



January 25, 2024

Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol
120 4th Street
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support for House Bill 89 – Child Care Assistance

Honorable Members of the Alaska State Legislature,

Alaska Children's Trust offers our strong support for House Bill 89, which would expand access to child care assistance for parents. As the statewide lead organization focused on the prevention of child abuse and neglect, we support policies that increase economic security for families and provide foundational early education support for children. House Bill 89 does both by increasing access to quality, affordable child care for Alaska's families.

Currently, the average family in Alaska is paying 15-35% of their income for child care, and 51% of families say they can't participate in the workforce to the extent they would prefer due to child care issues. According to KIDS Count 2023, Alaska ranks 44th in the nation for economic well-being and 34% of Alaska children have parents that lack secure employment.

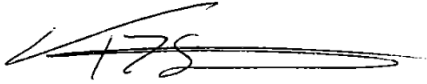
House Bill 89 would increase the eligibility limits for child care assistance, allowing more Alaska families access to affordable child care and providing more parents the opportunity to participate in the workforce.

Parents who are able to access the child care they need report reduced stress and increased economic stability, both important societal factors for decreasing the risk of child abuse and neglect. And quality child care allows children to grow and develop to their full potential, increasing their readiness for school and eventually the workforce.

While House Bill 89 does not solve all of the challenges currently facing Alaska's child care system, it is an important step towards revitalizing our child care sector in a way

that supports our children, families, communities, and businesses. We encourage your support for House Bill 89. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TJS', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Trevor J. Storrs
President & CEO
Alaska Children's Trust