



It's time to invest in Family, Friend, and Neighbor Caregivers!

Child Care Aware of WA facilitated play and learn groups are another quality early learning experience for children in our state. Play and Learn groups offer a safe, culturally responsive, nurturing environment for children and caregivers to thrive. For FFN caregivers, it's a place to learn more about child development, school readiness, family support, and community resources. Through these unique play-based opportunities, FFN caregivers can connect with others through shared experiences and build networks of support.

Across the state through various community-based partnerships, Play and Learn facilitators connect with families in their communities, specifically families of color, those who speak languages other than English at home, and families with incomes below the poverty line. Play and Learn facilitators support early learning and social-emotional growth for children by conducting developmental screens, providing behavioral and other health supports, and offering referrals. Facilitators are also able to provide technical assistance, family support, and connections for FFN caregivers in-person and virtually.

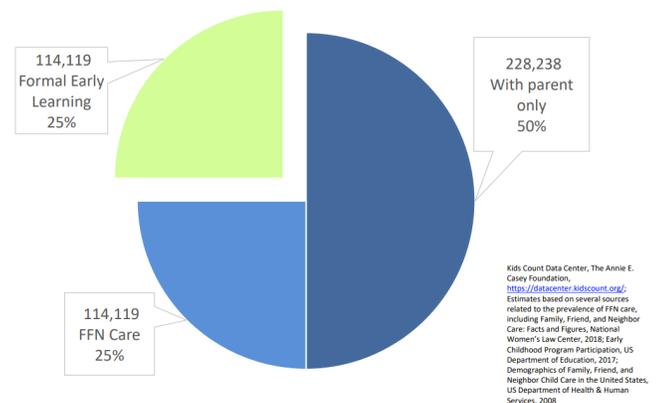
FFN Facts

- Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care (FFN) is the most common form of care in the United States
- FFN Caregivers are grandparents, aunts and uncles, older siblings, and close family friends
- Parents are more likely to choose FFN Care when:
 - Their children are infants, toddlers, and preparing to enter kindergarten
 - They prefer culturally relevant early learning experiences based on community
 - They need individualized care for their children with disabilities
- FFN care is the preferred care for many immigrant communities because it offers a familiar and reliable option and is oftentimes the only realistic choice due to constraints of affordability and availability
- Families rely now more than ever on FFN Care due to child care availability, school closures, and shifting work schedules – FFN is part of the child care quilt that allows parents to work while ensuring quality experiences for their children.
- Nearly 75% of Washington's children under age five are in the care of parents and other FFN caregivers

“ I have introduced my children to new activities. I am reading and playing more with them. The follow up calls from the facilitator helped me a lot because it reminded me I am not alone and people care about me and my child's well-being. ”

-Caregiver, Horn of Africa Services Kaleidoscope Play & Learn Group in Seattle

Who's taking care of Washington's children?



Why Focus on Play & Learn?

Expand our current statewide system



Child Care Aware of Washington's growing network of FFN programs includes weekly facilitated play group models that support FFN caregivers and parents in learning more about child development and ways that they can help their children be ready for kindergarten. Our statewide network of FFN programs includes 123 weekly play groups in 20 languages.

Based on Washington's Early Learning & Development Guidelines, Play & Learn groups are offered throughout the K-12 school year and year-round. Settings vary from Elementary schools, Community Organizations, virtual options, and text messaging services. Through multilingual instruction, trained facilitators integrate developmental assessments and early learning supports to encourage family engagement, ECEAP connections, and regional family resources. Our statewide system model with three model options allows for further partnerships with community groups, DSHS, recovery groups, and school districts.

Play and Learn groups are as unique as the communities they represent

- Central Washington offers Quiq, an interactive text messaging service in Spanish/English that provides live conversation and access to facilitated play groups, activity kits, developmental screening, child development resources, and community referrals.
- In Mason County a group facilitates in Q'anjob'al (an Indigenous Mayan language from Guatemala/part of Mexico), English, and Spanish
- Spokane county facilitates a group for families involved in a Recovery Café program
- A group for military families, many of whom are immigrants and whose spouses/family members are currently deployed is active in Oak Harbor
- King County currently hosts a group for Black families in White Center and facilitates a group in Spanish for Latinx families in Auburn.
- A group in partnership with Vancouver schools is specific for families whose preschoolers will be enrolling in kindergarten and helps them prepare to enter the school space

Call to Action

Invest 2.4 million over the next biennium into facilitated Play and Learn groups

To respond to community demand, CCA of WA has a multi-year plan to significantly increase the number of FFN programs statewide. Our vision is that all families have access to facilitated play and learn groups and other FFN programs in their neighborhoods and in their home language. Depending on the FFN model and play and learn group location, Washington state currently funds anywhere between 20%-40% of programs. Statewide, this funding provides a baseline for sustainable programming in conjunction with local funding sources. Additionally, consistent annual support will allow us to collect and analyze imperative data regarding the informal care of our state's children.



For this biennium, our request of 2.4 million will ...

- Fully fund an additional 15 groups statewide that meet community need
- Fund vital infrastructure for staff training, materials and translations, evaluation, technology, and leveraging local funding