

**04/09/14
PRESENTA-
TION:
EARLY
LEARNING
TODAY**

<TARGET><BILL></BILL><SUBJECT>04-09-14 PRESENTATION
EARLY LEARNING
TODAY</SUBJECT><COMM>SEDC28</COMM></TARGET>



BEST BEGINNINGS

Alaska's Early Childhood Investment

Senate Education Committee

April 9, 2014





- Best Beginnings
- Head Start
- Parents as Teachers
- thread



30 Million Word Gap

- By age 4, experience with words
 - Child in professional family 45 million 6:1
 - Child in working-class family 26 million 2:1
 - Child in poor family 13 million 1:2

Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experiences of Young American Children,
Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley, 1995



Words Count

- 60-second video
- 30-second TV spot airing statewide
- Radio PSAs
- Social media
- Promotional items
- Movie theaters
- Community activities!

Every Day



read talk

**Words
Count**



BEST BEGINNINGS

Alaska's Early Childhood Investment

BestBeginningsAlaska.org

**Words
Count**

play sing



BEST BEGINNINGS

Alaska's Early Childhood Investment









Into the future...





BEST BEGINNINGS

Alaska's Early Childhood Investment

Abbe Hensley, Executive Director
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BestBeginningsAlaska.org

Best Beginnings on Facebook

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

The 30 Million Word Gap The Role of Parent-Child Verbal Interaction in Language and Literacy Development

In 1995, researchers Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley published a study that highlighted the close link between children's academic success at ages nine and 10 and their verbal interaction with their parents during the first years of life. As they documented in their book, *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*, the vast gap in the amount of words and language heard by poor children and their wealthier peers from birth until age three leads to developmental delays that then predict a tougher climb to literacy. Because of this and other research we know:

Parent-child verbal interaction is strongly associated with the development of children's vocabulary and emergent literary skills.

- A great deal of attention is now being paid to research indicating that the amount of talk mothers direct to their children is strongly associated with the children's vocabulary growth (Hart and Risley 1995; Huttenlocher, et. al. 1991), as well as with their performance on measures of emergent literacy and print related skills (DeTemple and Snow, 1992). *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*, 2000: 137
- "Children of mothers who read to them frequently have large vocabularies, as countless studies have shown. In an evaluation of the Early Head Start Program (2004), Helen Raikes and her colleagues have found the expected links between shared book reading and child vocabulary in more than 1,000 children seen at age 14 months, 24 months, and 36 months, even after adjusting for differences in mothers' verbal abilities." Brooks-Gunn, 2005: 146

Parent-child verbal interaction is associated with development of conceptual knowledge (e.g. vocabulary, understanding of narrative and story structure) which together with subsequent development of decoding skills (e.g. phonological awareness, letter knowledge) leads to literacy.

- Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) distinguish between two kinds of emergent literacy skills: Conceptual knowledge¹ that directly supports children's understanding of the printed word (e.g. vocabulary, understanding of narrative and story structure) and decoding skills² that enable the child to translate print into sound and vice versa (e.g. phonological awareness, letter knowledge). Conceptual knowledge is initially conveyed orally, prior to the acquisition of decoding skills. There is a strong relationship between the two domains of emergent literacy skills among very young children, such that the development of conceptual knowledge indirectly influences the development of decoding skills. Storch and Whitehurst, 2001: 56, 65

¹ Whitehurst and Lonigan call this the "outside-in" domain of emergent literacy skills, meaning the domain of external, contextual information that allows the reader to make sense of the printed word.

² Whitehurst and Lonigan call this the "inside-out" domain of emergent literacy skills, meaning the domain of information contained inside the printed word.

- The ways in which parents and children interact at home shape early differences in literacy development. Parents can tailor their child's vocabulary development and critical thinking skills to prepare them for school by engaging in frequent conversations in academic English. As children mature, parents may increasingly use complex sentences, narrative structures and diverse vocabulary (Huttenlocher, et. al. 1991, Hoff-Ginsberg 1991, Hart & Risley 1992, Haden 1997, Weizman & Snow 2001; Goldberg 1989; Azevedo, et. al. 2007). Children who experience this kind of instruction at home have larger vocabularies and greater syntactic and narrative skills than do children whose parents do not enact such instruction. Differences in children's oral language skills emerge as crucial once children have mastered basic decoding and the focus shifts to reading comprehension around the 2nd and 3rd grades. (Raudenbush Proposal 2010)

Researchers link the achievement gap between high and low SES children to differences in quality and quantity of verbal interaction in high and low SES families.

- We know that variations in parenting are associated with social, economic and educational backgrounds. The link between parental talking and child vocabulary is one example. Parents who talk a lot to their children, ask questions, use many different words and discuss events are also more likely to be highly educated—but studies that measure parental education find that that link exists independent of parental education. Brooks-Gunn 2005, 143-144
- Mother's provision of verbal stimulation differs by education and occupation. . . higher SES mothers, compared with lower SES mothers "talk more, provide more object labels, sustain conversational topics longer, respond more contingently to their children's speech and elicit more talk from their children" (Hoff-Ginsberg and Tardif 1995). *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*, 2000: 294
- Adams (1990, p. 85) estimated that a typical middle-class child enters 1st grade with 1,000 to 1,700 hours of one-on-one picture book reading, compared with an average of just 25 hours for a child from a low-income family. Storch and Whitehurst, 2001
- Children whose early language experiences do not include academic English—including complex syntax, a diverse vocabulary, and narrative skills—face a cultural mismatch when they enter kindergarten and in ensuing grades (Devillers; Craig; Labov; Casden 2001; Boggs; Au; Heath). This situation can only be ameliorated if early educators emphasize oral proficiency in academic English and thereby prepare children for the transition to reading unfamiliar text with high levels of comprehension. (Raudenbush Proposal 2010)

Verbal interaction between parent and child is part of a constellation of income-associated home characteristics and family practices that influence reading readiness.

- Features of the home learning environment (parents' interactions with their young children, their beliefs about learning and their children's capabilities, family organization) account for sizeable differences in the learning opportunities that children are exposed to prior to school entry and, in turn, for the wide disparities in knowledge and abilities that characterize kindergartners (Duncan et. al.) *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*, 2000: 155

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- Recent work has suggested that the home learning environment might be particularly important for understanding children's cognitive development. Several studies have found that the more positive home learning environments of high income versus low income children account for as much as half of the gap in test scores of preschool children (Smith et al 1997). *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*, 2000: 294
 - The home literacy environment (defined as frequency and duration of shared reading, access to books at home or library visits, independent examination of books) plays out its influence early in a child's development. Literacy environment, together with parental expectations of their children's school success and parental characteristics (IQ, education, reading behaviors) accounts for 40 percent of the variance in preschool children's conceptual knowledge (based on a study of 367 4-year-olds in selected Suffolk County Head Start centers tracked through 2nd grade). Storch and Whitehurst, 2001: 64

Brooks-Gunn, Jeanne and Lisa Markman "The Contribution of Parenting to Ethnic and Racial Gaps in School Readiness." *Future of Children* Vol. 15, Number 1, 2005.

Raudenbush, Stephen "Getting on Track Early for School Success: An Assessment System to Support Effective Instruction." Proposal to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, May 2010.

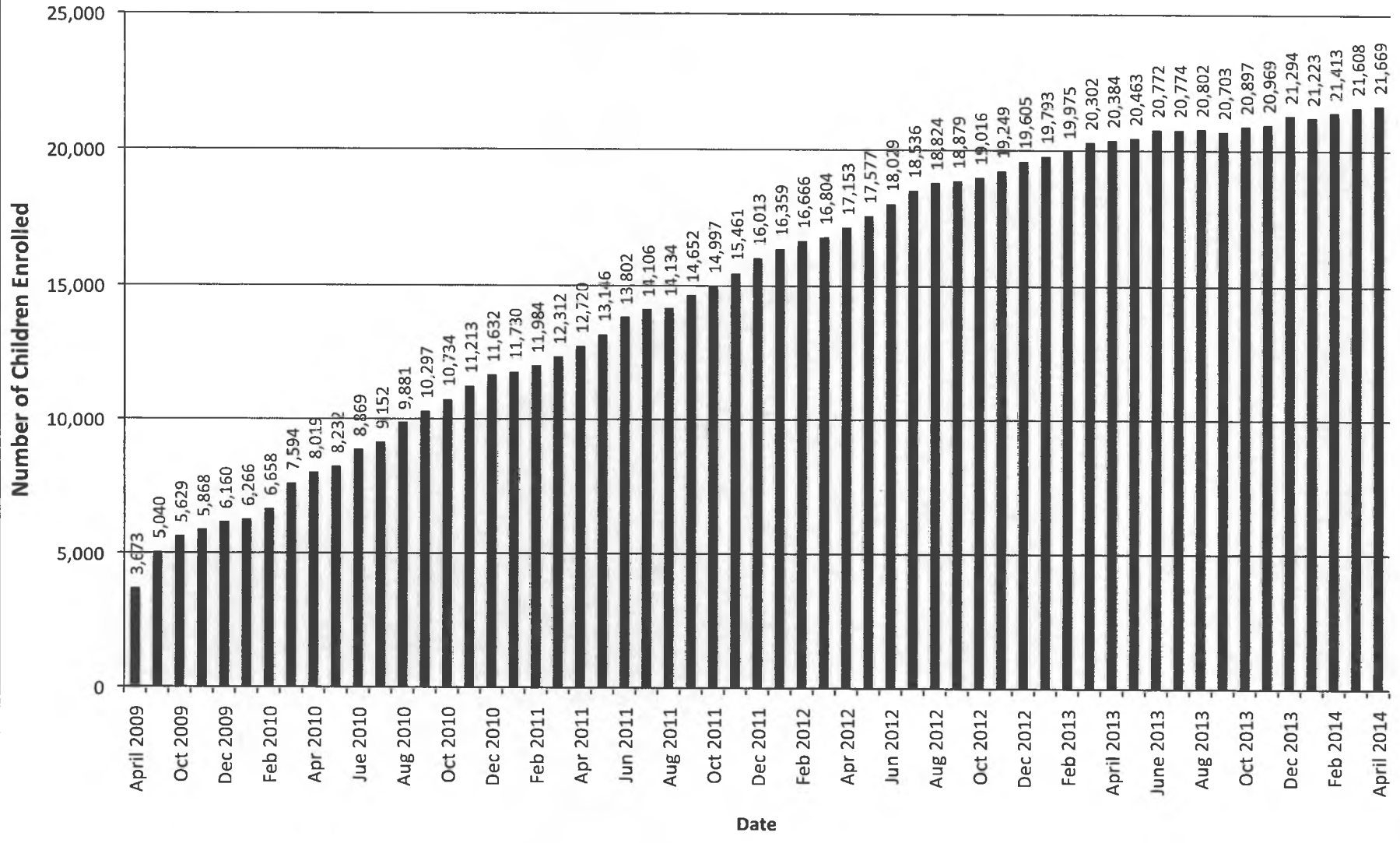
Shonkoff, Jack and Debra Phillips, Eds. *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*. National Academies Press 2000.

Storch, Stacey A. and Grover Whitehurst. "The Role of Family and Home in the Literacy Development of Children from Low-Income Backgrounds." *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* No. 92, Summer 2001.

Imagination Library Enrollments (Number of Children Receiving Books)

Affiliate	Apr 2009	Sept 2009	Jan 2010	July 2010	April 2011	Dec 2011	May 2012	Dec 2012	March 2013	Dec 2013	Feb 2014	March 2014	April 2014
Akiachak										93	91	89	87
Anchor Point							34	41	45	55	59	56	59
Anchorage		834	1,600	3,047	4,487	5,565	6,410	7,267	7,614	8,312	8,645	8,709	8,797
Brevig Mission					50	54	53	51	51	44	42	45	45
Copper River							6	22	62	58	55	68	65
Cordova										54	82	80	80
Delta								157	194	206	202	202	205
Dillingham					98	194	198	213	208	201	196	194	193
Emmonak					50	63	68	58	57	inactive			
Galena									17	15	11	10	10
Homer						192	176	193	205	266	281	289	289
Hoonah				52	51	61	60	62	69	54	56	56	55
Greater Kenai		--	120	220	390	709	828	1,041	1,165	1,298	1,288	1,318	1,301
Koliganek				16	17	20	16	Dec. 2012: merged with Dillingham					
Kotzebue						51	65	120	140	175	210	211	207
Kuskokwim				66	88	119	136	129	129	114	104	112	111
Mat-Su		44	88	728	1,574	2,309	2,607	2,957	3,070	3,124	3,114	3,188	3,182
Metlakatla						61	72	96	93	98	92	92	90
Nanwalek				30	29	21	21	32	32	31	29	29	28
Nome	135	160	174	175	165	232	255	217	222	219	210	215	215
North Slope				251	474	551	616	632	614	612	593	583	568
North Star Bor	2,738	2,824	2,974	3,052	3,400	3,463	3,494	3,661	3,582	3,446	3,324	3,309	3,292
Old Harbor				38	51	54	80	73	80	101	113	113	114
Port Heiden												10	10
Sand Point											39	40	42
Seward		112	175	202	213	221	226	224	189	173	164	161	157
Southeast	800	977	1,029	1,130	1,394	1,807	1,849	1,985	2,000	2,012	1,952	1,966	1,988
Togiak							43	45	48	53	51	50	48
Unalakleet					53	63	54	56	57	62	59	59	57
Unalaska		35	41	42		52	44	49	53	46	50	49	47
Upr Tanana		54	65	103	104	110	104	97	104	106	97	98	96
Valdez									72	162	161	164	188
Wainwright					32	41	42	45	46	44	43	43	43
Yukon Flats							20	82	84	60	inactive		
Total	3,673	5,040	6,266	9,152	12,720	16,013	17,577	19,605	20,302	21,294	21,413	21,608	21,669

Imagination Library Enrollments (Number of Children Receiving Books)



Words Count

What Parents Can Do to Help Reduce the 30-Million Word Gap

- Take a look at the video and materials at www.BestBeginningsAlaska.org. Watch and share the 60-second video and check out another spot on the “why” of all this at www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5BAO2o4Sqo
- Print out a *Words Count* picture frame from our website and showcase photos of your little one! And be on the watch for our photo/story sharing contest in April at www.facebook.com/BestBeginnings (Like us!)
- During the month of April, *Words Count* activities will be happening all over Alaska. You can:
 - Have daily story times, sing special songs (counting the words), play word bingo, do rare word searches, have fun telling stories with wordless books, and make your *Words Count* wherever your creativity takes you! (And share your ideas with friends and family.)
 - Focus on the areas Talk, Read, Sing, and Play. Think of “wordy” activities for each area or visit www.facebook.com/BestBeginnings for ideas.
 - Look at old favorites in new ways. For example, Audrey Wood’s *The Napping House* provides many synonyms for napping: sleeping, snoring, dreaming, dozing, snoozing, slumbering – a great way to expand your child’s vocabulary. What else can you do at story time?
- Share your ideas on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/BestBeginnings so others can benefit from your creativity!
- Have fun with it—opportunities abound every minute of the day!



BEST BEGINNINGS
Alaska's Early Childhood Investment

Head Start in Alaska



Enrollment 2013



- 4,136 total children served
 - 3,313 served through Head Start
 - 773 served through Early Head Start
- 3,675 families served

Head Start Results



Preparing children for success



Healthier children



- 1,691 children were up to date on their Well Child Exams at enrollment
- 3,033 children were up to date at the end of enrollment
- 337 children had a newly diagnosed chronic condition while enrolled

erving homeless children and families



- 486 homeless children served
- 446 homeless families served

- 123 homeless families acquired housing during the year.

What is next?



From Sequestration to Restoration

Approximately \$1.6 million in budget cuts resulted in:

- 120 – 140 less children served
- Shortened school year
- 22-27 fewer staff
- Head start centers were closed; some communities completely lost services
- Transportation services cut, travel budgets cut, staff development opportunities cut

- \$1.6 million potentially restored
- 1.3% COLA



opportunities



Parents as Teachers™

Alaska

All children will learn, grow and develop to realize their full potential.



—Program Goals & Outcomes—

Improve parenting capacity, parenting practices, and parent-child relationships.

96% of parents reported an increase in their understanding of their child's development.

90% of parents reported PAT motivates them to try new parenting strategies.

97% of parents reported activities in visits strengthen their relationship with their child.

Improve family health, functioning, and relationships.

90% of families set goals with their parent educator. One-third met at least one of their goals.

88% of parents reported less stress because of program participation.

76% of parents reported PAT helps build relationships with other families.

72% of parents were connected to a community resource.

Provide early detection of developmental delays and health issues.

86% of children enrolled in program received an initial screening within 90 days of enrollment.

Of those children screened, 28% were referred for further assessment.

Of the children who were further assessed, 16% were referred and received developmental follow-up services.

Increase children's school readiness and success.

PAT parents reported an increase in engagement of literacy activities with their children.

Preliminary statewide data shows a statistically significant increase in the socio-emotional readiness and competency of PAT children entering their next educational setting compared to non-PAT children*.

Preliminary regional data shows a higher number of PAT children demonstrate school readiness skills when compared to non-PAT children*.

Certified Parent Educators
14

Personal visits completed
2,473

Screenings conducted
220

Group socials offered
300

MEASURES:

- Affiliate Performance Report™
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire™
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire SE™
- Life Skills Progression™
- PAT Developmental Milestones™
- PAT Parenting Reflection™
- PAT Parent Satisfaction Survey™

Goal/outcome data compiled from FY13

*Data from RurAL CAP PAT

Parents as Teachers State Funded Programs

*A deeper approach to building strong families and promoting positive parent-child interaction,
so children are healthy, safe, and ready to learn.*

FY 14 Current Enrollment			FY 14 Cumulative Enrollment	
Families Served 179	Children Served 217	Waitlist 36	Families Served 212	Children Served 279



★ **AEYC Southeast**
3100 Channel Drive
Suite 215
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 789-1235

● **Kids' Corps Inc.**
3350 Commercial Drive
Suite 103
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 339-0154

◆ **RurAL CAP**
731 E. 8th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 279-2511

■ **Sprout Family Services**
3691 Ben Walters Lane
Suite 4
Homer, AK 99603
(907) 235-6044

Parents as Teachers™ Alaska

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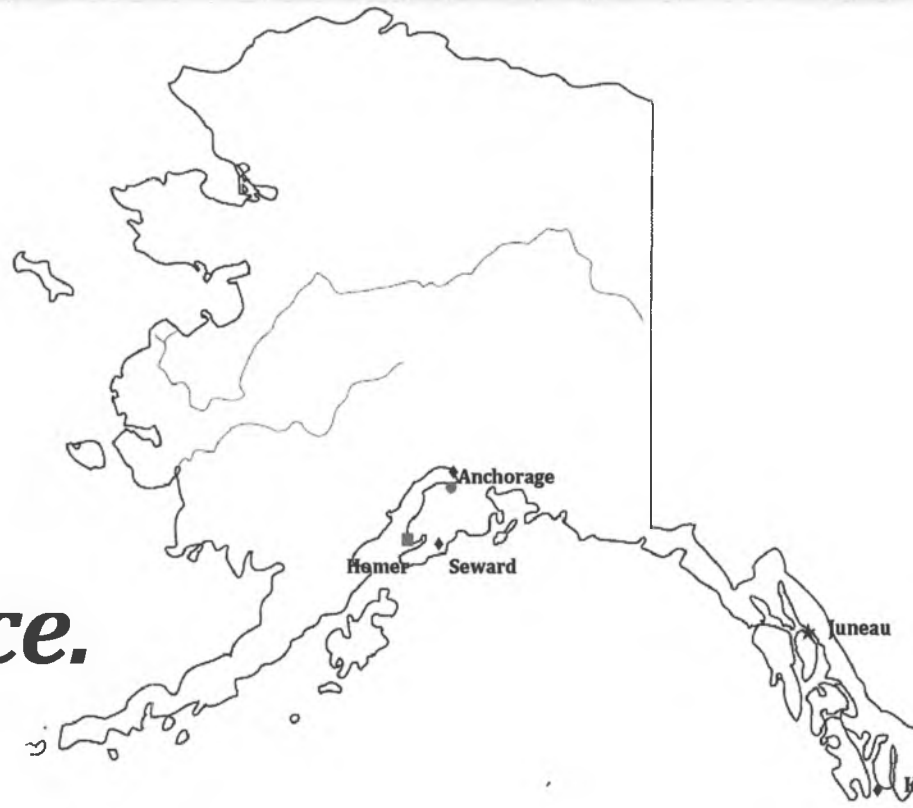
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(907) 279-2511

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3691 Ben Walters Lane
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Parents as Teachers™

Alaska



Making a difference.



Parents as Teachers™

Alaska

Healthy Start

When I first applied to the PAT program I already had two children and thought I knew all about children and how to be a parent. Yet, both my first two children had low birth weight and low amniotic fluid. After I applied, I found out I was expecting my third child. The PAT program helped me have a healthier pregnancy and I learned that brain development starts in the womb. My parent educator helped and taught me throughout every step of my pregnancy. My third baby had a healthy birth and healthy weight.

Shannon, PAT Parent

Making a difference.



Parents as Teachers™

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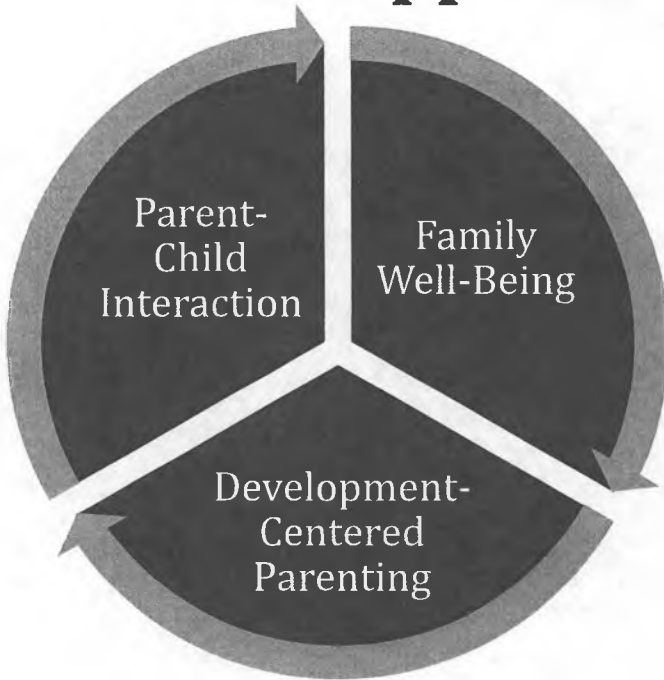
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The PAT Approach



Making a difference.



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Prevention and family education programs are most effective when they involve parents as partners.



Making a difference.



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Early Detection

I always find myself saying, "I wish we had this program when I had my first child. I bet if we would have had this program we would have found out, at an earlier age, that my son is autistic and could have given him the support he needed right away."

Alicia, PAT Parent

Making a difference.



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Goal/outcome data compiled from FY13

Making a difference.



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Supported Development

Through the PAT program I have learned more ways and new activities to teach my children. I've noticed that my second child has started to talk and understand at an earlier age than my first child and I believe this program has something to do with that. Our visits have provided me with fresh ideas of ways to continue to challenge my children as they grow and have given me valuable insights into their ongoing development.

Alexia, PAT Parent

Making a difference.



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Making a difference.



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Waitlist 32

FY 14 Cumulative Enrollment
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Children Served 228



Parents as Teachers™

Alaska



Making a difference.



thread, Alaska's Child Care Resource and Referral Network



Stephanie Berglund, CEO

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SS

thread connecting
early care & education
to alaska

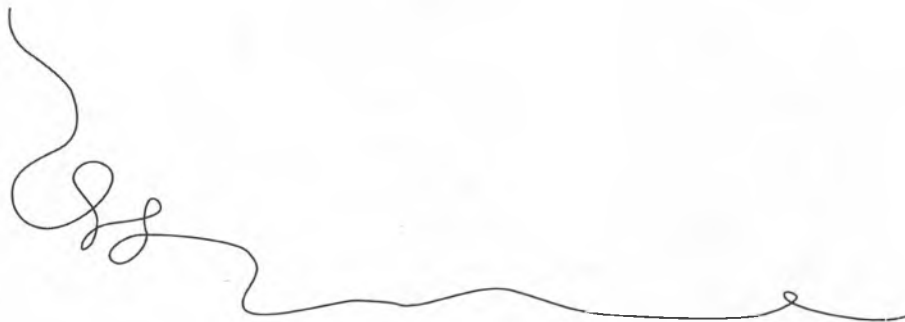
thread connects early care and education to Alaska

- Linking families with early care & education to fit their needs and choices
- Guiding early educators & programs towards quality and best practices
- Working with partners & communities together in support of families with young children



How Many Children In Early Care & Education?

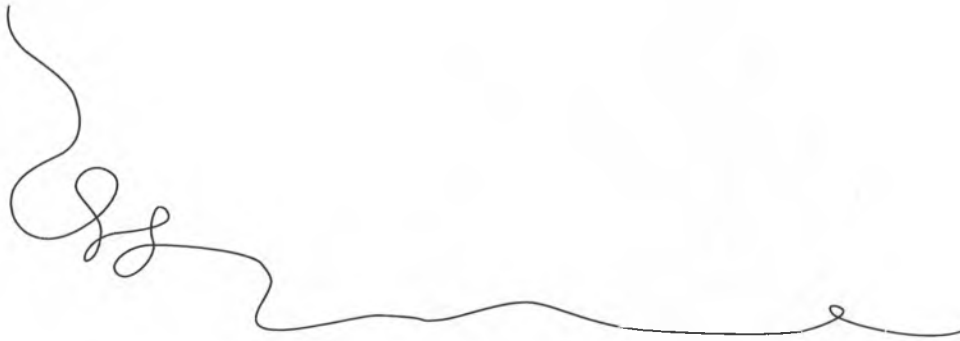
- In AK 60,000 children under age 6
- Of those 40,000 children have all of their parents in the workforce
- Less than 23,000 licensed spaces in child care, head start, preschools



Access

Affordability

Quality



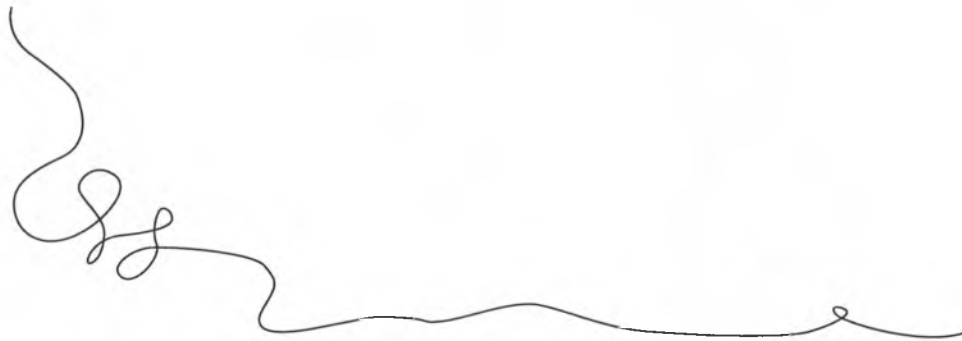
thread connecting
early care & education
to alaska

Families need child care

- The average rate for Infant and Toddler care between \$500-\$800/mo and in some areas can be \$1000
- Parents are paying the bulk of child care cost



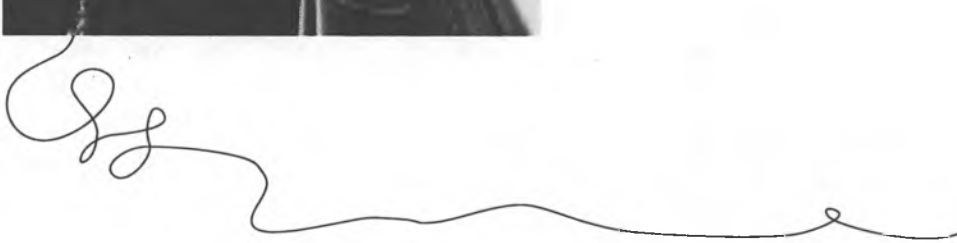
Research indicates the single biggest
factor in the quality of a program
and in improving child outcomes
is the teacher



Programs aim to provide quality care and education



- Early Educators make an average of \$10.82/hour in Alaska without benefits
- Staff turnover is 46%
- Quality is not clearly defined
- 10% of workforce has higher education



Something Big Is Here

- Science of the brain development and importance of supporting parents and early education programs
- National momentum and support of PreK
- Quality Rating and Improvement System
- ROOTS - incentives and supports for higher teacher wages tied to increased expectations for training and ongoing professional development



*we're
ready*



Alaska Quick Facts on Child Care



Children in Alaska	
Number of Children Under Age 5	53,793
Number of Children Age 4	10,488
Number of Children Age 5 - 9 Years	50,142
Number of Children Age 10 - 14 Years	51,202
Number of Children Under Age 6 with Working Parents	38,000
Number of Children Age 6 – 12 with Working Parents	45,000
Families in Alaska	
Families with Children Under Age 18	85,768
Married Couples with Children Under Age 18	57,920
Dads Raising Children Under Age 18	8,765
Moms Raising Children Under Age 18	19,083
Grandparents Raising Grandchildren	6,729
Low Income Working Families in Alaska	
Percentage of Children Under Age 5 Living in Poverty	15.7%
Percentage of Children Age 5 - 17 Years Living in Poverty	11.2%
Percentage of Families with Children Under Age 5 Living in Poverty	13.4%
Percentage of Families with Children Under Age 18 Living in Poverty	10.5%
Percentage of Families with Children Under Age 5 Living with Mom in Poverty	37.9%
Number of Children Under Age 18 Living Below 200% of the Poverty Level	66,000
Percentage of Children Under Age 18 Living Below 200% of the Poverty Level	36%
Number of children Under Age 18 who were Food Insecure at Some Point During the Year	36,000
Percentage of Children Under Age 18 who were Food Insecure at Some Point During the Year	20%
Education Related Stats for Alaska	
Number of Children in Alaska Pre-K Program	289
Number of Children Participating in Head Start	2,954
Number of Children in Kindergarten	9,606
Fourth Graders Reading Below Grade Level (2013 Test NAEP Results)	
Percentage of White 4th Grade Students Reading Below Grade Level	25%
Percentage of Hispanic 4th Grade Students Reading Below Grade Level	38%
Percentage of Black 4th Grade Students Reading Below Grade Level	52%
Percentage of Alaska Native 4th Grade Students Reading Below Grade Level	74%
Percentage of 4th Grade Students Eligible for Free/Reduced Price Lunch Reading Below Grade	57%
High School Students Not Graduating on Time	2,678
Percentage of High School Students Not Graduating on Time	25%
Early Care & Education Workforce in Alaska	
Number of Paid Employees in Child Care Programs	1,766
Number of Self-Employed Child Care Providers	1,738
Average Annual Wage for Child Care Workers	\$24,480

Licensed Child Care Programs in Alaska	
Child Care Centers	222
Small Family Child Care Homes	278
Large/Group Family Child Care Homes	89
Child Care Subsidies in Alaska	
Average Monthly Number of Children Who Receive a Subsidy	4,200
Average Number of Families Who Receive a Subsidy	2,700
Number of Children Receiving a Subsidy in Licensed Care	1,734
Percentage of Children Receiving a Subsidy in Licensed Care	77%
Number of Children Receiving a Subsidy in Unlicensed Care	966
Percentage of Children Receiving a Subsidy in Unlicensed Care	23%
Year of Most Recent Child Care Program Market Rate Survey Used for Setting Payment Rates	2009
Provider Payment Rates at the 75 th percentile or higher in all communities?	No
Average Annual Fees Charged to Parents for Child Care Programs in Alaska	
Center-based Infant Care	\$10,338
Center-based Preschool-age Care	\$7,655
Family Child Care Home Infant Care	\$8,476
Family Child Care Home Preschool-age Care	\$8,421
Annual Cost of College Tuition and Related Fees in NM	\$5,818

Sources:

U.S. Census Bureau, Demographic Profile Data, Table DP03. Selected Economic Characteristics. 2008-2012 ACS 5 Year Estimates. <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/isf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>

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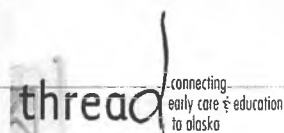
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Child Care Assistance Eligibility And Provider Payment Rates 2014 Policy Fact Sheet

March 4, 2014



Every week in Alaska, about 38,000 children under age 6 with working parents are in some type of child care setting. Parents depend on child care in order to work, while at the same time, children need a safe place to be that promotes their healthy development.

Child Care Affordability

The availability, affordability, and quality of child care are challenges that working parents face throughout Alaska.

For many parents, it's simply hard to find child care. thread, Alaska's statewide child care resource and referral system, helps about 8,000 families every year find quality child care in their communities.

Many families report difficulty affording child care. Alaska is one of 19 states where both the annual cost of center-based infant care and center-based preschool-age care exceed the annual cost of tuition and fees at 4 year state public colleges.

In fact, Alaska is one of 9 states (*Alaska, DC, Florida, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, and Utah*) where the annual cost in both centers and family child care homes for children under age 5 exceeds the annual cost of college tuition!¹

- The average annual cost of center-based infant care in Alaska is \$10,338.
- The average annual cost of center-based preschool-age care is \$7,655.
- The average annual cost for infant care in a family child care home is \$8,476.
- The average annual cost for preschool age care in a family child care home is \$8,421.

Affording child care is a challenge for most families, but particularly for those with more than one child and for those families with low incomes.

Child Care Assistance for Working Families in Alaska

The federal government allocates funds to states to be used for child care, both to assist low-income families to afford the cost of care and for activities related to improving the quality of care (i.e., training for the child care workforce). These funds are allocated under the federal law: the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG).²

The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) in Alaska assists children under the age of 13 or older children with certain disabilities pursuant to the federal CCDBG law. Federal law allows each state to set eligibility criteria for assistance. In Alaska, a family of three can qualify for assistance with an annual income up to \$54,288 (278 percent of the poverty level; 75 percent of state median income).



About 14,000 children under age 6 in Alaska live in low-income working families. Another 30,000 children between the ages of 6 and 13 in Alaska live in low-income families.³

Yet, on average, about 4,200 children each month receive a subsidy for their families to help make the cost of child care more affordable. The most recent data reported to the federal government (FY2012) shows that in Alaska:⁴

- 60 percent of the children (2,520) receiving a monthly subsidy are under age 5.
- 40 percent of the children (1,680) receiving a monthly subsidy are school age – between the ages of 5 and 12.

State policy also determines state payment rates on behalf of low- income children to child care providers. Reimbursement rates are critical because they allow child care providers the resources to maintain their business and facilities, establish low child-staff ratios, attract and retain quality staff and purchase materials. Provider payment rates ultimately determine the quality of child care programs because of the connection between rates and operating expenses.

Federal regulations do not mandate a specific state payment rate, but they do recommend that rates be set at 75 percent or above of the current market rate. This would mean that low-income families have access to at least 75 percent of the child care providers in their communities.

A state survey of market rates is required every two years to inform state rate setting policy. However, current federal law does not require that a current market survey be used to set subsidy rates (just that the survey be undertaken). Alaska has a recent market rate survey, but the survey used to set provider payment rates is from 2009.

Provider payment rates within CCAP vary according to the age of children served and characteristics of provider settings (centers or homes). Alaska's rates for infants and toddlers are at the 75th percentile of the 2009 market survey. All other rates are around the 50th percentile of the 2009 survey. In the past 5 years, the cost of child care has increased significantly. Fees charged to private pay parents have increased every year.

When state payment rates are low, there are several collateral effects:

- Child care providers may be less interested in enrolling low- income children whose care is paid for with a subsidy because funds are insufficient to operate a quality program. This means fewer parent choices.
- Some child care providers may take children whose care is paid for by low state rates, but the quality of the program may reflect the low rates (less educated staff, less experienced staff, lower paid staff (which may mean higher turnover), and fewer resources) since a combination of state payments and private parent payments represent the operating funds for most programs.

Alaska's Quality Rating and Improvement System

Alaska is developing a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) for child care so that parents can more easily differentiate the quality of care among various settings. Once a QRIS system is in place, it would make it easier for the state to differentiate rates paid to providers based on the quality of the program. (For example, providers could be paid higher rates as they achieve higher levels within the state QRIS).

Quality Child Care Matters!

The research shows that early brain development, early language development, executive function ability, and effective staff practice (the interaction between staff and children that supports learning and higher order thinking), has a direct connection to a child's healthy development and ultimate school success. In essence, quality child care makes a difference. **Beginning with provider payments that reflect the current market and then increasing payments related to higher quality care will help ensure that parents have choices among quality providers.**

For 2014, thread recommends the following policies:

- Increase Child Care Assistance to align with current market rates and adjust family payments to provide equitable access to child care for working families.
- Increase investment to thread to respond to growing needs of families in their search for child care and increased demands for professional development and support to advance the availability of quality child care across Alaska.

¹ Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2013 Update. Child Care Aware of America. <http://www.usa.childcareaware.org/costofcare>

² The Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990. http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/fundamentals_of_ccdf_administration_chapter_7.pdf

³ Low Income Working Families, Annie Casey Kids Count Data Center, Alaska, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#AK/2/0>

⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care, FY2012 Preliminary CCDF Data. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/fy-2012-ccdf-data-tables-preliminary>

For additional information, please see our website: <http://threadalaska.org/>.

Child Care in Alaska

2014 Policy Fact Sheet



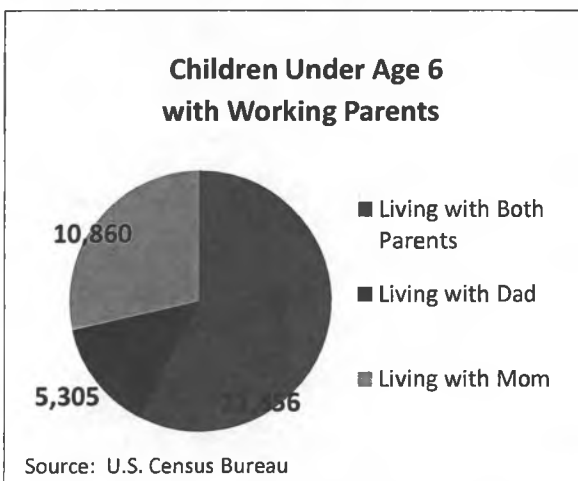
March 3, 2014

Every week in Alaska, about 38,000 children under age 6 with working parents are in some type of child care setting. Parents depend on child care to obtain and retain a job. At the same time, children need a safe place to be that promotes their healthy development.

The Availability of Child Care Helps Strengthen the Economy

The reality is that working parents with young children depend on child care. The most recent data shows for children under age 6:¹

- 21,856 children live in two parents families where both families work.
- 10,860 children live in a single parent household led by a working mother.
- 5,305 children live in a single parent household led by a working father.



Challenges Parents Have with Child Care

The availability, affordability, and quality of child care are challenges that working parents face throughout Alaska.

For many parents, it's simply hard to find child care. thread, Alaska's statewide child care resource

and referral system, helps about 8,000 families every year find quality child care in their communities.

Many families report difficulty affording child care.

Alaska is one of 19 states where both the

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Affording child care is a challenge for most families, but particularly for those with more than one child and for those families with low incomes.

Some Financial Assistance is Available, But Not Enough

About 14,000 children under age 6 in Alaska live in low-income working families. Another 30,000 children younger than age 13 in Alaska live in low-income families.³

Yet, on average, about 4,200 children each month receive a subsidy for their families to help make the cost of child care more affordable.

The most recent publicly available data (FY2012) shows that in Alaska:⁴

- 60 percent of the children (2,520) receiving a monthly subsidy are under age 5.
- 40 percent of the children (1,680) receiving a monthly subsidy are school age – between the ages of 5 and 12.

The quality of care is also a concern to parents.

Alaska is developing a quality rating system for child care so that parents can more easily differentiate the quality of care among various settings.

The research about the quality of child care shows strong evidence that quality settings are related to healthy child development and school readiness. For example, quality child care is related not only to the safety of children in child care, but also to the social, emotional, physical and cognitive growth of children. Studies show quality child care:

- Improves a child's school readiness and ultimate school performance, which leads to fewer grade retentions, fewer referrals to special education, and fewer high school drop outs.

The Connection Between Quality Child Care and School Success

The 2013 National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) average reading scores for Alaska's 4th grade children were lower than the average scores of 4th graders in 46 other states.⁵

- 57 percent of 4th graders eligible for free and reduced priced lunch read below grade level.
- 74 percent of Alaska native 4th grade students read below grade level.

Studies show that a high school graduate earns \$569,000 more over a lifetime than a student who does not complete high school.⁶ In Alaska, the

percentage of students who do not graduate on time (or drop out) is about 25 percent (2,678 students).

Child Care is an Economic Development Strategy

Child care is critical for working families and working families fuel Alaska's economy. However, child care is also an investment in our children, which will lead to a stronger workforce in the future.

For 2014, thread recommends the following policies:

- Increase Child Care Assistance to align with current market rates and adjust family payments to provide equitable access to child care for working families.
- Increase investment to thread to respond to growing needs of families in their search for child care and increased demands for professional development and support to advance the availability of quality child care across Alaska.
- Increase state investments in Head Start and Pre-K programs so that additional children in Alaska can be served.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. Table B23008. Age of Own Children Under 18 Years in Families and Subfamilies by Living Arrangements by Employment Status of Parents, 2010-2012 ACS 3 year estimates. http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_12_3YR_B23008&prodType=table

² Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2013 Update. Child Care Aware of America. <http://www.usa.childcareaware.org/costofcare>

³ Low Income Working Families, Annie Casey Kids Count Data Center, Alaska, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#AK/2/0>

⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Care, FY2012 Preliminary CCDF Data. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/fy-2012-ccdf-data-tables-preliminary>

⁵ National Assessment for Educational Progress (2013). 4th Grade Test Score Results for Alaska. <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states/>

⁶ Anthony Carnevale, Nicole Smith, Jeff Strohl, "Help Wanted: Projects of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2018" Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. June 2010. <http://cew.georgetown.edu/iobs2018/>

For additional information, please contact thread at <http://threadalaska.org/index.cfm/Contact-Us> or see our main website: <http://threadalaska.org/>.



Alaska SEED ROOTS (Retaining Our Outstanding Teachers) Awards 2013 Annual Report

SUCCESS STORY

Our SEEDs are growing...

The Alaska SEED Roots Awards, a 3-year pilot program in the Municipality of Anchorage, is awarding \$740,000 in wage bonuses and increasing professional development opportunities for early care and education professionals working directly with children.

INVESTING IN EARLY EDUCATORS = SUCCESSFUL CHILDREN

- Early care and education makes it possible for 32,300 Alaskans to participate in the labor force.
- Over 60% of children spend at least part of their day in non-parental care.
- Research shows that there is a direct correlation between the level of teacher training and the success of a child. In fact, the number one indicator of a quality early education program is the teacher-child relationship.
- Early care and education teachers provide an essential service to Alaska's families yet earn an average of \$10.82/hour or less – some of the lowest wages in Alaska.
- Low pay in the field has resulted in a 46% teacher turn-over rate, and decreased consistency in Alaska's early care and education programs.

ROOTS TAKES HOLD

The Alaska SEED Roots Awards pilot, managed by thread, tackles these issues head on. Eligible early education teachers are rewarded for retaining their current employment for at least one year and attaining a level 5 or above on the Alaska SEED career ladder – a tool that articulates the path for advancement in the early care and learning profession.

And word is spreading amongst early education professionals. The SEED Roots Awards makes it possible for them to remain in their jobs and pursue opportunities for professional and personal growth. As they succeed so do Alaska's children!

Hillcrest Children's Center Government Hill

Teachers Enrolled in SEED: 18
Teachers Awarded: 13
Center (First) Award: \$29,884
Average Individual Bonus: \$2,490

"We've had 13 teachers successfully complete the ROOTS program. The bonuses have been an incentive for higher performance amongst our team and helped to boost individual incomes. More importantly, it validated our teacher's commitment to provide quality care to our children and families. It has also encouraged the other teachers participating in the program to complete their Roots commitments this year."

- Christina Eubanks
Executive Director



Funded by a grant from the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development and administered by thread, Alaska's Child Care Resource & Referral Network



SEED Career Ladder Levels & ROOTS Awards Wage Incentives

The SEED career ladder is a path articulating advancement in the early care and learning profession. It recognizes credit-based education & training.

(Based on Regular Full-time/40hrs per week)
 Levels 5-7 earn a wage incentive of \$2,080
 Levels 8-9 earn a wage incentive of \$3,328
 Levels 10-12 earn a wage incentive of \$5,324

RESULTS

Through the SEED Roots Awards early education teachers are moving up the SEED career ladder and getting a return on their investment.

Year One

- 71 teachers enrolled
- \$44,012 awarded in wage incentives
- \$2,750 average wage incentive per person
- 3.5% of participants submitted documentation of completed coursework to move up one or more levels on the SEED career ladder
- 1 participant submitted documentation of completed coursework to move up two tiers on the wage incentive scale (an increase of \$3,244)

Year Two

- 80 currently enrolled and growing
- \$113,648 projected for wage incentive awards

EVALUATION

The Alaska SEED Roots pilot is being evaluated on its impact on teacher retention, and will assess quality between child care teachers and children across three domains: classroom organization, emotional support, and instructional support.

ALASKA SEED ROOTS PARTICIPANTS



I. Program Type



- Family Child Care
- Before/After School
- Child Care Center
- Head Start
- Pre-K
- Child Care Center/Pre-K

II. Participants' Employment Demographics



- 12.3% turnover rate (46% statewide)
- 55% work with Infant/Toddlers
- 67% work with 3, 4, or 5 year olds
- 21% work with School-age children
- 38.5% work with children with high needs
- 84.5% work 40+ hours a week

III. Participants' Base Wages at Enrollment

