



BEST BEGINNINGS

Alaska's Early Childhood Investment

February 22, 2012

The Honorable Hollis French
State Senate
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator French:

I am pleased to write in support of SB120 currently under consideration.

Best Beginnings' vision is that all Alaska children begin school ready to succeed. While it may seem easy and efficient to develop a one-size-fits-all program, in reality we need a variety of high quality programs and learning experiences for young children in our state.

A large and growing body of research provides increasing evidence of three related tenets: (1) brain growth and development occur at an astonishing pace in young children; (2) nurturing and brain stimulation during those years have a profound impact on how children fare in school; and, (3) a child's readiness for school is a powerful determinant of how he will do later in life.

Parents and other concerned community members are in the best position to identify problems, design solutions, and improve coordination to meet local needs. Personal visiting programs such as Parents as Teachers can be a critical component of a menu of services offered to assist parents in preparing their children to be ready to succeed in school and in life.

Best Beginnings has been working with a variety of partners at the state and local level to develop a comprehensive and integrated early childhood system. There is a definite need for personal visiting in this kind of coordinated system.

Please let me know if I can provide any additional information. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Abbe Hensley". The script is fluid and cursive.

Abbe Hensley
Executive Director

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Best Beginnings is a public-private partnership that mobilizes people and resources to ensure all Alaska children begin school ready to succeed.