



BEST BEGINNINGS

Alaska's Early Childhood Investment

Senate Finance Subcommittee for the
Department of Education & Early
Development

February 27, 2014





“In an era of tight government budgets...the real question is how to use the available funds wisely. The best evidence supports the policy prescription: invest in the very young.”

*James J. Heckman, PhD
Nobel Laureate in Economic Sciences*



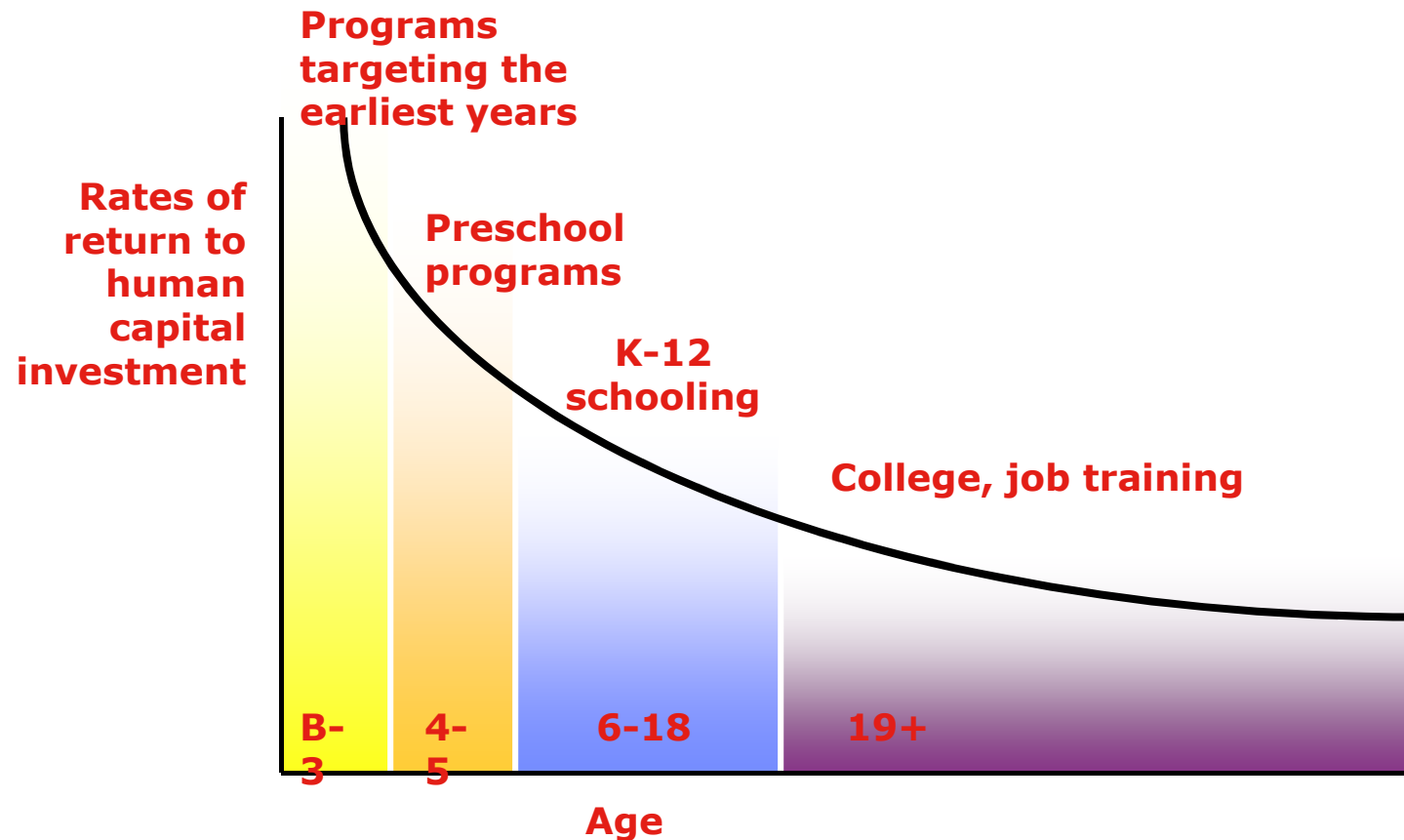
Numbers to Know

700

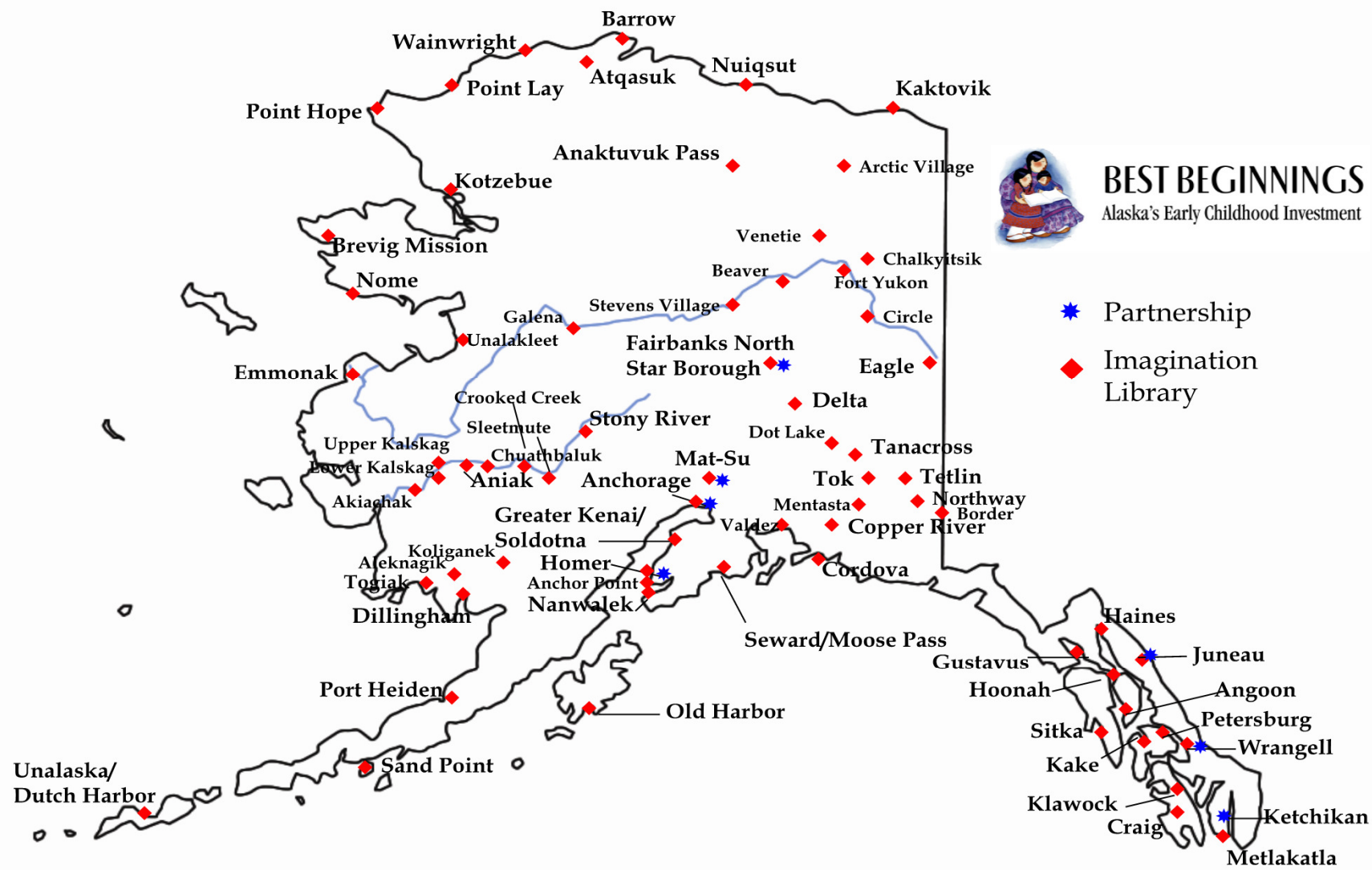
53,996

21,608

Preventive Intervention: More Efficient, More Favorable Outcomes Than Later Remediation



Early Childhood Partnerships & Imagination Libraries in Alaska



Last Updated:12/30/13



Our Mission

- To mobilize people and resources to ensure all Alaska children begin school ready to succeed
- How do we do it?
 - Parent/family engagement and education
 - Community-based
 - Research
 - Collaboration
 - Innovation



Early Childhood Partnerships

- Wrangell
- Ketchikan
- Juneau
- Homer
- Fairbanks
- Mat-Su
- Anchorage





Imagination Library

- Age-appropriate, quality children's books
- Free to families
- “Get the whole community involved in reading with children!”
- Family engagement
- Research results
- Numbers



Books in the Home

- Just the mere presence of books profoundly impacts a child's academic achievement.
- Each additional book yields more “bang for your book” among the book-poor than among the book-rich.
- The greatest impact of book access occurs among the least educated and poorest families.

Research in Social Stratification and Mobility, 2010



Resources & Outreach

- Radio and TV PSAs
- BestBeginningsAlaska.org, Facebook, YouTube, e-news
- Convening large and small groups
- Sponsoring national speakers
- Advocacy support
- Training and technical assistance to partners
- Activity guides and cards
- Innovative projects
 - *Babies on Track*
 - StoryTRACKS
 - *Words Count*



30 Million Word Gap

- By age 4, experience with words
 - Child in professional family 45 million 6:1
 - Child in working-class family 26 million 2:1
 - Child in poor family 13 million 1:2

Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experiences of Young American Children,
Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley, 1995



Words Count

- 60-second video
- 30-second TV spot airing statewide
- Radio PSAs
- Social media
- Promotional items
- Movie theaters
- Community activities!

Welcome to StoryTRACKS!

You're about to read *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen, with illustrations by Helen Oxenbury. While you walk from page to page, consider your surroundings: can you go **under**, **over**, or **through** anywhere? What do you see along the way that's the same or different from what the characters see in the book?

Reading a story together is a great way to start conversations, too. Keep in mind "T-R-A-C-K-S" as you make tracks through the story:

Talk, Respond,
Ask questions, Connect,
Keep at it, and Sing
and tell stories. Try
imitating the sounds
or singing along with
the repeating lines!

Enjoy the story and its
illustrations as you spend
this time together.



We're Going on a Bear Hunt

Retold by
Michael Rosen

Illustrated by
Helen Oxenbury



ALADDIN PAPERBACKS
New York London Toronto Sydney Singapore

Story TRACKS

- T** Talk
- R** Respond
- A** Ask questions
- C** Connect
- K** Keep at it
- S** Sing and tell stories

brought to you by:



BEST BEGINNINGS
Alaska's Early Childhood Investment



ANCHORAGE
PARK FOUNDATION



Investment that Pays Off

For \$400,000

- ↑ Imagination Library from 40% to 50% of children under 5
- ↑ Literacy intervention – local pilot
- ↑ *Words Count*
 - Mobile App for parents
 - Video and radio spots
 - Social media blitz
 - Messages where parents are



Investment that Pays Off

For \$500,000

Families Make TRACKS and Learn pilot

- Collaboration with 1:1 digital initiative
- Bridge the digital divide, connect families and schools
- Rich, interactive content for children 2-5
- Opportunities for parent education and support
- Family-created content



Investment Request FY 2015

- \$937,500 Governor's Budget
- \$400,000 Books, Pilot Project, *Words Count*
- \$500,000 *Families Make TRACKS and Learn* pilot

\$1,837,500



Into the future...





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