

I am the owner of Bright Beginnings Early Learning Centers. We operate four childcare centers in Anchorage and Eagle River, licensed to care for 500 children ages 6 weeks to 12 years.

I agree quality learning programs are vital to the long-term success of our children, and I appreciate the efforts of SB 111 to improve the reading proficiency of our children. I believe the passage of this bill will have unexpected consequences.

Transitioning 4-year-old children from private Early Learning Centers to public schools would have a devastating impact on our programs and their ability to stay in business.

Infant and toddler classrooms usually operate at a loss because of the child to caregiver ratios. Programs use funds from 3 and 4-year-old classrooms to supplement the infant and toddler classrooms. Without these supplements many programs including ours would not be able to afford to care for infants and toddlers. There is already a severe shortage of infant care in our community, with long wait lists for spots.

I believe there would be a cost savings to using existing programs, funneling funds and training to the dedicated early childhood professionals who are already teaching these children.

There would be no need to duplicate classrooms, equipment and administrative costs. Quality of the learning experience would improve with additional teacher training and resources. With the proper funding existing Early Learning Centers would be able to hire and retain qualified teachers.

4-year-old children are better served in an Early Learning Center environment. Classrooms are set up to meet their developmental needs. Playground equipment is appropriately sized and safe for them to use. Bathrooms are within the classroom instead of down the hall and shared with older children.

The dedicated professionals working in the childcare industry would love the opportunity to increase the reading readiness success of our children. With the proper funding and support I believe the results would be tremendously successful.

Susan DeLoach
Corporate Administrator
Bright Beginnings Early Learning Centers