



Second Step Implementation

Skagit County: A rural, culturally, economically, and geographically diverse community located in the northwest corner of the United States.

Population: 103,000

- Includes 27,105 children ages 0-17 (represents 26% of the county's total population and ranks Skagit County 11th out of the state's 39 counties for highest percent of youth population).
- Two-thirds of these children are school-aged and attend schools ranging from large, cultural diverse districts to small, homogenous, geographical isolated districts.
- Seven school districts, five serving a sizeable population of migrant students.
- Unemployment: 7.1% (State benchmark is 6.4%) and Skagit County is classified as an "economically distressed" area. Many of the challenges to ensuring safe and violence-free schools and communities in Skagit County are linked to the area's poor socio-economic status and the geographical isolation of communities.

Children:

- 26% are students of color including 18% who are Latino.
- 7.6% of the students are from migrant families (compared to only 3% statewide.)
- 45% of county school children qualify for free/reduced priced lunch (state average is 36%)
- In our largest school district, the percentage jumps to 62%.

Youth Violence:

- 2.45 per 1,000 youth age 10-17 were arrested for violent crimes in Skagit County, including rape, murder, and assault, higher than our state average. (2003)
- The seven districts in our county reported 100 incidents of weapons on school property, 411 incidents of criminal acts committed by students and 382 suspensions due to physical attacks or fights. (2003-2004 school year)
- 12th highest ranked county in number of juvenile arrests, alarmingly higher in two areas - juvenile property crime rate is 35.1 per 1000 compared to only 4.13 per 1000 nationally, and the alcohol violation rate is 18.7 per 1000 in Skagit compared to 5.52 per 1000 nationally.
- 550 juveniles were adjudicated in Skagit County and most of them returned to school with minimal support for their transition. (2004)



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Mental Health

- Estimated that 1,360 children in Skagit County between 0-17 have serious emotional disturbances (November 2003).
- 58% of children in Washington State are enrolled in Medicaid, compared to 49% nationally.
- Only 796 Skagit County youth received state supported mental health services in 2002, suggesting that many children eligible for Medicaid and in need of mental health treatment in Skagit County go without appropriate treatment.
- In 1998 mental health funding changed from a needs-based reimbursement system to an allocation formula resulting in a substantial decrease in funding for mental health services in Skagit County.
- In 2004, 653 children in Skagit County received Medicaid eligible mental health services. Due to these reductions in funding and changes in statewide standards of care for Medicaid eligibility, those with significant, but not life threatening, needs have gone without services.
- In Washington State, mental health is the single most common reason for hospitalization among teens

Early Childhood Programs

- 59.6% of all births in Skagit County receive Medicaid-paid maternity care.
- 18.3% of children below age five in Skagit County live below the poverty level compared with the state average of 13%.
- 1007 households (or 27.2%) headed by a female were living below the poverty level.
- Many new mothers are single parents without supports to promote the vital first relationships with their infants that are foundational to a child's emotional health
- In 2002, state resources for quality improvement funds for childcare providers were virtually eliminated.
- Childcare licensors attempt to assure that basic health and safety standards are met but provide no quality enhancement services.
- There is only a 10 hour annual training requirement for child care providers and no required qualifications for community preschool teachers.
- According to our childcare licensors, many early childhood caregivers lack the resources to effectively identify children with potential risk of anti-social behavior to mediate protective factors to support children from high-risk families against future drug use and violent behaviors.
- Childcare providers also lack the resources to promote strong literacy and social/emotional skill development, protective factors against anti-social behaviors in elementary school.



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Who we serve: We have a goal to increase the skills of preschool teachers and childcare providers in supporting the social/emotional development of children in their care, including implementing Second Step into 150 Early Childhood classrooms by the end of the grant period. We are targeting both home providers and agency-wide implementations. Targeted home providers are those serving the Latino populations.

Who are our partners: Skagit Valley College Early Childhood Education Program; NW ESD189 Early Learning Center; Skagit County Children's Council; Washington State Migrant Council and Migrant Head Start

Goal: Early Childhood Behavior Specialists (ECBS) are assigned to school districts and work with the early learning programs that feed into their designated districts to:

1. Work with the districts to help link them to early learning services.
2. Facilitate transition of children with social/emotional development needs.
3. Provide embedded training to preschool/childcare providers in working with children manifesting anti-social behavior or at risk of developing serious behavioral disorders and provide screening services for mental health services.
4. Provide the key linkage in an early intervention system and coordinate assessment, early identification, referral, family support and follow-up among mental health and family serving agencies.
5. Refer children and families through the ARIS program for contracted hours of mental health consultation and treatment for young children focused on improving their readiness to learn.
6. Facilitate implementation of the Second Step Program into centers and home care providers by providing college credit or STARS in-service credit, training and mentoring to childcare/preschool staff in Second Step implementation.
7. Provide direct services along with training early childhood providers to support our goal of developing a network of providers trained in violence prevention and building a sustainable system of violence prevention programs and services.
8. Assist childcare providers in developing intensive individualized intervention plan for challenging behaviors within early learning programs.
9. Refer to the Skagit County At Risk Intervention Services (ARIS) Program if appropriate.



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What we have done so far:

1. Four staff members plus a Skagit Valley College ECE instructor attended the CFC Training of Trainers course in Seattle, including two Spanish-speaking facilitators.
2. Enrolled 20 providers into an Early Childhood Education class at Skagit Valley College, ECE 199, to be trained in to implement pre-K Second Step in their centers and homes.
 - a. This class is worth 1 credit per quarter, and each student will enroll for 2 quarters. 12 of those enrolled received tuition scholarships through the SS/HS grant. SVC and Head Start also provided scholarships to students.
 - b. Students have two Saturday classes each quarter taught by the ECBS, and then receive mentoring from the ECBS as they implement Second Step. Classes are given in English with Spanish interpreting as needed.
 - c. Students are provided with a Second Step curriculum, either the English or Spanish version.
 - d. Prerequisites were established for those eligible for enrolling in this class, including time in early learning programs and specific classes completed at Skagit Valley College in ECE.
 - e. Fall and Winter class enrollees include:
 - i. 4 home providers
 - ii. 4 Head Start staff
 - iii. 4 Migrant Head Start Staff
 - iv. 1 school district employee
 - v. 7 center providers
 - f. ECBS conduct regular on-site mentoring to early learning providers implementing Second Step.
3. Train and mentor entire early learning centers to implement Second Step into their classrooms. For example:
 - a. Trained 28 staff including classroom special education teachers, instructional assistants, occupational therapists, speech and language pathologists, physical therapists, a school psychologist and administrative staff at Skagit Preschool and Resource Center (SPARC), serving approximately 133 children at this time. Second Step will be included in the SPARC program in both English and Spanish within no less than 6 classrooms with preschool and kindergarten aged children. The School psychologist also will be using this program as part of IEP goals and measurements of child outcomes with children identified as delayed in the area of social/ emotional development or who have behavior concerns.



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What we are planning:

1. Provide training for the entire staff of seven YMCA Early Learning Programs serving approximately 280 children.
2. Provide training for all of the North Cascade Child Development Center staff in January, 2007 serving approximately 40 children.
3. Provide training for the Sedro Woolley Public Library in December, 2007 serving approximately 15 children. We are looking at finding someone who can sustain and be trained so the program can be sustained.
4. Train all staff in the county Head Start program in August, 2007, currently serving 272 children.
5. Offer SVC class for a second cohort of 20 early learning teachers who want college credit to implement Second Step into their programs, beginning in March 2007 and continuing to offer the class to 2 new cohorts during the 2007-2008 Academic Year.
6. Implement Second Step at the Kulshan Creek Neighborhood Station, a community center in the heart of a public housing development serving primarily Hispanic families.
7. ECBS will be trained in the Family Guide to Second Step and assist providers in utilizing that program with their parents and families.