
ALPHA Resolution 2023-01 Increasing Access to Child Care and Early Education

WHEREAS, one in five Alaska households cannot fully participate in the labor force due to the cost, availability, or quality of child care, leading to lower incomes and negative health outcomes.¹

WHEREAS, over half of three-year-old children in Alaska did not have routine child care from 2016-2019.²

WHEREAS, 61% of Alaskans live in a child care desert and 77% of parents report missing work due to child care issues.³

WHEREAS, over two thirds of three-year-old children in Alaska did not attend preschool from 2018-2019.⁴

WHEREAS, less than one third of Alaska's children are showing up ready for kindergarten.⁵

WHEREAS, research shows a connection between high-quality early childhood education settings (licensed child care, pre-kindergarten, Head Start, tribal and military care) and a child's positive social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development.⁶

WHEREAS, attendance at preschool has long-term associations with lower blood pressure, lower depression, and other positive health outcomes.^{7, 8, 9}

WHEREAS, a high-quality preschool education has a 12% return on investment to society after inflation.¹⁰

WHEREAS, the Alaska Reads Act passed in 2022 will provide some financial support over the next ten years to develop high quality pre-kindergarten programs, or expand existing programs, in districts with the greatest need.¹¹

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that ALPHA supports legislation and investment to increase access to high-quality child care, and funding for universal pre-kindergarten.

Fiscal Impact: This resolution should have no fiscal impact on ALPHA.

Public Health Impact: This resolution would support policies to improve public health through increasing availability of high quality child care and early education for Alaska’s children and families. This would have immediate impacts on parents’ ability to work and afford basic needs, reducing stress and strengthening family health. It would also have a long-term impact on children newly receiving early education, increasing positive health, academic, and financial success. One negative potential impact to public health is an increase in transmissible diseases among children newly attending child care or preschool settings.

References:

- ¹Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council. “[Early Care & Learning in Alaska 2020 Economic Impact Report](#)” (2020).
- ²Kids Count Data Center. “[Three-year-old children in child care by region in Alaska](#)” (2021).
- ³U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. “[Untapped Potential in AK](#)” (2021).
- ⁴Kids Count Data Center. “[Three-year-old children in preschool by region in Alaska](#)” (2021).
- ⁵Alaska Children’s Trust. “[Kids Count 2020 Alaska Education](#)” (2020).
- ⁶Foundation for Child Development. “[Investing in Our Future: The Evidence Base on Preschool Education](#)” (2013).
- ⁷Developmental Psychology. “[The long arm of childhood: Preschool associations with adolescent health](#)” (2017).
- ⁸American Economic Journal: Economic Policy. “[Long-Term Impacts of Compensatory Preschool on Health and Behavior: Evidence from Head Start](#)” (2014).
- ⁹Science. “[Early Childhood Investments Substantially Boost Adult Health](#)” (2014).
- ¹⁰The Region. “[Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with a High Public Return](#)” (2003).
- ¹¹The Alaska State Legislature. [HB 114](#) (2022).