RESOLUTION NO. R2019-15

A Resolution of the Pierce County Council Expressing Its Intent to Prioritize Prenatal-to-Three Policies, Best Practices and Cross Coordination to Improve Child and Family Outcomes in Pierce County.

Whereas, counties routinely provide an array of programs and services to an estimated 16 million children ages birth to three in the United States; and in 2016 about 35 percent of counties had more than a quarter of all children living in poverty; and

Whereas, the most rapid period of brain development occurs within the first years of life with the brain developing faster from birth to age three than at any later period in life, building the foundation for all future learning, behavior and health; and when toddlers receive what their growing brains need, they become healthy children who are confident, empathetic and ready for school and life; and programs and policies that support healthy development from birth to age three result in better social, economic and health outcomes and build a more productive workforce that strengthens our economy now and in the future; and

Whereas, parents are a child’s most important caregivers and play the lead role in their child’s healthy development; at the same time, communities and governments can effectively provide families with an array of comprehensive support at an especially critical time; and

Whereas, programs and policies should start early to ensure healthy beginnings at birth, support families with infants and toddlers and make high-quality child care and learning environments more accessible and affordable to all; and

Whereas, high-quality child care is often unavailable or unaffordable for parents who need it, and many families are not connected to networks or early childhood supports that can offer guidance and confidence to navigate the earliest months and years of their children’s lives; and

Whereas, Pierce County takes seriously its responsibility to protect and enhance the health, welfare and safety of residents in cost-effective ways—especially for the 33,371 children under the age of 3 in Pierce County; and

Whereas, research shows that when we invest in the first three years of a child’s life the returns for the community are the highest, and we can reduce the need for more expensive interventions later; and
Whereas, research also shows that high-quality early childhood development programs can deliver an annual return of up to 13 percent per child on upfront costs through better outcomes in education, health, employment and social behavior in the decades that follow; and economists attribute local economic growth and prosperity to high-quality early child care programs; and

Whereas, the National Association of Counties (NACo) and other national organizations joined the National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers (NCIT), a project of the Pritzker Children’s Initiative (PCI), in a groundbreaking partnership to work with communities and states across the country to focus on early childhood development for young children from birth to three; and

Whereas, Pierce County was awarded $250,000 from the State of Washington’s Department of Children Youth and Families, and $25,000 from the Pritzker Children’s Initiative for planning and implementation of the Help Me Grow framework in Pierce County; and

Whereas, Help Me Grow is a system model that works to promote cross-sector collaboration in order to build efficient and effective early childhood systems that mitigate the impact of adversity and support protective factors among families, so that all children can grow, develop, and thrive to their full potential; and

Whereas, the Pierce County Council has determined it is in the best interest of the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Pierce County, to prioritize prenatal-to-three policies, best practices and cross coordination to improve child and family outcomes in Pierce County; Now Therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of Pierce County:

Section 1. The County Council hereby expresses its intent to prioritize prenatal-to-three policies, best practices and cross coordination to improve child and family outcomes in Pierce County.

ADOPTED this _____ day of ________________, 2019.

ATTEST:

PIERCE COUNTY COUNCIL
Pierce County, Washington

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Denise D. Johnson            Douglas G. Richardson
Clerk of the Council          Council Chair