



AK Children's Caucus, April 11, 2024



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By Stephanie Berglund
President/CEO, **thread**

Who is **thread**?

Statewide: Fairbanks, Anchorage, Juneau

Mission: *To advance the quality of early childhood education and child development by empowering parents, educating child care professionals, and collaborating with our communities.*

Vision: *All early care and learning is accessible, affordable, and high-quality to support positive outcomes for children and families.*

Who is **thread**?

Established in '86. We offer direct services to programs and educators.

Serve 10,000 families, 2,000 workers, and 430+ child care programs statewide.

Partnered with the state of Alaska on recent distribution of COVID-19 relief funds

thread is a member organization of Child Care Aware of America, a national partner.

Strong advocates for improving the child care system through better local, state, and federal policy.

Governor's Child Care Task Force

Support and endorse the child care task force recommendations

33 priorities in 1st report:

- Highlights include: early educator wage subsidy, licensing actions, regulation changes
- 2nd Report due by July. Will look at child care affordability and quality.
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There will be many actionable items, depending on what regulation changes are proposed and accomplished this year.

Current Child Care Priorities

Take action to support:

- HB 89
- Budget request – Child Care needs State support
- Prompt Pay Parity
- Regulation Package from the Department of Health

Alaska can't afford to wait to support child care.

Data Compilation and Use

Use data to support policy and funding of child care

- Dozens of studies and reports have been published
 - AK Early Childhood Strategic Direction
 - Cost of Care study
- Have a central repository to keep and publish data and make it available for policymakers and staff.
- Determine how best to use data/research in decision-making



Other Ideas for FY25 and beyond:

Invest in child care with sustainable funding and strengthen policies

- Make funding for child care businesses tiered to incentivize quality
i.e. Learn & Grow, Alaska's Quality Recognition and Improvement
System
- Establish a consistent early educator wage stipend that can reward
education and longevity i.e., using SEED (System for Early
Education Development) levels.
 - Make coaching available for child care businesses.
 - Make teacher wellness programs permanent.
- Adopt other policies based on the AK Early Childhood Strategic
Direction goals.