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I support early childhood education and hope that you will too! The early years from birth to 5 are critical in forming the architecture of a child's brain and ensuring success in school and life. We simply do not have enough funding to keep our youngest children in quality early childhood programs. How can we improve that outcome and improve our State's economic stability and future? By investing more in young children because it makes sense – the earlier the investment, the greater the return. A child's brain development is 90% complete before Kindergarten. Early childhood creates thousands of jobs for Alaskans and generates economic activity and growth – exactly what our state needs right now!

I have worked in the early childhood profession in Fairbanks for 34 years. My children grew up in quality early care and education programs from the time they were 2 and 4 years old – they are successful and viable members of our community today! Quality early childhood can and should be guaranteed to every child living in Alaska. I have spent my career being a voice for children – they are so important to our sustainable future!

The Alaska Children's Trust just released a report – Kids Count Alaska Economic Well-Being which is loaded with information, statistics, research and analysis. Alaska is a child care desert – we have more demand for child care than supply. Especially for infants and toddlers. In my program I have parents who cannot go back to work because they cannot find quality infant/toddler care. They cannot find marginal infant/toddler care. Alaska's families live in poverty and food insecurity. Over one-third of Alaska children live in families where no parent has regular, full time or part time employment. Children make up a quarter of Alaska's population. Please stand for Alaska's children – do not try to balance the budget by eliminating programs that help strengthen our economy.

Thanks so much.



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