



Parents as Teachers: An Evidence-Based Home Visiting Program

A range of research studies conducted and supported through state governments, independent school districts, private foundations, universities and research organizations, demonstrate that Parents as Teachers makes a real difference in the lives of parents and their children.

Research Highlights

4 Independent Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT)
6 published reports; 5 of them peer-reviewed

Length of participation in PAT was a significant predictor of children's third grade achievement.

"...the PAT program improved parenting practices in ways that promote both school readiness and subsequent academic achievement." (p.116).

From: Zigler, E., Pfannenstiel, J.C., & Seitz, V. (2008). The Parents as Teachers program and school success: A replication and extension. *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 29, 103-120.

PAT parents were more involved in children's school activities and engaged their children more in home learning activities, especially literacy-related activities.

"...children of parents involved in a PAT program should enter school with 'stronger' readiness skills than their non-PAT peers."

From: Albritton, S., Klotz, J., & Roberson, T. (2004) The effects of participating in a Parents as Teachers program on parental involvement in the learning process at school and in the home. *E-Journal of Teaching and Learning in Diverse Settings*, 1(2), 108-208. <http://www.subr.edu/coeducation/ejournal/Albritton%20et%20al.Article.htm>.

PAT parents read to their children more often and were more likely to enroll them in preschool, both of which increased school readiness.

"...the PAT program was highly effective in helping impoverished parents prepare their children to enter school."(p.81)

From: Pfannenstiel, J.C., Seitz, V., & Zigler, E. (2002). *Promoting school readiness: The role of the Parents as Teachers program. NHSA Dialog: A Research-to-Practice Journal for the Early Intervention Field*, 6, 71-86.

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More details about Parents as Teachers' evidence-based research outcomes from across the U.S.:

Parents as Teachers Helps All Children Enter School Ready to Learn

- 7,710 public school children from a stratified random sample of Missouri districts and schools were examined at kindergarten entry and at the end of third grade. Results showed that participation in Parents as Teachers, together with preschool, not only positively impacts children's school readiness and school achievement scores, but also narrows the achievement gap between children in poverty and those from non-poverty households. With at least 2 years of Parents as Teachers combined with a year of preschool, 82% of poor children were ready for school at kindergarten entry—a level identical to nonpoverty children with no Parents as Teachers or preschool.ⁱ A reanalysis using a subset of the above data strongly confirmed these findings."
- Parents as Teachers children showed better school readiness at the start of kindergarten, higher reading and math readiness at the end of kindergarten, higher kindergarten grades, and fewer remedial education placements in first grade.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Children in high poverty schools who participated in Parents as Teachers were equivalent to those of children at low poverty schools with no preschool enrichment (Parents as Teachers or preschool). In addition, when children attending high poverty schools participated in both Parents as Teachers and preschool, their scores were

significantly higher than those of children in low poverty schools with no preschool enrichment (Parents as Teachers or preschool).^{iv}

- 87% of Native American children served by Parents as Teachers through its Baby FACE program were ready for preschool by age 3.^v

Parents as Teachers Supports Later School Achievement

- The aforementioned 2007 study of 7,710 Missouri public school children also showed that length of participation in PAT was a significant predictor of children's third grade achievement on the Missouri Assessment Program Communication Arts test.^{vi}
- PAT children scored significantly higher on standardized measures of reading and math at the end of first grade than did comparison children. In addition, teachers rated PAT children's achievement progress higher than control group children's progress in all areas.^{vii}
- PAT children continued to perform better than non-PAT children on standardized tests of reading and math achievement in second grade. Compared to non-PAT children, PAT children required half the rate of remedial and special education placements in third grade.^{viii}

Parents as Teachers Prevents Child Abuse

- The U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect states, "home visiting and center-based programs with a parental focus can help prevent child abuse and neglect."^{ix} The Task Force on Community Preventive Services recommends early childhood home visitation as an effective method for preventing child abuse and neglect.^x
- In a randomized trial, adolescent mothers who received case management and Parents as Teachers were significantly less likely to be subjected to child abuse investigations than control group mothers who received neither case management nor Parents as Teachers.^{xi}
- In another randomized trial, adolescent mothers in an urban community who participated in Parents as Teachers scored lower on a child maltreatment precursor scale than mothers in the control group. These adolescent mothers showed greater improvement in knowledge of discipline, showed more positive involvement with children, and organized their home environment in a way more conducive to child development.^{xii}
- Parents as Teachers families had fewer documented cases of abuse and neglect in comparison to the Missouri state average.^{xiii}

Parents as Teachers Increases Parental Involvement

- Results of a multi-site randomized trial showed that for families with very low income, those who participated in Parents as Teachers were more likely to read aloud to their child and to tell stories, say nursery rhymes, and sing with their child.^{xiv}
- A significantly higher proportion of Parents as Teachers parents initiated contacts with teachers and took an active role in their child's schooling. For example, 63% of parents of Parents as Teachers children versus 37% of parents of comparison children requested parent-teacher conferences.^{xv}
- Parents as Teachers parents demonstrated high levels of school involvement, which they frequently initiated, and supported their children's learning in the home.^{xvi}
- Parents as Teachers parents read more to their children, use more techniques to support book/print concepts, and have more children's books in the home.^{xvii}

Parents as Teachers Improves Children's Health and Development Outcomes

- Annual health and developmental screenings is a core component of Parents as Teachers. Of the 200,000 plus children screened in the most recent program year, 13% were identified with possible health/developmental delays and were referred on for additional follow up services. 70% of those referred received follow-up services.^{xviii}
- Children participating in Parents as Teachers were much more likely to be fully immunized for their given age, and were less likely to be treated for an injury in the previous year.^{xix}
- At age 3, Parents as Teachers children performed significantly above national norms on a measure of school-related achievement, despite the fact that the sample was over-represented on all traditional characteristics of risk. More than one-half of the children with observed developmental delays overcame these delays by age 3.^{xx}

- ⁱ Pfannenstiel, J.C. & Zigler, E. (2007). Prekindergarten experiences, school readiness and early elementary achievement. Unpublished report prepared for Parents as Teachers National Center.
- ⁱⁱ Zigler, E., Pfannenstiel, J.C., & Seitz, V. (2008). The Parents as Teachers Program and School Success: A Replication and Extension. *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 29, 103-120.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Drazen, S., & Haust, M. (1995). The effects of the Parents and Children Together (PACT) program on school achievement. Binghamton, NY.; Drazen, S. & Haust, M. (1996). Lasting academic gains from an early home visitation program. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, August 1996.
- ^{iv} Pfannenstiel, J. C., Seitz, V., & Zigler, E. (2002). Promoting school readiness: The role of the Parents as Teachers program. *NHSA Dialog: A Research-to-Practice Journal for the Early Intervention Field*, 6, 71-86.
- ^v Research and Training Associates, Inc. (2006). *BIA Baby Family and Child Education Program: 2005 Report. Executive Summary*.
- ^{vi} Zigler, E. & Pfannenstiel, J.C., (2007).
- ^{vii} Pfannenstiel, J. (1989). New Parents as Teachers project: A follow-up investigation. Overland Park, KS: Research & Training Associates.
- ^{viii} Drazen, S., & Haust, M. (1995).
- ^{ix} Panel on Research on Child Abuse and Neglect (1993), p. 169.
- ^x Hahn, R.A., Bilukha, O.O., Crosby, A., Fullilove, M.T., Liberman, A., Moscicki, E.K., et al. (2003). First reports evaluating the effectiveness of strategies for preventing violence: Early childhood home visitation. *Center for Disease Control, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 52, 109.
- ^{xi} Wagner, M.M. & Clayton, S.L. (1999). The Parents as Teachers Program: Results from Two Demonstrations. *The Future of Children: Home Visiting: Recent Program Evaluations*, 9(1), 91-115.
- ^{xii} Wagner, M., Iida, E. & Spiker, D. (2001). The multisite evaluation of the Parents as Teachers home visiting program: Three-year findings from one community. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.
- ^{xiii} Pfannenstiel, J., Lambson, T., & Yarnell, V. (1991). Second wave study of the Parents as Teachers program. Overland Park, KS: Research & Training Associates.
- ^{xiv} Wagner, M. & Spiker, D. (2001). Multisite Parents as Teachers Evaluation: Experience and outcomes for children and families. Menlo Park, CA: SRI, Int'l www.sri.com/policy/cehs/early/pat.html
- ^{xv} Pfannenstiel, J. (1998). New Parents as Teachers project: A follow-up investigation. Overland Park, KS: Research & Training Associates.
- ^{xvi} Pfannenstiel, J., Lambson, T., & Yarnell, V. (1996). The Parents as Teachers program: Longitudinal follow-up to the second wave study. Overland Park, KS: Research & Training Associates.
- ^{xvii} Research and Training Associates, Inc. (2006); Albritton, S., Klotz, J., & Roberson, T. (2004). The effects of participating in a Parents as Teachers program on parental involvement in the learning process at school and home. *E-Journal of Teaching and Learning in Diverse Settings*, 1, 188-208.
- ^{xviii} 2005-2006 Parents as Teachers Annual Program Report.
- ^{xix} Wagner, M., Iida, E. & Spiker, D. (2001).
- ^{xx} Pfannenstiel, J., Lambson, T., & Yarnell, V. (1991).

PAT Alaska

A Special Feature with Information on Parents as Teachers (PAT) Involvement and Early Childhood Development

Update

Parents as Teachers

A fun, early learning program for soon-to-be parents and parents with children up to five years of age.

Research Shows:

PAT children outscored their peers on measures of school readiness and later school achievement.

PAT children were more advanced than other 3 year-olds in language and social development, problem-solving, and other intellectual skills.

PAT children performed better than non-PAT children in elementary school.

PAT parents took a more active role in special education; lower incidence of abuse and neglect.

What We Do:

Personalized home visits with a certified Parent Educator, trained in child development, who is eager to help give their children the best beginning.

Family Play Times where families can learn new things about children parenting and share experiences with other parents.

Regular Developmental Screenings to ensure children's development is on track and to detect possible delays.

A Resource Network that can help parents find services in their community, if needed, that are beyond what PAT can provide.

How to Contact Us:

Melissa Pickle- PAT Alaska
State Coordinator at
mpickle@ruralcap.com or (907)
865-7345



As a research-based parent education and family support program developed over 20 years ago, evaluation has been integral to the success of the Parents as Teachers program since its inception. The first evaluation of PAT was funded through a contract from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Subsequent studies have been supported by the State of Missouri and other states, independent school districts, and private foundations. A few studies have been carried out by individual researchers. Overall, evaluations of PAT show these general outcomes for families:

OUTCOME: PAT Parents are more involved in their children's schooling.

PAT parents demonstrated high levels of school involvement, which they frequently initiated, and supported their children's learning at home. 95% of PAT parents attended special events at their schools, nearly 67% worked as volunteers in the school or classroom monthly, 75% participated in PTA and PTO meeting, and 67% communicated with their child's teachers by phone on average 4 times a year. Most parents (85%) initiated a contact with the school or teacher. 75% of parents always assisted with home activities related to school work.

Phannenstiel, J. Lambson, T. and Yarnell, V. The Parents as Teachers Program.: Longitudinal follow-up to the second wave study. Overland Park, KS: Research and Training Associates, 1996.

Participating parents were more likely to regard their school as responsive to their child's needs than were parents of comparison group children. 53% of PAT parents rated their district as "very responsive", versus 29% of comparison group parents.

Pfannenstiel, J. and Seltzer, D. Evaluation Report: New Parents as Teachers Project Overland Park, KS. Research and Training Associates, 1985; Phannenstiel, J., and Seltzer, D. New Parents as Teachers: Evaluation of an Early Parent Education Program. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 4, 1-18, 1989.

A significantly higher proportion of PAT parents initiated contact with teachers and took an active role in their child's schooling. For example, 63% of parents of PAT children versus 37% of parents of comparison children requested parent-teacher conferences.

Pfannenstiel, J. New Parents as Teachers Project: A Follow-Up Investigation. Overland Park, KS: Research & Training Associates, 1989.

More PAT parents attended parent conferences than parents in the comparison group. 95% of parents of PAT kindergartners "always" attended.

O'Brien, T., Garnett, D.M. and Proctor, K. (2002). Impact of the Parents as Teachers Program. Cañon City, CO (Fremont County) School Year 1999-2000. Center for Human Investment Policy, Graduate School of Public Affairs, University of Colorado at Denver



OUTCOME: PAT parents engage in more language- and literacy-promoting behaviors with their children.

PAT is as effective for the lowest-income families as for those with more moderate incomes. Of particular note were the positive effects on parenting behavior and the impacts made on language- and literacy-

promoting behaviors for families with very low income. In families with very low income, those who participated in PAT were more likely to read aloud to their child and tell stories, say nursery rhymes, and sing with their child.

Wagner, M. and Spiker, D. Multisite Parents as Teacher Evaluation: Experience and Outcomes for Children and Families, 2001. www.sri.com/policy/cehs/early/pat.html

PAT parents engaged in a wide variety of activities that supported learning in the home. Over 75% of PAT parents reported taking their child to the library regularly, modeling enjoyment of reading and writing several times a week, and giving children the opportunities to purchase or receive books several times a month.

Phannenstiel, J., Lambson, T. and Yarnell, V. The Parents as Teachers Program: Longitudinal follow-up to the second wave study. Overland Park, KS: Research & Training Associates 1996.

OUTCOME: PAT parents are more knowledgeable about child-rearing practices and child development.

Parents who received the neuroscience infused *Born to Learn* curriculum showed improvements in parent knowledge (general development and neuroscience knowledge), parenting behavior, and parenting attitudes.

McGilly, K. (2000) Chicago Born to Learn Neuroscience Project: Final Report to Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation. St. Louis, MO: Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc.

95% of parents rate PAT as "very special" and over 85% report that they learned to more effectively interact with their child, understand child development more, and spend more time with their children.

Research and Training Associates (2002) BIA Family and Child Education Program: 2001 Report.

OUTCOME: PAT children score higher on kindergarten readiness tests and on standardized measures of reading, math and language in first through fourth grades.

PAT children scored significantly higher on standardized measures of reading and math at the end of first grade than did comparison children. Teachers rated PAT children's achievement progress higher than control group children's progress in all areas.

Phannenstiel, J. New Parents as Teachers Project: A Follow-Up Investigation. Overland Park, KS: Research & Training Associates, 1989.

PAT children were rated by their teachers as performing at high levels of proficiency in all areas assessed. When compared to their grade-level peers, 91% of PAT children were rated



by their teachers as equal to or better than average. Overall, the relative level of achievement children demonstrated at age three on completion of the PAT program was maintained at the end of the first/second grade.

Phannenstiel, J., Lambson, T. and Yarnell, V. The Parents as Teachers Program: Longitudinal follow-up to the second-wave study. Overland Park, KS: Research and Training Associates, 1996.

Third graders who had received PAT services with screening services from birth to age three scored significantly higher on standardized measures of achievement than their non-participating counterparts. PAT children had a national percentile rank of 81, while non-participating students rank of 63 on the Stanford Achievement Test. PAT graduates were less likely to receive remedial reading assistance or to be held back a grade in school. In fourth grade, PAT graduates still scored significantly higher overall and on all Stanford Achievement subtests (reading, math, language, science social studies) than did non-PAT fourth graders.

Coates, D. Early childhood evaluation. Missouri: A Report to the Parkway Board of Education, 1994. Coates, D. Memo on one-year update on Stanford scores of students early childhood evaluation study group. Parents As Teachers program leads to elementary school success, Parkway School District news, Spring, 1997.

Pre-kindergarten assessments showed that compared to matched comparisons, PAT children had better language skills and were twice as likely to be reading-ready by kindergarten.

Drazen, S. and Haust, M. Raising reading readiness in low-income children by parent education. Paper presented at the annual meeting of American Psychological Association, August 1993.

PAT children showed better school readiness at the start of kindergarten, higher reading and math readiness at the end of kindergarten, higher kindergarten grades, and fewer remedial education placements in first grade. PAT children continued to perform better than non-PAT children on standardized tests of reading and math achievement in second grade. Compared to non-PAT children, PAT children required half the rate of remedial and special education replacements in third grade.

Drazen, S. and Haust, M. The effects of the Parents and Children Together (PACT) Program on school achievement. Binghamton, NY: Community Resource Center, 1995. Drazen, S. and Haust, M. Lasting academic gains from an early home visitation program. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, August, 1996.



Upon entry to kindergarten, PAT children scored significantly higher than children from the comparison groups on measures of language and self-help/social skills.

Coleman, M. Rowland, B. & Hutchings, B. Parents as Teachers: Policy implications for early school intervention. Paper presented at the

1997 annual meeting of the National Council on Family Relations, Crystal City, A, November, 1997; Parents as Teachers: Kindergarten screening final report. Rutherford County, VA: Rutherford County Schools, May 1998.

For all areas of development, teachers rated PAT children higher, with 5 of 8 areas achieving statistical significance. PAT children also had better attendance, with an average of 95%. 65% of the PAT third graders scored in the proficient or advanced categories of the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) achievement test, as compared to 54% of the comparison group. More than one-fourth of the comparison group scored in the unsatisfactory range on the CSAP, while only 3% of the PAT third graders scored in this range.

O'Brien, T., Garnett, D.M., and Proctor, K. (2002). Impact of the Parents as Teachers Program. Cañon City, CO (Fremont County) School Year 1999-2000. Center for Human Investment Policy, Graduate School Public Affairs, University of Colorado at Denver.

Findings from a school readiness assessment project involving 3,500 kindergartners in Missouri showed that Parents as Teachers achieves its goal of preparing children for success in school. Among children whose care and education were solely home-based, those whose families partici-

pated in PAT scored significantly higher on the School Entry Profile. However, the highest performing children were those who participated in PAT combined with pre-school, center-based child care, or both.

Children from high-poverty schools scored above average on all areas of development when they entered kindergarten with a combination of PAT and any other pre-kindergarten experience (preschool, center-based care, and/or home based care).

Phannenstiel, J. School Entry Assessment Project: Report of Findings, 1999. For the full School Entry Assessment Project report, go to <http://www.patnc.org/researchevaluation.asp#beyond>.

A recently published journal article reports that parent participation in PAT has important effects on children's school readiness and that PAT is "highly effective in helping impoverished parents prepare their children to enter school." The most powerful finding that emerged from the study was that the school readiness scores of children in high poverty schools with no pre-school enrichment (PAT or preschool). In addition, when children attending high poverty schools participated in both PAT and preschool, their scores were significantly higher than those of children in low poverty schools with no preschool enrichment (PAT or preschool).

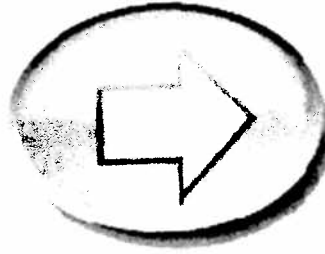
Phannenstiel, J.C., Seitz, V., & Zigler, E. (2002) Promoting school readiness. The role of Parents as Teachers Program. *NHSA Dialog: A Research-to-Practice Journal for the Early Intervention Field*, 6, 71-86.

Conclusion

In sum, PAT has a long history of evaluation research that reflects positive outcomes for families and young children.



How does PAT meet the definition of scientifically based research?



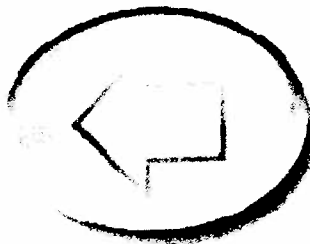
Parents as Teachers Born to Learn curricula content is based on reliable and current research in the areas of child development and neuroscience. The information shared with parents is not anecdotal information, but content based on the key characteristics of reliable research (studies that use the scientific

method have been replicated, and generalizable, meet rigorous standards of peer review, and have converging results). Research on brain development confirms the critical nature of the early years. In collaboration with neuroscientists from Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc. developed the *Born to Learn* curriculum to translate the latest neuroscience and child development is woven throughout the curriculum and is documented by scientific references.

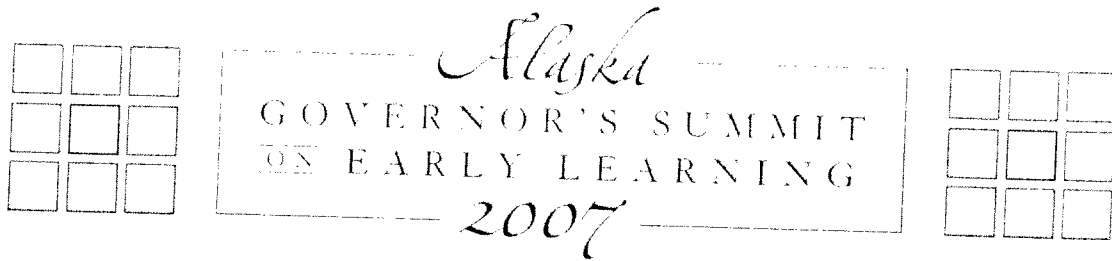
Parents as Teachers Born to Learn curricula and training address what reliable research has identified as the essential components of school readiness. Based on research in child development and early education, the National Education Goals Panel identified five areas that play key roles in children's success in school. Measures of school readiness, the Panel determined, include physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language development, and cognition and general knowledge. The *Born to Learn* curricula and training are designed to support the development of the whole child and include visit plans and content that address each of these research-based school readiness dimensions.

Parents as Teachers places a premium on the kinds of experiences to which young children are exposed and affirms the crucial role of parents in orchestrating those experiences. Parents are the principle architects of their children's development. Reliable research indicates the important role of parents in young children's lives and that the more extensive the parent involvement in their children's education, the higher the student achievement. The Parents as Teachers model is designed to enhance parents' involvement in their children's education.

- **NCLB empowers parents to get involved in their child's education. PAT engages parents in their child's development and education from the earliest years and increases parental involvement.**
- **NCLB requires stronger accountability for results. PAT has proven effective in increasing a child's school readiness and later school success.**
- **NCLB stresses using scientific-based research. PAT curricula are based on reliable and current research in the area of child development and neuroscience.**



How does PAT fit with the No Child Left Behind Act?



Recommendations

The Alaska Governor's Summit on Early Learning brought together over 150 Alaskans from a wide variety of sectors across the state to develop recommendations for Governor Sarah Palin's early learning policy agenda. Participants were asked to address these goals:

- Goal A** All children, especially those most in need, have access to early literacy and learning opportunities in their home or in out-of-home settings;
- Goal B** These services are coordinated; and
- Goal C** Parents, grandparents, and extended family are engaged in young children's learning with needed support, resources, and incentives.

After hearing from national speakers on early learning and economic development, brain research and early learning, and early learning public policy, and from Alaskan leaders, participants broke into small groups. Participants discussed how to create a **System Infrastructure** for early learning in Alaska and how to provide early learning opportunities to children **In the Home** and to children in **Programs Outside the Home**. Their top recommendations include the following:

- **Implement a voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)** which is a method to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education settings (addresses all three goals, and is a priority in the areas of both "System Infrastructure" and "Programs Outside the Home")
- **Conduct a comprehensive public engagement campaign** to inform parents, extended families, community members, and business about the economic and social "return on investment" in the early years and what they can do to support early learning (addresses Goal C, and is a priority in the area of "In the Home")
- **Increase funding for Head Start** to enable more low-income children to participate (addresses Goal A, and is a priority in the area of "Programs Outside the Home")
- **Increase the child care assistance reimbursement rates** (addresses Goal A, and is a priority in the area of "Programs Outside the Home")

- **Increase the eligibility guidelines for child care assistance** so more families can participate in the workforce (addresses Goal A, and is a priority in the area of “Programs Outside the Home”)

Other Recommendations

System Infrastructure

- **Provide sustainable state resources** to support early learning (examples are an early learning endowment, a formula for funding, trust fund, or savings account)
- **Develop a public-private entity** to oversee and coordinate early learning activities (examples are the Denali Commission, cabinet level structure, new department, or single coordinating office with multiple departmental linkages)
- **Develop community-level database & coordinated system** to identify services and organizations that provide early learning services across Alaska
- **Conduct community needs assessments** to develop system of support for families and children (multi-agency system and strong community buy-in)

In the Home

- **Encourage employer flexibility and financial assistance** for parents of young children, (examples are tax credits, paid parental leave, parenting resources, flexible schedules, and other family-friendly policies)
- **Provide all parents with access to home-based education and support** (examples are expansion of home visiting, parenting classes, and financial supports)
- **Develop culturally relevant materials** (listening to groups, using technology, have incentives and mechanisms to share, template to produce own materials)

Programs Outside the Home

- **Create a statewide professional development plan** that ensures there are adequate supports to build an early care and education workforce (examples are wage incentive programs and financial supports for education and training)
- **Create a liability insurance pool for child care centers and a health insurance pool for child care workers, with financial support**
- **Provide incentives to businesses** to support the creation and maintenance of quality early care and education programs





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Too many of our children are failing in school. The problem begins before age 6. As a result, almost half of Alaska children begin school unprepared to read or learn. They are set up for failure.

Common sense and science tell us we can do much better in preparing young children to be ready to read and ready to learn. It is a societal imperative and our obligation as Alaska's stewards to give our children the opportunity to succeed. Nothing else we do will have a more positive impact on Alaska's economic and social health.

The Alaska Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force has charted a course for success in this report. During deliberations, the 27 members learned:

- Almost half of Alaska children enter school unprepared to read or learn. This is not the child's failure. Society – parents, educators, politicians and professionals – must accept responsibility.
- Scientific research shows critical brain development occurs between birth and age 6. Children are born ready, willing and able to learn.
- Investments in early childhood literacy and learning pay dividends many times over. Children will be more successful in school, be less likely to get into trouble, grow into more productive adults, and contribute to the common good of society. The bottom line: Every dollar invested in quality early learning programs will return \$7 to \$17.
- Alaska lags far behind most states in addressing early childhood literacy and learning issues.

The Task Force – business, civic, nonprofit, philanthropic, education and government leaders – met from November 2005 through the summer of 2006. In developing their recommendations, Task Force members were advised by Alaska and national experts in early childhood education.

The recommendations lay the foundation for success. There is much work to do and a role for everyone.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force has recommendations in three areas: In the Home, Out of the Home in Child Care & Early Education Programs, and Looking Ahead. The first two focus on children from birth to age 6 in their environments. The third focuses on long-term sustainability of the investment in Alaska's young children.

In the Home

Three recommendations increase early literacy skills, family literacy skills, early learning skills and parenting skills for all populations in Alaska:

- Increase the engagement of parents, grandparents and extended family in their child's learning by providing resources and incentives.
- Develop and increase access to quality, culturally engaging reading materials.
- Increase proven, family centered literacy programs by partnering with other organizations.

Out of the Home in Child Care & Early Education Programs

Four recommendations increase access to voluntary, affordable and quality early care and education:

- Distribute Alaska's Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) in family friendly formats.
- Implement a quality rating system (QRS) to help parents evaluate child care and early learning programs and to guide program improvement.
- Increase the professional development opportunities and qualifications for early childhood educators and provide appropriate compensation.
- Develop a statewide system of voluntary and affordable early childhood education.

"If you want to work on the core problem, it's early school literacy."

– James Barksdale, former CEO of Netscape

Looking Ahead

Four recommendations establish a sustainable early childhood literacy and learning system with accountability for outcomes:

- Create a commission, council, public-private consortium or other entity to implement Task Force recommendations.
- Develop a multi-year work plan for implementing recommendations.
- Educate Alaskans about the social imperative of preparing children from birth to age 6 to be ready to read and learn.
- Ensure future funding from private, nonprofit, foundation and government sources.

These recommendations chart a course for the future. It is the responsibility of all Alaskans to prepare Alaska's young children to be ready to read and ready to learn.



"A failure establishes only this, that our determination to succeed was not strong enough."

– Christian Nevell Bovee, 19th century author



INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Literacy in Alaska

“If you look critically at the failure in our educational system, you must conclude that the child’s failure and the school’s failure are largely determined before the child enters the educational system at age 6.”

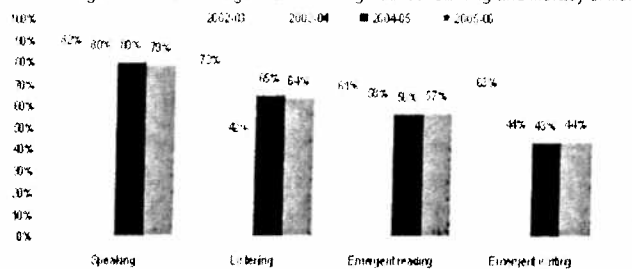
– Irving Harris, former CEO, Procter & Gamble

The Problem

Alaska’s young children have joined a disturbing national trend. They are entering school less and less prepared to succeed. This is cause for alarm and action. A battery of studies and data reinforce what parents instinctively know: An ill-prepared child is far more likely to fail in

school and become a burden on society. Declining pre-kindergarten trends contribute to Alaska’s low scores on standardized third-grade tests, poor performance on the High School Graduation Qualification Exams and an unacceptably high dropout rate.

Percentage of Alaska kindergartners showing desired learning and literacy skills.



Source: Alaska Progress Report, Alaska 20/20

The Grassroots Movement

Concerned Alaskans met in August 2004 and May 2005 to discuss early childhood literacy and learning. At the May 2005 meeting, Gov. Frank Murkowski embraced the importance of the initiative and supported formation of a grassroots task force. Twenty-seven statewide leaders were assembled to draft a blueprint identifying what Alaskans could and should do to improve school readiness in young children. This report is their response. During the past seven months, the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force has immersed itself in this foundational issue. It has sought advice from national and Alaska experts, and has digested a large amount of data and research to develop a plan that will work in every community in the state. The plan for success is contained in this report.

Most Alaskans agree there’s a critical need to invest in young children. A report commissioned by the System for Early Education Development (SEED), *“Economic Impact of Early Education and Child Care Services in Alaska,”* found 87 percent of Alaskans surveyed thought early learning and child care were high priorities – higher than state funding for road construction, local government or university education. Only K-12 education rated higher.

Why this age group?

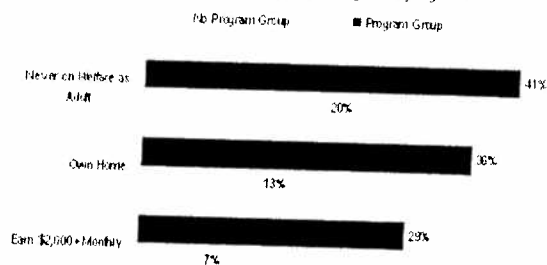
Recent research demonstrates what parents and early childhood educators have known for years: A critical period for brain development occurs between birth and age 6. Parents who read, tell stories and have positive daily interactions with their young child promote the child's brain development. Quality child care and early education do the same. Children gain the skills and confidence they need to succeed from these positive early experiences.

Why is this problem growing?

Many factors contribute to this problem. Parents often don't have the tools or resources they need. Being an effective parent takes skills often passed from generation to generation. Alaskans, a highly mobile and migrant population, are frequently

separated from this rich source of parenting knowledge. Those who do have access to extended family may still struggle. An increasing need for families to earn multiple incomes places a premium on time, energy and other prerequisites for effective parenting. Also, quality early care and education is not affordable for many parents. Investing time and money in young children can counter this growing problem.

Title: Economic Effects of Perry Preschool Program by Age 27



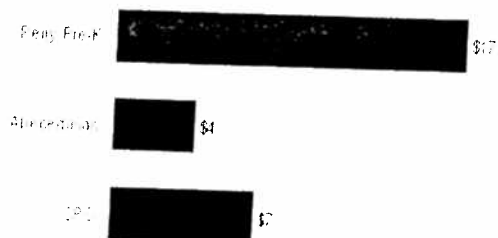
Source: National Institute for Early Education Research

Why is this my problem?

This trend impacts everyone, not just children and their families. Credible long-term studies such as the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project, the Carolina Abecedarian Project and Chicago's Child-Parent Centers (CPC) demonstrate children who are in quality early learning programs have higher literacy skills, increased graduation rates and better attitudes toward school.

These children also grow into adults who are less likely to commit crimes, or require welfare assistance and who earn higher salaries.

Title: Economic Returns of Pre-K: Government Dollars Saved per Government Dollars Invested on Pre-K: Three Case Studies

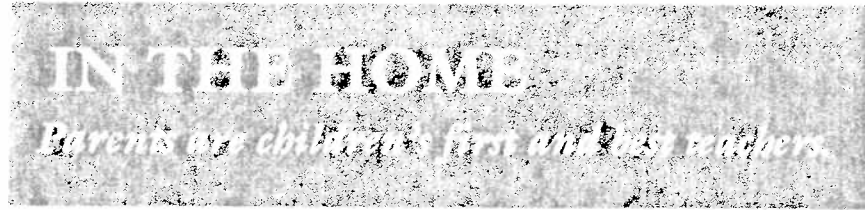


Source: Heckman, 2006

Our children need to acquire the skills to make them successful in life. They represent Alaska's future as parents, employees, employers, citizens and leaders. It is imperative to increase the number of children arriving in kindergarten who are ready to read and learn.

"Today a reader, tomorrow a leader."

— Margaret Fuller, journalist



"What a child doesn't receive, he can seldom later give."

- P.D. James, novelist

Objective: Increase skills in early literacy, family literacy, early learning and parenting for all populations in Alaska.

We cherish the memories of stories told by our parents or of the books they read to us. Our child's delight and excitement captivate us as we pass down those stories and read some of the same books to them. These are precious moments of learning shared between a parent and a child. As parents, we are our children's first and best teachers.

We intuitively know these interactions within the family are critical in preparing children to read and learn. No technology or machine can replace this human process passed from one generation to the next. Some parents and families, however, need help in meeting the challenges of raising young children and fulfilling the role of first teacher. It is in Alaska's best interest to help.

Parents want their children to have a good start in life. Most parents are aware children learn from birth. What they may not know is how much the brain and lifelong learning capabilities develop in the first six years. Research shows brain connections grow dramatically from birth to age 6. Children need quality early literacy and learning environments during this period.



SYNAPTIC DENSITY: Synapses are created with astonishing speed in the first years of life. The more positive learning experiences children have, the more connections between brain cells will be made. This increases their ability to learn.

Drawing by H.T. Chugani

Increase the engagement of parents, grandparents and extended family in their child's learning by providing resources and incentives.

Develop and increase access to quality, culturally engaging reading materials.

Increase proven, family centered literacy programs by partnering with other organizations.

Ensure the ongoing involvement of parents, grandparents and extended family is deliberate, valued and supported by providing resources and incentives.

Quality information about parenting should be available to all parents. This should be provided through parent resource centers, libraries, web sites, wellness visits with health care providers and other community sources. One example is the Ready To Learn Service provided by KAKM-TV, which offers educational television, outreach to parents and free children's books. These books help families build a home library. Incentives, including vouchers for goods and services, could be used to encourage parents and family members to seek these resources.

Develop and improve access to quality, culturally engaging reading materials.

Access to reading materials is an essential ingredient for early literacy and learning development. Many Alaska communities, particularly those in remote or rural areas, don't have bookstores or libraries with adequate collections. This limits available reading materials for families.



In both Alaska's rural and urban communities, there are few children's books that reflect the state's diverse cultures and life. Research shows young children learn best when books are relevant to their lives. It is important more reading materials be written and published that speak to the families of today's young children in Alaska.

Develop and improve access to quality, culturally engaging reading materials.

Family centered literacy programs build literacy skills of parents and children. There are many such programs across Alaska; more are in use nationwide. The Task Force recommends selection of programs and approaches that can be shown to work best in Alaska settings. They can be made available statewide by partnering with existing organizations.

End Results

We'll know we're successful in improving childhood literacy and learning skills if the home where:

- Parents and extended families are actively engaged in developing their children's literacy and learning skills.
- All homes and community and school libraries have and share abundant, quality and culturally engaging reading materials for young children.
- Research-based family literacy programs are available in all communities and are affordable for those who want to use them.
- Community leaders and community organizations join to support and promote family literacy.
- Alaskans know what literacy and learning skills are necessary for children to enter school ready to read and ready to learn.

“No skill is more crucial to the future of a child, or to a democratic and prosperous society, than literacy.”

– Los Angeles Times, “A Child Literacy Initiative for the Greater Los Angeles Area”



OUT OF THE HOME

Supporting parents and children in the home is the foundation for early learning.

"I love to see the spark in a child's eye when they accomplish something they haven't done before."

- Staff member, Clinton Early Learning Center, Clinton, NY

Objective: Increase access to voluntary, affordable and quality early care and education.

Today's reality is that many young children will spend more waking hours in child care and early learning settings than with their families. For many children this experience begins in infancy and continues until they enter school. These critical early experiences shape who these children become and how they learn.

If we nurture and teach our children at home, we should expect the same positive learning environment outside of the home. Research surrounding the significance of quality early childhood education on children's later development is indisputable. Alaska, however, is just beginning to look comprehensively at how to improve the early learning experience for children and families. One idea is to provide guidelines for parents and early educators about what young children should know and be able to do. Another is to help parents identify quality child care programs.

Child care affects many of our children. There were approximately 63,000 children younger than age 6 in Alaska in 2004, according to the SEED report. Approximately 60 percent were in child care or early education settings. The numbers can be expected to increase with Alaska's population growth and exacerbate the current shortage of spaces in those programs.

Young families at the beginning of their earning potential wrestle financially with child care and early learning costs. Many parents already are paying what they can afford. Also, those providing the care often aren't earning a living wage. The low pay and lack of benefits lead to an unacceptable turnover rate among child care providers, who often enter the field with minimal skills and education.

The high turnover and resulting inconsistency of caregiving also have negative effects on a child's development. Research shows the younger the child, the higher the impact on long-term learning by caregiver changes.

As a public investment, early childhood development pays better returns than most, up to \$17, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. Research such as this led the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to substantially invest in early childhood learning in Washington State. The foundation looked at what could be

done to have the greatest impact on children who were failing and becoming dropouts. They saw it was in early care and education. As a result, the Gates Foundation pledged \$9 million for early learning initiatives.

Task Force Recommendations:

- Distribute Alaska's Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) in family friendly formats.
- Implement a quality rating system (QRS) to help parents evaluate child care and early learning programs and to guide program improvement.
- Increase the professional development opportunities and qualifications for early childhood educators and provide appropriate compensation.
- Develop a statewide system of voluntary and affordable early childhood education.

Distribute Alaska's Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) in family friendly formats.

ELGs help parents and caregivers understand the expectations for children's development and learning. They spell out goals for what young children should know, understand and be able to do at critical stages of development. The State Board of Education and Early Development recently endorsed Alaska's ELGs. The Task Force recommends ELGs be published in multiple languages, in easy-to-read formats and be made available to families with young children through early care and education programs, pediatricians, libraries, businesses and online.

Implement a quality rating system (QRS) to help parents evaluate child care and early learning programs and to guide program improvement.

A QRS is a tool to help parents evaluate the quality of child care and early learning programs, a difficult task without some guiding criteria. It serves as a consumer guide, a benchmark for child care improvement and an accountability measure for funding. Criteria include ratio of teachers to children, family involvement and the skill and education level of the staff. A QRS also instills market-based motivation for fostering improvements by the program providers. Many states have implemented a QRS. The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services is in the early stages of developing a statewide QRS.

Increase the professional development opportunities and qualifications for early childhood educators and provide appropriate compensation.

Early educators need greater access to professional development offered through a variety of delivery systems. These must address the challenges faced by providers across the state, whether in rural or urban communities, such as long workdays, inflexible schedules and too few opportunities to access training.

Based on significant research, many states support increased wages for child care providers to improve recruitment and retention. Most importantly, it improves child outcomes. Alaska should do likewise.

Develop a state-funded system of affordable and voluntary early childhood education.

Thirty-eight states have implemented a model of state-funded pre-kindergarten, not including Head Start. (Alaska is not one of them.) These states provide funding for pre-kindergarten in a variety of ways and utilize approaches that meet their needs within financial and political constraints.

The Task Force recommends Alaska develop a system of affordable and voluntary early childhood education. Such a system could provide handsome returns on the investment.

The Task Force further recommends community-based discussion to design a system that is effective in both urban and rural areas. To begin shaping that discussion, the Task Force has identified elements key to the design of any system. They are:

- The approach is voluntary and parents retain the choice of whether to have their children participate.
- Families can select a pre-kindergarten program from available choices, including those privately owned, faith-based, run by the community, operated by nonprofit organizations or are part of public-school systems.
- Local leaders and families actively participate in developing effective pre-kindergarten options.
- Families are provided with financial support or incentives.
- The system is phased in to allow communities and programs time to ensure appropriate planning.

End Results

We will have achieved our goal by improving childhood literacy and learning outside of the classroom.

- Parents are educated consumers of child care and early learning programs.
- The quality of child care and other early learning settings improves.
- Quality early childhood education is available and affordable for all children from birth to age 6.
- Alaskans recognize the importance and value of early childhood education.

“There is no substitute for books in the life of a child.”

– Mary Ellen Chase, author and educator



LOOKING AHEAD

Turning the vision into a reality.

Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare

– Japanese Proverb

Objective: establish a sustainable early childhood literacy and learning system with accountability for outcomes.

This report completes the job of the Task Force. The work, however, has just begun. The recommendations in this report will not become reality without an ongoing effort to keep the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn issue high on Alaska's agenda.

Task Force recommendations:

- 1. Create a commission, council, public-private consortium or other entity to implement Task Force recommendations.
- 2. Develop a multi-year work plan for implementing these recommendations.
- 3. Educate Alaskans about the social imperative of preparing children from birth to age 6 to be ready to read and learn.
- 4. Ensure future funding from private, nonprofit, foundation and government sources.

Create a commission, council, public-private consortium or other entity to implement Task Force recommendations.

Alaska has benefited from the work of many people involved in early childhood issues, but there hasn't been a unified voice. Interested parties include the business community, philanthropies, government agencies, the nonprofit sector and, most importantly, parents. Other states have created a body to govern or oversee early learning activities. Through the Task Force efforts, Alaska is on track to establish an entity that will ensure a comprehensive, coordinated approach to improve early literacy and learning.

Develop a plan to ensure high-quality, affordable, and accessible early childhood education.

This report to the public, the governor and elected officials is the first step in a work plan that covers several years. Key elements of the work plan developed by the Task Force include:

- Launch a public education campaign.
- Obtain public feedback on early literacy and learning initiatives.
- Develop resources to assist families with early childhood learning.
- Support work on a QRS.
- Distribute and encourage the use of ELGs.
- Develop a voluntary and affordable early childhood education system statewide.

Develop a public education campaign to help Alaskans understand the importance of early childhood literacy and learning.

A critical element in this effort is educating Alaskans about the importance of early childhood literacy and learning. A long-term public education campaign is needed to help Alaskans understand this issue is a societal imperative. This campaign will involve partnering with Alaska's media outlets and collaborating with funding sources to develop a campaign specific to Alaska. It must be culturally relevant and engaging. It should raise awareness of this unparalleled opportunity to improve school readiness for Alaska's young children.

Develop a plan to ensure high-quality, affordable, and accessible early childhood education.

Funding is essential in moving this effort forward. Resources currently are provided by a partnership that includes private business, nonprofits, foundations and government. This cooperative partnership will continue and can leverage support from additional funding sources.

Key Messages

There is an entity to guide and implement Task Force recommendations.

- There is an entity to guide and implement Task Force recommendations.
- Funds are obtained and maintained to support early literacy and learning.
- Early childhood learning is a societal imperative in Alaska.
- Children arrive at school ready to read and ready to learn.



PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS

Young children & families need everyone's support.

"If you do not seek out allies and helpers, then you will be isolated and weak."

– Sun Tzu, 6th Century BC Chinese philosopher

There is work for everyone to do. Just as these recommendations are the result of Alaska's many sectors coming together around an important issue, so too will the future of this effort depend upon the commitment of all Alaskans. Here are some of the ways we can support the effort to improve the school readiness of Alaska's youngest children.

Business

It is in the long-term interest of businesses to support school readiness, as it helps assure tomorrow's work force has the skills to be successful in a competitive world. Employers should consider providing supports such as flexible leave, health benefits and subsidies to help employees with young children balance the demands of work and family. Research shows employers who provide such supports have higher retention rates, greater employee loyalty and increased productivity. A growing number of Alaska employers are making these investments. BP Alaska, Credit Union 1 and Providence Alaska Medical Center are just a few who have demonstrated their commitment to parents with young children by providing quality, on-site child care for employees. Other Alaska companies also support families with young children.

Nonprofits

The nonprofit sector can provide leadership and administrative support for this initiative. These organizations understand community dynamics and can mobilize people into action. The Alaska Humanities Forum, United Way of Anchorage's Success By 6 Initiative, Child Care Connection, Inc. and First Alaskans Institute are committed to supporting implementation of the recommendations in this report. Other nonprofits are encouraged to join.

The support and leadership of the Rasmuson Foundation and The CIRI Foundation in this initiative demonstrate philanthropic resources can help bring about change. This sector can galvanize financial and intellectual resources, command the attention of Alaska's political leadership, foster research and pilot demonstration projects to move this effort forward.

Government

The Federal Reserve Bank study shows the economic impact of supporting early learning and how government can save money by investing in young children. The SEED report shows the public overwhelmingly supports government investment in early childhood education. The State of Alaska has committed funding to support the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn recommendations. Government at every level must recognize supporting early childhood learning is a good investment. For example, publicly funded libraries are a mainstay in early literacy and learning. Children who have the ability to learn and succeed will contribute to the long-term economic and civic vitality of their local communities and Alaska.

Faith-Based Community

Alaska's faith-based community plays an important role for young children and their families through child care, early learning programs and support for families. These efforts will ensure more children will arrive at school ready to read and learn.





END RESULTS

We'll know we're successful when . . .

- Parents and extended families are actively engaged in developing their children's literacy and learning skills.
- All homes and community and school libraries have and share abundant, quality and culturally engaging reading materials for young children.
- Research-based family literacy programs are available in all communities and are affordable for those who want to use them.
- Community leaders and community organizations join to support and promote family literacy.
- Alaskans know what literacy and learning skills are necessary for children to enter school ready to read and ready to learn.
- Parents are educated consumers of child care and early learning programs.
- The quality of child care and other early learning settings improves.
- Quality early childhood education is available and affordable for all children from birth to age 6.
- Alaskans recognize the importance and value of early childhood education.
- There is an entity to guide and implement Task Force recommendations.
- Funds are obtained and maintained to support early literacy and learning.
- Early childhood learning is a societal imperative in Alaska.
- Children arrive at school ready to read and ready to learn.



EDUCATION BEGINS AT HOME ACT (S. 667/H.R. 2343)

What is the “Education Begins at Home Act”?

The Education Begins at Home Act (S. 667 and H.R. 2343) is legislation reintroduced in the 110th Congress on February 16, 2007 by Senator Bond (MO) and Senator Clinton (NY) and on May 16, 2007 by Representative Davis (IL) and Representative Platts (PA). It is intended to give many more children a quality early childhood experience through the provision of home visitation services. The new funds will help states to establish or expand quality home visitation programs already underway in communities, and will target some specific groups of children and families for assistance. The legislation has been referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions and to the House Education and Labor and House Armed Services Committees.

What does the “Education Begins at Home Act” do?

The legislation will establish the first dedicated federal funding stream to support parents with young children through quality home visitation at the state and local level.

Specifically, the bill will:

- Provide \$400 million over 3 years to states to expand access to parent education and family support services through quality early childhood home visitation programs;
- Provide \$50 million over 3 years to partnerships at the local level to expand early childhood home visitation services to families with English language learners;
- Provide \$50 million over 3 years to provide early childhood home visitation services to families with a family member in the Armed Forces; and
- Strengthen the early childhood home visitation component of Early Head Start.

Why is early childhood home visitation important?

The home is the first and most important learning environment for children, and parents are their child’s most influential teachers. Home visitation delivers parent education and family support services directly to parents with young children, providing guidance on how parents can enhance their children’s development from birth through kindergarten entry.

Home visitation is an effective, research-based and cost-efficient way to bring families and resources together to ensure that children grow up healthy and ready to learn. This legislation builds on existing models of quality early childhood home visitation programs, which together can help to meet the special needs of different children and families. This legislation will help states to create a system of early childhood home visitation that will ensure that families are receiving the most appropriate services to meet their needs.

What kinds of outcomes could one expect from early childhood home visitation programs?

A number of quality early childhood home visitation programs have yielded a range of positive outcomes for children and families. Because they have different areas of focus, different models may have a stronger impact on some outcomes than others, including:

- ***Improved children's readiness for school and success in school*** – Children whose parents participated in a quality home visitation program showed improved school readiness scores and higher scores on achievement and standardized tests and increased high school graduation rates.¹
- ***Improved child health and development*** – Families who received quality home visitation were more likely to seek prenatal and well-child care and to have their children immunized.²
- ***Improved parenting practices*** – Parents participating in quality home visitation demonstrate more knowledge about child-rearing, have better communication skills and have less parenting stress.³
- ***Reductions in child maltreatment*** – Parents participating in quality home visitation had more age-appropriate expectations of their children and used more positive discipline. These indicators are which is important because a lack of appropriate expectations and use of negative discipline are shown to be precursors to abuse. In fact, the research shows fewer documented cases of abuse and neglect among children who received home visiting services.⁴

Under this legislation, what families will be eligible for home visitation services?

An eligible family is defined as a woman who is pregnant and the expectant father, and a parent or primary caregiver, including foster parents, kinship caregivers and certain non-custodial parents of a child until the child enters kindergarten. If they wish, states will be able to further define which families they serve with these new funds.

How will the funding be administered?

At the federal level, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), in collaboration with the Department of Education, will make grants to states to establish or expand quality programs of early childhood home visitation. The funds can be used to supplement, not replace, existing state and local services for families. In each state, the

Governor will identify a state agency to take the lead in delivering early childhood home visitation services under this program.

Grants to serve families with English language learners will be made directly from DHHS to local entities. Grants to serve military families will be made by the Department of Defense to local entities.

How will funding be allocated to states?

Funds will be allocated to states based on the number of children from birth through age 5 who reside in that state, compared to the number of children of those ages who reside in all States that receive funds for the fiscal year. However, no state can receive more than \$20 million in one fiscal year.

What will states be required to do to receive the funding?

To receive a state grant, a state will be required to submit an application that includes:

- A **needs assessment** describing the existing quality and capacity of early childhood home visitation programs and the families being served, and identifying gaps in services.
- A plan for **how the state will implement one or more early childhood home visitation programs** that help fill in its identified service gaps.
- A description of **how the state will build on and promote collaboration among existing early childhood home visitation programs** to ensure families are getting the most appropriate services to meet their needs.
- A description of **how the state will promote channels of communication between staff of early childhood home visitation programs and staff of other early childhood education and early intervention programs** such as Head Start, preschool programs, child care programs, and programs operating under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- A plan for providing **training and technical assistance** to staff of early childhood programs.

An **evaluation plan** that demonstrates how outcomes will be tracked and measured in the areas of: parent knowledge; children's health, cognitive, language, social-emotional and physical development indicators; child maltreatment indicators, school readiness indicators; and links to community services.

For what will states be able to use the funding?

States will be able to use the funding to:

- Provide eligible families with **voluntary early childhood home visitation** on at least a monthly basis, with a greater frequency for those families identified with additional needs;
- Offer **annual health, vision, hearing and developmental screening** for eligible children;

- Provide *referrals* for eligible families, as needed, *to additional resources*;
- Offer *group meetings* to further enhance the information and skill-building addressed during home visits;
- Provide *training and technical assistance* to early childhood home visitation and early childhood care and education staff (required set-aside of 10%); and
- *Coordinate various models of early childhood home visitation, early childhood education and care and early intervention* to ensure families are receiving the most appropriate and effective services to meet their needs.

Are states required to use these funds for a particular home visitation model?

The legislation refers to establishing or expanding quality programs of early childhood home visitation. It is not limited to one particular model of service; instead the legislation details some of the characteristics of quality home visitation programs and limits the use of funds to programs with these components. A state will determine which model or models to utilize that meet those characteristics and best meet the needs of their families.

How will the implementation of quality home visitation programs be assured?

The legislation ensures implementation of quality home visitation programs through the application process, requirements regarding uses of the funds, and required evaluations and reporting. In particular:

- *Applications will be reviewed by a peer review panel* that includes representatives with backgrounds in the fields of home visitation and early childhood development
- States will be required to *reserve 10 percent of the grant funds to provide training and technical assistance* on topics such as effective methods of parenting education, home visiting and promoting early childhood development
- Grantees (state or local entity) will be *required to provide a minimum of monthly visits*, with a greater frequency of services provided to families identified with additional needs
- Grantees (state or local entity) will be *required to implement home visitation models that provide certain services* as part of any home visit, such as providing parents with knowledge about age-appropriate child development and the skills to interact with their child to enhance age-appropriate development.
- Grantees (state or local entity) will be *required to conduct an annual evaluation that includes tracking outcomes* in the areas of: parental knowledge of early learning and development; child health, cognitive, language, social-emotional and physical development indicators; child maltreatment indicators; school readiness indicators; and links to community services.
- *DHHS will be required to conduct an independent evaluation* that, among other things, will track how grant funds have expanded access to early childhood home visitation programs, numbers of families served, impact of services on desired outcomes, the effectiveness of home visiting on different populations, the

effectiveness of training and technical assistance and will make recommendations for strengthening or modifying the Act.

What will be the reporting requirements for grantees?

State and local grantees will be required to submit an annual report to the Secretary. The reports will include a description of:

- the actual services delivered under the grant;
- outcomes for children and families served;
- the research based instruction, materials, and activities used; and
- the effectiveness of the training and technical assistance.

State reports must also include the following:

- after the second year of the grant, the results of the evaluations; and
- the annual program implementation costs, including the cost of providing services per family.

In addition, the Secretary will conduct an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the Act.

Why include a section on strengthening Early Head Start?

Early Head Start is currently the largest federally-funded program that provides home visitation services to parents with young children. The proposed enhancements to the Early Head Start program are intended to incorporate best practices from the field of home visitation into the existing program.

Why is special attention given to families with English Language Learners and to military families?

Military families and families with English language learners face unique challenges when raising young children. Military families are frequently relocated and are often stationed far away from their natural support system of family and friends. Parents who serve in the military may also be separated from their spouses and children for long periods of time due to deployment. Parents who are English language learners must acclimate to a new country and culture, and learn how to navigate our education, health and social service systems. This legislation will target funding to help promote innovative home visitation approaches that will effectively reach and serve these families with unique needs.

¹ Pfannenstiel, J.C., Seitz, V., & Zigler, E. (2002) Promoting school readiness: the role of the Parents as Teachers Program. *NHSA Dialog: A Research-to-Practice Journal for the Early Intervention Field*, 6, 71-86. Arkansas Statewide Study of HIPHY, 1999, conducted by Dr. Robert Bradley of the University of Arkansas; Levenstein, P., Levenstein, S. & Oliver, D. (2002), First grade school readiness of former chad participants in a South Carolina

Replication of the Parent-Child Home Program, *Applied Developmental Psychology*, 23, 331-353. Levenstein, P., Levenstein S., Shiminski J.A., & Stolzberg J.E. (1998), Long-term impact of a verbal interaction program for at-risk toddlers: An exploratory study of high school outcomes in a replication of the Mother-Child Home Program, *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 19, 267-285.

² Berkenes, J.P. (2001), HOPES Healthy Families Iowa FY 2001 Services Report; Klagholz & Associates (2000), Healthy Families Montgomery Evaluation Report Year IV; Greene et al. (2001), Evaluation Findings of the Healthy Families New York Home Visiting Program; Katzev, A., Pratt, C. & McGuigan, W. (2001), Oregon Healthy Start 1999-2000, Status Report.

³ Pfannenstiel J. & Seltzer, D. (1989) New Parents as Teachers: Evaluation of an Early Parent Education Program, *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 4, 1-18; Wagner, M., Iida, E. & Spiker, D. (2001) The Multisite Evaluation of the Parents as Teachers Home Visiting Program: Three-Year Findings from One Community; Administration for Children and Families (2003) *Research to Practice: Early Head Start Home-Based Services*, Washington D.C.: DHHS.; Galano J. & Huntington, L. (1997) Year V Evaluation of the Hampton, Virginia Healthy Families Partnership; LeCroy & Milligan Associates, Inc. (2001) Healthy Families Arizona Evaluation Report; McLaren, L. (1988) Fostering mother-child relationships, *Child Welfare*, 67, 35-365.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2003) First reports evaluating the effectiveness of strategies for preventing violence: early childhood home visitation and firearms laws. Findings from Task Force on Community Prevention Services MMWR 52 (No. RR-14); Wagner, M., Iida, E. & Spiker, D. (2001) *The Multisite Evaluation of the Parents as Teachers Home Visiting Program: Three-Year Findings from One Community*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

For more information about the collaborative work of these home visiting programs please contact:
Healthy Families America (312) 663-3520 www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org
Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) USA (212) 532-7730 www.hippyusa.org
Parents as Teachers (314) 432-4330 www.parentsteachers.org
The Parent-Child Home Program (516) 883-7480 www.parent-child.org



Support the Education Begins At Home Act (EBAH) S. 667/H.R. 2343

**Senators Bond (R-MO) and Clinton (D-NY)
Representatives Davis (D-IL) and Platts (R-PA)**

Home visiting delivers early education and support to families where they are—in their homes and on their terms. Through stand-alone programs or in partnership with center-based services, voluntary home visiting educates families, brings them up-to-date information about health, child development and school readiness, works with them to develop their child's literacy and language skills, and connects them to critical services. Home visiting is a bridge that links the resources of the community with the comfort of the home environment, empowering even hard-to-reach parents to build a better future for themselves and their children.

Home Visiting Is Based on Prevention

Home visitation is designed as part of a model of prevention. Home visitation aims to keep families safe, healthy, self-sufficient, and connected to support resources. This approach serves not only families directly, but broader communities as well; over time, the initial investment in home visitation serves to reduce future costs associated with health care, social services, criminal justice, special education, high school drop-outs and the child welfare system.

All home visiting programs focus on either pregnant women and/or parents with young children, age 0-5. While some home visiting programs target families deemed "at risk," all programs focus on parents, because of the parents' profound effect on their children's earliest years of life, and the crucial role they play on their children's future.

The Cost Effectiveness of Investing in Parents

In many ways, parenting is more difficult than ever before. Yet despite the overwhelming importance of parenting in the early years of a child's life, as a nation we invest few public resources on improving parenting practices through parent education and parent support.

In response, EBAH establishes the first dedicated federal funding stream to support the parents of young children through quality home visitation. In so doing, EBAH makes an early investment in parenting to help ensure healthy child development, school readiness and school success and stem the tide of a whole host of health care, social service, criminal justice, special education and child welfare costs in the future. Understanding that families with English language learners or with a parent in the military may face additional challenges, EBAH specifically targets funds for these families.

EBAH's Quality Controls

EBAH strives to insure that only the highest-quality programs are funded. To be eligible for grant funds, the Governor must designate a lead state agency such as the State education agency or State health and human services agency to carry out grant activities. Expert panels review and evaluate the quality of applications and make recommendations to the Secretary based on this review. Federal grants may only be used to fund home visitation programs that are grounded in empirically-based knowledge on home visiting and linked to determined outcomes. States are required to monitor program implementation to assure fidelity to the specified model. Programs must employ well-trained and competent staff and show strong organizational capacity to implement the program involved. In addition, participating home visitation programs must employ a solid referral network to other community resources and supports. Finally, EBAH requires independent evaluations at the state and federal levels, at the end of the grant's second year, which will assess outcomes consistent with program goals.

For more information about the collaborative work of these home visiting programs please contact:
Healthy Families America (312) 663-3520 www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org
Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPI) USA (212) 532-7730 www.hippy-usa.org
Parents as Teachers (314) 432-4330 www.parentsteachers.org
The Parent-Child Home Program (516) 883-7480 www.parent-child.org



Helping Your Child Learn About Shapes and Space

Understanding shapes and developing spatial sense will help your child learn geometry when he gets older.

The experiences he has during these early years form important pathways in his brain.

The more times these pathways are used the more efficient they become. Young children generally learn about shapes and space in a specific order. They learn by

- exploring and using solid (three-dimensional) shapes in play
- matching solid objects to pictorial (two-dimensional) shapes.
- identifying and naming pictorial shapes.

Math is learned in a sequence. If you miss a step, it becomes difficult to grasp later concepts in the sequence. Many parents start with the last step in the above sequence when they teach their children shapes. If your child has not had enough experience exploring solid shapes he may have trouble identifying and naming pictures of shapes in books. Even if he is able to memorize the names of shapes he may not have the understanding of them that will help him later in school.

What you can do

You can help your child by providing solid objects that represent shapes. With a little creativity you can find objects around your house. Cans of food are cylinders, balls are spheres, party hats are cones, boxes or blocks are cubes or rectangular prisms. At first your child will use his own words to describe the shapes of objects (ball-shaped or round, box-shaped, ice cream cone-shaped), but if you use the correct geometric terms he will become familiar with them.

When your child explores solids during play and everyday activities he learns that round objects roll, that flat ones can be stacked, that nesting toys are similar in shape and are graduated in

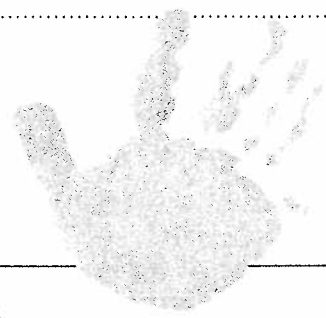
size, and that puzzles consist of various shapes that fit together. When he creates shapes from play dough or pipe cleaners, he sees and feels their characteristics. Eventually he learns that shapes have specific necessary attributes. For instance, he learns that cones can vary in size, color, material, and weight, but they must have a circle on one end and a point on the other.

Another understanding your child will need for the study of math is spatial sense (a feel for his surroundings and the objects in them). Experiences that focus on direction, position, and relative shapes and sizes will help your child develop this sense. When he runs, climbs, swings, slides, plays with blocks, and puts puzzles together he is developing spatial sense. Using words to describe positions in space (for example, on, under, over, off, top, bottom, through, beside) of both your child and of objects he sees will help him understand their meanings. You can say, "You are on the slide. You put the doll under the blanket. I am standing beside the chair."

Ready for pictures

Once your child is familiar with solid shapes and their characteristics, he is ready to learn pictorial shapes (for example, circle, triangle, square, rectangle, oval). To help him make the move from objects to pictures, you can give him opportunities to trace around the solid objects so he can see how they look on paper. An easy way to do this is to help your child make solid shapes from playdough, use a plastic knife to slice them in half, and then match them to corresponding pictures. Dipping three-dimensional objects into paint and making prints with them also helps children understand the connection between solid items and their pictorial representations.

continued on back



GAMES TO PLAY

There are many fun ways to give your child opportunities to learn shapes and to develop spatial sense. Provide blocks and puzzles in a variety of shapes and store them where your child can easily get to them. Ask your child to find specific shapes in your home or outside. Talk with him about how the shapes are alike and different.

- Make common shapes with your child—first three-dimensional, then two-dimensional. There are many ways to make two-dimensional shapes, including play dough, cookie dough, sponges, wet sand, toothpicks and marshmallows, pipe cleaners, heavy string, and even your bodies. You and your child can make 2-dimensional shapes using crayons, finger paint, markers, chalk, and other drawing materials. Have your child describe the shapes he makes so he becomes familiar with terms such as round, flat, corners, curved, sides, and cone.
- Playing with toys that are made up of parts that can be combined into a whole is a good way to help children understand shapes and space. These include dolls with clothes, models that come apart, blocks, Legos, puzzles, and paper dolls with clothes. Folding and cutting activities, such as making a snowflake, are helpful. Other suggested toys include nesting cups or boxes, cups or pitchers for sand and water play, and games that use a grid system (such as tic-tac-toe).
- Play a game of Simon Says with your child. Give him instructions that involve positional words, such as “put your hands *on* your hips, *over* your head, *under* your chin.” Set up an obstacle course in which your child will crawl *under* a table, *over* a cushion, *through* a box. These activities help him develop spatial sense.
- Hold a stuffed bear or other animal over a basket and ask your child, “Where is the bear?” See if he can tell you it is over the basket. Move the bear to another position (for example, beside or next to the basket), and repeat the question. Continue the game, asking your child to describe the bear’s position in relation to the basket (for example, *in* the basket, *under* the basket, or climbing *up*, *down*, or *across* the basket). A variation of this game is to take turns with your child tossing a beanbag at a basket and describing where it lands.
- Put an object that represents a solid shape (for example, square block, cone-shaped party hat, small can, ball) into the toe of an athletic sock or paper bag. Have your child reach into the sock and guess the shape. Tell him to describe what the shape feels like before he looks at it. Let him choose a different shape to put in the sock for you to guess. Continue taking turns guessing and describing the shapes.
- With your child, make pipe cleaners into various shapes and use them to blow bubbles. What shapes are the bubbles? Your child will discover that the bubbles always turn out to be spheres, but will have fun trying.



Intellectual Development

YOUR CHILD - 4 YEARS



Look for your child to

Ways you can help

MATCHING, SORTING AND CLASSIFYING

Put things into groups according to shape, size, or length.

Help your child start collections: rocks, leaves, bottle caps, buttons. Talk about how he might organize them. Use comparing words: bigger, smaller, longer, shorter.

Find which thing or picture does not belong.

Set out four items—three that are similar/same, and one that is different. Try a knife, fork, spoon, and crayon.

Sort things or pictures into two groups, according to category.

At the grocery store, point out how things are organized: produce here, books and magazines there, frozen foods there.

Complete a 12- to 18-piece puzzle.

At home, let him help you figure out where to put the things you bought. Talk about why they belong where he puts them.

Pick out the *longest* item in a group.

Buy a simple puzzle, or make one. Help your child choose a bright picture, glue it to a piece of cardboard, and cut it apart.

Understand *more*, and be able to tell which of two groups has more.

Play a game of "drawing straws." Cut a drinking straw into three pieces. Place them in your fist so they appear to be the same length. Each pick one and compare. Longest straw "wins." Take turns.

Help your child sort a collection into two groups. Then suggest that he choose the group that has more, and you will use the group that has less.

CONCEPTS AND PATTERNS

Name 8 basic colors.

Help your child make a book of colors.

Name penny, nickel, quarter, and dime.

Use coins to make patterns. Name the coins as you or your child set up a pattern: penny, penny, nickel, penny, penny, nickel...

continued on back

Intellectual Development

**YOUR CHILD
4 YEARS**

Look for your child to

Ways you can help

CONCEPTS AND PATTERNS

Name days of the week, in order.

Make a weekly schedule together. Make seven boxes across the page, and label them with the days of the week. Let your child help you write or draw in routines and special plans for each day.

Copy and continue a simple pattern.

Use beads or blocks to make a pattern for your child to copy. Name the colors and shapes as you place them: blue square, red square, blue square, red square.

Play a percussion instrument to the beat of familiar songs or speech patterns.

With your child, beat a spoon on a pan, in time to the rhythm of a favorite song.

Understand today, yesterday, and tomorrow.

Spend some time each night talking with your child about things that happened yesterday, today, and what may happen tomorrow.

Connects time with routine

Give him the idea of what to expect at different times in his day (e.g., bedtime is at eight).

Shows right hand/foot, left hand/foot upon request

Sing and dance the *Hokey Pokey*.

NUMBERS

Count 10 items out loud

Play board games in which you have to count the squares to move ahead.

Recognize and name the numerals 1 through 5.

Borrow counting books from the library. Help your child make one of his own.

EXPLORE AND EXPERIMENT

Enjoy learning about objects and materials by experimenting with them.

Let your child mix water and other "ingredients" together. What dissolves? What sinks? What floats? Encourage his exploration by using words like *wonder*, *predict*, *find out*, *try*, *observe*.

Intellectual Development

**YOUR CHILD
4 YEARS**

Look for your child to

Ways you can help

REPRESENT IDEAS

Begin to draw and build with an idea in mind.

Make drawing and building materials available for him to use in daily play. Ask him to tell you about his drawings and buildings. Write what he says on his drawings. Leave his buildings up when possible.

ATTENTION SPAN

Keep his attention on something he chooses to do, unsupervised, for 10 minutes.

Give him uninterrupted time to play with open-ended materials that he enjoys: play dough, drawing materials, blocks, etc. Praise him for staying with the activity.



Discussion points

- Immunizations
- Windows of opportunity
- Overhead batting

2 Months

Weekly Plan 2 (Bi-weekly Plan 2)

Parent educator resources

- *Preventable Diseases*
- *Critical Periods: Windows of Opportunity*



Parent handouts

- *Your Child or Your Baby, 1½ to 3½ Months: Intellectual Development*, p. D-81/D-91
- *Your Child or Your Baby, 1½ to 3½ Months: Motor Development*, p. D-85/D-95
- *Windows of Opportunity*
- *Immunizations Are Important!*

Video

- *Born to Learn™ Neuroscience Video: Segment #6, Windows of Opportunity*

Materials

- The baby's own blanket
- A piece of yarn, ribbon, or elastic that will stretch across a crib
- Several of the baby's small toys or household items

Process

I. Rapport-building

- II. **Observation.** Throughout the visit, consider the *whole child* as you share specific observations related to each domain of development.

- III. **Discussion.** Incorporate throughout the visit.

- A. **Review your previous visit using the Personal Visit Record.** Ask parents what they noticed as they practiced the parent follow-up activity(s).

- B. **Parent comments and concerns.** Invite parents to share, now and throughout the visit.



- C. **Developmental characteristics.** Use the handouts, *Your Child or Your Baby, Intellectual Development* and *Motor Development*. Ask which of these characteristics parents may be observing already. Record observations on the form, *Milestones: 1½ to 3½ Months* after the visit.



- D. **Immunizations.** Use the handout, *Immunizations Are Important!* (Refer to the resource, *Preventable Diseases*.)


1. Discuss the importance of following the health care provider's immunization schedule.
2. Ask parents to tell you when the baby gets her shots. Note them in the home visit record.
3. Emphasize the importance of keeping careful records of immunizations. Ask the parents their plans for keeping track of their child's immunizations.



- E. **Windows of opportunity.** Use the handout, *Windows of Opportunity*. (Refer to the resource, *Critical Periods: Windows of Opportunity*.)

1. There are periods of time in the development of the baby's brain when specific types of learning take place.
2. During these periods, the development of connections (synapses) between neurons is most sensitive to stimulation from the environment.
3. Once the sensitive period for an ability has passed, it is harder to change the structure of the brain to accommodate new learning. Synapses have become permanent and space in the brain has been taken up by synapses serving other abilities.

4. These important periods of brain growth are called “windows of opportunity” because parents have great opportunities to help their baby’s brain develop during these times.

 5. With parents, view and discuss video segment #6, *Windows of Opportunity*.

- F. **Overhead batting.** To be able to bat at objects while lying on his back, a child has to coordinate motor, intellectual, and visual skills. It is a step toward being able to reach for and grasp objects.
1. **Motor:** The baby is overcoming newborn reflexes and gaining control over the movement of his arms.
 2. **Intellectual:** The baby is realizing that objects exist apart from his body. His curiosity leads him to try and reach interesting objects.
 3. **Visual:** The baby’s eyes are beginning to work together to give a sharp image of an entire object and he can see farther. This age is the beginning of a window of opportunity for the development of vision. The baby’s eyes should move together to focus on an object, so that vision centers in the brain can integrate images from both eyes.

IV. **Parent-child activity:** Bat Mobile

A. **Rationale.** Tell the parents why this activity is important.

1. Batting play helps babies:
 - a. gain control over their arms.
 - b. feed their curiosity.
 - c. practice moving both eyes together.
 - d. begin to coordinate eyes and hands together for play.

B. **Parent-child interaction**

1. **Bat Mobile**

- a. Tie the yarn, ribbon, or elastic between the legs of a swing or chair, or across a crib, so that the baby can be placed underneath.
- b. Help the parents find objects around the house that will interest the baby and can be hung from the yarn.
- c. Use more yarn to tie the objects to the first piece at a height that the baby can reach while lying on his back.
- d. Show the baby how to raise his arm to bat the objects. Emphasize that it may take a while for the baby to learn how to do this. At first it will happen accidentally.

2. **Book sharing**

- a. Ask if the parents have been propping a book so that the baby can see it.
- b. Emphasize that the parents can read aloud material such as newspapers or magazines of interest to them to the baby.

3. **Parent follow-up activity.** Ask the parents to do the following during the time between visits:

- a. Allow the baby to play under his bat mobile several times a day.

4. **Optional/extended activity.** Use this activity if time remains in the visit.

- a. Move the baby so that his feet will hit the batting mobile when he kicks.
- b. With parents, watch to see if he accidentally hits a hanging item.
- c. Explain that after weeks of play, the baby will learn that her feet can cause the items to move. Then he will purposefully repeat these actions.


C. **Shared observation.** Help the parents observe their child’s play and consider these questions:

1. Did the baby accidentally hit a hanging object with a hand?
2. Did he seem to notice if he made an object move?
3. Did he seem able to focus on the object with both eyes?

V. **Summary**

A. **Key observations.** Restate one or two key observations about the child’s development.

B. **Parents’ strength.** Point out a strength of the parents.

- 
- C. **Parent follow-up.** Remind parents to continue with the follow-up to the activity(s). Tell parents that you'll be eager to hear about their experiences with the follow-up activity(s) at your next visit. Review the following items with the parents before you leave:
1. Resources/referrals
 2. Group meetings/community events
 3. Next visit



CRITICAL PERIODS: WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY

Babies are born with millions and millions of connections (known as synapses) between neurons, but the nervous system is still quite immature. Between birth and adulthood many connections will strengthen, and others will disappear. Scientists now believe that there are two broad stages of the formation of synapses between brain cells. The early period occurs before birth, when experience is not yet required. During this early prenatal period, hundreds of millions of neurons are dividing from stem cells. These neurons then establish connections to set up brain circuits to control many unlearned, newborn behaviors and reflexes like breathing, heart rate, body temperature, blood pressure and reflexes. After birth, synapses begin to reorganize to strengthen some connections and eliminate others. This phase of development is very much dependent on experience.

Importance of stimulation in brain development

The later period of the reorganizing of connections between brain cells is very much controlled by the environment a baby experiences. Pathways that are used are integrated into the brain's permanent wiring. Connections that are not used appropriately are eliminated. It is essential that babies experience the world around them. Children reared in conditions of great deprivation and neglect have brains that show abnormalities that persist long after the deprivation is corrected.

Critical periods in brain development

Once the connections are stabilized between brain cells, there are limits to the brain's ability to rewire. There are time limits—critical periods—when environmental stimulation and practicing skills are most important. During these time periods, the brain is very active in making and breaking connections for particular abilities. These critical periods are “windows of opportunity.” Nature flings these windows open at different times, some starting around birth, others

later, and then either “closes,” or at least “lowers” them as a child grows. While the windows are open, lack of appropriate stimulation or negative experiences can have great long-term impact. Brain development proceeds in waves. The timing of the “windows” is different for each skill a child develops.

Vision

In research with cats and monkeys, studies have shown that the two eyes compete for space in the cerebral cortex. If one eye has less visual experience than the other, for example by patching one eye, the closed eye loses out to the open eye. This means that if one eye is closed while the animal is between the ages of 3 and 12 weeks, the eye loses its synaptic connections and becomes blind. If the eye is unpatched before 12 weeks, the brain can recover from the deprivation. In a matter of days, new synapses form and the blind eye can see. If scientists waited too long, however, the loss of vision was irreversible.

Babies can see at birth, but not in detail, and lack depth perception, hand-eye coord-

Windows of Opportunity

You have a golden opportunity to help your child's brain develop. Connections between brain cells are not formed haphazardly. They are promoted by your child's physical development, by her observation of what goes on around her, and by her active involvement with her world.

Window of opportunity defined

Vision, hearing, language, movement, problem solving—each of the areas in your child's brain responsible for different abilities has a sensitive period for development. During these prime times, your child's brain is most ready to make connections for learning new skills. These critical periods are called "windows of opportunity" because, during these times, parents have the opportunity to work with nature to help their baby develop the abilities she is acquiring.

you can tell that the first few months are a prime time for your baby's brain to develop vision.

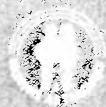
Consider your curious, active toddler. His body is always on the go and moving. He develops very inventive ways to get objects he desires. You see that the windows of opportunity are open for motor development and for such thinking skills as problem-solving. Connections for these abilities are forming at a fast rate.

How to tell when the window is open

Most prime times for learning begin very early, certainly during the first 3 years of life. By observing your baby, you can often tell what windows of opportunity are open at a given time.

For instance, your newborn stares intently into your face. She seems to concentrate on focusing her eyes a few feet away. Brightly contrasting patterns capture her attention. So,

My child's growing abilities:



When the window closes

While learning takes place most easily during these prime times, the brain will continue to use the same process of forming connections to learn and refine most abilities later in your child's life. It may be more difficult and take more effort, but new connections can usually be made.

Take full advantage of an open window

Your loving relationship with your child makes it easy to take advantage of the windows of opportunity for brain development whenever they occur. When you observe your baby's interests and give her your attention, you can be sure you are making the most of the opportunities for learning that nature provides.

You are your child's first and most influential teacher. Enjoy the opportunity!

**1½ to
3½
MONTHS**

**Parent handout
Your Child**

YOUR CHILD'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Look for your child to:

Smile deliberately.

Become familiar with close family members.

Show excitement when seeing or hearing caregivers.

Use crying as a way to alert you to her needs.

Use sucking to calm herself.

Ways you can help

Eye contact and smiling are very important. Maintain eye contact with your baby while you feed or socialize with her. Always smile back when she smiles at you.

Let your child feel secure in your love by cuddling, singing, rocking, and speaking softly to her.

Offer her a lot of affection and attention while she is alert.

Immediately respond to your baby when she cries. As she becomes confident that her needs will be met, she will cry less.

Soothe and relax your baby when she is uncomfortable by gently massaging and stroking her back, shoulders, arms, and legs.

Allow her to suck to satisfy her emotional and sucking needs.



**1½ to
3½
MONTHS**

Look for your child to:

Imitate some facial expressions.

Ways you can help

Watch as your baby imitates your facial expressions. Imitate her in a reciprocal way to encourage a give-and-take exchange.

**YOUR
CHILD'S
BRAIN**

- Makes connections for feeling secure when your child's needs are met.
- Produces feelings of trust when you keep taking good care of your child.

Discussion points

- Early math concept development: Shapes and space
- Language development in relation to shapes and space
- Parenting topic

Math

Shapes and Space

Parent educator resources

- *Early Stages of Math Development: Shapes and Space*

Materials

- Unbreakable household objects that clearly represent geometric shapes; for instance, small cans (cylinders), balls (spheres), funnels or party hats (cones), blocks (rectangular prisms), boxes with equal sides (cubes). Include at least two of each shape.
- Washable markers
- Plain, unlined paper at least 8" x 11"
- Small sponges cut into geometric shapes such as a square and triangle (optional/extended)
- Large stamp pad (optional/extended)

Parent handouts

- *Your Child or Your Young Child, Intellectual and Language Development, 3, 4, or 5 Years*
- *Helping Your Child Learn About Shapes and Space*
- *Shapes and Space Activity Page*
- Related children's book about shapes
- Selection from *Rhymes and Songs*

Parenting topics to consider

- Electronic Media
- Safety

PROCESS


I. Rapport-building


II. Observation. Observations are made throughout the visit. Consider the whole child as you and the parent share specific observations related to each domain of development.

III. Discussion. Incorporate throughout the visit. Ask questions to understand what the parents already know about each topic and seek out their perspectives.


A. Review your previous visit using the Personal Visit Record. Ask parents what they noticed as they practiced the parent follow-up activity(s).


B. Parent comments and concerns. Invite parents to share, now and throughout the visit.

 **C. Developmental characteristics.** Use the handouts, *Intellectual and Language Development* that are appropriate for the child's age. Ask which of these characteristics parents may be observing already. Record observations on the form, *Milestones: 3, 4, or 5 Years* after the visit.

 **D. Early math concept development: Shapes and space.** Use the handout, *Helping Your Child Learn about Shapes and Space*, to discuss shapes. (Refer to the resource, *Early Stages of Math Development: Shapes and Space*.)

1. The math that we remember as geometry helps us to describe and classify our physical world. It involves understanding shapes and spatial relationships.
2. As children explore their world, they learn that some things have their own shape (solids) and that some take the shape of their container (liquids/gels).
3. Children learn the names of geometric shapes after they have come to understand the similarities and differences between solid shapes.

- 
4. Children need to have experiences that allow them to move themselves and objects so they can develop spatial sense. Activities, such as climbing and block play, help children conceptualize relationships of objects such as position (over, under) and direction (left, down).




E. Language development in relation to shapes and space. Use the handout, *Helping Your Child Learn about Shapes and Space*, to discuss shapes. (Refer to the resource, *Early Stages of Math Development: Shapes and Space*.)

1. Children need to learn mathematical words to help organize their thinking about shape, position, and direction.
2. Parents can use position words often (top, bottom, over, under, beside, through, up, down, above, below, right, left) during daily routines to help her understand their meanings. Some words, especially *right* and *left*, take a lot of exposure to comprehend.
3. Children use language to describe shapes (*flat*, *curved*, *ball-shaped* [sphere], *can-shaped* [cylinder], *box* [cube]). This descriptive language is an important part of shape identification.
4. Parents can ask questions that encourage children to talk about shapes and positions (How is that shape like this one? How is it different? What if I turn this shape? and Where have you seen this shape before?)

F. Parenting topic. Choose a topic from the Parenting Topics section of the guide based on the family's needs, interests, and goals. Refer to the resource box at the beginning of the plan for possible parenting topics to consider. Use the parent handout to discuss the topic. Include the child in the discussion as much as possible.


IV. Parent-child activity: Shapes and Space



A. Rationale. Tell the parents why this activity is important.

1. Holding and manipulating three-dimensional shapes helps a child learn their properties and how to identify similarities and differences.
2. Moving objects in space helps a child to see where things are in relation to other things.
3. Because the dendrites in the brains of preschoolers are growing rapidly and excess synaptic connections are being pruned, it's important that children this age have varied and repeated experiences with shapes and spatial sense to form and keep the pathways that will support later math skills.

B. Shapes and Space

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1. Activity description. Use the handout, *Shapes and Space Activity Page*, to share the directions with the parents.
 - a. While playing the games, *Does It Roll?* and *Does It Stack?*, the parent and the child will explore familiar items of different shapes to learn more about their physical characteristics.
 2. Activity set up. Involve the child and parents as much as possible.
 - a. Show the parent the items you have brought and ask him if he would like to add any objects from his home.
 - b. Spread the objects out on the floor or table.
 3. Steps to facilitate
 - a. Encourage the parent and child to explore the objects before beginning a game.
 - b. Introduce the game *Does It Roll?* Have the parent and child select objects and try to roll them a short distance along a flat surface. Encourage them to make two piles—objects that roll and those that don't.
 - c. Then play *Does It Stack?* by identifying which items will stack on top of each other and which will not. Invite the parent and child to create a new game that helps them learn more about the shapes.
 - d. Continue to explore the similarities and differences in shapes. Have the parent and child use the washable markers to trace around each object onto the paper. Then play a matching game with the


three-dimensional objects and the two-dimensional tracings.

4. Strategies for supporting learning

- a. While the child is playing with the objects, encourage the parent to describe the objects using words such as *round*, *straight*, *curved*, or *flat*.
- b. Allow the child to take the lead in play. She will let you and the parent know when she is ready to move to the next part of the activity.
- c. Invite the child to share with you and the parent about what she is doing.
- d. Allow the child to make errors. Encourage the parent to model the appropriate response rather than correct his child.
- e. Model and encourage the parent to use open-ended questions to help the child organize and further her thinking. For example, "Why do you think it is not rolling straight?"

C. Book sharing/literacy experience


1. Give the book to the child and ask her to have the parent read it aloud.
2. Encourage the parent and child to find shapes in the illustrations.
3. If the child requests, have the parent re-read the book or give the book to the child to look at.
4. Go on a scavenger hunt and find the shapes in the book in the child's home environment. Have the parents and child refer to the book as a resource.
5. If desired, give the parent a page to add to the child's *Rhymes and Songs* book. Help the parent teach the rhyme or song to his child by repeating it several times.

 **D. Parent follow-up activity.** Use the back of the *Shapes and Space Activity Page* to help the parent determine a follow-up activity. The following is a suggestion.

1. Take a walk around the home to find and name shapes in the environment. The child may want to hold an object of a certain shape and look for one that matches it.
2. Provide opportunities for the child to represent shapes and explore spatial relationships by drawing, building, and playing with puzzles.
3. Encourage play with big boxes or on playground equipment. Children learn about shapes and spatial relationships when they experience how they themselves fit in space as they go over, under, around, into, and through.

E. Optional/extended activity. Use this activity if time remains in the visit.

1. Introduce the sponges and stamp pad to the parent and child. Encourage them to select sponges and press them on the stamp pad and then onto the paper.
2. Ask the parent and child questions to get them to talk about the characteristics (straight, curved, flat, round, corners).
3. Ask the parent and child to name the two-dimensional shape that was created by the three-dimensional sponge. For example, a cone makes a triangle; a cube makes a square.

 **F. Shared observation.** Help the parents observe their child's play. Use the back of the *Shapes and Space Activity Page* to summarize parents' observations.

1. In the area of intellectual development you and the parent may observe the child:
 - a. exploring the objects using all her senses. She may demonstrate that she is noticing differences and similarities by sorting or matching the objects. She may not be able to identify the shapes by name.
 - b. showing more of an awareness of spatial relationships by moving herself and objects over, under, around, and through things.
 - c. finding a geometric shape when asked, but she may not be able to name it. She may have rigid beliefs about shapes (will only recognize a triangle if it has three equal sides).
 - d. experimenting with rolling and stacking objects and sorting them by the results. She may try different ways to solve a problem or put a puzzle together.

- e. following the parent's directions to move an object in the environment or look for something by following directions (look under the bed and behind the box).
 - f. recognizing and identifying familiar geometric shapes in her environment, and understanding that there are many different forms of a specific shape. She will be able to match three-dimensional objects to two-dimensional shapes.
 - g. solving problems that deal with space such as fitting many blocks into a small container or putting puzzle pieces into a frame.
2. In the area of **language** development you and the parent may observe the child:
- a. following the directions for the rolling and stacking games. She will demonstrate an understanding of familiar characteristics (e.g., locating a *round* object).
 - b. saying and responding to frequently used position words such as *on* and *under*.
 - c. describing how things are alike and different as she plays and using geometric shape words for objects in the environment.
 - d. using terms such as *in front of* and *in back of* or using the terms *first* and *last* to give directions.
 - e. using words, such as *beside*, *between*, and *middle*, to describe more complex spatial relationships.
 - f. experimenting with new, big words and making new words by combining ones she already knows.
3. Some questions you may want to ask the parent:
- a. How did your child show her understanding of the similarities and differences in objects?
 - b. What describing words did your child use to show her understanding of shape?
 - c. How did your child show her understanding of position and direction?

V. Summary

A. Key observations. Restate one or two key observations about the child's development.

B. Parents' strength. Point out strengths you have observed.

C. Parent follow-up. Remind parents to continue with the follow-up to the activity(ies) and tell them that you'll be eager to hear about their experiences.

1. Parent follow-up activity(ies) for the next visit.
2. Review any action steps related to referrals or community resources.
3. Remind parents of upcoming group meetings or community events.
4. Set the date for the next personal visit.



Early Stages of Math Development: Shape and Space

Children learn about mathematics through their everyday activities. They learn when they play with objects and people, solve problems, and make observations in their surroundings. In early childhood, children need extensive experiences manipulating real objects to develop a sense of shape and space. These experiences will provide the foundation for the more formal study of math later, including geometry, which deals with solid shapes and their surfaces.

Young children generally learn about shapes through observation and handling of three-dimensional (3-D) objects. It is natural for them to explore and manipulate objects during play and other everyday activities. They learn that round objects roll, but cannot be stacked. They learn that flat objects do not roll, but can be stacked. When they put puzzles together, they notice the shapes of objects. When they nest containers, they discover those that are similar in shape and are graduated in size will fit inside each other. Children also learn about shapes when they construct them from playdough, pipe cleaners, or heavy string. Eventually, they learn that shapes have critical attributes. For instance, a cube *can* be blue or made of wood, but it *must* have 6 square sides, 12 edges and 8 corners.

In early childhood, children need extensive experiences manipulating real objects to develop a sense of shape and space.

Developing spatial sense

Children develop spatial sense (an intuitive feel for one's surroundings and the objects in them), by experiences that focus on the direction, orientation, and perspectives of objects in space, the relative shape and sizes of figures and objects, and how a change in shape relates to a change in size. When children climb, swing, slide and run in playgrounds, or when they play with blocks and puzzles, they are developing spatial sense.

When parents use position words (in, on, over, under, top, bottom, through, up, down, etc) often to describe what children are doing during play, they help children to understand their meanings. Parents can say, "You put that block beside this one. You are crawling under the table." Children need to hear such descriptions often in order to learn position words.

Children need to hear such descriptions often in order to learn position words.

Understanding two-dimensional shapes

Once children understand the differences and similarities among solid shapes and can match and sort them with some success, they can begin to understand two-dimensional (2-D) shapes (a ball shape is a circle, a cone is a triangle, etc.). They use familiar words to describe shapes (ball, box-shaped, etc.), but with the help of adults children eventually can learn the geometric terms of both 3-D and 2-D shapes: sphere (circle), cube (square), rectangular prism (rectangle), cone (triangle). The more children hear these terms at home the easier it will be for them to learn them.



Parents often instruct their children to copy and draw shapes. While important, this is a fine motor rather than a mathematical skill. Children should be familiar with both 3-D and 2-D shapes before they master drawing them. Parents of preschoolers should be made aware that the best way to help their children learn about shapes is by providing a variety of objects that are similar and different in shape. They also can point out shapes in the environment and talk about how they are alike and different. They can provide blocks in a variety of shapes and puzzles in places that are easily accessible to their children. They can make shapes with their children—first three-dimensional ones from playdough or pipe cleaners; then two-dimensional ones using crayons or fingerpaint. Children are naturally creative. They can find many ways to form shapes—even with their bodies!

Learning through play

Children learn best about shapes and space when they are involved in enjoyable, hands-on activities. Activities that are helpful in learning early geometry (appropriate for preschoolers) include:

- Building structures with various types of blocks, Legos, or toothpicks and marshmallows
- Playing with toys that are made up of parts that can be combined into a whole (puzzles, dolls and doll clothes, paper dolls, models that come apart)
- Folding and cutting activities (such as making a snowflake)
- Completing obstacle courses (crawling under the table, through the box tunnel, over the cushion, etc.)
- Playing Simon Says and being asked to “put your hands on your hips, your hands above your head, your feet apart”
- Playing with nesting toys or boxes of graduated sizes
- Playing with sand and water
- Exploring indoor and outdoor environments to identify shapes and angles made by people and nature
- Creating shapes from playdough, cookie dough, pipe cleaners, heavy string, sponges, or their bodies
- Tracing shapes onto paper
- Reading maps
- Making graphs
- Playing tic-tac-toe and other games that use a grid system



Parent Educator Role

What to do

- Help parents understand that the best way to teach preschoolers about shapes and space (an important foundation for geometry) is to give them frequent opportunities to play with and create three-dimensional solid shapes, to see pictures of shapes, and to hear descriptions of shapes and position words.

How to do it

- Bring in a variety of objects that represent shapes, and help parents and children find them in their homes. Bring blocks, Legos, puzzles, and pictures of shapes. Describe shapes (is flat, has corners, is curved) and positions (on, under, over, between, beside).

Strengthening Families™

Programs that explain to parents the stages of math development and emphasize the parental role in helping children develop important early math concepts, such as shapes and space, strengthen parenting. Knowledge of parenting and child development is a protective factor in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

To learn more about the Strengthening Families™ initiative, visit www.strengtheningfamilies.net

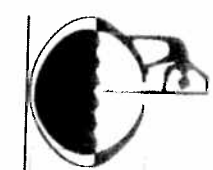
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RESEARCH SUMMARY

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THE COST OF CRIME: COULD THE STATE REDUCE FUTURE CRIME AND SAVE MONEY BY EXPANDING EDUCATION AND TREATMENT PROGRAMS?

By Stephanie Martin and Steve Colt

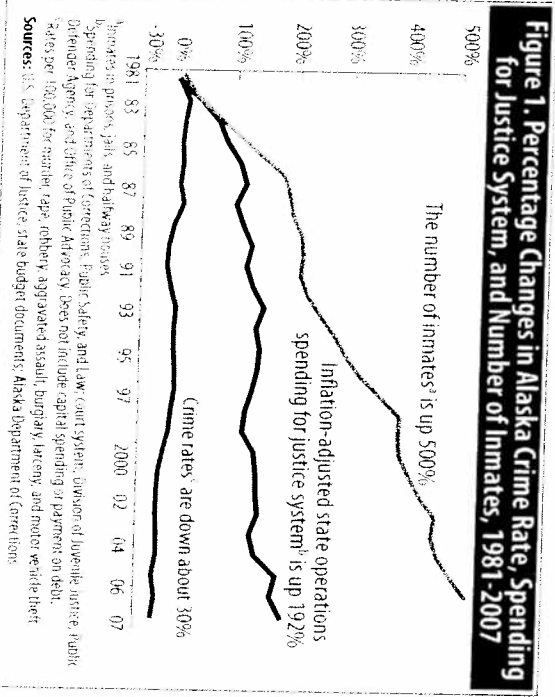
Alaska's prison population is among the fastest-growing in the U.S., with five times more inmates in 2007 than in 1981. Spending for the state justice system has nearly doubled since 1981—but the crime rate has dropped only about 30%.

Here's the dilemma for the state, given the pattern shown in Figure 1: what can it do to hold down the number of inmates and stem the rising costs—while at the same time keeping the public safe and using tax dollars effectively?

Senator Hollis French asked JSER to project growth in the number of Alaska inmates and the associated costs—and then evaluate whether the state could reduce that growth by expanding intervention and prevention programs for people already in prison or at risk of ending up there. Alaska currently spends about \$17 million a year for such programs, but they aren't available to many of those who might benefit from them.

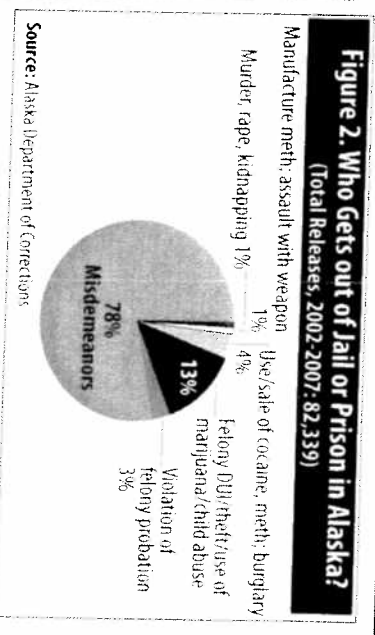
There are a wide range of such programs. But it is programs for adults who are already in prison or jail that have the most potential to save money and reduce crime in the next 20 years. That's because they can reach the most people.

We know that without any intervention, about two-thirds of those who serve their sentences and are released commit new crimes. Stopping at least some of them from committing more crimes would not only help improve public safety but also reduce growth in both the number of inmates and in spending.



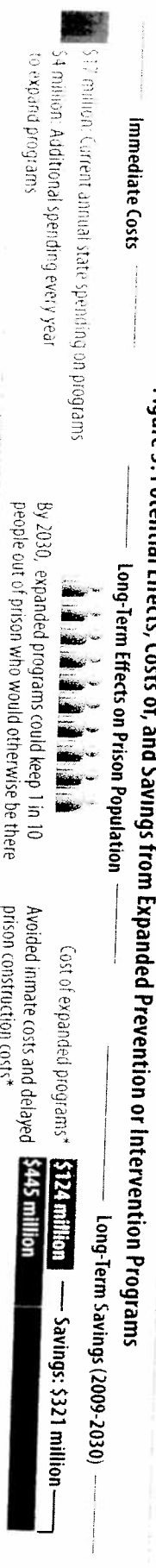
Also, most of those released committed misdemeanors (Figure 2). Those who commit the most serious crimes serve long sentences and make up a small share of those released in any given year.

To analyze which programs have the most potential to reduce crime and save the state money, we worked with the Alaska Criminal Justice Working Group and the Washington State Institute of Public Policy. That institute did a similar analysis for Washington state and provided us with data it collected from program evaluations nationwide (see back page). What did our study show?



- With no change in policies, the number of Alaska inmates is likely to double by 2030, from 5,300 to 10,500.
- If the state spent an additional \$4 million a year to expand programs it already has, the prison population in 2030 might be 10% smaller than projected—about 1,050 fewer inmates.
- The state would spend about \$124 million for expanded programs through 2030 but would avoid \$445 million in costs—a savings of \$321 million. It would save money by incarcerating fewer people and by delaying prison construction costs. (Figures 3 and 8).
- Education and substance-abuse treatment programs—in prison, after prison, and instead of prison—save the state two to five times what they cost and reach the most people. Programs for teenagers are also very effective at reducing crime and saving money, but they reach fewer people.

Figure 3. Potential Effects, Costs of, and Savings from Expanded Prevention or Intervention Programs



Why Consider Expanding Programs?

In 1980, 2 in 1,000 Alaskans were behind bars; today that share is approaching 10 in 1,000. The sharp increase started in the 1980s, when the state government began collecting large oil revenues. The state used some of that money to expand police agencies, courts, and other parts of the criminal justice system statewide. Also in the 1980s, it made sentencing for the most serious felonies more uniform and stiffened sentences.

The crime rate in Alaska has declined since the 1980s. But the number of Alaskans in prisons, jails, and halfway houses has increased much faster, as have costs for the state justice system. Alaska's prisons are full, and the 1,500-bed prison scheduled to open in 2012 is projected to be full soon after it opens.

Locking people up is expensive, whether their crimes are major or less serious. Alaska spends on average \$44,000 a year per inmate in prisons, jails, and halfway houses. Adjusted for inflation, that's actually less than in the 1980s—but it's still a lot (Figure 4).

Studies in other states have shown that some intervention and prevention programs can help cut both costs and crime, either by keeping people who have served their sentences from committing new crimes after they're released, or preventing some people from going to prison in the first place.

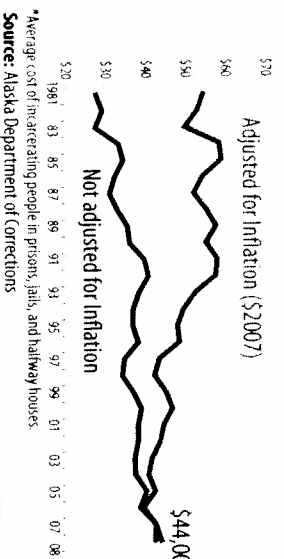
What Programs Did We Analyze?

The Alaska Criminal Justice Working Group gave us a list of programs to analyze. We looked for programs with the biggest potential payoff for the state—those that could reduce growth in both numbers of inmates and in spending for corrections, at a reasonable cost for the state.

Alaska already has a number of programs in place, and we found that expanding some of those would be most cost-effective. Table 1 lists the programs in our final analysis. As a guideline for what was a "reasonable" expansion, we used 10% to 20% of the eligible people not already served—except for very small programs that can't easily be expanded that much.

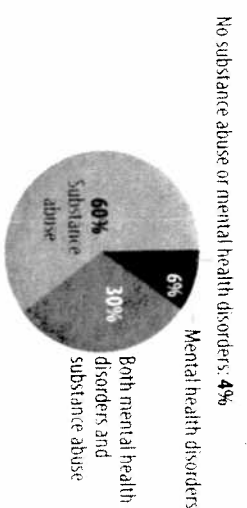
These programs would serve inmates, at-risk juveniles, and young children. They are all intended to reduce future crime in some way. Programs that treat substance-abuse or mental health disorders have been shown to reduce recidivism—and as Figure 5 shows, almost all current inmates have those disorders.

Figure 4. Annual State Costs Per Inmate,* 1981-2008
(In Thousands of Dollars)



*Average cost of incarcerating people in prisons, jails, and halfway houses.
Source: Alaska Department of Corrections

Figure 5. How Many Alaska Inmates Have Substance Abuse or Mental Health Disorders?



Sources: Alaska Department of Corrections; Alaska Mental Health Trust

Table 1. Current Size and Potential Expansion of Intervention and Prevention Programs^a

Programs	Currently serve	Reasonable expansion	Potentially eligible (2008)
Prison-based programs			
Education (adult basic; vocational)	More than 1,000	500	Almost all inmates (4,500)
Substance-Abuse (residential; intensive outpatient)	Close to 500	500	90% of inmates (approximately 4,000)
Sex-offender treatment ^b	0	50	10% of 500 eligible inmates
Transition from prison			
Transition for inmates with mental health disorders (Institutional Discharge Project)	70	100	36% of inmates (1,600)
Alternatives to incarceration			
Mental health, drug, alcohol courts; electronic monitoring; residential substance-abuse treatment	500	500	Approximately 5,000 ^c
Juvenile offenders			
Aggression replacement training; family therapy; residential treatment; institutional transition	Approximately 500	1,000	Approximately 3,000
Prevention			
Head Start for 3- and 4-year olds from low-income families ^d	3,025	450	Approximately 8,000 ^e

^aPrograms included in our final analysis are those for which we found evidence that expansion would have significant payoffs for the state at a reasonable cost. We evaluated additional programs not included here, either because there wasn't sufficient evidence to assess their effectiveness or because they weren't feasible to implement in Alaska at this time.

^bTo effectively reduce crime, sex offender treatment programs need to be offered in both prison and the community. Treatment is currently available only in the community, so the number served in prison is currently zero—but there are proposals to add treatment in prison.

^cPeople facing low-level charges and with substance-abuse problems.

^dHead Start is a federal program, but the state supplements federal money and Governor Sarah Palin has proposed additional state funding. We assume all children from families with up to double the poverty level income would be eligible.

2306 Lodge 3

We looked at but excluded other programs from our final analysis. The criminal justice working group decided that a few programs, while effective elsewhere, wouldn't be feasible to implement in Alaska at this time. For other programs, there wasn't enough available evidence to judge how effective they were in saving money or reducing crime, or the available evidence showed them to be largely ineffective.

How Do THE PROGRAMS COMPARE?

As Figure 3 (front page) shows, expanding programs to serve more of the eligible people would save the state about \$321 million and reduce the projected number of inmates 10% by 2030. Figures 6 and 7 show how the various programs contribute to costs, savings, and reductions in the number of Alaskans behind bars.

- *Education and substance-abuse treatment programs for inmates save two to four times what they cost, reduce recidivism by about four percentage points, and can reach the most people.*

- *Intervention programs for juveniles who have committed crimes are very effective at saving money and reducing recidivism, but they serve a much smaller number of people.*

- *Programs that set up transition services for inmates with mental-health disorders coming out of prison are among the most effective—but they can't readily be expanded to serve the many people who could benefit from them.*

- *Alternatives to prison for some people charged with lesser offenses save the state money right away, and almost all reduce recidivism. The exception is electronic monitoring, which is inexpensive but hasn't been shown to reduce future crime.*

- *Treatment programs for sex offenders do reduce crime, but they are very expensive and so don't save the state money.*
- *Programs that prevent future crime by helping very young at-risk children are the most effective. But the effects of spending for those programs aren't apparent until many years later.*

Figure 6. How Effective Are Various Programs at Saving Money and Reducing Crime?

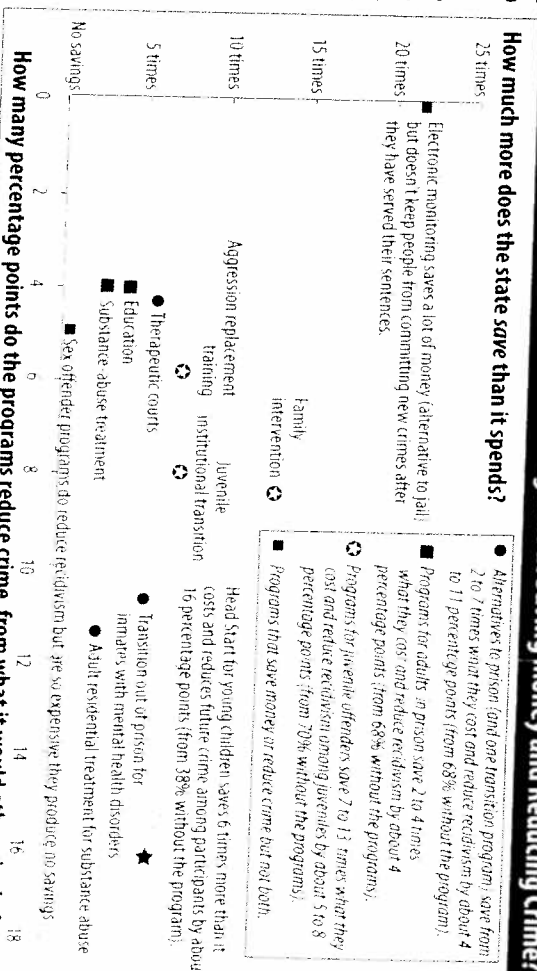
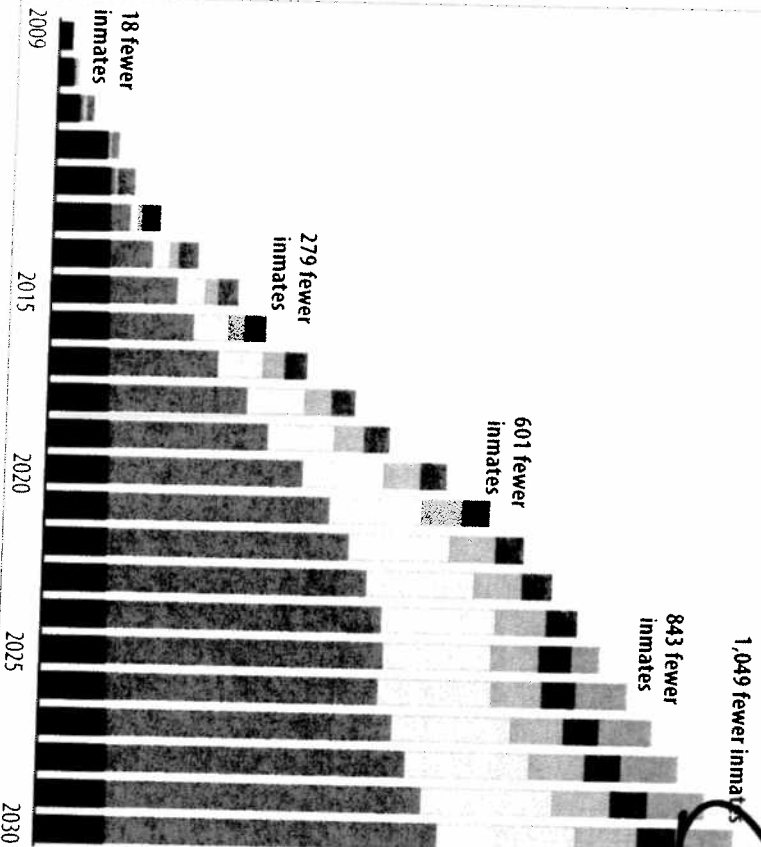


Figure 7. How Would Expanding Specific Programs Contribute to Reducing Growth in Numbers of Inmates?



Pre-school programs for at-risk children cost about \$1,000 per child but save many times that much, by reducing future crime. The effects of the spending aren't apparent for years, until the children grow up.

Programs for juveniles offenders cost an average of about \$2,500 per person, but save almost 10 times that much by keeping kids out of prison. They serve only a subset of the population of 12- to 17-year-olds.

Transition programs for people with mental health disorders are extremely effective, add about \$2,000 per person to inmate costs, and save about four times that much. But the programs currently serve very few people and can't readily be expanded to serve large numbers.

Programs that treat inmates for substance abuse add about \$2,000 a person to inmate costs, but over time save about twice as much. They are effective, but can't readily be expanded to reach all the people who need them.

Education and job training programs in prison add about \$1,000 to inmate costs, but they reach the most people and save about four times more than they cost. Because they are offered in every facility, they can easily be expanded and can reach more people. (Reductions in the number of inmates as a result of the sex-offender treatment program are also included here, but are only one or two people a year.)

Programs that keep people out of prison save the state money right away, because they cost much less than the \$44,000 per person the state spends to lock people up. They include therapeutic courts for substance abuse and mental health disorders, electronic monitoring, and residential substance-abuse treatment.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Figure 8 shows how Alaska's corrections system got where it is and where it's likely to go—if intervention and prevention programs are kept at their current levels, and if the most effective programs are expanded to serve more of the eligible people.

We found that the state could both reduce the number of Alaskans in prison or jail and save considerable money over the next 20 years, by adding about \$4 million a year to the \$17 million it currently spends to keep people from returning to prison—or prevent them from ever going there at all.

Spending more for these programs even as oil prices and state revenues are falling may not seem like a good idea. But Alaska also needs to look to the future—and over time the benefits of strategically expanding those programs that reduce crime and keep more Alaskans out of prison far outweigh the costs.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Our job was to assess whether specific programs could reduce long-term state spending for corrections by reducing growth in the number of inmates. As a starting point, we needed evaluations of how effective various programs are at reducing future crime.

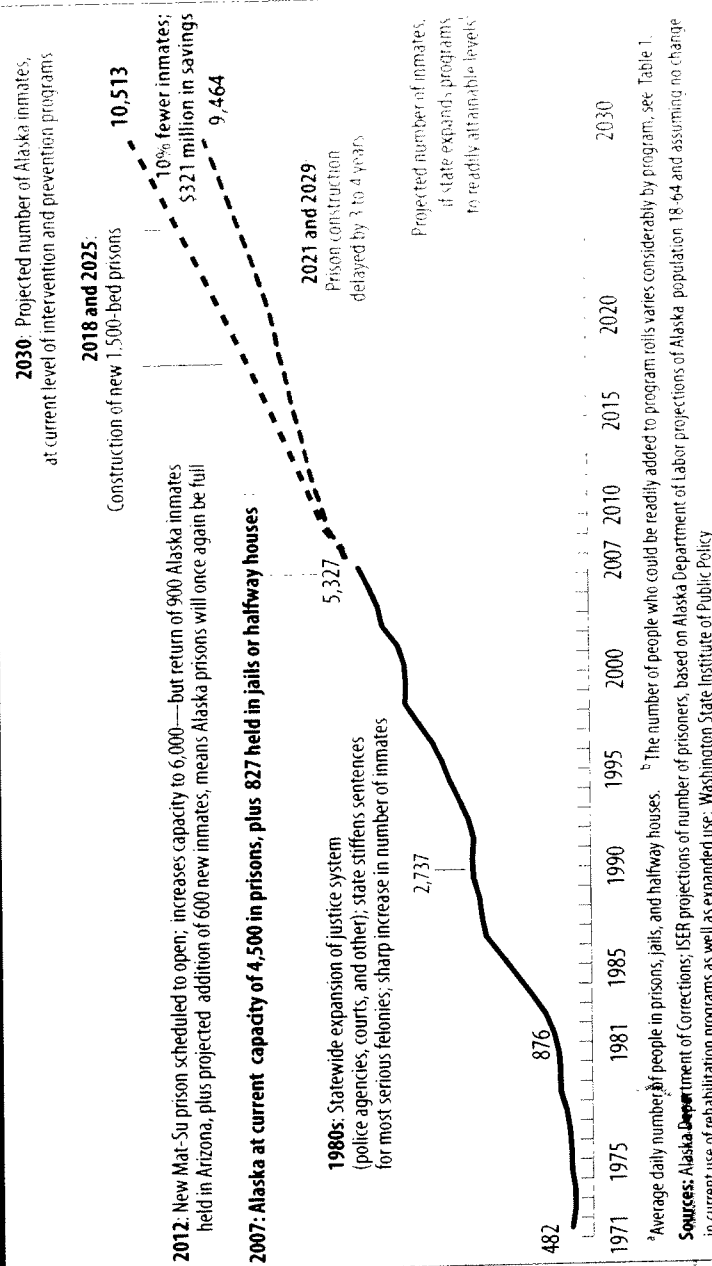
But except for some of the therapeutic court programs, most programs in Alaska have not been rigorously evaluated. Therefore, we used results of a Washington state assessment that systematically reviewed 571 program evaluations from around the country.

To be included, evaluations had to have carefully designed control groups, replicable results in multiple settings, and long-lasting effects. This method is evidence-based public policy, which merges research and practice. It is similar to clinical trials in medicine. Keep in mind that this is a new field, and only about 10% of programs in place nationwide have been evaluated at this standard.

With data from rigorous evaluations, the Washington State Institute of Public Policy created a model that estimated the effects of programs on recidivism—and then combined those results with a cost-benefit analysis to estimate the long-term effects on state spending and inmate populations.

We combined the institute's estimates of recidivism with Alaska data on program costs, eligible groups, and state population to estimate long-term effects on crime and state spending.

Figure 8. Average Number of Alaska Inmates,^a 1971-2007, and Projected Number, 2008-2030



The authors thank the members of the Alaska Criminal Justice Working Group for their help in identifying programs to evaluate and for comments on drafts of this publication. The Alaska Legislature funded this group in 2007 and authorized the Alaska Judicial Council to act as its staff.

The group is chaired by a justice of the Alaska Supreme Court and Alaska's lieutenant governor. Other members include top policymakers from the departments of Corrections, Public Safety, Health and Social Services, and Law, as well as the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority; the heads of the Alaska Public Defender Agency and the Office of Public Advocacy; the administrative and deputy directors for the Alaska Court System; the executive director of the Judicial Council, the U.S. attorney, and Anchorage's police chief.

This group meets monthly to talk about long-term justice issues, as well as to resolve any inter-branch issues that come up among the many agencies and organizations that deal with aspects of Alaska's justice system.

The authors also thank Elizabeth Drake and Steve Aas of the Washington State Institute of Public Policy for developing the methods and models we used and for helping us apply them to Alaska. For more information go to www.wisipp.wa.gov.

This research summary and many other publications on a wide range of topics are available on ISER's Web site:

www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu