

From: Mara Sheakley-Early
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Early Childhood Education and Programs Funding
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Hello,

My name is Mara Sheakley-Early, I am a lifelong Juneauite and I am a parent of a two year old and am expecting my second child in August. I am also a secondary school teacher working for the Juneau School District. I am writing today in support of Early Childhood Education funding from the State of Alaska.

First off, I would like to thank you for your support of early childhood funding in the budget in the past and hope that you will continue to support funding for services for young children, such as Parents as Teachers, Best Beginnings, Head Start, and pre-k education. Alaska can NOT afford to neglect children's early education. The price to pay later on is too high. When children don't receive a strong start, and they enter kindergarten unprepared we all pay later in higher special education costs, higher crime and substance abuse and lost earning potential.

I have seen the benefits of early childhood education. Growing up, my father was a teacher at Auke Bay Cooperative Preschool. From a young age, I understood the the fundamentals and values that are being taught at such a young age -- such as sharing, playing together, understanding one's emotions, communication skills, empathy, understanding for others, creativity, play and more. As a secondary teacher, I see the benefits from students who have been lucky enough to have the foundation of early childhood education in their high school careers as students, extra curricular participants, and budding citizens in our communities. My newest and most important role is being a mother to my almost two year old son. I am also currently expecting his sibling sometime in August. I have been lucky enough to participate in AEYC's Parents as Teachers program. Even as a teacher with a background in teaching and with my father who was a preschool teacher, I appreciate and value the community and education that Parents as Teachers provides for me. The consistency, activities provided, check ins and community events with other families with the same age children are important as I develop as a parent of an infant to toddler to young child.

I am asking that you maintain all funding for early childhood education and programs from the Governor and House Budgets.

Thank you,

Mara Sheakley-Early