

2/24/10
ALASKA
EARLY
CARE &
EDUCATION

Louie Flora

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Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2010 5:19 PM
To: 'lhcslaf+houseeducationcommittee@legis.state.ak.us'
Subject: Article on Head Start
Attachments: image001.gif

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Head Start Study Finds Brief Learning Gains

By [Mary Ann Zehr](#)

Premium article access courtesy of [Edweek.org](#).

Participation in Head Start has positive effects on children's learning while they are in the program, but most of the advantage they gain disappears by the end of 1st grade, a [federal impact study](#) of Head Start programs says.

A large-scale randomized control study of nearly 5,000 children released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services this week shows that a group of children who entered Head Start at age 4 benefited from a year in the program, particularly in learning language and literacy. Benefits included learning vocabulary, letter-word recognition, spelling, color identification, and letter naming, compared with children of the same age in a control group who didn't attend Head Start.

Benefits for children who entered Head Start at age 3 were even stronger. By the end of Head Start, the group that had entered at age 3 showed gains in most of the language and learning areas that the 4-year-old group had, but also showed benefits in learning math, pre-writing skills, and perceptual motor skills.

But by the end of the 1st grade, the study found, children who had attended Head Start had an edge in only one aspect of learning in comparison with control groups. Children in the Head Start 4-year-old group did significantly better on vocabulary than children in the control group. And Head Start participants in the 3-year-old group performed better in oral comprehension than children in the study's control group.

In other words, most of the advantages in learning that children gained because of Head Start disappeared by the time they finished 1st grade.

Kathleen Sebelius, the U.S. secretary of health and human services, which oversees the federal preschool program, said in a [statement](#) about the study that "for Head Start to achieve its full potential, we must improve its quality and promote high standards across all early-childhood programs."

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan seconded the need for improvement in the program. "These results make it clear that we need to build a more coordinated system of early care and education, and to focus on key improvements to teaching and learning in the early grades," he said in a statement.

Quality Concerns

The authors of the impact study write that "although the quality is high on average, Head Start programs vary in terms of instruction in the key areas measured as part of this study." They also stressed that children in the control group participated in a mixture of alternative child-care settings, including care by their parents. So the study is reporting only how Head Start children benefited above and beyond children in other kinds of early-childhood settings.

Craig T. Ramey, a professor of health studies and psychiatry at Georgetown University in Washington, said in an interview that researchers in the field of early-childhood education see Head Start as a "great idea," but added that "Head Start must hold its feet to the quality fire."

The Department of Health and Human Services has a working group that should take on the task of establishing national standards for all child-care programs, including Head Start, he said.

Mr. Ramey questioned the quality not only of some Head Start programs, but of the impact study as well. He characterized it as an example of "poor scholarship and reporting of data."

He said, for example, the study reports only effect sizes and doesn't provide information about the performance of children on average. The federal government was supposed to have released data two years ago to scientists so they could analyze the information, he noted, but such data have not been released as part of the impact study. It is not possible to tell by the study whether Head Start students are "humming along at the national average" in terms of their cognitive learning, or if they are "at the 10th percentile" on standardized measures of cognitive learning, he said.

Mr. Ramey and his wife, Sharon Landesman Ramey, a professor of child and family studies at Georgetown University, have written a paper that they expect to present on a panel hosted by the Washington-based Brookings Institution on Jan. 19. They characterize Head Start programs as "unacceptably uneven in their quality."

Exemplary programs should be identified and serve as models, they write, but the Head Start programs that are failing should be "improved or terminated quickly to prevent serious harm to children."

Deborah Lowe Vandell, the chairwoman of the education department at the University of California, Irvine, said in an e-mail that the study's analysis of some subgroups of preschoolers participating in Head Start showed the program was more effective in improving the cognitive and academic performance of children

most at risk of failing academically, those with the lowest academic performance when they entered Head Start and children with limited proficiency in English.

"At the same time," she wrote, "I wish that stronger positive effects had been demonstrated for a broader range of children. A possible explanation for these differential effects is that Head Start was not sufficiently challenging for children with stronger cognitive and language skills."

Investing in Alaska's Young Children

Alaska Early Care and Education:
Public Policy Priorities for 2010



A Collaborative Effort

- Abbe Hensley, Executive Director, Best Beginnings
- Melissa Pickle, Director, RurAL CAP Parents as Teachers
- Candace Winkler, CEO, thread
- Joy Lyon, Alaska Association for the Education of Young Children (AK AEYC)
- Other Partners: Alaska Head Start Association (AHSA), Alaska Infant Learning Programs Association (AILPA)

Alaska Facts

- 49,670 children under 5
- 1 out of 5 living below the federal poverty level
- Most likely to be poor – youngest children



Alaska's Early Childhood Legislative Priorities 2010

- Denali Kid Care
- Head Start
- Home Visiting
- Early Childhood Partnerships
- Imagination Library
- Access to Quality Child Care
- Quality Rating and Improvement System
- Professional Development and Retention of Early Educators

Early Childhood System

- Comprehensive early childhood system, not just separate, individual programs
 - Early learning
 - Health, mental health, and nutrition
 - Family support
 - Special needs/early intervention




Legislative Priority

- Early childhood partnerships
 - Move decisions closer to those being served
 - Bring people together to solve problems
 - Pinpoint actual needs
 - Respond to cultural considerations
 - Focus on solutions, not turf
 - Ensure the best outcomes in each community for young children
- A network of effective community and regional organizations that support comprehensive early childhood services called for by ECCS, Ready to Read, Ready to Learn, and Governor's Summit on Early Learning

Legislative Priority

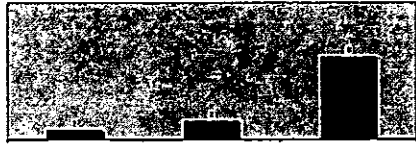
- Early childhood partnerships 2009-10
 - Nine communities, with about 78% of Alaska children 0-5
 - Conducted needs and assets assessments
 - Identified priorities
 - Developing strategic plans
 - Taking action!



7

Legislative Priority

Early Childhood Partnership Growth with Funding through Best Beginnings

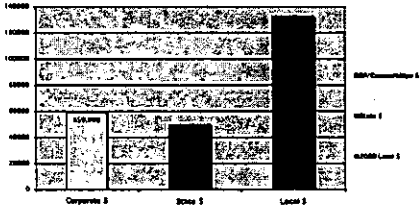


1988 Juneau 2000 Fairbanks, Juneau 2008 (Increasing Funding from Best Beginnings) Anchorage, Galena, Homer, Homer, Kenai, Kodiak, Kodiak, Mat-Su, Fairbanks, Juneau

8

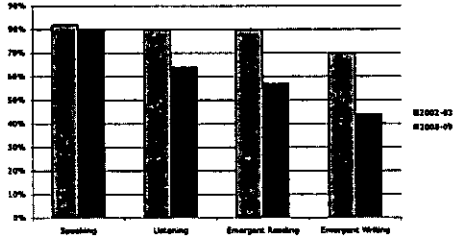
Legislative Priority

Early Childhood Partnership Funding



9


Alaska Kindergarten Developmental Profile Results



10

Legislative Priority

- Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Alaska

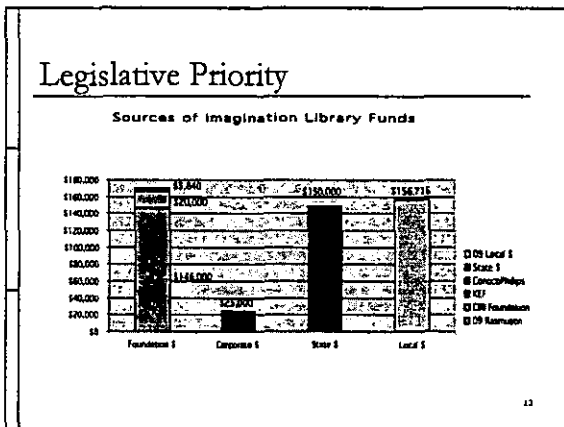


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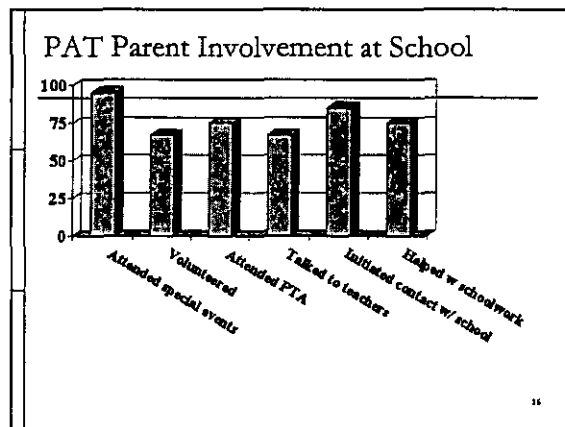
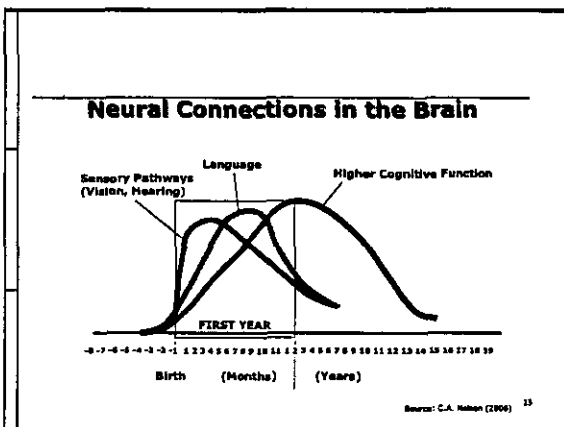
Legislative Priority

- Imagination Library 2009-10
 - 32 communities participating
 - 7,594 children enrolled March 2010
 - Funds allocated for 10,192 children
 - 1,500 children have already "graduated"
 - Kuskokwim Educational Foundation funding books in all 10 villages
 - Funding from Rasmuson Foundation, Dept. of Education & Early Development, ConocoPhillips, The CIRI Foundation, multitude of individuals and local businesses
 - 49,670 Alaska children under 5

12




- ### Legislative Priority
- Early Childhood Home Visitation Programs
 - Increase parent knowledge of early childhood development beginning at birth
 - Promote early literacy experiences
 - Improve parenting practices
 - Prevent child abuse and neglect
 - Provide early detection of developmental delays and health issues
 - Increase children's readiness to succeed in school
 - Increased parent involvement in school
- 14



- ### Legislative Priority
- Alaska Parents as Teachers 2008-09
 - 11 programs funded through federal grants
 - 47 communities served
 - 910 families served
 - 1,112 children served
 - 74 prenatal women served
 - 14 homeless families served
 - 762 children received developmental screenings with 162 found to need further evaluation
 - 336 families linked to other services
- 17

- ### Head Start/Early Head Start
- Comprehensive school readiness program providing educational, health, nutritional social and other support services
 - Eligibility criteria based on income level and poverty of access designation
 - Models of service include classroom and home visitation
 - Parents as partners in program design, implementation and evaluation
-
- 18

Alaska Head Start Association (AHSA)




- An Overview of Head Start in Alaska
 - 16 Head Start Grantees across the state
 - Providing services in over 100 communities
 - Serving over 3,500 children and employing over 950 staff members
 - Funded by Federal and State grants

19

2008-2009 Alaska Head Start Summary Report


- 276 children identified as needing medical treatment
- 515 children identified as needing dental treatment
- 77 children identified as needing mental health services
- 379 children identified as having special needs
- 781 parents referred for emergency/crisis intervention services
- 1119 parents requested parenting information
- \$27,744 – Average pay for a BA degreed Head Start Teacher in Alaska



Alaska Head Start Association (AHSA)


Legislative Priorities: Head Start & DKC

- AHSA Critical Issues 2010
 - Inflation proof current state investment in Head Start to prevent reduction of children served
 - Increase state investment in Head Start to expand services and address critical infrastructure needs such as facilities
 - Develop a comprehensive statewide plan to enhance service delivery and minimize duplication
 - Dedicate workforce development funds
 - Increase income eligibility guidelines for Denali Kid Care




thread, AK early care & ed connection

"the common thread" that ties together statewide support for families, early educators and Alaska communities




- Linked 7,600 families with referrals
- Educated 2,500 professionals
- Guided 200 programs to best practice
- Served 58 communities throughout AK



Alaskan Children With Working Parents

- In AK 60,000 children under age 6
- Of those 40,000 children have all of their parents in the workforce
- In AK less than 24,000 licensed or approved spaces in child care, head start, preschools



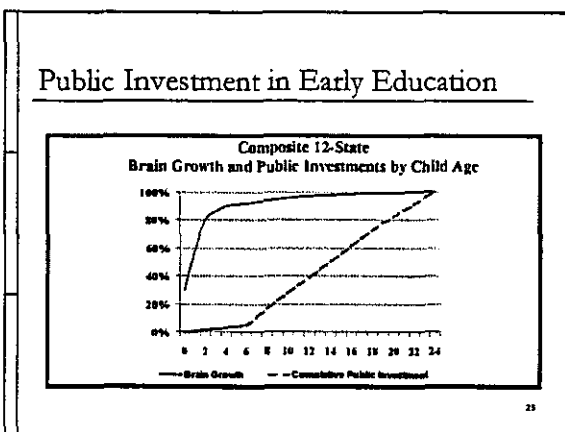
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Challenges for many families...

- The average rate for Infant and Toddler care between \$500- \$1000 per month
- Most programs spend 70-80% of their budgets on Personnel Expenses
- Early Educators make an average of \$9/hour and turnover is 46%

36% of households with children under age 6 reported work restrictions due to child care issues

21



Legislative Priority: Access to Quality Child Care:

- Goal: Provide lower income children the opportunity to access higher quality child care services through Child Care Assistance
 - Increase the reimbursement rate to the 75th percentile
 - Increase family eligibility to 85% of the state median income.

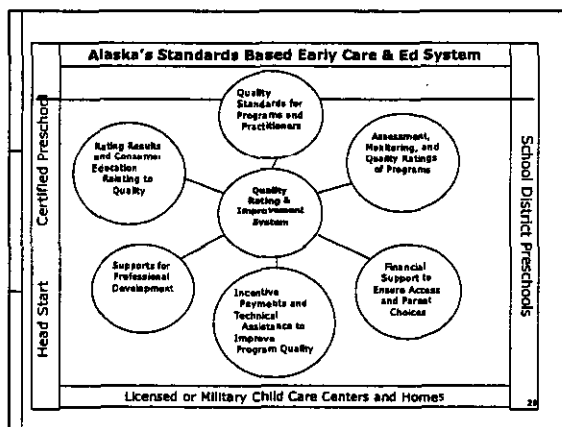
Family eligibility hasn't been changed since 2002

26

Legislative Priority: Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

- Helps parents make the best choices for their families
- Moves programs towards quality
- Provides outcome information for policy makers to assess different funding strategies

27



Legislative Priority: Professional Development & Retention of Workforce

Purpose of Priority:

- Decrease financial barriers to professional development opportunities
- Increase recruitment and retention in the early care and education field

Research indicates the biggest factor in the quality of a program and in improving child outcomes is the teacher education level

29

Alaska's Child Care Workforce

- Less than 10% of the child care workforce has a college degree
- National Accreditation standards and Head Start standards are moving towards a BA teacher in each classroom
- In Child Care with the average wage of \$9/hr and a 45% turnover rate additional support is needed to increase the qualifications of teachers

30

Alaska's Early Childhood Legislative Priorities 2010

- ❑ Denali Kid Care
- ❑ Head Start
- ❑ Home Visiting
- ❑ Early Childhood Partnerships
- ❑ Imagination Library
- ❑ Access to Quality Child Care
- ❑ Quality Rating and Improvement System
- ❑ Professional Development and Retention of Early Educators

21

For More Information ...

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| | ❑ Threadalaska.org |

22

Alaska Association for the Education of Young Children (AK AEYC)

- ❑ AK AEYC mission is to lead, facilitate, and support the efforts of those working in the early care and education profession throughout Alaska.
- ❑ Membership of almost 1,000 professionals in the field of early care and education



23

Alaska Head Start Association (AHSA)

- ❑ The Alaska Head Start Association
 - A membership organization comprised of
 - ❑ Parents
 - ❑ Staff members
 - ❑ Friends in the community
 - Purpose
 - ❑ To collectively advocate on issues affecting Alaska's Head Start children and families
 - Legislative Committee
 - ❑ Legislative Tracker
 - ❑ Develop position statements



Best Beginnings: Alaska's Early Childhood Investment

- ❑ A public-private partnership mobilizing people and resources to ensure all Alaska children begin school ready to succeed
 - Parents as a child's first and most important teacher
 - Quality, affordable, accessible early care and education programs for families who want them, wherever they live
 - Early learning a top priority for all Alaskans

25

thread, Alaska's CCR&R Network

Southcentral Office (formerly Child Care Connection)

- Provides statewide leadership and management of Network
 - ❑ Offices in Anchorage and Wasilla
 - ❑ Outreach staff in Kenai, Valdez, and Kodiak

Southeast Office (services provided by AEYC-SEA)

- ❑ Office in Juneau
- ❑ Outreach staff in Sitka, Petersburg, Ketchikan, Wrangell

Interior/Northern Office (formerly C.A.R.E.S.)

- ❑ Office in Fairbanks





PO Box 22870 · Juneau, AK 99802
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To lead, facilitate, and support the efforts of those working in the Early Care and Education profession throughout Alaska.

Child Care Assistance Position Paper
January 2010
Alaska Association for the Education of Young Children

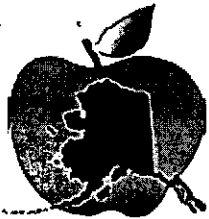
What is it and why is it important?

Affordability of quality child care is a major issue for many Alaskan working families. The average monthly cost of full-time child care ranges from \$400-\$900 per month, depending on the age of the child and location of the care. 39,400 children under the age of six live in households where all available parents are in the workforce. Yet only 3,800 children received child care assistance in 2009.

- In Alaska, funds from the Child Care & Development Fund (CCDF) are used to subsidize the cost of child care for low income families to enable them to work.
- Under federal rules, the Child Care Assistance Program can provide financial assistance to help cover child care costs to families whose income is less than 85% of the state's median monthly income.
- Thanks to support from the legislature, child care assistance reimbursement rates were raised to the 50th percentile in 2008. In 2010 the rates will increase for infants and toddlers to the 75th percentile. This will increase options for low income families that can not pay the difference between what programs charge and the state reimburses. The recommendation from the U.S. Health and Social Services is the 75th percentile.
- The family eligibility has not been adjusted since 2002. There are an increasing number of families that do not qualify for assistance, but still can't afford to enroll their child in a legal child care program.
- Economic cost-benefit studies consistently show significant long range benefits when children from low income families receive high quality child care. Due to the financial burden of paying a required co-payment amount, in addition to the difference in what the state will reimburse for child care, families are choosing from lower priced and usually lower quality child care.

Recommendations:

- Complete the child care assistance rate adjustment to include preschool and school age children at the 75% percentile. This will allow low income children the opportunity to access higher quality programs that will lead to outcomes such as increased school readiness, and fewer children left home alone after school.
- Increase family eligibility to 85% of the state median income. This will enable more families to access child care in order to work.



System for Early Education Development
Professional Development and Retention of Early Educators
(Public Policy Priority for 2010)

THE ISSUE

- The turnover rate for early care and education teachers in Alaska is approximately 46% (2003, Market Rate Survey). Teacher retention promotes attachment and quality relationships between young children and those who care for them which are crucial to optimal brain development and learning.
- Low wages and lack of financial resources for teacher's professional development impacts recruitment and retention of a qualified and stable workforce.
- Positive child outcomes are increased with higher levels of teacher preparation and formal education.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION OF EARLY EDUCATORS

- Three factors are positively associated with teacher quality: compensation, participation in professional development, and stability. Compensation appears to be the strongest predictor of classroom quality in child care centers (Kagan, et al., 2006). thread, Alaska's Child Care Resource and Referral Network, has the infrastructure to incentivize teachers with current credentials through the ROOTS (Retaining Our Outstanding Teacher) Awards. To impact retention, these awards must be calculated and distributed at significant levels that follow the SEED Professional Framework. Formal evaluation has shown that compensation programs have demonstrated considerable increased retention rates in states where initiatives exist.
- Scholarship type programs can reduce financial barriers to further education and training for teachers. thread provides up to \$500 per year for qualified education expenses for early educators working in licensed programs. Increasing these annual awards an additional \$500 would facilitate the completion of additional professional development and improve the quality of early care and education for Alaska's children.
- Research has consistently shown that higher levels of provider education and training are associated with more positive and stimulating teacher behavior resulting in more positive child outcomes. Education and training that increase positive interactions between adults and children impacts multiple areas of development (Pianta, 2006; Ramey et al., 2008).

ACTION NEEDED

- \$1.5 million to increase professional development opportunities for early educators and to provide financial incentives to increase retention in the early education field

Connected with thread.

Rationale for Alaska SEED ROOTS Awards

The Alaska 2009 Child Care Market Rate Survey with 395 respondents provides data that supports the need for wage increases tied to increased professional development. The majority (81%) of responding programs report needing to hire new staff from once every month to 2-3 times per year and 61% of all providers report hiring and retaining qualified staff as "very difficult." Responses to questions about challenges with staff retention include lack of qualifications/education as the number one factor with lack of ability to offer benefits as second. Center/group home providers reported to hire and retain qualified caregivers requires on average \$12.50 per hour.

Other national programs such as WAGES has produced the following recent outcomes:

- The annual turnover rate was 15% for WAGES® Project participants, far less than the pre-program statewide turnover rate of 31% per year and less than the current statewide turnover rate of 24%.
- Sixty percent (64%) of WAGES® Project participants indicated that they had taken college level coursework since applying to the Child Care WAGES® Project and 86% plan to do so in the future.
- Eighteen percent (19%) of WAGES® Project participants moved up a level on the supplement scale due to continued education.

To increase early educators' wages from the statewide average of \$ 11 per hour (2008, wage survey, Alaska Department of Labor) to the desired \$12 per hour would require the following increases. Each tier is tied to incremental educational attainment with a 60% increase for each one. Calculations are based on the current professional development of the early childhood field to include child care and Head Start.

TIER I: Child Development Associate Level (used SEED level 6 & 7) includes CDA and unrelated AA with credits or Occupational Endorsement	223	223 x \$2080= \$463,840
TIER II: AA/AAS Level (used SEED levels 8 &9) includes related AA and ECE AA and unrelated BA	119	119 x \$3328=\$396,032
TIER III: BA/BS/MA Level (used SEED levels 9, 10, &11) related BA, unrelated BA with ECE credits, BA in ECE, & MA	129	129x \$5324=\$686,796

TOTAL:

\$1,546,668

Investing in Alaska's Young Children



Alaska Early Care and Education: Public Policy Priorities for 2010

Denali Kid Care: Increase the income eligibility guidelines for Denali Kid Care (DKC) from 175% to a minimum of 200% of Alaska's federal poverty level (FPL). This change would restore eligibility to 1,300 children and 225 pregnant women. Children with access to preventative health care and developmental screenings have better outcomes for health and learning abilities throughout their lives.

Head Start: Increase State investment in Head Start to: expand services, address critical infrastructure needs, and keep existing slots from being reduced to due to rising costs. Provide workforce development funds to enable Alaskan Head Start staff to meet federal teacher qualification requirements.

Home Visiting: Establish research-based voluntary early childhood home visiting programs in Alaska, such as *Parents as Teachers*, with universal access for families with children prenatal up to kindergarten entry. Such programs increase parent knowledge of child development, improve parenting practices, promote early literacy experiences, provide early detection of developmental delays and health issues, and increase children's school readiness and school success. Through these preventative programs, future costs such as special education and remedial education have been shown to be reduced.

Best Beginnings: Support community-based **Early Childhood Partnerships** and **Imagination Library**. This leverages funding from the private sector and helps support the public-private partnership working to create and sustain a comprehensive statewide early childhood system. **Early Childhood Partnerships** provide a statewide coordinated network and structure necessary to move decisions closer to those being served, pinpoint actual needs, respond to cultural considerations, and ensure the best outcomes for young children in every community. **Imagination Library** mails a book per month to Alaska children from birth to age 5. Research shows that children who have not developed some basic literacy skills by the time they enter school are three to four times more likely to drop out in later years. Too many Alaska children, about 40%, are entering kindergarten without those skills. This program makes a difference by bringing quality books into the home, engaging young children and their families in early literacy activities.

Access to Quality Child Care: Increase child care reimbursement rates to the 75th percentile. This allows low-income children the opportunity to access higher quality programs, resulting in outcomes such as increased school readiness. Increase family eligibility to 85% of the state median income. This will enable the state to quantify and respond to support for families to enter or remain in the workforce.

Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS): Implement phase one of QRIS in Alaska. A QRIS is an organized method to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education settings outside the home. The system would provide a roadmap for individual early learning programs to improve their quality of care, thereby increasing parent access to a larger supply of quality options. The system would provide greater accountability for policy makers who govern public investments in Alaska's early care and education system and would ensure that publicly funded Pre-K services can be delivered through a variety of delivery systems that meet the needs of parents.

Professional Development and Retention of Early Educators: Provide funding to thread, **Alaska's Child Care Resource and Referral Network**, to increase the current Individual Reimbursement Awards (IRF's) for college child development courses, and reinstate the ROOTS (Retaining Our Outstanding Teacher) Awards to recognize and incentivize teachers with credentials in early education. There is a direct relationship between teacher preparation and quality of early care and education for children. It is difficult for individuals working full-time and earning low wages to afford the cost of education. In addition, due to low wages and lack of recognition, the teacher turnover rate in Alaska in early care and education programs is approximately 46%. By providing these incentives, the early care and education field would be able to recruit and retain a more qualified and stable workforce.

These priorities are recommendations articulated in no particular order. The recommendations are meant to assist public policy leaders in developing a system of early learning to promote school readiness, strong families, and a strong workforce. These are advanced by a coalition of early childhood advocates working together to support young children.



The Alaska Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread, has a mission to advance the quality of early education and child development by empowering parents, educating child care professionals and collaborating with our communities.

www.threadalaska.com



Best Beginnings is a public-private partnership that mobilizes people and resources to ensure all Alaska children begin school ready to succeed through support from businesses, foundations, nonprofits, government, and individuals.

www.bestbeginningsalaska.org



The Alaska Association for the Education of Young Children's mission is to lead, facilitate, and support the effort of those working in the Early Care and Education profession throughout Alaska.

www.akaeyc.org



The Alaska Head Start Association is a membership organization providing a united voice of advocacy and leadership on issues affecting Alaska's Head Start children and families.

www.akheadstart.org



The Alaska Infant Learning Professional Association-AILPA is a member organization to advocate for and support high quality early interventions services for infants and toddlers with special needs and their families.



BEST BEGINNINGS

Alaska's Early Childhood Investment

Early Childhood Partnerships

Request

- \$1 million FY11 to support early childhood partnerships
- Funds would pay for grants to partnerships established in FY10, enabling them to begin work on locally identified priorities and their two-year strategic plans. Funding would also support technical assistance and start up of three to four new partnerships.

Rationale

- Current services and programs are like a jigsaw puzzle with mismatched pieces. There are gaps, overlap, and lack of coordination. People at the local level are in the best position to identify problems, design solutions, and improve coordination to meet local needs.
- Effective local organizations have been recognized in state and national studies as essential to building effective statewide systems.

Accomplished to date

- In July 2009, Best Beginnings awarded one-year grants to nine communities to form early childhood partnerships or support partnerships already established.
- Communities represented in the partnerships are home to 39,000 children under age 5. That's about 78% of all children birth to age 5 in Alaska.
- Partnerships create opportunities for local people from varied interests and backgrounds to improve services and resources for young children.
- Core funding from the state and private sector has been leveraged in local communities, resulting in \$133,000 in cash and in-kind contributions.
- Partnerships are assessing needs and assets in their communities, developing priorities, and building strategic plans. The results will be improved coordination of services, better access for families, and communities that are very engaged in meeting the needs of young children.

Longer term goals

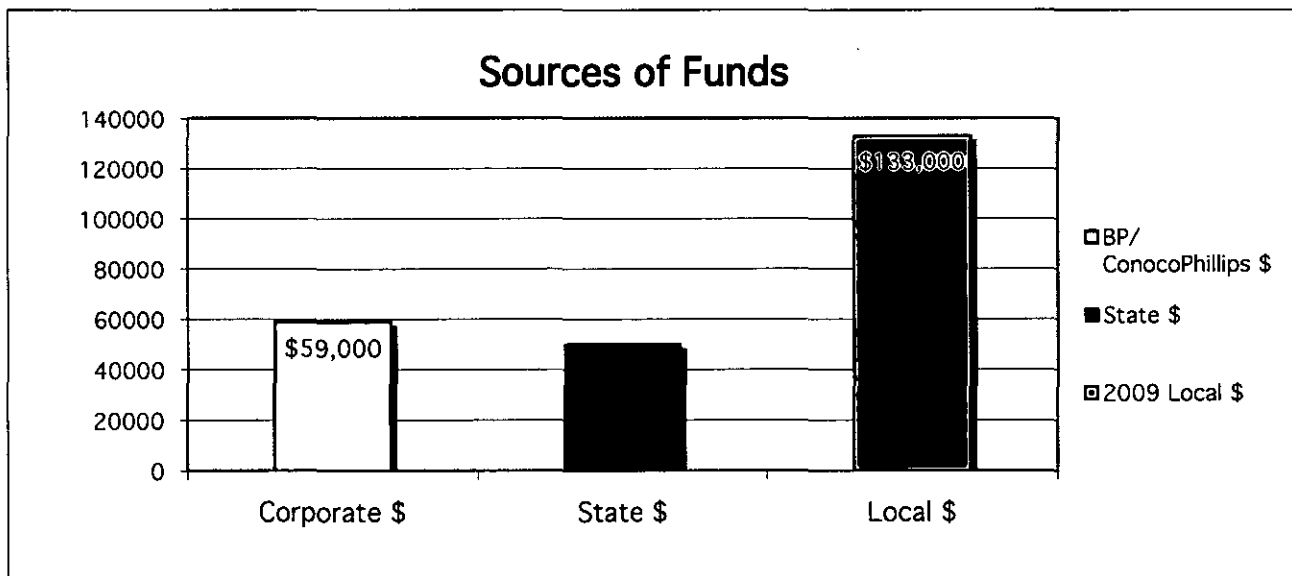
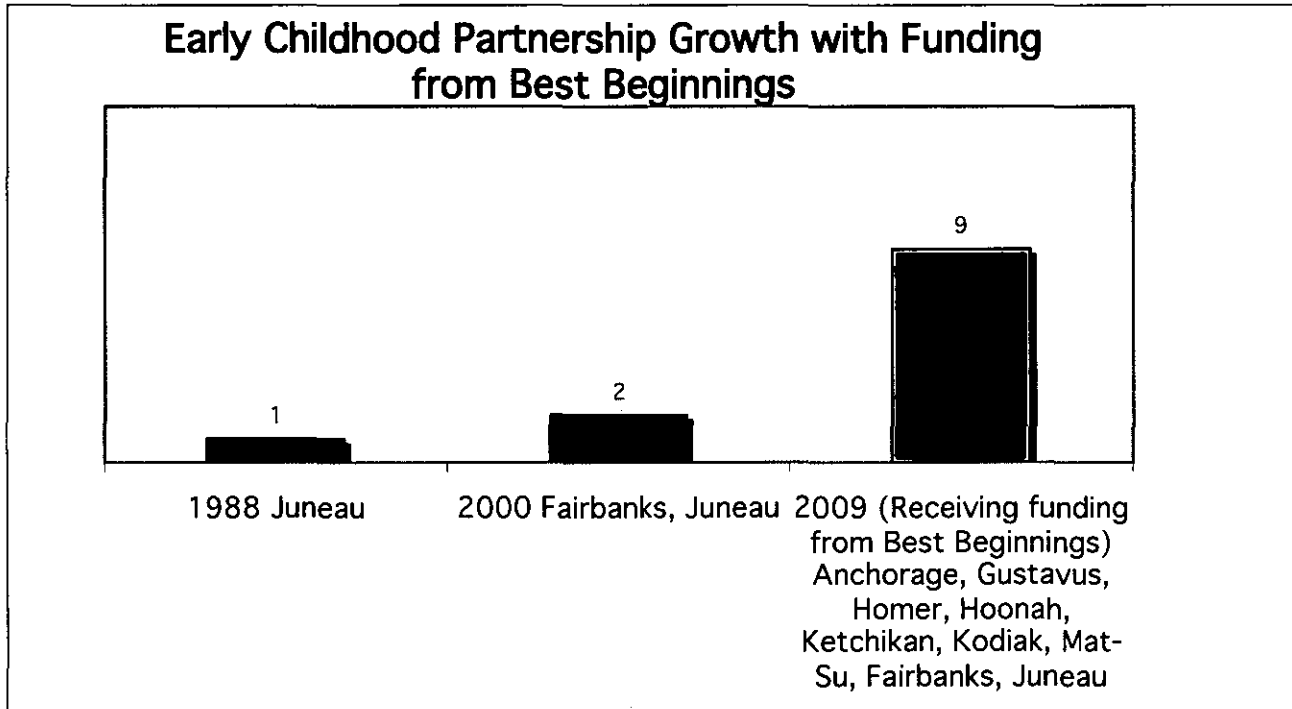
- Organize and mobilize early childhood partnerships all over Alaska.
- Develop a coordinated system of early childhood programs and services.
- "Delegate" to people in communities responsibility for identifying programs and systems that work well, where gaps exist, and how best to respond to local needs.
- Form a network of effective community and regional organizations that support comprehensive early childhood services. Such networks and a comprehensive systems-wide approach have been strongly recommended by state and national studies as key to meeting the needs of babies and young children.
- Children begin school prepared to succeed.



BEST BEGINNINGS

Alaska's Early Childhood Investment

BEST BEGINNINGS EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIPS





BEST BEGINNINGS

Alaska's Early Childhood Investment

Imagination Library

Request

- \$400,000 for FY11 to expand Imagination Library, which mails a free book every month to enrolled children, birth to age 5.
- Requested funds would expand the program to cover at least 14,000 Alaska children, about 28% of all children under 5. Leveraged local and private funding would increase the number of children served.

Rationale

- About 40% of Alaska children begin school unprepared to succeed. Alaska's dropout rate is among the highest in the nation.
- Early literacy is a key indicator of how a child will fare in school and in life. Children who have not developed some basic literacy skills *by the time they enter school* are three to four times more likely to drop out in later years.
- Imagination Library helps children develop the literacy skills they'll need to succeed ... in their own homes, with their families.
- Imagination Library in Alaska has grown by leaps and bounds since Best Beginnings became involved. Best Beginnings provides technical assistance and funds to launch Imagination Library in new communities and to continue and expand the program in communities already participating.

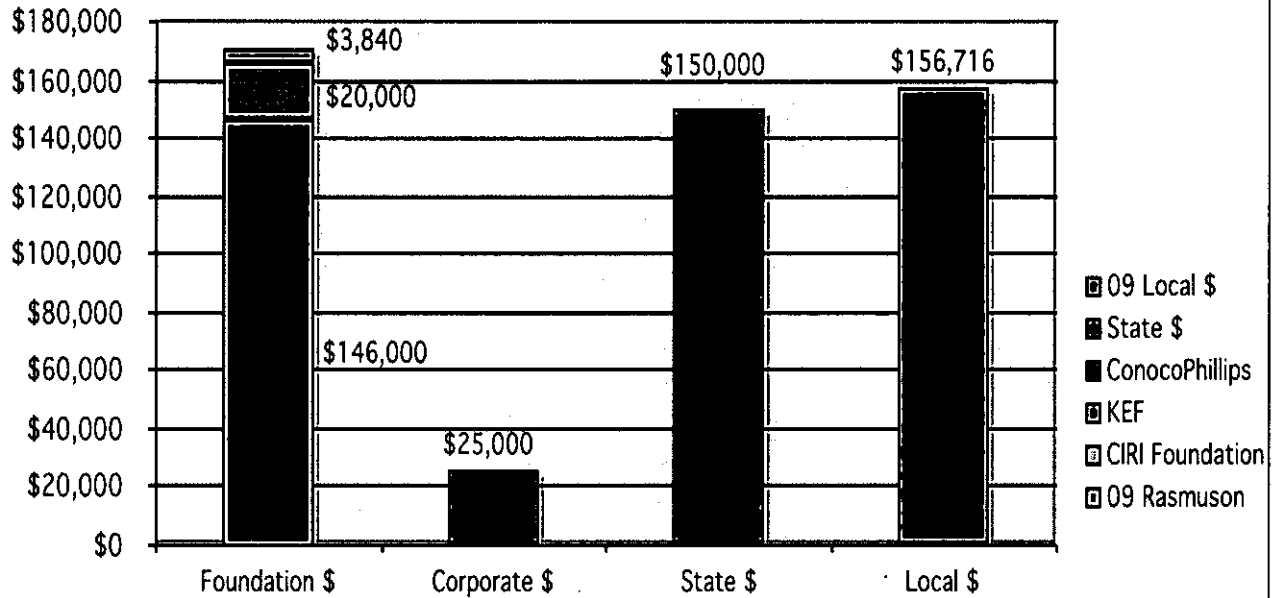
Accomplished to date

- Children impacted: Through the efforts of Best Beginnings and its partners, funds have been allocated to enroll 10,192 children in 32 communities. More than 1,500 additional children have graduated from the program when they turned 5.
- Private and local support: In most communities, volunteers raise funds locally to match grants from Best Beginnings. Best Beginnings has received major grants for Imagination Library from the private sector, foundations, and the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development. To date, \$471,130 has been contributed in private and local support. The total will rise further later this year when local contributions begin matching a second Rasmuson Foundation grant (for 2010 and 2011) of \$150,000.

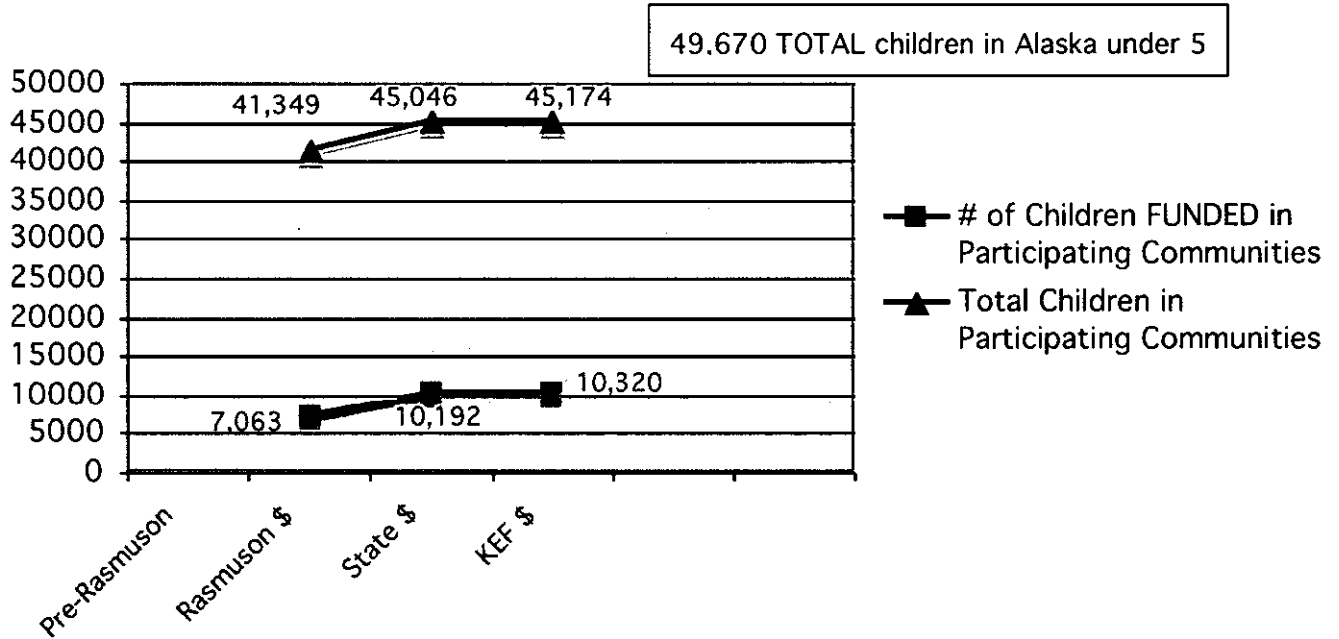
Longer term goals

- Fully subsidize Imagination Library in communities with very limited resources.
- Enroll at least 80% of the children under age 5 in the current Imagination Library communities.
- Expand to additional communities so that every Alaska child, birth to age 5, would be eligible for Imagination Library.

SOURCES OF FUNDS & DOLLARS LEVERAGED

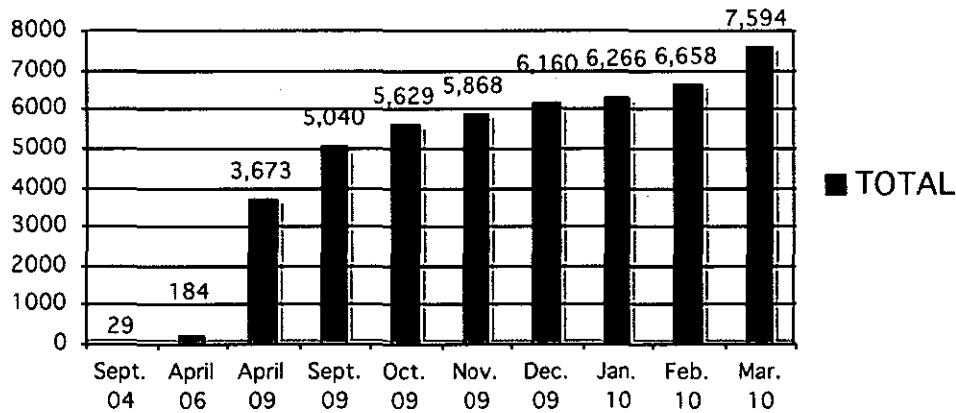


NUMBERS OF CHILDREN FUNDED vs TOTAL CHILDREN

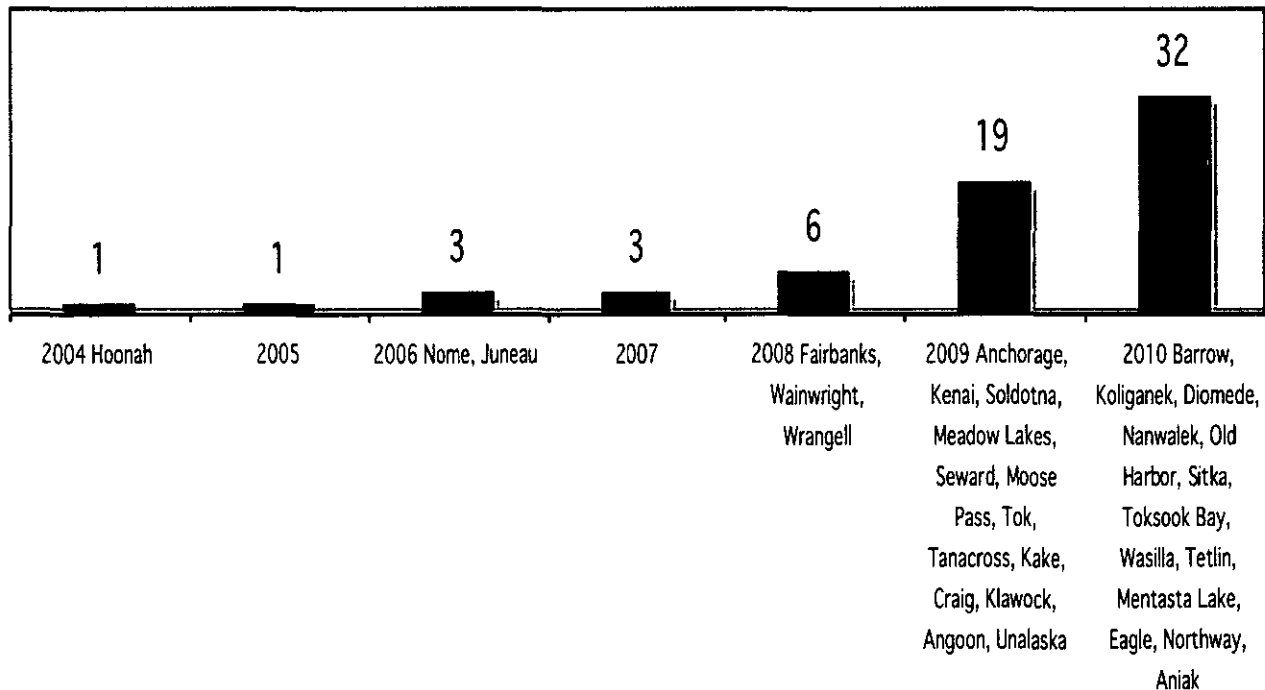


Imagination Library Enrollments (# of Children)

Affiliate	Apr 09	Sept 09	Oct 09	Nov 09	Dec 09	Jan 10	Feb 10	Mar 10
Anchorage		834	1,105	1,304	1,514	1,600	1,818	2,340
Fairbanks	2,738	2,824	2,951	2,962	2,986	2,974	2,957	2,942
Juneau	800	977	1,003	1,000	1,024	1,029	1,038	1,056
Kenai		--	106	105	104	120	213	198
Koliganek								17
Kuskokwim								31
Mat-Su		44	70	82	88	88	166	502
Nome	135	160	160	158	171	174	171	184
Old Harbor							15	15
Seward		112	145	165	175	175	176	181
Tok		54	51	55	61	65	65	92
Unalaska		35	38	37	37	41	39	36
Total	3,673	5,040	5,629	5,868	6,160	6,266	6,658	7,594



Communities Adding Imagination Libraries





Early Childhood Home Visitation Programs

Parents are their children's first and most influential teachers. Voluntary home visiting programs serving families with children prenatal up to kindergarten entry provide the information, support, and encouragement parents need to help their children develop optimally during the crucial early years of life. Such programs increase parent knowledge of early childhood development, improve parenting practices, promote early literacy experiences, provide early detection of developmental delays and health issues, and increase children's school readiness and school success. Through these preventative programs, future costs such as special education and remedial education, have been shown to be reduced.

- In Alaska, many children entering kindergarten are underprepared for school. Children who begin school behind rarely catch up later on and are less likely to graduate from high school, attend college, or acquire the skills necessary to obtain a job that pays a living wage.
- Alaska's graduation rate according to the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development is around 65%. The lack of school readiness at kindergarten has been linked with low graduation rates.
- Research has shown that children experience the best outcomes when quality pre-kindergarten experiences include research based home visiting programs that involve parents. Often cited research concerning the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project and the Chicago Child Parent Centers preschools both included strong home visitation components. A recent study of Parents as Teachers, a voluntary research based home visiting program for families with children prenatal up to kindergarten entry, showed when preschool programs are coupled with Parents as Teachers participation, children are more prepared for kindergarten with those gains sustained at third grade. Furthermore, the achievement gap between children from low income families and those from middle class families was eliminated.
- Research has also indicated families involved with home visitation programs such as Parents as Teachers are more involved in their children's later school experiences, leading to more positive outcomes for their children's education.

Recommendations:

Establish research based voluntary early childhood home visiting programs in Alaska, such as Parents as Teachers, open to interested families with young children prenatal up to kindergarten entry. Establishment of such programs is an investment in the young children of Alaska and their families, with a wide range of positive outcomes for years to come.

For more information on Parents as Teachers, contact Lisa Danielson, Parents as Teachers Alaska State Coordinator at ldanielson@ruralcap.com or 907-865-7334.



What is Parents as Teachers?

Parents as Teachers is:

- A parent education and family support program serving families through out pregnancy until their child enters kindergarten. Services to families include personal visits, group socialization opportunities with other families, developmental screenings to ensure a child's development is on track, and referrals to other services as appropriate.
- Designed to enhance child development and school achievement through parent education.
- A free voluntary program for families.

Why Parents as Teachers?

- Research has clearly shown that the early years are critical in a child's development and lay the foundation for success in school and in life.
- Parents are the most influential people in their children's lives; they are their children's first teachers. If we want to make a positive difference in the lives of children, we must make an impact with their parents.
- Extensive analysis by economists has shown that investing in effective early childhood programs, such as Parents as Teachers, produces great returns. These returns benefit the community through reduced crime, welfare and educational remediation.

Why Focus on the Years Before School Starts?

- Brain development that takes place before age 1 is rapid and extensive; the influence of the early environment on brain development is long lasting.
- Developmental "windows of opportunity" are periods of time when children are especially adept at learning specific skills including:
 - Motor skills such as turning over, walking, drawing;
 - Sensory skills such as seeing and hearing;
 - Communication skills including language; and
 - Social skills such as playing and interacting with other children.
- During these windows of opportunity, it is important to provide positive experiences for young children at the appropriate times to ensure optimal development.

Why Focus on the Parent?

- Parent education helps parents to understand what to expect during each stage of development and how to promote the best development in their child.
- Research shows that parental involvement in their child's learning is linked to the development of the child's academic skills, including reading and writing.

How is Parents as Teachers Adapted for Alaska?

- The majority of Parents as Teachers programs in Alaska hire people from within the communities being served to be trained as Parent Educators. This helps to ensure the people presenting the curriculum have a solid understanding of the community and the local culture.
- Alaska has its own Nationally Certified Parents as Teachers Curriculum Training Team. These trainers reside in Alaska and are experienced in providing Parents as Teachers services to families from a wide range of cultural backgrounds.
- Parent Educators are trained to adapt activities from the Parents as Teachers Curriculum to reflect the local community and culture of the family.
- Visits are provided in the family's home language.

What Outcomes has Parents as Teachers Achieved?

- At age 3, children who have been enrolled in Parents as Teachers are more advanced in language, social development, problem solving and other cognitive abilities.
- Children enrolled in Parents as Teachers score higher on kindergarten readiness tests.
- Children who participate in Parents as Teachers score higher standardized measures of reading, math and language in grades first through fourth.
- Parents who participate in Parents as Teachers are more confident about their parenting skills.
- Parents who participate in Parents as Teachers are involved in their child's education beginning at birth and they maintain this involvement in their child's schooling. Parent involvement has been shown to be a key component of a child's success in school.

For more information on Parents as Teachers, contact Lisa Danielson, Parents as Teachers Alaska State Coordinator at ldanielson@ruralcap.com or 907-865-7334.

PARENTS AS TEACHERS ALASKA

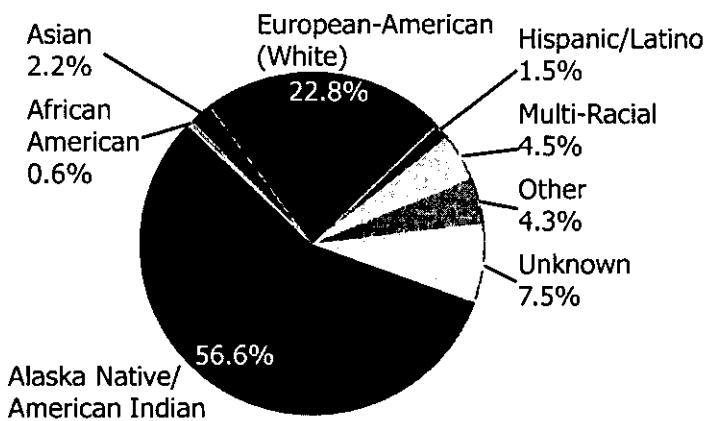
2009 FACT SHEET



Parents as Teachers (PAT) is an evidence based international home visitation program dedicated to providing parent education services to families with children prenatal to five years of age through home visits and group meetings.



ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN SERVED



2009 HIGHLIGHTS

Services for Children and Families 2008-2009:

- ❖ 47 communities served
- ❖ 910 families served
- ❖ 1,112 children served
- ❖ 74 prenatal women served
- ❖ 14 homeless families were served
- ❖ 629 Alaska Native/American Indian children served
- ❖ 762 children received developmental screenings with 162 found to need further evaluation
- ❖ 336 families linked to other services

Percentages of Enrolled Children by Agency/Organization:

- ❖ 21% school districts
- ❖ 71% non-profit organizations
- ❖ 7% military programs

Professional Development:

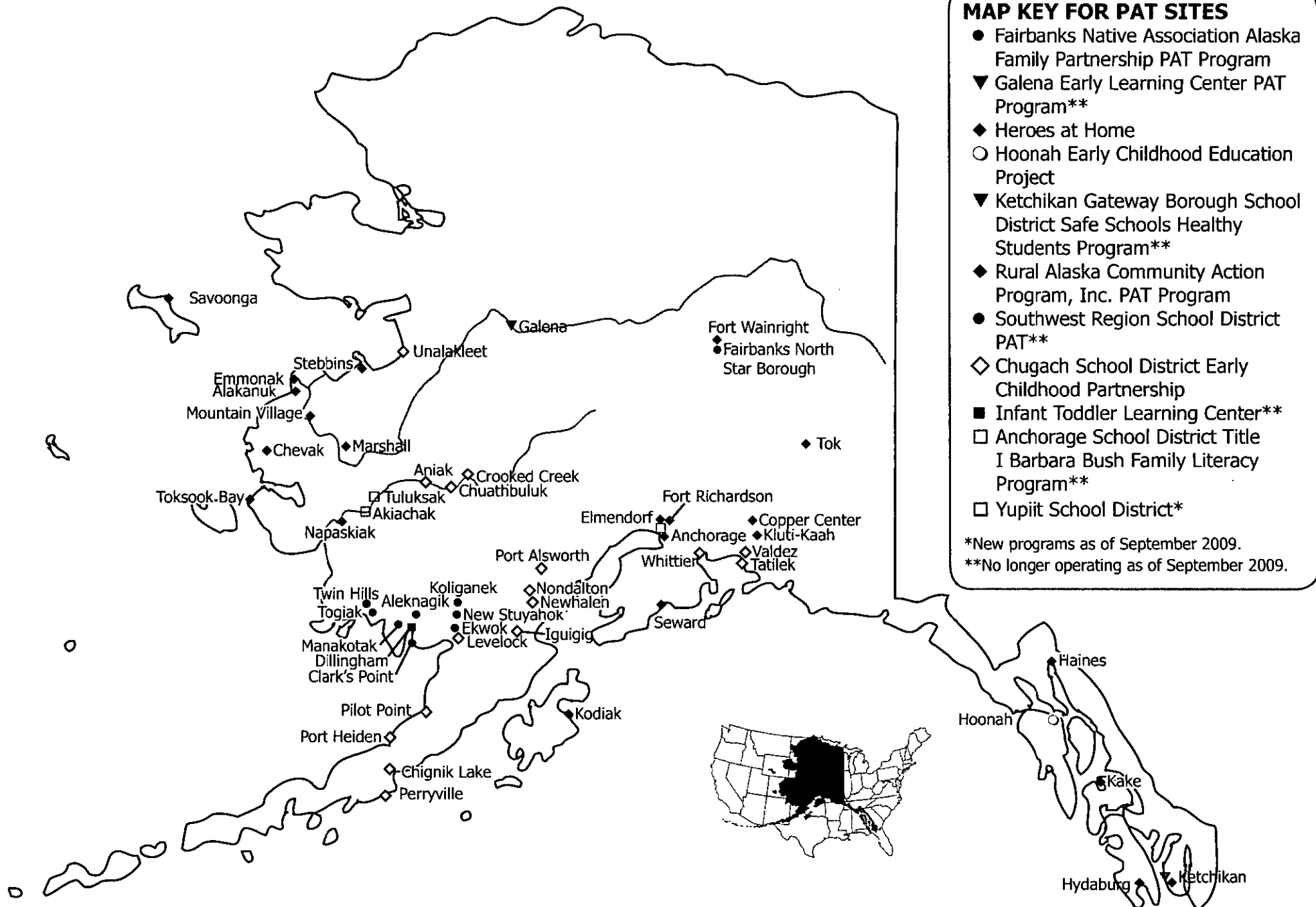
- ❖ Trained and certified 43 Parent Educators and 9 supervisors in the Prenatal to 3 Years Curriculum
- ❖ Certified and trained 37 Parent Educators in the 3 Years to Kindergarten Curriculum
- ❖ 419 participants from 60 Communities attended PAT workshops/training institutes

Parents as Teachers State Office:

Lisa Goneau-Danielson, c/o Rural CAP
PO Box 200908
Anchorage, AK 99520-0908
Phone (907) 865-7334
ldanielson@ruralcap.com

This information is provided by the PAT Alaska State Office. The PAT Alaska State Office is located within the Child Development Division of the Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc. and funded through the Alaska Parent Information and Resource Center. The role of the State Office is to plan and coordinate curriculum training institutes, conduct annual recertification, collate data for statewide reports and provide on-going communication and technical assistance for affiliated programs.

2009 PARENTS AS TEACHERS COMMUNITIES IN ALASKA





ALASKA HEAD START ASSOCIATION

Critical Issues 2010



- **INCREASE STATE OF ALASKA INVESTMENT IN HEAD START BY \$3,500,000**

During the summer of 2008 the Alaska Head Start Association worked to put together a comprehensive two-year Head Start expansion plan to present to the Department of Education and Early Development. This plan called for \$2.5 million in new funding from the state of Alaska in FY 2010 and FY 2011 to enroll approximately 275 new children.

Another \$1.6 million was included for deferred maintenance and to assist grantees to maintain existing slots that would otherwise be eliminated due to increased operating costs. While AHSA appreciates the Legislature's appropriation of \$600,000 for Head Start expansion in FY 2010, this amount allowed grantees to enroll only 59 new children in three communities. In addition, programs across the state have struggled to maintain the same quality and quantity of services because appropriations have failed to keep pace with rising costs. Increased energy costs continue to be a serious concern for programs.

ACTION NEEDED: Increase Head Start funding by a total of \$3,500,000. This amount allows approximately 220 additional children to receive Head Start services, addresses critical infrastructure needs and prevents any reduction in the number of Head Start slots available in Alaska.

- **SUPPORT A COMPREHENSIVE STATE-WIDE PLAN TO ENSURE THAT ALL EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS AND SERVICES ARE COORDINATED AND COMPLEMENTARY**

The Alaska Head Start Association supports continuation and expansion of a Pilot Preschool Program. AHSA believes that the need for Early Childhood Education in our state far exceeds what our existing systems can provide. However, the association also believes that the state has a responsibility to ensure that all publicly funded systems, existing and new, are working together to provide services in a coordinated and complementary manner. Written agreements addressing eligibility, enrollment, and recruitment need to be in place between all early childhood systems that are providing services in a common area.

ACTION NEEDED: Ensure that a comprehensive state-wide plan addressing how early childhood services will be delivered is developed and implemented. Any new legislation should require written coordination agreements between early childhood systems to eliminate duplication or competition in early childhood service delivery.

- **DEDICATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FUNDS TO SUPPORT HEAD START TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS**

The “Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007” has established the following professional development requirements for Head Start:

- By September 30, 2011 100% of Head Start teachers must have an associates degree in early childhood education
- By September 30, 2013 50% of Head Start teachers nationwide must have a bachelor’s degree in early childhood or a bachelor’s degree and course work equivalent to major in early childhood education.
- By September 30, 2013 100% of Head Start Education Coordinators and Curriculum Specialists must have a bachelor’s degree.
- By September 30, 2013 100% of Head Start teaching assistants must have a CDA and be enrolled in a degree program.

Alaskan Head Start grantees have made significant progress over the past five years to try and meet the existing professional development requirements. However to meet these new requirements by the timeframes outlined we will need to have a coordinated statewide response. Obtaining degrees takes time, especially when staff are taking classes via distance delivery and working full time jobs. Often this means that early childhood educators are only able to take classes in the evenings and during the summer.

ACTION NEEDED: *The Department of Labor and Workforce Development should designate workforce development funds for early childhood education because it is an under-developed profession.*

- **SUPPORT INCREASED HEALTH CARE ACCESS FOR ALASKAN FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN**

The Alaska Head Start Association strongly supports an increase in funding for the Denali KidCare Program. By taking this action our state will restore and expand eligibility criteria for health care coverage for the children of Alaska’s working families. The primary goal of Head Start is to make sure children are prepared for success as they enter their school years. A vital piece of this preparation is insuring that families have affordable, adequate health insurance coverage for their children, which Denali KidCare provides.

ACTION NEEDED: *Increase the income eligibility guidelines for Denali KidCare to at least 200% of Alaska’s federal poverty level.*

ALASKA HEAD START PROGRAMS

**Head Start Grantees and the Communities They Serve
2009-2010**

**Aleutian/Pribolof
Island Association**

50 children
King Cove-Y
Sand Point-N
Unalaska-Y
St. Paul-Y

**Association of
Village Council
Presidents**

221 children
Akiachak-Y
Bethel-N
Cherfornak-Y
Kalskag-Y
Kotlik-Y
Nightmute-Y
Quinhagak-Y
Russian Mission-Y
Scammon Bay-Y
Tuluksak-Y

**Bristol Bay
Native Association**

97 children
Dillingham-N
Manokotak-Y
Naknek-Y
New Stuyahok-Y
Togiak-N

**Central Council of
Tlingit & Haida
Indian Tribes
of Alaska**

262 children
Angoon-N
Craig-N
Douglas-N
Hoonah-N
Juneau-N
Klawock-Y
Petersburg-N
Saxman-Y
Sitka-N
Wrangell-N
Yakutat-N

CCS Early Learning

260 children
Chugiak-N
Eagle River-N
Meadow Lakes-N
Palmer-N
Wasilla-N

Chugachmiut

22 children
Nanwalek-N
Port Graham-Y
Seldovia-Y

**Council of
Athabaskan Tribes**

30 children
Arctic Village-N
Chalkyitsik-N
Circle-N
Fort Yukon-N
Venetie-N

**Fairbanks Native
Association**

263 children
Fairbanks-N

Kawerak

225 children
Brevig Mission-Y
Little Diomed-Y
Elim-Y
Gambell-Y
Golovin-Y
Koyuk-Y
Nome-N
Shishmaref-Y
St. Michael-Y
Shaktoolik-Y
Teller-Y
Wales-Y
White Mountain-Y

**Kenaitze Indian
Tribe IRA**

57 children
Kalifornisky Beach-N

Kenai-N
Soldotna-N
Nikiski-N

Kids' Corps, Inc.

352 children
Anchorage-N

**Metlakatla Indian
Community**

31 children
Metlakatla-N

**Play 'N Learn
Community HS**

126 children
Fairbanks-N
North Pole-N

RurAl CAP

823 children
Akiak-Y
Alakanuk-Y
Chevak-N
Emmonak-Y
Haines-Y
Homer-Y
Hooper Bay-N
Kake-Y
Ketchikan-Y
Kluti-Kaah-N
Kodiak-N
Kwethluk-Y
Marshall-Y
Mt. Village-Y
Napaskiak-Y
Nunapitchuk
Pilot Station-Y
St. Mary's-Y
Savoonga-Y
Selawik-Y
Stebbins-Y
Sterling-Y
Tanacross-Y
Toksook Bay-Y
Tok-Y
CDI Head Start
247 children
Anchorage -N

**Tanana Chiefs
Conference**

99 children
Fort Yukon-Y
Holy Cross-Y
Huslia-Y
Kaltag-Y
McGrath-Y
Minto-Y
Nenana-Y
Nulato-Y
Tetlin-Y
Tanana-Y

Y=Serving the majority
of eligible children

N=Not serving the ma-
jority of eligible children

Revised September, 2009



Support Brings Success!

Alaska Head Start Association
Why Head Start Matters



Alaska's Head Start programs prepare young children for success in school and life.

1. Head Start children are healthier than their peers from similar socio-economic backgrounds who are not enrolled in Head Start. Healthy children learn better.

FACTS*

(The following figures refer to Head Start only. Early Head Start is not included.)

- 78% of Alaska's Head Start children received health screenings that meet Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) standards. (EPSDT is Medicaid's well child check up program.) This compares to a 50% EPSDT medical screening rate for eligible 2-5 year olds statewide**.
- Of the 2,152 Head Start children who received health screenings, 356 were diagnosed as needing treatment for a variety of potentially serious conditions, including hearing & vision problems, anemia and asthma.

CONCLUSION

Without Head Start, we estimate that 100 or more children would enter kindergarten by 2009 with significant undiagnosed and untreated health problems.

**Based on federal 2007 Program Information Reports (PIR) for Alaska grantees.*

***For 2003, reported in the National Health Policy Forum issue brief #819, 11/20/2006.*

FACTS*

(The following figures refer to Head Start only. Early Head Start children are not included.)

- 88% of Alaska's Head Start children received dental exams. This compares to a 25% EPSDT dental screening rate for eligible 3-5 year olds statewide**.
- Of the 2,425 Head Start children who received dental exams, 586 were diagnosed as needing dental treatment. 376 of these children (64%) received treatment.

CONCLUSION

Without Head Start, we estimate that 270 or more children every year would live with untreated oral health needs. These conditions place a child's speech development, nutritional well-being, overall health and future oral health at risk.

**Based on federal 2007 Program Information Reports (PIR) for Alaska grantees.*

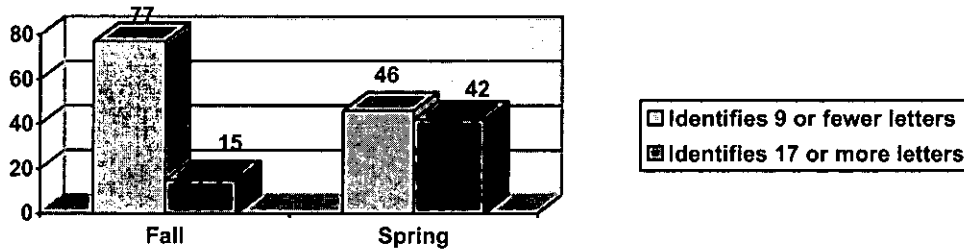
***For 2003, reported in the National Health Policy Forum issue brief #819, 11/20/2006.*

2. Participation in Head Start improves literacy and math skills for many children who are at risk of starting kindergarten behind their better off peers in these areas.

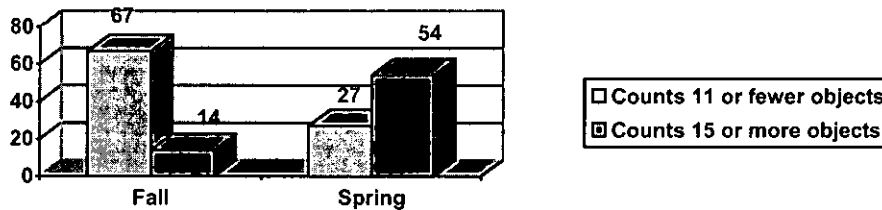
The following graphs are based on information taken from the National Head Start Reporting System (NRS) results of 11 Alaska grantees during the 2006-2007 program year. The NRS assesses only children who were going to kindergarten in 2007. The graphs include only those children assessed in both fall and spring—a total of 352 children in Region X programs and 329 children in AIAN programs.



**Letter Recognition
 (Percentages)**



**Early Math Skills
 (Percentages)**



Alaska's Head Start programs achieved results that approach national norms even though program characteristics differ from national averages in several significant ways.

- Alaska has fewer full day programs
- Alaska has fewer teachers with a Bachelor's degree

Program Characteristic	Alaska Program Averages	National Head Start Averages
Percentage of teachers with Bachelor's degree or higher	20%	44%
Percentage of children enrolled in full day programs	10%	53%

3. Participation in Head Start increases the likelihood that children with previously undiagnosed disabilities will receive diagnosis and therapy for their disability before they enter kindergarten.

FACTS*

(The following figures from the federal 2007 Program Information Report for Alaska grantees refer to Head Start only. Early Head Start children are not included.)

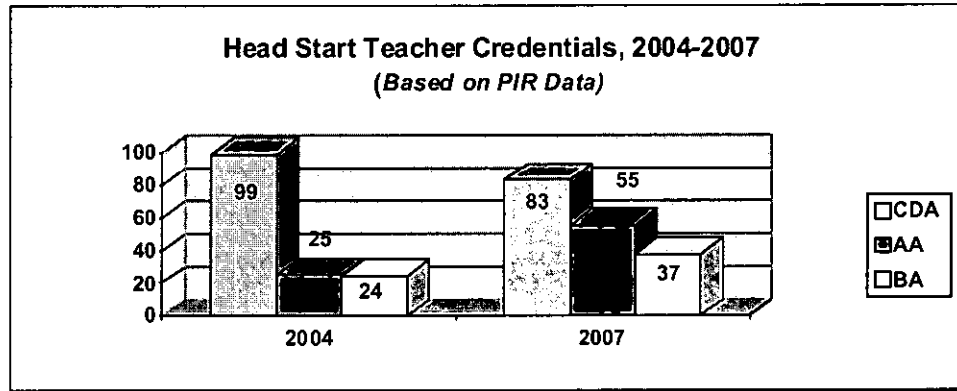
- 95% of Alaska's Head Start children received developmental screenings exams.
- Of the 2,600 Head Start children who received developmental screenings, 276 were eventually diagnosed with a disability.

CONCLUSION

Without Head Start, hundreds of Alaska's children would enter kindergarten every year with undiagnosed disabilities.



4. The quality of Head Start teachers continues to improve in spite of funding and distance learning challenges.



5. Head Start provides economic benefits for all of Alaska.

Federal Head Start grants injected over 27 million dollars into Alaska's economy in FY 2007. This sum does not include the many other sources of federal revenue, such as Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) reimbursements, which Head Start programs attract. This investment provides an important source of economic activity and employment in many of the rural communities listed on page one. For example, Head Start programs employed 927 people in 2006.

The Future of Head Start in Alaska

Many studies link high quality early child development programs to large and long term economic savings. We believe that the early intervention, health, and school readiness results described above testify to the high quality of Alaska's Head Start programs.