

From: [Sen. Donny Olson](#)
To: [Liz Harpold](#); [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: FW: Support Alaska Infants Learning Program
Date: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 2:52:21 PM
Attachments: [Outlook-zkej4elp.png](#)

From: Amy Simpson <asimpson@picak.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 1:33 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee <Finance.Committee@akleg.gov>
Subject: Support Alaska Infants Learning Program

Amy Simpson, Executive Director
Programs for Infants and Children

RE: Alaska Infant Learning Program

I am writing in support of SB178 to expand Alaska's Infant Learning Program (ILP). I serve as Executive Director of Programs for Infants and Children (PIC), which provides services to children and families in Anchorage, Girdwood, Whittier, and communities across the Lake and Peninsula region.

Each year, PIC receives between 900 and 1,000 referrals from physicians, parents, childcare providers, hospitals, and other community partners. Our responsibility is to evaluate whether children are experiencing developmental delays or disabilities, determine eligibility, and provide early intervention services to support their development. These services are mandated under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which requires that all eligible children are served without waitlists.

Over the past 12 years, flat funding has not reduced the number of children served, but it has significantly impacted service delivery. Programs have been forced to operate with fewer providers due to rising costs, resulting in children receiving services less frequently than in prior years.

To restore service levels, we estimate that \$2.7 million increment is needed to address inflation and years of flat funding. An additional \$3.02 million increment would support expanded eligibility, accommodating an estimated 77% increase in children qualifying at a 25% delay threshold.

National data demonstrate that early intervention is a cost-effective investment. The National Early Intervention Longitudinal Study found that 46% of children who receive early intervention services do not require special education beyond kindergarten. Based on these findings, we estimate potential annual savings of \$34.9 million in future special education costs.

The fiscal note associated with this bill addresses the resources needed by the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services, including staffing and Medicaid match. However, it does not include the

necessary funding for grantees to deliver these services. Both components are essential to ensure successful implementation.

Without this investment, too many children will continue to miss critical early supports, increasing the likelihood of challenges in school and beyond. Expanding ILP is a strategic investment that will improve outcomes for children, strengthen families, and reduce long-term costs for the state.

Amy Simpson, Executive Director
Programs for Infants and Children

Amy Simpson

Executive Director
Programs for Infants and Children
907-550-3024

