

2/24/10

PRESENTA-

TION:

BEST

BEGINNINGS

EARLY

CHILDHOOD

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
Alaska's Early Childhood Investment

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.

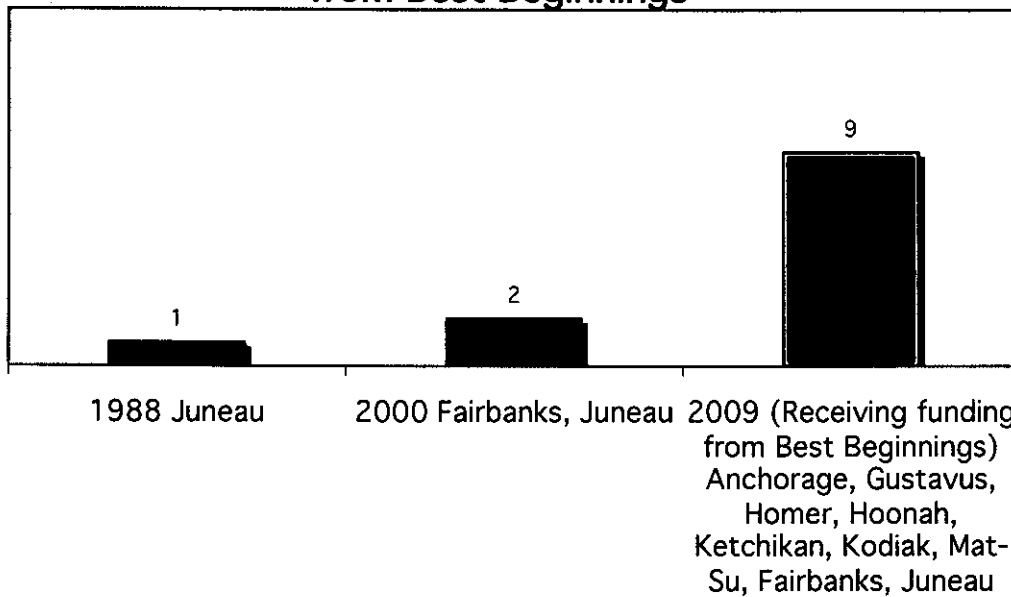


BEST BEGINNINGS

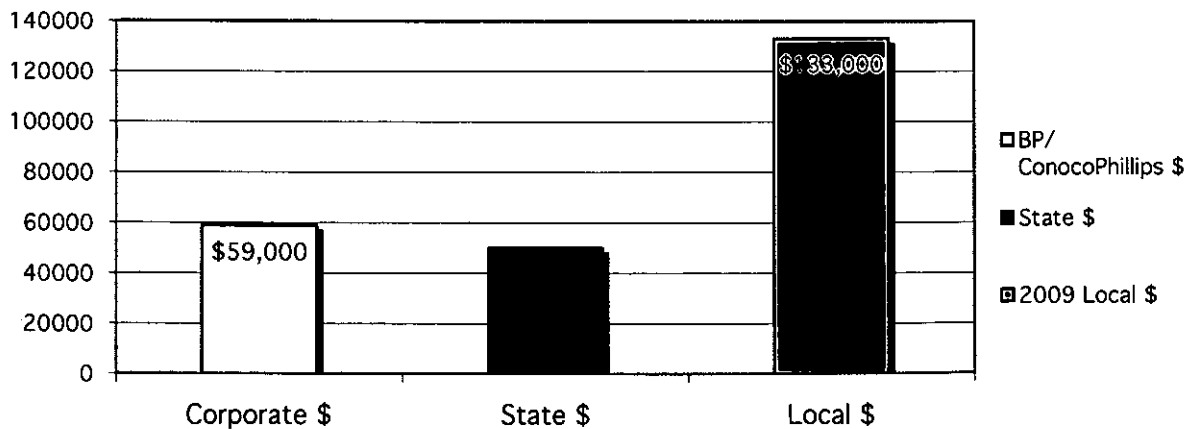
Alaska's Early Childhood Investment

BEST BEGINNINGS EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIPS

Early Childhood Partnership Growth with Funding from Best Beginnings



Sources of Funds





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.

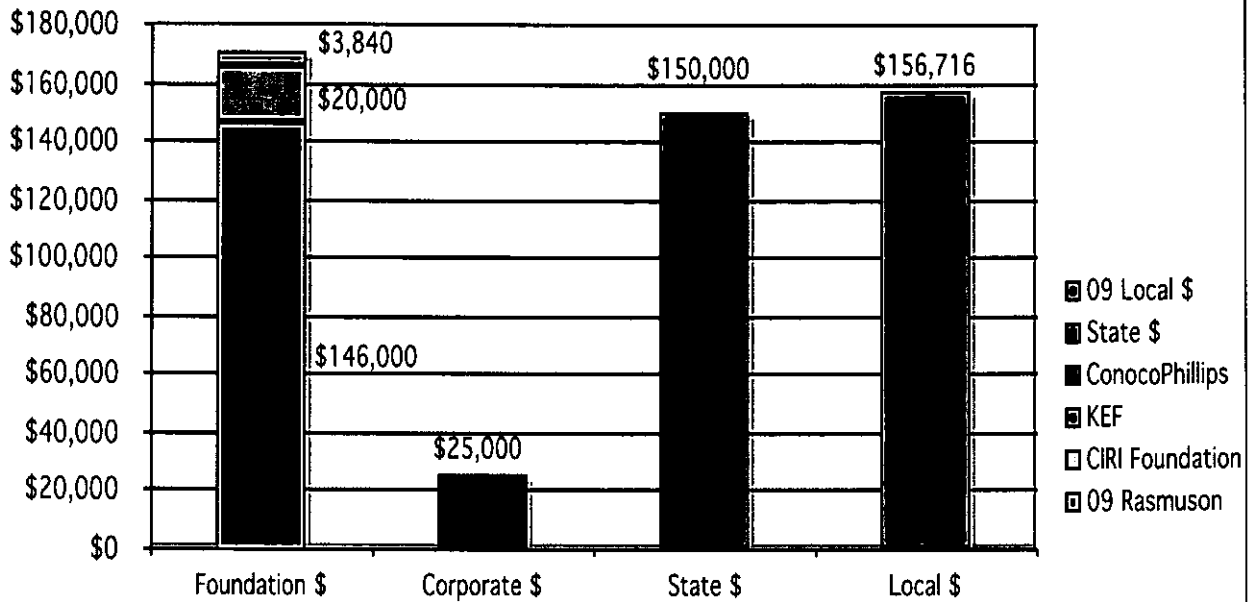
Accomplished to date

- 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.

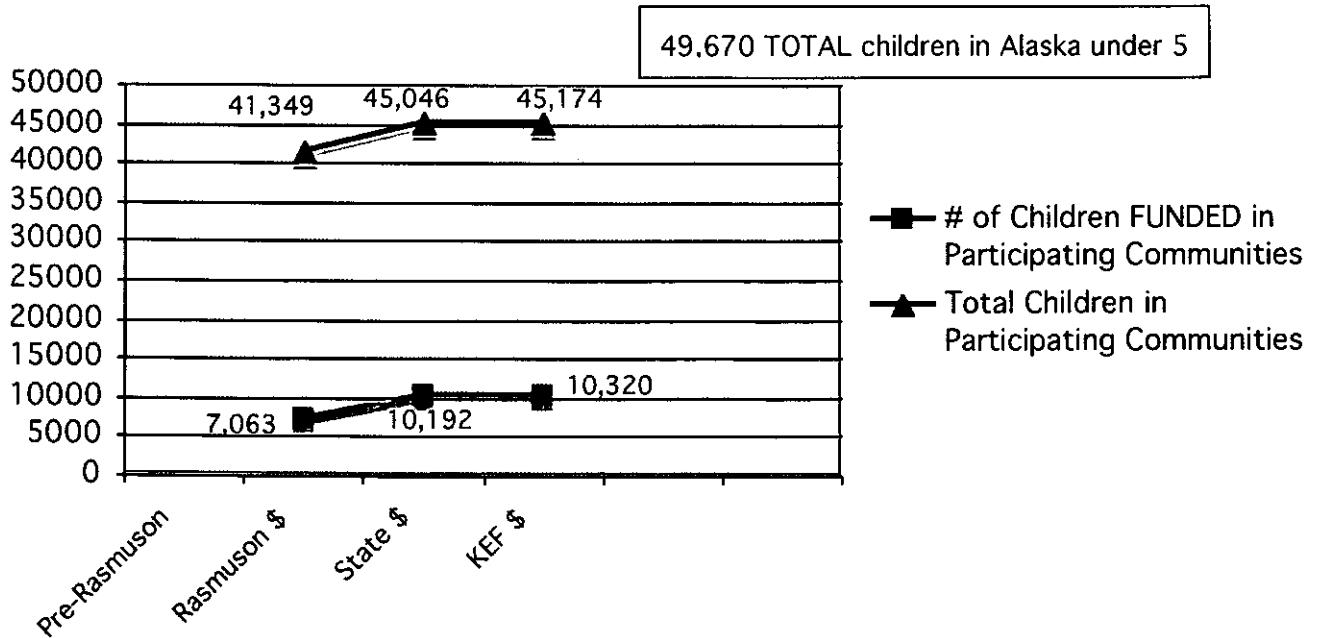
Longer term goals

- 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

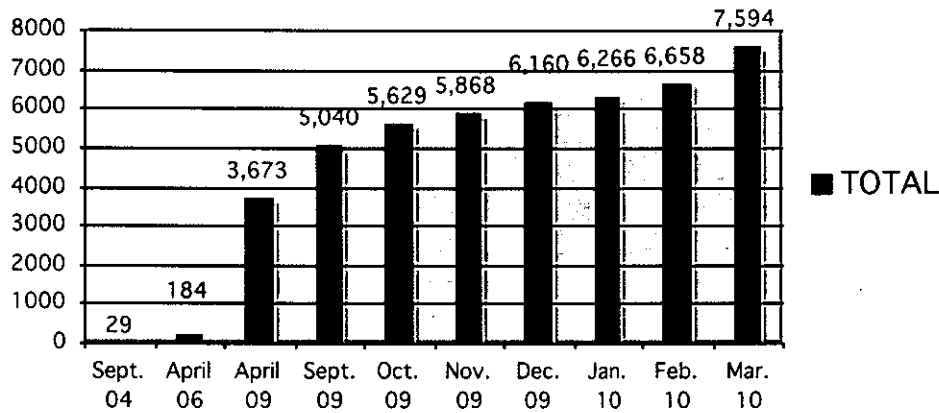


NUMBERS OF CHILDREN FUNDED vs TOTAL CHILDREN

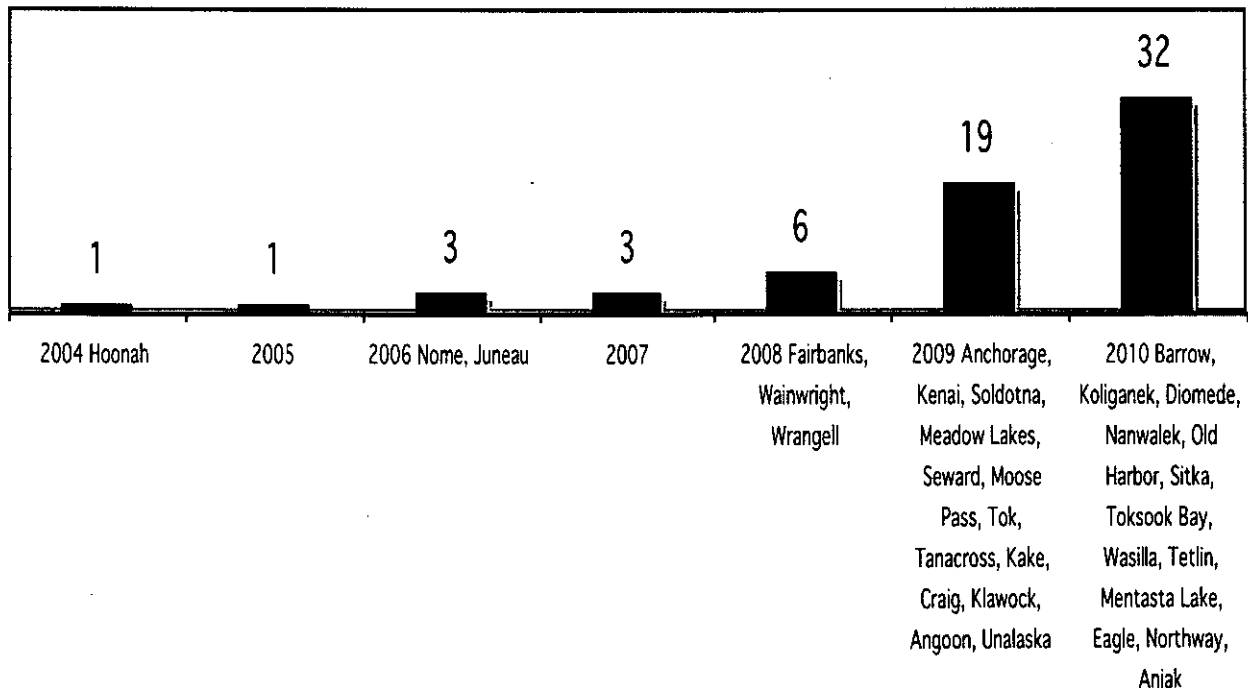


Imagination Library Enrollments (# of Children)

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



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!



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Legislative Priority

Early Childhood Partnership Growth with Funding through Best Beginnings

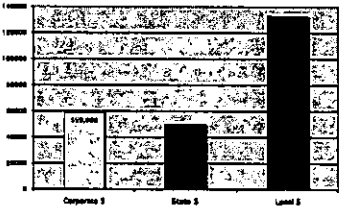


1982 Juneau 2000 Fairbanks, Juneau 2009 (Including funding from Best Beginnings) Anchorage, Gustavus, Homer, Homer, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Mt. Si, Fairbanks, Juneau

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Legislative Priority

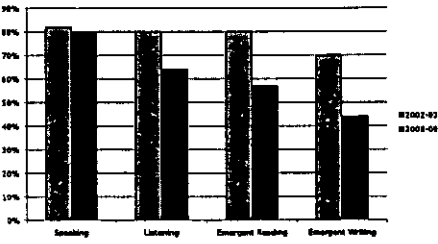
Early Childhood Partnership Funding



Corporate State Local

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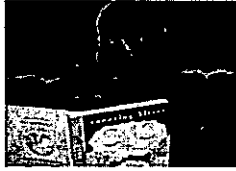
Alaska Kindergarten Developmental Profile Results



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Legislative Priority

- Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Alaska

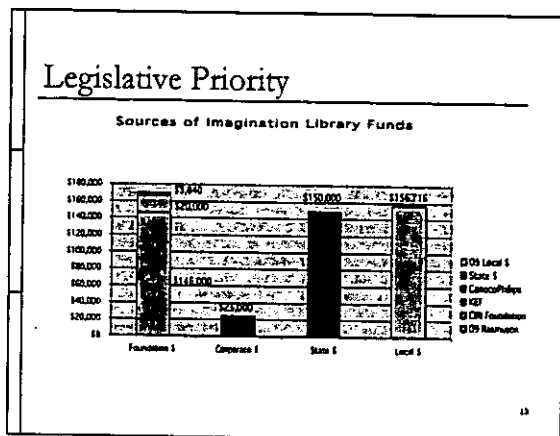


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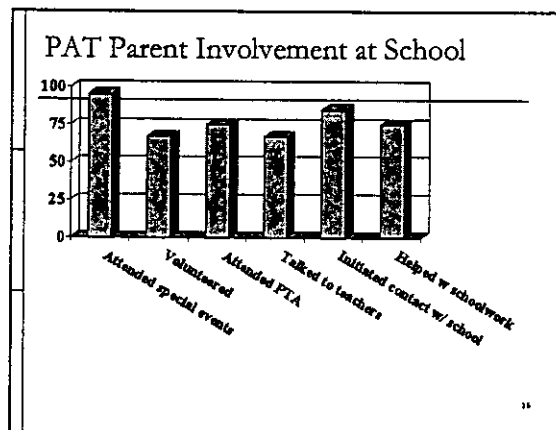
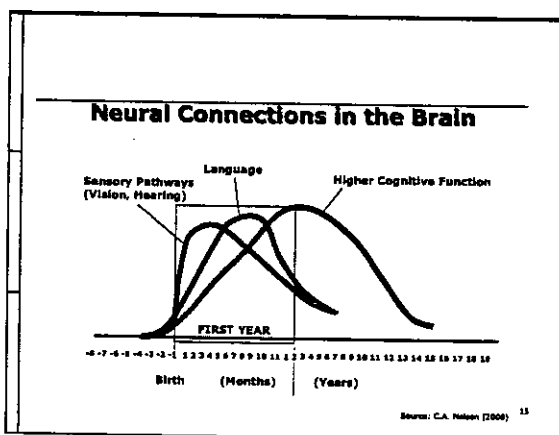
Legislative Priority

- 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

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- ### 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



- ### 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

- ### 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
-

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

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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



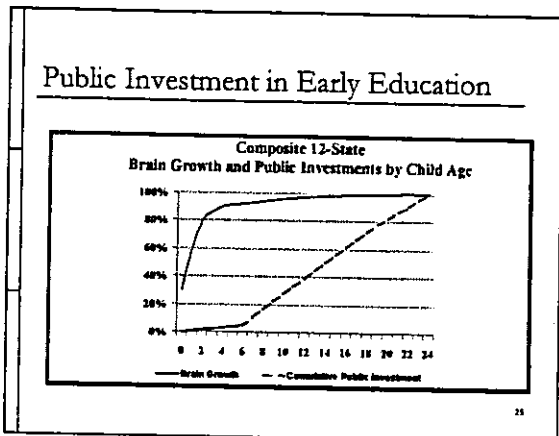
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Challenges for many families...

- 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

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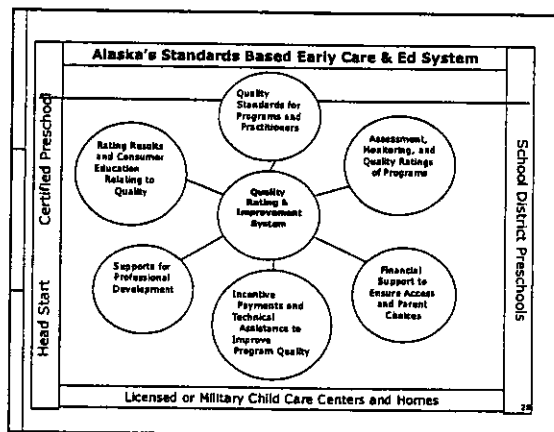
Legislative Priority: Access to Quality Child Care:

- 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

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



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

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

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

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For More Information ...

- | | |
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| | □ Threadalaska.org |

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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



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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

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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





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

Angeon-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 Diomedes-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



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.*

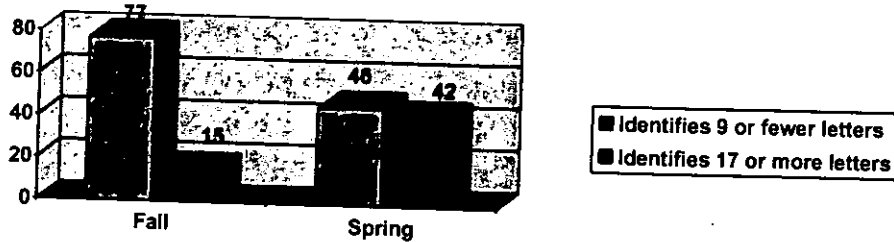
***For 2003, reported in the National Health Policy Forum issue brief #819, 11/20/2006.*

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.

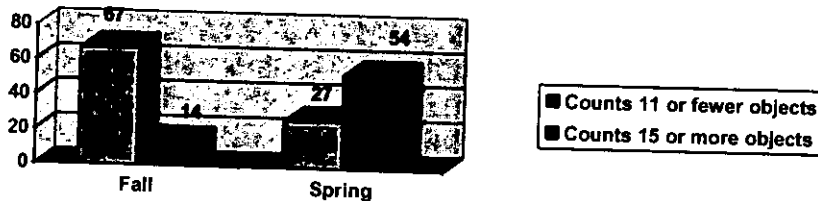
The following graphs are based on information taken from the National Head Start Reporting System (NRS) results of 11 Alaska grantees during the 2006-2007 program year. The NRS assesses only children who were going to kindergarten in 2007. The graphs include only those children assessed in both fall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

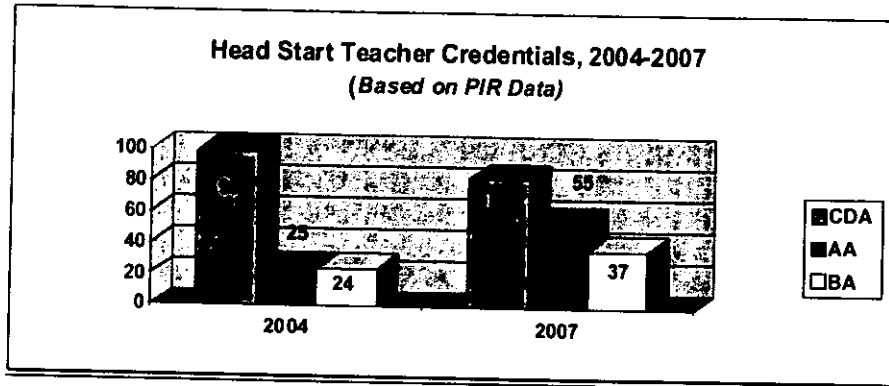
- 95% of Alaska's Head Start children received developmental screenings exams.
- Of the 2,600 Head Start children who received developmental screenings, 276 were eventually diagnosed with a disability.

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.



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