

GIVING EVERY CHILD A GREAT START



## Homeless Child Care Program

### The Community Need

Homelessness in King and Pierce Counties continues to rise, particularly for families. Pierce County Community Connections reported a 37% increase in overall homelessness while the number of homeless families rose by a devastating 50%. Research on childhood homelessness and associated traumas reveals a profound and accumulative negative effect on the development of children—inhibiting their emotional, cognitive, and behavioral development, and leading many to repeat the cycle of homelessness as adults. Stability, a nurturing caregiver, a safe environment and quality early learning are crucial to success later in life.

### Pioneering a Solution

Our Homeless Child Care Program helps homeless families access and pay for child care during a traumatic time in their lives. In addition to food and shelter, parents experiencing homelessness need additional, and often catalyzing, basic needs: time to address their challenges, and peace of mind that their children are in a safe early learning environment. Placing homeless children in child care gives their parents the time to address financial, employment, legal, medical and other challenges that are preventing them from obtaining housing stability—eventually, one family at a time, reducing the number of families experiencing homelessness in our community.

Perhaps more importantly, quality child care can change the trajectory of a child's life, particularly an at-risk child who has experienced trauma such as homelessness and domestic violence. James Heckman, Nobel Prize-winning economist, director of the Center for the Economics of Human Development and author of The Heckman Equation, has conducted years of research that proves having children in quality early learning settings "not only impacts each child, but it also strengthens our country's workforce today and prepares future generations to be competitive in the global economy tomorrow." The Ounce of Prevention Fund, a Chicago nonprofit focused on quality early learning experiences for all children, emphasizes that children without a high-quality early learning experience are more likely to drop out of school, become a teen parent, never attend college, be placed in special education or be arrested for a violent crime. Providing safe, high quality child care, especially for our most vulnerable children, is the most cost-effective way to mitigate these negative outcomes and ensure a more vibrant, healthy community.



Photo: GENNA MARTIN, SEATTLEPI.COM  
As featured on SeattlePI.com, three children, not clients of CCR, play together at the Othello Village homeless camp off of Martin Luther King, Jr. Way in South Seattle in March.

**An investment in the Homeless Child Care Program funds child care subsidies for children experiencing homelessness as well as costs associated with providing initial assessments and customized service coordination for families—all leading to a higher level of care for children. And if ALL of our children are well cared for, including those who are homeless, they'll be better prepared for school and life and grow up ready to take care of our community and the world.**