

Investing in Alaska's Young Children

Alaska Early Care and Education: Public Policy Priorities for 2013



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A Collaborative Effort

- Best Beginnings
- **thread**
- Alaska Association for the Education of Young Children (Alaska AEYC)
- Alaska Head Start Association (AHSA)
- Alaska Infant Learning Program Association (AILPA)

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Alaska Facts

- 53,996 children under 5
- 10,112 kindergarteners this school year
- Most likely to be poor – youngest children



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Alaska's Early Childhood Legislative Priorities 2013

- Parents as Teachers (\$1,042,500 in Governor's budget)
- Best Beginnings (\$937,500 in Governor's budget)
 - Early Childhood Partnerships
 - Imagination Library
- Quality Rating & Improvement System
- Professional Development & Retention of Early Educators

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Early Childhood System

- Comprehensive early childhood system, not just separate, individual programs

- Early learning
- Health, mental health, and nutrition
- Family support
- Special needs/early intervention



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Legislative Priority: Parents as Teachers

Personal Visits

Screening

Group
Connections

Resource
Referrals

Parents as Teachers Goals

- Increase parent knowledge of early childhood development and improve parenting practices
- Provide early detection of developmental delays and health issues
- Prevent child abuse and neglect
- Increase children's school readiness and school success

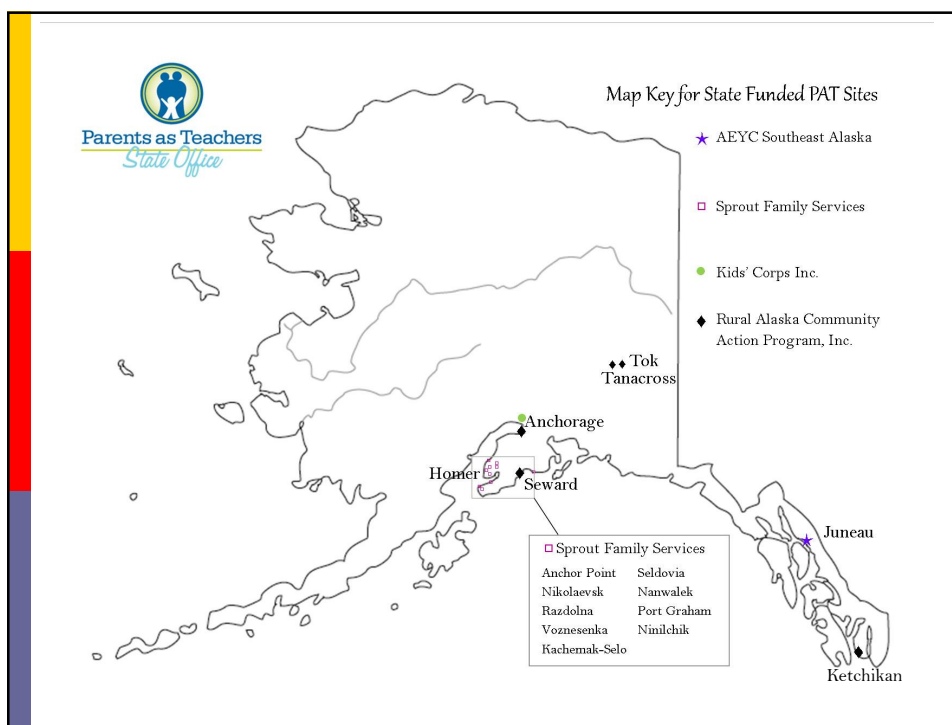


Alaska Parents as Teachers



Parents as Teachers Alaska's Investment

- New investment by the state
 - Economically viable at \$4,000 - \$6,000/family
- Model that works in both urban and rural Alaskan communities
- Additional focus on particular populations
 - Military families
 - Teen parents
 - Families in shelters/transition
 - Multi-cultural/bilingual families
 - Children at risk for developmental delays



Parents as Teachers Outcomes

PAT Parents:

- Are more involved in their child's schooling
- Report a higher level of confidence and engagement in parenting
- Engage in more language and literacy-promoting activities with their children

PAT Children:

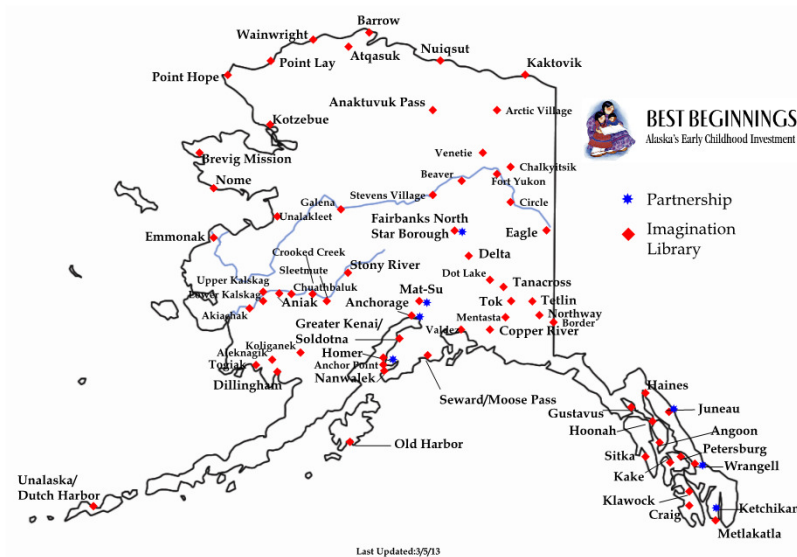
- Arrive at their next educational setting developmentally on target
- Referred to early intervention programs have exited out before age three



Best Beginnings: Alaska's Early Childhood Investment

- A public-private partnership mobilizing people and resources to ensure all Alaska children begin school ready to succeed
 - Community-based, volunteer-led work through Imagination Libraries and early childhood partnerships
 - Innovative early childhood learning materials
 - Research and public awareness campaigns

Early Childhood Partnerships & Imagination Libraries in Alaska



Legislative Priority

- Early childhood partnerships' work
 - Community Support for Early Childhood
 - Parent Engagement & Education
 - Language & Literacy
 - Partnership Development & Sustainability



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Legislative Priority

- Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Alaska



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Legislative Priority

- Imagination Library – with your support

March 2010	March 2013
32 communities	103 communities
7,594 children enrolled	20, 384 children enrolled

- Funding from Dept. of Education & Early Development, Healthy Alaska Natives Foundation, Providence Health & Services, Wells Fargo Bank, multitude of local businesses, and individuals
- 38% of Alaska children under 5

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Legislative Priority: Quality Rating & Improvement System (QRIS)

- Helps parents make the best choices for their families
- Moves programs towards quality
- Provides outcome information for policy makers to assess different funding strategies

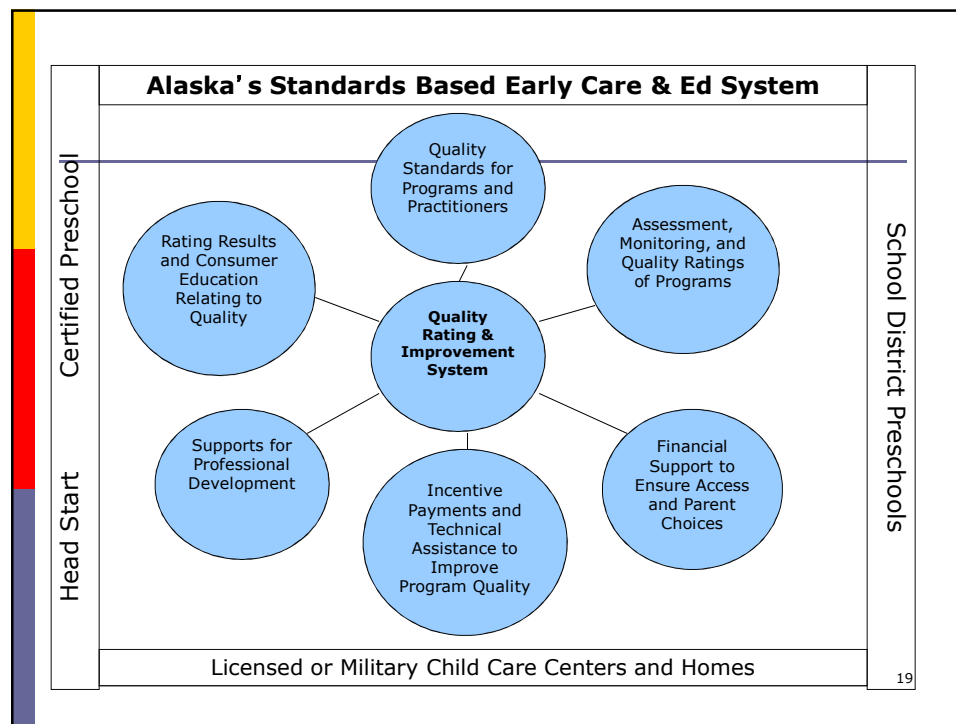


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Legislative Priority: Quality Rating & Improvement System (QRIS)

- Pilot projects
- January 2008 Alaska QRIS plan
- March 2013 DHSS contract with **thread** for staff
- Next steps

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Legislative Priority: Professional Development & Retention

Purpose of Priority:

- Decrease financial barriers to professional development opportunities
- Increase recruitment and retention in the early care and education field

Research indicates the biggest factor in the quality of a program and in improving child outcomes is the teacher education level

Alaska's Child Care Workforce

- Less than 10% of the child care workforce has a college degree
- National Accreditation standards and Head Start standards are moving towards a BA teacher in each classroom
- With the average wage of \$9/hour and a 40-50% turnover rate in child care, additional support is needed to increase the qualifications of teachers

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Presenters

- Kristin Ramstad
 - Parents as Teachers Director, Rural Alaska Community Action Agency, Inc.
- Estrella "Star" Lee
 - Alaska Parents as Teachers Coordinator, Rural Alaska Community Action Agency, Inc.
- Abbe Hensley
 - Executive Director, Best Beginnings
- Joy Lyon
 - Executive Director, AEYC Southeast Alaska

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