

From: [Kathleen Easley](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Pre-K Funding
Date: Tuesday, March 31, 2015 11:29:12 AM

I am emailing you today to encourage your continued support of pre-school programs in the state of Alaska. I am a parent of a kindergartener who had early intervention at age three and entered an Anchorage school district pre-school program. He was tested and placed in special education for speech delays. This early intervention and ability for my son to go to a pre-school also allowed him to get the needed interventions that brought him up academically, socially, and emotionally to be ready for entrance to kindergarten this school year. He was exited from special education (1st quarter of K) and is now reading at a 1st grade level (3rd quarter of K), he is excelling in math, and is above grade level for most of the kindergarten academic areas. If he had not been eligible for special education, I still would have placed him in some sort of early learning center or pre-school. I believe this early education made it possible for him to come into kindergarten ready and able to go!

I am also a part of the education system. I am a school nurse that works with over 400 children everyday. I participate in the student assistance team at my elementary school. The goal of this team is to try interventions with students who are behind academically before referral to special education for testing. I often see that children who did not have any form of early intervention (such as preschool), often lag behind by as much as a few academic years. These are not children with learning or behavioral disabilities- these are average children from all socioeconomic backgrounds. I believe this gap would be closed by increased access to pre-schools. If we support and encourage attendance of pre-school programs for children age 3-5 or have these children screened for needed early intervention programs we can discern developmental delays or other potential concerns early- when it can be facilitated properly for each individual child. If we have State and Federal backing and financial support for pre-school programs we will not have children who are behind academically. These children that have not had an early intervention can often be seen academically behind even up into the third grade.

If we plan on having productive, educated citizens in our community, we must make an impact with education. I feel that we need to offer the earliest possible intervention, which are pre-school programs. We are giving the children a greater chance at being independent learners who will perform on or above grade level for their academic career. I believe that supporting early education has shown long term positive effects for students. This is the time to be involved in making sure pre-school is available to our children in Alaska. Please consider the importance and impact this has on our communities. We must invest in early education and support pre-school programs in our state.

Thank you for your time!
Kathy Easley
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