

Testimony for Public Hearing
Alaska State Senate Finance Committee
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Good afternoon, Senate Finance Committee members. My name is Priscilla Hensley Holthouse. Among other things, I am a parent, an aunt, an Inupiaq, and an Alaskan. I am also sick today, so am submitting my testimony via email. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I also emailed a letter last week.

Like many of the people you've heard from today, I urge you to fund early care and learning. This is an investment with a high rate of return and likelihood of success.. What are the figures? That \$1 invested in early learning turns into \$7-\$13 dollars down the road? This will save us money in the long run and make way for people to live better lives and be more self-sufficient.

Best Beginnings and Parents as Teachers empower parents and families by providing information and support so they can be the best parents possible, and so their children can succeed in school. It would be great if all parents magically knew what to do when their children were born, but if you're a parent, you know that it doesn't work that way. Even with a great support system, good jobs and educations, and stable family backgrounds, my husband and I still greatly benefitted from a home visit program, and from the information and services of Best Beginnings. The type of work they do does even more good for at-risk families.

As research has taught us more about children age 0-5, Best Beginnings has shared this information with Alaskans and helped changed the way Alaskans think about, parent, educate, and develop policy for young children. They support families and kids and help the broader community at large to better see the connection between children's earliest experiences and our entire state's success. I know more about my child, and being a parent, because of Best Beginnings. The Imagination Library books are a true gift of literacy - a simple, small spark that means SO much to a family.

You have heard a lot of great testimony from people around Alaska today, and I know you are listening carefully and have a difficult task in sifting through the many competing, compelling interests. Thank you for working on behalf of Alaskans - even the littlest ones.

Again, I hope you will reinstate funding for these important early childhood initiatives.
Quyanaqpak,

Priscilla Hensley Holthouse

