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To lead, facilitate, and support the efforts of those working in the Early Care and Education profession throughout Alaska.

February 6, 2012

Senator Lesil McGuire
State Capital Room 125
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator McGuire,

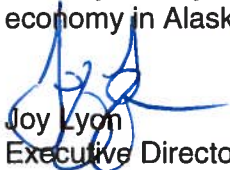
On behalf of Alaska Association for the Education of Young Children, I am pleased to offer our support for Senate Bill 129. Passage of this bill would increase State of Alaska employee access to child care services, and positively impact the recruitment and retention of state employees.

Many other large employers have analyzed the return on investment realized by supporting on-site child care, including Providence Hospital, Credit Union One, and BP in Anchorage, SEARHC in Sitka, Peace Health Hospital in Ketchikan, and the General Services Administration in Juneau. Alaska Legislative Affairs currently oversees the contract for the state employer sponsored child care next to the Capitol, which has been successful in offering priority enrollment for Legislative staff and state employees.

The number of families with two working parents is at an all-time high, and according to an economic impact study of early care and learning by McDowell Group, one in ten Alaska workers depends on child care to maintain their employment. Access to high-quality, reliable child care near the workplace is an important benefit proven to enhance employees attendance and productivity. According to recent studies, 90 percent of parents using full-service child care centers say that access to a center close to their workplace improves their productivity at work.

This bill would also increase the capacity and quality of child care in Alaska for working families. Currently there are spaces in licensed programs for less than half of the young children with no stay-at-home parent. Alaska is rated in the bottom ten states for quality of child care by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. Employer sponsored child care programs are able to achieve higher quality. High quality child care has a positive correlation with school readiness and reduced stress in families.

Thank you for your ongoing work to support school readiness, strong families, and a healthy economy in Alaska.



Joy Lyon
Executive Director
AEYC Southeast Alaska