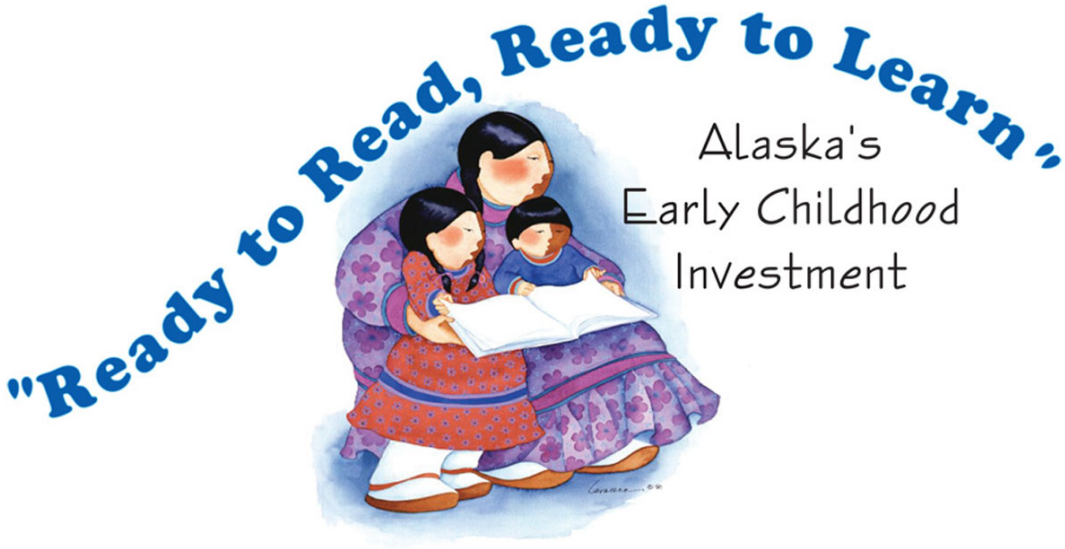
September 2006



Alaska Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force Report & Recommendations

"Children are made readers on the laps of their parents."

– Emilie Buckwald, writer and publisher

R2R

Task Force Voices

"Key elements of reading and listening happen long before school age. Parents must be involved in this learning process . . . even before the child crawls."

– Patty Hamilton
Child care advocate

"Parental nurturing of a child in all aspects – physical and mental – is vital to learning. Making powerful contact with children makes them positive about life."

– Byron Mallott
Trustee, First Alaskans Institute

"This is when kids really develop their vocabularies. We know that by getting this little push . . . kids are more likely to do well . . . it sets the stage for success."

– Dr. Ann Shortt
Superintendent, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District

It's very, very clear to me that the involvement of parents – talking to children, reading to them – is just paramount."

– David Wight
Former President & CEO, Alyeska Pipeline Service Company

"The cost of child care in Barrow is very expensive while the income of parents is limited. It is a very difficult situation."

– Edna MacLean
President Emeritus, Ilisagvik College

The Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force holds its first meeting in November 2005 at the UAA/APU Consortium Library.

Photo by Gene Storm

ALASKA
Ready to Read, Ready to Learn
TASK FORCE

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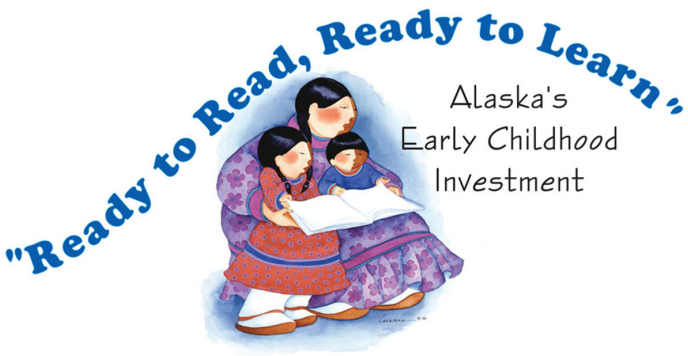

Dear Alaskans:

Alaska's future is bright. As our state's role in the world grows, next-generation Alaskans will have more opportunities than we – their parents and grandparents – can imagine. With these opportunities come challenges.

Many young Alaskans won't be prepared for that future because of poor reading and writing skills. An unacceptably high percentage of Alaska high school students can't read at passing levels. Many handicap their future by dropping out of school. This fact has troubled parents and educators for years. Academic improvements lag even with K-12 programs such as "No Child Left Behind."

Educators and parents have long known the path to academic success starts at home before a child enters kindergarten. Children whose parents read to them daily, who have positive interactions with their parents and who receive quality child care succeed when others don't. To ensure no child is left behind, no child should start behind.

These recommendations promote a better start and a brighter future for Alaska children. We ask you to read and learn – as we did – about how to prepare new generations of Alaskans to take advantage of opportunities and meet future challenges.

Sincerely,

Alaska Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force

Globe Staff Photo/Essdras M. Suarez - Used with Permission

Jessica Olin reads to her 17-month old, Tyrone, at their home in Wales. Research shows positive learning experiences promote brain development, leading to increased ability to learn.

"The more you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."

– Dr. Seuss, author of children's books

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force Report & Recommendations

Too many of our children are failing in school. The problem begins before age 6. As a result, almost half of Alaska children begin school unprepared to read or learn. They are set up for failure.

Common sense and science tell us we can do much better in preparing young children to be ready to read and ready to learn. It is a societal imperative and our obligation as Alaska's stewards to give our children the opportunity to succeed. Nothing else we do will have a more positive impact on Alaska's economic and social health.

The Alaska Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force has charted a course for success in this report. During deliberations, the 27 members learned:

- Almost half of Alaska children enter school unprepared to read or learn. This is not the child's failure. Society – parents, educators, politicians and professionals – must accept the blame.

- Scientific research shows critical brain development occurs between birth and age 6. Children are born ready, willing and able to learn.

- Investments in early childhood literacy and learning pay dividends many times over. Children will be more successful in school, be less likely to get into trouble, grow into more productive adults, and contribute to the common good of society. The bottom line: Every dollar invested in quality early learning programs will return $7 to $17.

- Alaska lags far behind most states in addressing early childhood literacy and learning issues.

The Task Force – business, civic, nonprofit, philanthropic, education and government leaders – met from November 2005 through the summer of 2006. In developing their recommendations, Task Force members were advised by Alaska and national experts in early childhood education.

The recommendations lay the foundation for success. There is much work to do and a role for everyone.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force has recommendations in three areas: In the Home, Out of the Home in Child Care & Early Education Programs, and Looking Ahead. The first two focus on children from birth to age 6 in their environments. The third focuses on long-term sustainability of the investment in Alaska's young children.

In the Home

Three recommendations increase early literacy skills, family literacy skills, early learning skills and parenting skills for all populations in Alaska:

1. Increase the engagement of parents, grandparents and extended family in their child's learning by providing resources and incentives.

2. Develop and increase access to quality, culturally engaging reading materials.

3. Increase proven, family centered literacy programs by partnering with other organizations.

Out of the Home in Child Care & Early Education Programs

Four recommendations increase access to voluntary, affordable and quality early care and education:

1. Distribute Alaska's Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) in family friendly formats.

2. Implement a quality rating system (QRS) to help parents evaluate child care and early learning programs and to guide program improvement.

3. Increase the professional development opportunities and qualifications for early childhood educators and provide appropriate compensation.

4. Develop a statewide system of voluntary and affordable early childhood education.

"If you want to work on the core problem, it's early school literacy."

– James Barksdale, former CEO of Netscape

Looking Ahead

Four recommendations establish a sustainable early childhood literacy and learning system with accountability for outcomes:

1. Create a commission, council, public-private consortium or other entity to implement Task Force recommendations.

2. Develop a multi-year work plan for implementing recommendations.

3. Educate Alaskans about the social imperative of preparing children from birth to age 6 to be ready to read and learn.

4. Ensure future funding from private, nonprofit, foundation and government sources.

These recommendations chart a course for the future. It is the responsibility of all Alaskans to prepare Alaska's young children to be ready to read and ready to learn.

Photo by Gene Storm

Enthralled by a book, Christina Arehart (center) and toddler Rylee Rosson, are ready to learn. Alicia Arehart is the reader. The three were participants in a Ready to Read, Ready to Learn reception in March 2006 at the Governor's Mansion in Juneau.

"A failure establishes only this, that our determination to succeed was not strong enough."

– Christian Nevell Bovee, 19th century author

INTRODUCTION

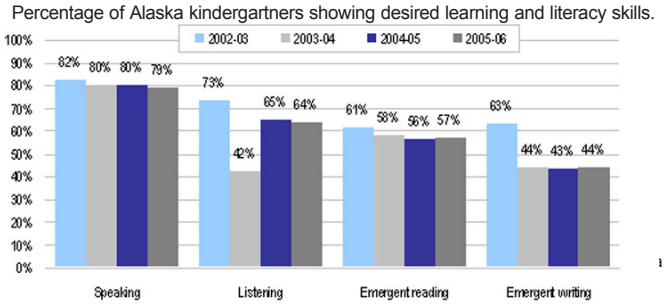
Goal: Every child in Alaska arrives at school ready to read and ready to learn.

"If you look critically at the failure in our educational system, you must conclude that the child's failure and the school's failure are largely determined before the child enters the educational system at age 6."

– Irving Harris, former CEO, Procter & Gamble

The Problem

Alaska's young children have joined a disturbing national trend. They are entering school less and less prepared to succeed. This is cause for alarm and action. A battery of studies and data reinforce what parents instinctively know: An ill-prepared child is far more likely to fail in school and become a burden on society. Declining pre-kindergarten trends contribute to Alaska's low scores on standardized third-grade tests, poor performance on the High School Graduation Qualification Exams and an unacceptably high dropout rate.



Source: Alaska Progress Report, Alaska 20/20

The Growing Momentum

Concerned Alaskans met in August 2004 and May 2005 to discuss early childhood literacy and learning. At the May 2005 meeting, Gov. Frank Murkowski embraced the importance of the initiative and supported formation of a grassroots task force. Twenty-seven statewide leaders were assembled to draft a blueprint identifying what Alaskans could and should do to improve school readiness in young children. This report is their response. During the past seven months, the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force has immersed itself in this foundational issue. It has sought advice from national and Alaska experts, and has digested a large amount of data and research to develop a plan that will work in every community in the state. The plan for success is contained in this report.

Most Alaskans agree there's a critical need to invest in young children. A report commissioned by the System for Early Education Development (SEED), *"Economic Impact of Early Education and Child Care Services in Alaska,"* found 87 percent of Alaskans surveyed thought early learning and child care were high priorities – higher than state funding for road construction, local government or university education. Only K-12 education rated higher.

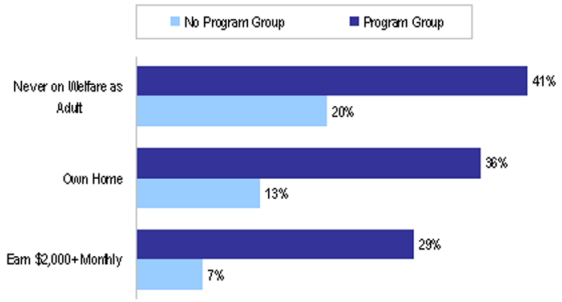
Why this age group?

Recent research demonstrates what parents and early childhood educators have known for years: A critical period for brain development occurs between birth and age 6. Parents who read, tell stories and have positive daily interactions with their young child promote the child's brain development. Quality child care and early education do the same. Children gain the skills and confidence they need to succeed from these positive early experiences.

Why is this problem growing?

Many factors contribute to this problem. Parents often don't have the tools or resources they need. Being an effective parent takes skills often passed from generation to generation. Alaskans, a highly mobile and migrant population, are frequently separated from this rich source of parenting knowledge. Those who do have access to extended family may still struggle. An increasing need for families to earn multiple incomes places a premium on time, energy and other prerequisites for effective parenting. Also, quality early care and education is not affordable for many parents. Investing time and money in young children can counter this growing problem.

Title: Economic Effects of Perry Preschool Program by Age 27

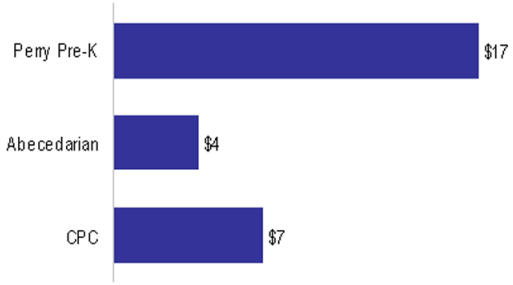


Source: National Institute for Early Education Research

Why is this my problem?

This trend impacts everyone, not just children and their families. Credible long-term studies such as the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project, the Carolina Abecedarian Project and Chicago's Child-Parent Centers (CPC) demonstrate children who are in quality early learning programs have higher literacy skills, increased graduation rates and better attitudes toward school. These children also grow into adults who commit fewer crimes, don't require welfare assistance and earn higher salaries.

Title: Economic Returns of Pre-K: Government Dollars Saved per Government Dollars Invested on Pre-K Three Case Studies



Source: Pre-K Now 2005

Our children need to acquire the skills to make them successful in life. They represent Alaska's future as parents, employees, employers, citizens and leaders. It is imperative to increase the number of children arriving in kindergarten who are ready to read and learn.

"Today a reader, tomorrow a leader."

– Margaret Fuller, journalist

IN THE HOME

Parents are children's first and best teachers.

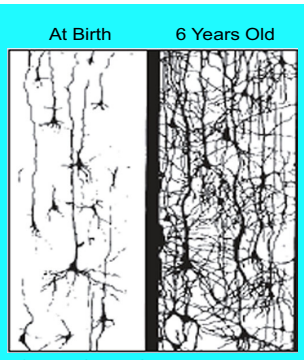
"What a child doesn't receive, he can seldom later give."
- P.D. James, novelist

Objective: Increase early literacy skills, family literacy skills, early learning skills and parenting skills.

We cherish the memories of stories told by our parents or of the books they read to us. Our child's delight and excitement captivate us as we pass down those stories and read some of the same books to them. These are precious moments of learning shared between a parent and a child. As parents, we are our children's first and best teachers.

We intuitively know these interactions within the family are critical in preparing children to read and learn. No technology or machine can replace this human process passed from one generation to the next. Some parents and families, however, need help in meeting the challenges of raising young children and fulfilling the role of first teacher. It is in Alaska's best interest to help.

Parents want their children to have a good start in life. Most parents are aware children learn from birth. What they may not know is how much the brain and lifelong learning capabilities develop in the first six years. Research shows brain connections grow dramatically from birth to age 6. Children need quality early literacy and learning environments during this period.



SYNAPTIC DENSITY: Synapses are created with astonishing speed in the first years of life. The more positive learning experiences children have, the more connections between brain cells will be made. This increases their ability to learn.
Drawing by H.T. Chugani

Task Force recommendations:

1. Increase the engagement of parents, grandparents and extended family in their child's learning by providing resources and incentives.

2. Develop and increase access to quality, culturally engaging reading materials.

3. Increase proven, family centered literacy programs by partnering with other organizations.

Increase the engagement of parents, grandparents and extended family in their child's learning by providing resources and incentives.

Quality information about parenting should be available to all parents. This should be provided through parent resource centers, libraries, web sites, wellness visits with health care providers and other community sources. One example is the Ready To Learn Service provided by KAKM-TV, which offers educational television, outreach to parents and free children's books. These books help families build a home library. Incentives, including vouchers for goods and services, could be used to encourage parents and family members to seek these resources.

Develop and increase access to quality, culturally engaging reading materials.

Access to reading materials is an essential ingredient for early literacy and learning development. Many Alaska communities, particularly those in remote or rural areas, don't have bookstores or libraries with adequate collections. This limits available reading materials for families.

Photo illustration by Gene Storm

Reading materials that are relevant to Alaska and its cultures will help engage parents and children in early learning. Publishers should be encouraged to produce more books that reflect Alaska and its diversity.

In both Alaska's rural and urban communities, there are few children's books that reflect the state's diverse cultures and life. Research shows young children learn best when books are relevant to their lives. It is important more reading materials be written and published that speak to the families of today's young children in Alaska.

Increase proven, family centered literacy programs by partnering with other organizations.

Family centered literacy programs build literacy skills of parents and children. There are many such programs across Alaska; more are in use nationwide. The Task Force recommends selection of programs and approaches that can be shown to work best in Alaska settings. They can be made available statewide by partnering with existing organizations.

End Results

We'll know we're successful in improving childhood literacy and learning skills in the home when:

- Parents and extended families are actively engaged in developing their children's literacy and learning skills.
- All homes and community and school libraries have and share abundant, quality and culturally engaging reading materials for young children.
- Research-based family literacy programs are available in all communities and are affordable for those who want to use them.
- Community leaders and community organizations join to support and promote family literacy.
- Alaskans know what literacy and learning skills are necessary for children to enter school ready to read and ready to learn.

"No skill is more crucial to the future of a child, or to a democratic and prosperous society, than literacy."

– Los Angeles Times, "A Child Literacy Initiative for the Greater Los Angeles Area"

OUT OF THE HOME

Quality child care & early education programs promote successful children.

"I love to see the spark in a child's eye when they accomplish something they haven't done before."

– Staff member, Clinton Early Learning Center, Clinton, NY

Objective: Increase access to voluntary, affordable and quality early care and education.

Today's reality is that many young children will spend more waking hours in child care and early learning settings than with their families. For many children this experience begins in infancy and continues until they enter school. These critical early experiences shape who these children become and how they learn.

If we nurture and teach our children at home, we should expect the same positive learning environment outside of the home. Research surrounding the significance of quality early childhood education on children's later development is indisputable. Alaska, however, is just beginning to look comprehensively at how to improve the early learning experience for children and families. One idea is to provide guidelines for parents and early educators about what young children should know and be able to do. Another is to help parents identify quality child care programs.

Child care affects many of our children. There were approximately 63,000 children younger than age 6 in Alaska in 2004, according to the SEED report. Approximately 60 percent were in child care or early education settings. The numbers can be expected to increase with Alaska's population growth and exacerbate the current shortage of spaces in those programs.

Young families at the beginning of their earning potential wrestle financially with child care and early learning costs. Many parents already are paying what they can afford. Also, those providing the care often aren't earning a living wage. The low pay and lack of benefits lead to an unacceptable turnover rate among child care providers, who often enter the field with minimal skills and education.

The high turnover and resulting inconsistency of caregiving also have negative effects on a child's development. Research shows the younger the child, the higher the impact on long-term learning by caregiver changes.

As a public investment, early childhood development pays better returns than most, up to $17, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. Research such as this led the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to substantially invest in early childhood

learning in Washington State. The foundation looked at what could be done to have the greatest impact on children who were failing and becoming dropouts. They saw it was in early care and education. As a result, the Gates Foundation pledged $9 million for early learning initiatives.

Task Force Recommendations:

1. Distribute Alaska's Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) in family friendly formats.
2. Implement a quality rating system (QRS) to help parents evaluate child care and early learning programs and to guide program improvement.
3. Increase the professional development opportunities and qualifications for early childhood educators and provide appropriate compensation.
4. Develop a statewide system of voluntary and affordable early childhood education.

Distribute Alaska's Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) in family friendly formats.

ELGs help parents and caregivers understand the expectations for children's development and learning. They spell out goals for what young children should know, understand and be able to do at critical stages of development. The State Board of Education and Early Development recently endorsed Alaska's ELGs. The Task Force recommends ELGs be published in multiple languages, in easy-to-read formats and be made available to families with young children through early care and education programs, pediatricians, libraries, businesses and online.

Implement a quality rating system (QRS) to help parents evaluate child care and early learning programs and to guide program improvement.

A QRS is a tool to help parents evaluate the quality of child care and early learning programs, a difficult task without some guiding criteria. It serves as a consumer guide, a benchmark for child care improvement and an accountability measure for funding. Criteria include ratio of teachers to children, family involvement and the skill and education level of the staff. A QRS also instills market-based motivation for fostering improvements by the program providers. Many states have implemented a QRS. The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services is in the early stages of developing a statewide QRS.

Increase the professional development opportunities and qualifications for early childhood educators and provide appropriate compensation.

Early educators need greater access to professional development offered through a variety of delivery systems. These must address the challenges faced by providers across the state, whether in rural or urban communities, such as long workdays, inflexible schedules and too few opportunities to access training.

Based on significant research, many states support increased wages for child care providers to improve recruitment and retention. Most importantly, it improves child outcomes. Alaska should do likewise.

Develop a statewide system of voluntary and affordable early childhood education.

Thirty-eight states have implemented a model of state-funded pre-kindergarten, not including Head Start. (Alaska is not one of them.) These states provide funding for pre-kindergarten in a variety of ways and utilize approaches that meet their needs within financial and political constraints.

The Task Force recommends Alaska develop a system of affordable and voluntary early childhood education. Such a system could provide handsome returns on the investment.

The Task Force further recommends community-based discussion to design a system that is effective in both urban and rural areas. To begin shaping that discussion, the Task Force has identified elements key to the design of any system. They are:

- The approach is voluntary and parents retain the choice of whether to have their children participate.
- Families can select a pre-kindergarten program from available choices, including those privately owned, faith-based, run by the community, operated by nonprofit organizations or are part of public-school systems.
- Local leaders and families actively participate in developing effective pre-kindergarten options.
- Families are provided with financial support or incentives.
- The system is phased in to allow communities and programs time to ensure appropriate planning.

End Results

We'll know we're successful in improving childhood literacy and learning outside of the home when:

- Parents are educated consumers of child care and early learning programs.
- The quality of child care and other early learning settings improves.
- Quality early childhood education is available and affordable for all children from birth to age 6.
- Alaskans recognize the importance and value of early childhood education.

"There is no substitute for books in the life of a child."

– Mary Ellen Chase, author and educator

LOOKING AHEAD

Turning the vision into a reality.

Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare.

– Japanese Proverb

Objective: Establish a sustainable early childhood literacy and learning system with accountability for outcomes.

This report completes the job of the Task Force. The work, however, has just begun. The recommendations in this report will not become reality without an ongoing effort to keep the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn issue high on Alaska's agenda.

Task Force recommendations:

1. Create a commission, council, public-private consortium or other entity to implement Task Force recommendations.
2. Develop a multiyear work plan for implementing these recommendations.
3. Educate Alaskans about the social imperative of preparing children from birth to age 6 to be ready to read and learn.
4. Ensure future funding from private, nonprofit, foundation and government sources.

Create a commission, council, public-private consortium or other entity to implement Task Force recommendations.

Alaska has benefited from the work of many people involved in early childhood issues, but there hasn't been a unified voice. Interested parties include the business community, philanthropies, government agencies, the nonprofit sector and, most importantly, parents. Other states have created a body to govern or oversee early learning activities. Through the Task Force efforts, Alaska is on track to establish an entity that will ensure a comprehensive, coordinated approach to improve early literacy and learning.

Develop a multi-year work plan for implementing these recommendations.

This report to the public, the governor and elected officials is the first step in a work plan that covers several years. Key elements of the work plan developed by the Task Force include:

- Launch a public education campaign.
- Obtain public feedback on early literacy and learning initiatives.
- Develop resources to assist families with early childhood learning.
- Support work on a QRS.
- Distribute and encourage the use of ELGs.
- Develop a voluntary and affordable early childhood education system statewide.

Educate Alaskans about the social imperative of preparing children from birth to age 6 to be ready to read and learn.

A critical element in this effort is educating Alaskans about the importance of early childhood literacy and learning. A long-term public education campaign is needed to help Alaskans understand this issue is a societal imperative. This campaign will involve partnering with Alaska's media outlets and collaborating with funding sources to develop a campaign specific to Alaska. It must be culturally relevant and engaging. It should raise awareness of this unparalleled opportunity to improve school readiness for Alaska's young children.

Ensure future funding from private, nonprofit, foundation and government sources.

Funding is essential in moving this effort forward. Resources currently are provided by a partnership that includes private business, nonprofits, foundations and government. This cooperative partnership will continue and can leverage support from additional funding sources.

End Results

We'll know we're successful in making the vision a reality when:

- There is an entity to guide and implement Task Force recommendations.
- Funds are obtained and maintained to support early literacy and learning.
- Early childhood learning is a societal imperative in Alaska.
- Children arrive at school ready to read and ready to learn.

PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS

Young children & familes need everyone's support.

"If you do not seek out allies and helpers, then you will be isolated and weak."

– Sun Tzu, 6th Century BC Chinese general

There is work for everyone to do. Just as these recommendations are the result of Alaska's many sectors coming together around an important issue, so too will the future of this effort depend upon the commitment of all Alaskans. Here are some of the ways we can support the effort to improve the school readiness of Alaska's youngest children.

Business

It is in the long-term interest of businesses to support school readiness, as it helps assure tomorrow's work force has the skills to be successful in a competitive world. Employers should consider providing supports such as flexible leave, health benefits and subsidies to help employees with young children balance the demands of work and family. Research shows employers who provide such supports have higher retention rates, greater employee loyalty and increased productivity. A growing number of Alaska employers are making these investments. BP Alaska, Credit Union 1 and Providence Alaska Medical Center are just a few who have demonstrated their commitment to parents with young children by providing quality, on-site child care for employees. Other Alaska companies also support families with young children.

Nonprofits

The nonprofit sector can provide leadership and administrative support for this initiative. These organizations understand community dynamics and can mobilize people into action. The Alaska Humanities Forum, United Way of Anchorage's Success By 6 Initiative, Child Care Connection, Inc. and First Alaskans Institute are committed to supporting implementation of the recommendations in this report. Other nonprofits are encouraged to join.

Foundations

The support and leadership of the Rasmuson Foundation and The CIRI Foundation in this initiative demonstrate philanthropic resources can help bring about change. This sector can galvanize financial and intellectual resources, command the attention of Alaska's political leadership, foster research and pilot demonstration projects to move this effort forward.

Government

The Federal Reserve Bank study shows the economic impact of supporting early learning and how government can save money by investing in young children. The SEED report shows the public overwhelmingly supports government investment in early childhood education. The State of Alaska has committed funding to support the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn recommendations. Government at every level must recognize supporting early childhood learning is a good investment. For example, publicly funded libraries are a mainstay in early literacy and learning. Children who have the ability to learn and succeed will contribute to the long-term economic and civic vitality of their local communities and Alaska.

Faith-Based Community

Alaska's faith-based community plays an important role for young children and their families through child care, early learning programs and support for families. These efforts will ensure more children will arrive at school ready to read and learn.

Anjelica Sandoval and her stepfather, Russell Fields, explore a book at the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn reception at the Governor's Mansion in Juneau. Anjelica was among several children from the Tlingit & Haida Central Council Head Start program who attended the reception.

Photo by Gene Storm

END RESULTS

We'll know we're successful when . . .

- Parents and extended families are actively engaged in developing their children's literacy and learning skills.
- All homes and community and school libraries have and share abundant, ` quality and culturally engaging reading materials for young children.
- Research-based family literacy programs are available in all communities and are affordable for those who want to use them.
- Community leaders and community organizations join to support and promote family literacy.
- Alaskans know what literacy and learning skills are necessary for children to enter school ready to read and ready to learn.
- Parents are educated consumers of child care and early learning programs.
- The quality of child care and other early learning settings improves.
- Quality early childhood education is available and affordable for all children from birth to age 6.
- Alaskans recognize the importance and value of early childhood education.
- There is an entity to guide and implement Task Force recommendations.
- Funds are obtained and maintained to support early literacy and learning.
- Early childhood learning is a societal imperative in Alaska.
- Children arrive at school ready to read and ready to learn.

CONCLUSION

The Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force evaluated how we as Alaskans prepare young children to read and learn and why it is important to society. The members – business, civic, nonprofit, philanthropic, education and government leaders – brought many perspectives to the job. Their childhood memories and life experiences provided the common lens through which to view early literacy and learning.

As you read this report, we are confident you too came to the conclusions shared by those who served on the Task Force. Children are born learning. It is incumbent upon us as Alaskans to ensure their early learning experiences prepare them to succeed.

Nurturing young children – preparing them to read and to learn – is a societal imperative.

Now is the time for you to decide on your role in this critical mission.

Children from the Tlingit & Haida Central Council Head Start program take center stage at the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn reception in March 2006. Here (from left) Katie Guthrie, Brenda Velasquez, Aaliyah Johnson and Jeremiah Lott receive books from First Lady Nancy Murkowski, who hosted the event.

Photo by Gene Storm

"A house without books is like a room without windows."

– Horace Mann, education reformer

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The following organizations funded the work of the Alaska Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force.

Thank you for your support!

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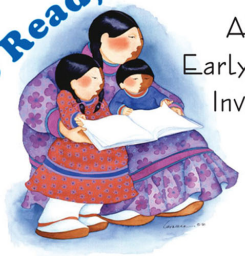
Online Resources

Born Learning
bornlearning.org
Children's Defense Fund
childrensdefense.org
Every Child Matters
everychildmatters.org
Minneapolis Federal Reserve
minneapolisfed.org/research/studies/earlychild
Mind in the Making
mindinthemaking.org
National Governor's Association
nga.org
National Institute for Early Education Research
nieer.org
Pre-K Now
preknow.org
Qualistar Early Learning
corra.org
Smart Start North Carolina
smartstart-nc.org
State of Alaska's Early Learning Guidelines
educ.state.ak.us
State of Alaska, DHSS, Division of Public Assistance, Child Care Program Office
hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/ccare
System for Early Education Development
seed.alaska.edu
Talaris Research Institute
talaris.org
Thrive by Five
thrivebyfivewa.org
Voices for America's Children
voices.org
Zero to Three
zerotothree.org

"Story Time" – Special thanks!

A special thank you to Barbara Lavallee for making available the use of her artwork *"Story Time"* for the Ready to Read, Ready to Learn logo. This work pictures what Alaskans desire to see: parents and young children engaged in reading and learning together. Reading or storytelling is the central subject of much of her art. Other works by the artist can be seen online at: artiqueltd.com/artists/bio/artist/7

"Ready to Read, Ready to Learn"

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