

Doniece Gott

From: Sharon Franklin <sfranklin@alaskacenter.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2026 2:34 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Senate Bill 178

My name is Sharon Franklin and I'm writing in support of Senate Bill 178: Expand Eligibility for Early Intervention, and I respectfully urge the committee to support Senate Bill 178. SB178 expands Alaska's Infant Learning Program early interventions, which helps parents become the best teacher for their children with developmental delays or disabilities.

I am a Developmental Disability Resource Connection Specialist who provides services in Fairbanks, Alaska. I have seen the impact early intervention has had on my community/family. Expanding ILP eligibility from 50% developmental delay to 25% delay helps more Alaskan families and saves the state money.

We know the budget is tight. That's why it's important to recognize that in addition to being the right thing to do, investments in early interventions in SB178 promise to result in 400% return on investment for the State of Alaska.

Data shows that nearly half of the children who receive the early intervention in SB178 will not need higher cost special education services when they get to K-12 schools. Small investments upstream can help children, families, and the state budget. But cost savings are only one of the many reasons to support SB178. The others are far more personal and powerful and don't fit in my allotted time.

In closing, please support SB178, thank you.

Sincerely,
Sharon Franklin

Doniece Gott

From: Calista A. Elzey <caelzey@alaskacenter.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2026 2:28 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for Senate Bill 178: Expand Eligibility for Early Intervention

My name is Calista Elzey and I'm writing in support of Senate Bill 178: Expand Eligibility for Early Intervention - and I respectfully urge the committee to support Senate Bill 178. SB178 expands Alaska's Infant Learning Program early interventions, which helps parents become the best teacher for their children with developmental delays or disabilities.

I am a licensed social worker and developmental therapist who provides early intervention services in Fairbanks. I have seen the positive impact early intervention has had on my community and the families I serve. Expanding ILP eligibility from 50% developmental delay to 25% delay helps more Alaskan families who would benefit from early intervention. Investments in early interventions in SB178 promise to result in a 400% return on investment for the State of Alaska.

Data shows that nearly half of the children who receive the early intervention in SB178 will not need higher cost special education services when they get to K-12 schools. Small investments upstream can help children, families, and the state budget. But cost savings are only one of the many reasons to support SB178. I have personally seen how early intervention can significantly benefit the lives of children and their caregivers by supporting their relationships, confidence, and access to community resources.

In closing, please support SB178,

Thank you.



Calista Elzey, LMSW

Developmental Therapist

Cell: (907) 888-2585 (call or text)

Fax: (907) 456-6124

1020 Barnette St., Fairbanks AK 99701

www.alaskacenter.org

Confidentiality Statement:

This email message and any attachments from Alaska Center for Children and Adults are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed. The information contained herein may include protected or otherwise privileged information. Unauthorized review, forwarding, printing, copying, distributing, or using such information is strictly prohibited and may be unlawful. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender by replying to this message and delete the e-mail without further disclosure. Thank you.

Doniece Gott

From: Jessica Mills Clark <Jessica.Clark@comconnections.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2026 12:57 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support ILP in the state budget: SB178

My name is Jessica Mills Clark and I'm writing in support of increasing the FY 27 funding for the Infant Learning Program expansion in the Department of Health, Division of Senior and Disabilities Services by \$5.72 million. Thank you for including this increment in FY 26, please take that same step again.

I am an educator and family service coordinator who provides services in Ketchikan. I have seen the positive impact early intervention has had in my community and our surrounding areas. Expanding the ILP eligibility from 50% to 25% developmental delays help more Alaskan families and saves the state money, as demonstrated by the Heckman Curve (below). Investing early in children yields the greatest returns. The Heckman Curve demonstrates that the highest economic and social benefits come from early skill development. This investment leads to lifelong success, increased productivity, and reduced societal costs. The Heckman Curve was developed by an economist, not by an early intervention provider.



Sincerely,

Jessica Mills Clark, M.Ed., IMH-E®
Early Childhood Special Educator
Early Learning Program
Community Connections
(907) 225-7825
(907) 225-1541 (fax)
Jessica.Clark@comconnections.org

Doniece Gott

From: Michele Girault <mgirault@hopealaska.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2026 9:04 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB178

To: Alaska State Senate Finance Committee

From: Michele Girault Executive Director Hope Community Resources and Board President Key Coalition of Alaska

Subject- SB178

I am writing in full support of expanded early intervention services. This initiative is one of the top priorities for the Key Coalition of Alaska. We were very grateful for the bipartisan support of this initiative last session and hope to see that continue this session.

There is clear data that investing in our children at the earliest stages of need provides critical support to both child and family and reduces cost to the state as the child matures. The infant learning programs across the state have been a lifeline for many families and have consistently demonstrated success.

I strongly urge you to include this increment into the budget again this session, enabling our skilled ILP teams across the state to expand their critical impact.

Thank you!

Alaskans share a Vision of a flexible system in which each person directs their own supports, based on their strengths and abilities, toward a meaningful life in their home, their job and their community. Our Vision includes supported families, professional staff and services available throughout the state now and into the future.

This message, including any attachments, is intended solely for the use of the person or entity to which it is addressed and may contain CONFIDENTIAL and/or privileged information that is protected by federal and state regulation. If the reader of this email is not the intended recipient or his or her agent, the reader is notified that any dissemination, distribution or copying of this email is prohibited. If you think you have received this email in error, please advise the sender by reply email and delete this email immediately.

Visit us at <http://www.hopealaska.org> or on our [Facebook](#) page.

Doniece Gott

From: Tesia Meade <tesia.meade@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2026 9:02 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support SB 178

Hi,

I'm writing in support of Senate Bill 178: Expand Eligibility for Early Intervention - and I urge the committee to support Senate Bill 178. SB178 expands Alaska's Infant Learning Program early interventions, which helps parents become the best teacher for their children with developmental delays or disabilities. Expanding ILP eligibility from 50% developmental delay to 25% delay helps more Alaskan families and saves the state money. We know the budget is tight. That's why it's important to recognize that - in addition to being the right thing to do - investments in the early interventions in SB178 promise to result in a 400% return on investment for the State of Alaska. Data shows that nearly half of the children who receive the early interventions in SB178 will not need higher cost special education services when they get to K-12 schools. Small investments upstream can help children, families, and the state budget. But cost savings are only one of the many reasons to support SB178. The others are far more personal and powerful. Please support SB178.

Thanks,
Tesia Meade
99801

Doniece Gott

From: Cathy Bolling <lalalaska11@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2026 9:27 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for SB 178: 30 years of gratitude

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Good morning Senate Finance Committee members, Senators Hoffman, Olsen, Stedman, Kiehl, Merrick, Kaufman and Cronk:

I am writing to urge your support of **Senate Bill 178: Expand Eligibility for Early Intervention**. I write to you today from personal experience as the grateful parent of a child who received these services almost 30 years ago, right in our home in Craig.

We were so excited to welcome our first child and proudly announced, "She's above average." But at around 18 months we noticed, or rather it was brought to our attention, she was not responding to her name or making eye contact as would be expected. At first we denied that anything could be wrong with our "Above average" daughter but as we observed her more closely, our denial turned into fear and then desperation. At the recommendation of our local providers, we took her to Anchorage for a multi-disciplinary assessment. The diagnosis: somewhere on the autism spectrum, but at 2-and-a-half years old, too early to say where. The doctor recommended early intervention.

We considered whether we needed to move for services. But fortunately, through Community Connections, we had an early learning specialist come into our home with her bag of toys, to attempt to engage our daughter and meet her where she was at. I would watch the two of them, my daughter initially moving away and the specialist, gently following her and trying to engage, not always with words, but in the skilled techniques she knew and I did not.

In time, she engaged that little girl. And it made this mother's heart happy. It was the first step in a long road that brings us to today, as that little girl is nearing 30 years old and is a thriving, working, traveling, compassionate, engaged member of society, here in Southeast.

That ELP specialist did a lot for my daughter, but she did a lot for me as well. She modeled for me what I needed to do to reach my daughter and help her link in with the world around her. The specialist left me notes each week that I could refer to. She answered my questions. She was the model I needed.

And so I urge you to support SB 178 bill, which helps not only children with developmental delays/disabilities, but the parents who find themselves at a loss when the usual early parenting skills fail to work.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cathy Bolling
Craig, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Cheryl Welcome <cheryl.welcome@mssca.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2026 11:58 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for SB178 -safe-

My name is Cheryl Welcome and I'm calling in support of Senate Bill 178: Expand Eligibility for Early Intervention - and I respectfully urge the committee to support Senate Bill 178. SB178 expands Alaska's Infant Learning Program early interventions, which helps parents become the best teacher for their children with developmental delays or disabilities.

I am a Developmental Specialist and Manager who provides services in the Mat Su. I have seen the impact early intervention has had on my community, the children, and families we serve, as well as the impact of turning families and children away who don't meet the high criteria, only to return later with increased delays. Expanding ILP eligibility from 50% developmental delay to 25% delay helps more Alaskan families and saves the state money.

We know the budget is tight. That's why it's important to recognize that in addition to being the right thing to do, investments in early interventions in SB178 promise to result in 400% return on investment for the State of Alaska.

Data shows that nearly half of the children who receive the early intervention in SB178 will not need higher cost special education services when they get to K-12 schools. Small investments upstream can help children, families, and the state budget. But cost savings are only one of the many reasons to support SB178. The others are far more personal and powerful and don't fit in my allotted time.

In closing, please support SB178, thank you.

Thank you,

Cheryl Welcome
ILP Developmental Specialist Manager
M.Ed. IMH-E® Infant Family Specialist, Endorsed Reflective Supervisor
DIR Floortime Certified

Doniece Gott

From: krisbrooks@everyactioncustom.com on behalf of Kristin Bradshaw
<krisbrooks@everyactioncustom.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2026 12:54 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support For Senate Bill 178

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

My name is __Kristin Bradshaw_ and I'm writing in support of Senate Bill 178 and increasing FY27 funding for the Infant Learning Program expansion in the Department of Health, Division of Senior & Disabilities Services by \$5.72 million. I was happy to see the Legislature include this long-sought increment in FY26, and ask you to take that same step again.

I am an occupational therapist who provides early intervention services in Fairbanks. In my role, I have the impact early intervention has had on my home community. Over my 29 year career in early intervention I have seen many advances in medical interventions, evaluations, intervention strategies to best support our youngest and most vulnerable. One thing that has needed to change to meet best practices and provide support earlier is to change our qualification criteria to a 25 percent delay. How many more first steps, words, hugs, bites, etc could we support and witness if we opened up services to capture the children who are delayed but currently not eligible?

Expanding ILP eligibility from 50% to 25% developmental delay helps more Alaskan families and saves the state money.

Thank you for stepping up in support of expanding ILP programs from a 50% to 25% developmental delay! Please support Senate Bill 178 and maintain this commitment in the FY27 budget.

Sincerely,
Kristin Bradshaw
178 Carlyle Way Fairbanks, AK 99709-2930 krisbrooks@hotmail.com
(907) 378-1545

Doniece Gott

From: D. McGinnis, DNP, APRN, FNP-C <mcginnisfnp@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2026 1:13 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB178

Honorable Senators,

I am a family nurse practitioner from the Northwest Arctic Borough. I work for Maniilaq but am testifying for myself in support of SB178 to expand Alaska's Infant Learning Program early interventions. I work in the villages surrounding Kotzebue. I often see young children that I suspect have needs for early education that I am then informed they do not qualify. I have been working in Alaska for 3 years now, so I am seeing those children start to struggle as they get older.

We have a saying in medicine that "Prevention is better than cure," emphasizing that taking proactive steps to maintain health—such as through lifestyle choices and vaccinations—is more effective and beneficial than treating diseases after they occur.

Please take the next step to help not just the rural children but ALL children to get a good start in life as they are the FUTURE of Alaska.

Thank you,
Diane

D. McGinnis, DNP, APRN, FNP-C

Doniece Gott

From: Mary Beck <mary@linksprc.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2026 1:48 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for SB178 – Expand Early Intervention Services

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

My name is Mary Beck, and I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 178 to expand eligibility for early intervention services under Alaska's Infant Learning Program (ILP).

My son is non-verbal and on the autism spectrum. He participated in the ILP program, and I can say with certainty that he would not be where he is today — or as successful as he is — without those early intervention services.

Through ILP, our family received critical support during some of the most challenging and uncertain moments of our lives. The providers didn't just work with my son — they empowered me as a parent. They taught me how to better communicate with him, support his development, and build the foundational skills he needed to grow and succeed.

Early intervention truly changed the trajectory of his life. Because of ILP, he entered school more prepared, with stronger communication skills and greater independence than he would have had otherwise. The progress he has made is a direct result of those early services.

Expanding eligibility through SB178 is not only the right thing to do for families — it is a smart investment in Alaska's future. No family should miss out on life-changing early intervention services because they fall just outside current eligibility criteria.

Please support SB178 and help ensure more Alaska children receive the early support they need to reach their fullest potential.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

--

Mary Beck
LINKS Resource Center, Parent Advocate

mary@linksprc.org

Office: 907-373-3632 Ext.635

Cell: 907-671-3070

linksprc.org

LINKS provides resources, advocacy, and connections to improve lives.

