

From: [Hattie A Harvey](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Written Testimony, Re: Best Beginnings
Date: Monday, March 30, 2015 8:43:47 PM

Dear House Finance Committee,

The Best Beginnings Imagination Library program is crucial to developing children's language and literacy skills, and helping to foster an early interest in and motivation for learning. By age 4, children from low-income homes have on average been exposed to 37 million words *less* than those from middle- and high-income homes. At entry to Kindergarten, children's oral language skills, including their vocabulary knowledge, is a stronger predictor of academic achievement than reading, math, or writing skills. The Best Beginnings Imagination Library program directly provides opportunities for improving children's language and literacy skills, subsequently increasing their school readiness skills, which researchers have linked to increased graduation rates, lower crime and incarceration rates, and a decrease in teenage pregnancy rates. It is critical to consider continuation of funding for this program to the success of Alaska's children.

Thanks,
Hattie Harvey

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