

# DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

## COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

### Responsibilities Split, Partnership for Kids Strengthened

Among other things, collaboration requires creativity and a keen eye for opportunity. Last year, Graduate Tacoma’s Early Learning and Reading Network (ELRN) and First 5 FUNdamentals saw an opportunity to make a bigger impact and then got creative: They decided to split up the work.



Led by First 5 FUNdamentals, Project Child Success and its existing networks guide

vision, strategy, and activities in Pierce County’s early learning space (children birth to three years). The ELRN remains focused on preschool strategies, kindergarten readiness and third grade reading in Tacoma. This intentional partnership is another example of how an inspired community of dedicated educators and community members is purposefully keeping its eye on the success of every child, cradle to college and career.



## KEY FINDINGS

### A Comprehensive System Is Needed

Approximately ten to 15 percent of all children have a disability that hinders their educational development. When developmental issues are identified before age three, intervention is less costly than treatment later in childhood – and that’s significant. But perhaps the most essential reason to screen our youngest children is that when a child’s potential barriers to success are known and addressed early, that child is much more likely to feel supported and thrive.

We know that early screening is being conducted in Tacoma – most commonly through primary healthcare providers. Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) also screens preschoolers and those entering kindergarten. But there is a gap: A standardized system for tracking early developmental screening does not yet exist in Tacoma and Pierce County. With such a system, we would be better able to understand where children might be vulnerable.

As a community, we could be more strategic about reaching them where they need us most.

Based on the findings from its recent research seeking to better understand the birth-to-three system in Pierce County, Project Child Success (PCS), (*see Community Spotlight at left*) is making some headway. As Pierce County’s early learning movement, PCS is participating in a statewide workgroup to design and pilot a comprehensive system that connects at-risk children with the services they need using a nationally recognized model called “Help Me Grow.”

More information on the PCS Research project:  
[www.projectchildsuccess.org/about/publications](http://www.projectchildsuccess.org/about/publications)

More information on Help Me Grow:  
[www.helpmegrowwa.org](http://www.helpmegrowwa.org)



#### AIMING HIGHER GOAL:

Increase the number of children screened by age three and age five.