



News Release

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Contacts: [Kelly Stowe](#), Communications Office
[Marqise Allen](#), Communications Office

360-236-4022

360-236-4072

Healthy early learning settings are part of the goal for #HealthiestNextGen

OLYMPIA — Healthy children learn better. That’s an underlying premise for the Governor’s Healthiest Next Generation Initiative — a partnership between the Departments of Health and Early Learning and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

As part of this partnership, First Lady Trudi Inslee will take part in a special event on April 16 at Sound to Harbor Head Start/Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)’s West Olympia center.

The first lady will be joined by Secretary of Health John Wiesman and Director of Early Learning Elizabeth “Bette” Hyde in celebrating the health and education of some of the state’s youngest children as part of [National Week of the Young Child](#).

ECEAP and Head Start are preschool programs that give free services to eligible children and their families to help them be ready to succeed when they enter kindergarten.

The event supports healthy eating and physical activity in early learning settings to help create the healthiest next generation of Washingtonians. Governor Jay Inslee launched the [Healthiest Next Generation Initiative](#) to join with families across the state to make our next generation the healthiest ever. The goal of the initiative is to help children maintain a healthy weight, enjoy active lives, and eat well in places where they spend the most time — including early learning settings, schools, and their communities.

“Part of building the Healthiest Next Generation is providing the tools children and families need to live healthy, happy, successful lives,” said First Lady, Trudi Inslee.

The Healthiest Next Generation is inspired by communities that have already made improvements to support their children. Students at Sound to Harbor get outside every day, rain or shine, and have fruit and vegetables as part of their lunch and snack.

Secretary of Health John Wiesman added, “A child’s health and the health of their environment have a direct influence on their success in school. Promoting healthy habits and helping kids and their families get the tools they need to eat well and be active helps them succeed in school is, the intent of the healthiest next generation initiative.”

[Sound to Harbor Head Start/ECEAP](#), part of the [Capital Region ESD 113](#), serves more than 800 children through 14 centers and 44 classrooms located throughout Grays Harbor, Thurston, and Mason counties. The program works with community centers, school districts, cities, counties, and community-based organizations to create their centers. Children typically attend a half-day program, four days a week from late September to early June.

“We’re proud of our program’s commitment to quality, which includes supporting our staff through training and being actively engaged with our parents,” said Beth Schilling, West Olympia Center Director.

Sandy Nelson, assistant superintendent, Early Learning, Capital Region Educational Service District (ESD) 113 added, “In addition to creating an environment that supports physical activity and healthy menus to help ensure our children’s success, we also ensure that every child’s vision, hearing, height and weight are checked and that connections are made with health care providers.”

Check out the [Department of Health’s page about Healthiest Next Generation](#) Initiative or join us at #HealthiestNextGen.

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