

# Children's Budget

Over the last two years, the City has developed a results-oriented investment strategy for funding programs for children and youth. The goals of this effort, called the Children's Budget, are to improve school readiness, academic achievement, and health for all children and youth, with particular emphasis on reducing disproportionate outcomes by race and income level. The key elements of the Children's Budget strategy are:

- Invest in best practices and tested programs whenever possible;
- Track the progress of children and youth toward improved academic achievement and health;
- Use the knowledge gained by measuring and monitoring to improve programs and make better decisions about how to invest in children and youth in the future;
- Coordinate budgeting and planning for children and youth programs across City departments to allow City's policy-makers to make more strategic decisions, increase efficiencies, and, ultimately, improve outcomes for children and youth; and
- Keep the public informed about how the City's children and youth are faring, and the effects of City-funded programs.

The City invests in children and youth through the budgets of five City departments: the Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs, the Seattle Public Library, the Departments of Neighborhoods, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Human Services Department (which also contracts with a number of public health agencies in 2006). The recommended overall annual Children's Budget for 2006 is approximately \$29.5 million, an increase from the 2005 level of \$28.4 million. City funding sources include the General Subfund and the Families and Education Levy. The Families and Education Levy, renewed by Seattle voters in September 2004, provides \$116.8 million for children and youth for seven years. The City's proposed General Subfund commitment is approximately \$14.7 million, an amount about \$500,000 greater than the City's General Subfund budget contribution in 2005.

The Children's Budget is organized into five major investment areas: Early Learning, Family Involvement and Support, Out-of-School Time, Support for High-Risk Middle and High School Age Youth, and Student Health. The funding changes and examples of the programs in each investment area are provided below.

**Early Learning** – Increase both General Subfund and Levy investments, increasing the total Early Learning amount from \$3.8 million to \$5.2 million. Program elements include preschool classes for low-income children, childcare for low-income families, and preschool and childcare teacher training.

**Family Involvement and Family Support** – Continue the overall funding commitment of approximately \$4.7 million per year. Program elements include helping parents help their children to achieve academically, and helping parents, especially immigrant and refugee parents, to get basic services such as food, shelter, and clothing.

**Out-of-School Time** – Increase both General Subfund and Levy investments, increasing the total Out-of-School Time investment from \$8.4 million to \$8.9 million. Program elements include after-school activities with an academic focus for elementary and middle school students, arts training for middle and high school students, summer day camp scholarships for low-income children, and library programs for children and teens.

**Support for High-Risk Middle and High School Students** – Program elements include nearly \$3.8 million a year for case management to help teens access public services, truancy prevention to help youth at risk of dropping out of school, and counseling for high-risk middle school students.

**Student Health** – Program elements include more than \$5.3 million a year for school-based health centers and school nurses in four middle schools and 10 high schools; mental health counseling for high-risk youth; and dental care for elementary school students.

