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‘Strengthening Families Alaska’ to support new programs for children

ANCHORAGE — Alaska’s Strengthening Families Program recently received funding that will be used to support nine new early-care and learning programs and three Early Childhood Partnership communities. Strengthening Families is a program facilitated by the Office of Children’s Services, Department of Health and Social Services.

The \$497,190 fiscal year 2012 departmental grant will allow the programs to begin using the Strengthening Families “Protective Factors Framework,” which focuses on building skills and strengths, such as: parental resilience; social connections; knowledge of parenting and child development; concrete support in times of need; and social and emotional competence of children. As a result, families are stronger, outcomes for children are improved, and the likelihood of child abuse and neglect is reduced.

Each early care and learning program will also receive training and support for promoting social and emotional development in its daily work with children. Programs will receive small grants, support for leadership development, training, and weekly coaching and consultation. Alaska’s Strengthening Families program will be working with partners at thread, the Alaska Child Care Resource and Referral Network, and Best Beginnings to select and support the new sites.

This project will also provide an opportunity to embed the same framework in the child protection system. Training will be provided by the Child Welfare Academy to 10 Office of Children’s Services offices and their community partners. This cutting-edge work will

contribute to the national work being done by the Center for the Study of Social Policy and National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds.

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