



**ALASKA
CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND PLAN
FOR
FFY 2006-2007**

This Plan describes the CCDF program to be conducted by the State for the period 10/1/05 – 9/30/07. As provided for in the applicable statutes and regulations, the Lead Agency has the flexibility to modify this program at any time, including changing the options selected or described herein.

The official text of the applicable laws and regulations govern, and the Lead Agency acknowledges its responsibility to adhere to them regardless of the fact that, for purposes of simplicity and clarity, the specific provisions printed herein are sometimes paraphrases of, or excerpts and incomplete quotations from, the full text.

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 165 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

(Form ACF 118 Approved OMB Number: 0970-0114 expires 06-30-2008)

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PART 1 --ADMINISTRATION

The agency shown below has been designated by the Chief Executive Officer of the State (or Territory), to represent the State (or Territory) as the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency agrees to administer the program in accordance with applicable Federal laws and regulations and the provisions of this Plan, including the assurances and certifications appended hereto. (658D, 658E)

1.1 Lead Agency Information (as designated by State chief executive officer)

Name of Lead Agency: Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
Address of Lead Agency: P.O.Box 110601, Juneau, AK 99811-0601
Name and Title of the Lead Agency's Chief Executive Officer: Joel Gilbertson,
Commissioner
Phone Number: 907-465-3030 Fax Number: 907-465-3068
E-Mail Address: joel_gilbertson@health.state.ak.us
Web Address for Lead Agency (if any): <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/>

1.2 State Child Care (CCDF) Contact Information (day-to-day contact)

Name of the State Child Care Contact (CCDF): Mary Lorence
Title of State Child Care Contact: Child Care Program Manager
Division of Public Assistance
Address: 619 E. Ship Creek Avenue, Suite 230
Anchorage, AK 99501-1677
Phone Number: 907-269-4500 Fax Number: 907-269-4520
E-Mail Address: mary_lorence@health.state.ak.us
Phone Number for child care subsidy program information (for the public) (if any):
1-888-268-4632
Web Address for child care subsidy program information (for the public) (if any):
<http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/ccare/>

1.3 Estimated Funding

The Lead Agency estimates that the following amounts will be available for child care services and related activities during the 1-year period: October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2006. (§98.13(a))

CCDF: \$11,323,802
Federal TANF Transfer to CCDF: \$13,100,000
Direct Federal TANF Spending on Child Care: \$15,973,356
State CCDF Maintenance of Effort Funds: \$3,544,811
State Matching Funds: \$3,682,512
Total Funds Available: \$47,624,485 (includes direct TANF funds for child care assistance for TANF families as well as non-TANF families)

1.4 Estimated Administration Cost

The Lead Agency estimates that the following amount (and percentage) of Federal CCDF and State Matching Funds will be used to administer the program (not to exceed 5 percent): \$1,200,000 (4.27%). (658E(c)(3), §§98.13(a), 98.52)

1.5 Administration of the Program

Does the Lead Agency directly administer and implement all services, programs and activities funded under the CCDF Act, including those described in Part 5.1 – Activities & Services to Improve the Quality and Availability of Child Care, Quality Earmarks and Set-Aside?

Yes. Skip questions 1.6 and 1.7. Go to Section 1.8.

No, and the following describes how the Lead Agency maintains overall control when services or activities are provided through other agencies: (658D(b)(1)(A), §98.11)

The Lead Agency manages all child care programs at the state level. Grantees and Contractors, in the form of local government entities or non-profit organizations implement many of the services, including: determining eligibility for non-TANF subsidized child care services, determining eligibility for child care providers to become approved to participate in the child care assistance program, providing child care referral services and supplying comprehensive consumer awareness, education and training to families, child care providers and the general public. In Anchorage a grantee also provides child care licensing services. CCDF fiscal management and program policy development remain at the state level.

The Lead Agency monitors grantees and contractors through annual on-site visits, random desk audits, and review of monthly statistical reports, quarterly fiscal and narrative reports. Grantees and contractors attend formal training sessions on policy and procedures required by the Lead Agency and participate in bi-monthly technical assistance teleconferences conducted by the Lead Agency.

The grantee/contractor must certify that they will comply with the terms, conditions, and assurances, of their grant or contract and perform all work required in their agreed scope of work. Specific deliverables and performance indicators such as adequate program access, timely and efficient service delivery, accurate eligibility and payment determinations, fiscally responsible program expenditures, and accessible professional development and training opportunities for child care providers across the state are monitored over the course of the grant or contract. Specific Federal and State audit requirements are also required and must be adhered to by the grantees and contractors, with oversight by the Lead Agency.

1.6 Determining Eligibility

For child care services funded under §98.50 (e.g., certificates, vouchers, and grants/contracts for slots based on individual eligibility), does the Lead Agency itself: (§98.11)

- Determine individual eligibility of non-TANF families?
 Yes.
 No. If no, identify the name and type of agency that determines eligibility of non-TANF families for child care:

Local Child Care Assistance Administrators, grantees and contractors of the Lead Agency, determine eligibility. State Public Assistant Analysts are responsible for monitoring all services provided by the grantees and contractors using policy and program compliance reviews, on-site visits, investigating allegations of suspected misuse of program funds, determining initial and supplemental funding allocations, reviewing quarterly program invoices and identifying training issues.

- Determine individual eligibility of TANF families?
 Yes.

The Department of Health and Social Services Division of Public Assistance determines the eligibility of TANF families.

 No. If no, identify the name and type of agency that determines eligibility of TANF families for child care:

- Assist parents in locating child care?
 Yes.
 No. If no, identify the name and type of agency that assists parents:

The Local Administrators and the Regional Child Care Resource and Referral agencies are the primary agencies that assist parents in locating child care.

- Make payments to providers and/or parents?
 Yes.
 No. If no, identify the name and type of agency that makes payments:

1.7 Non-Governmental Entities

Is any entity named in response to section 1.6 a non-governmental entity? (658D(b), §§98.10(a), 98.11(a))

Yes, and the following entities named in 1.6 are non-governmental:

The Lead Agency maintains grants and contracts in local communities to determine family and provider eligibility to participate in the child care assistance program. The grantees and contractors include local government entities and private, not-for-profit agencies. The nongovernmental grantees are:

- Cordova Family Resource Center
- South Peninsula Women's Services, Inc
- Catholic Community Service
- LeeShore Center
- Alaska Family Services, Inc
- Nome Community Center, Inc
- Seaview Community Services

The Lead Agency also grants funds to three private regional Child Care Resource & Referral agencies to assist parents in locating appropriate child care and carry out child care quality improvement activities:

Child Care Connection, Inc
Association for the Education of Young Children, Southeast Alaska
Play N Learn (DBA C.A.R.E.S., Children's Advocates, Resources and Educational Services)

No.

1.8 Use of Private Donated Funds

Will the Lead Agency use private donated funds to meet a part of the matching requirement of the CCDF pursuant to §98.53(e)(2) and (f)?

Yes, The name and type of entity designated to receive private donated funds is:
Name:
Address:
Contact:
Type:

No.

1.9 Use of State Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) Expenditures for CCDF-Eligible Children

1.9.1 During this plan period, will State expenditures for Pre-K programs be used to meet any of the CCDF maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement?

Yes, and:

() The State assures that its level of effort in full day/full year child care services has not been reduced, pursuant to §98.53(h)(1).

(%) Estimated % of the MOE requirement that will be met with pre-K expenditures.

If the State uses Pre-K expenditures to meet more than 10% of the MOE requirement, the following describes how the State will coordinate its Pre-K and child care services to expand the availability of child care (§98.53(h)(4)):

No.

1.9.2 During this plan period, will State expenditures for Pre-K programs be used to meet any of the CCDF Matching Fund requirement? (§98.53(h))

Yes, and

(%) Estimated % of the Matching Fund requirement that will be met with pre-K expenditures.

If the State uses Pre-K expenditures to meet more than 10% of the Matching Fund requirement, the following describes how the State will coordinate its Pre-K and child care services to expand the availability of child care (§98.53(h)(4)):

No.

1.9.3 If the State answered yes to 1.9.1 or 1.9.2, the following describes State efforts to ensure that pre-K programs meet the needs of working parents: (§98.53(h)(2))

1.10 Improper Payments

1.10.1 How does the Lead Agency define improper payments?

The Lead Agency defines improper payments as program benefits or payments received by a family or provider that the family or provider was not (A) entitled to under Alaska Statute (law) 47.25.001-47.25.150 and Alaska Administrative Code (regulation) 4 AAC 65.010-4 AAC 65.901; or (B) in compliance with those provisions.

1.10.2 Has your State developed strategies to prevent, measure, identify, reduce and/or collect improper payments? (§98.60(i), §98.65, §98.67)

Yes, and these strategies are:

- 1) A new statewide computer system is in development and will be implemented in the Fall of 2005. This system will allow closer monitoring of child care payments.
- 2) The Local Administrators review and monitor the provider billings prior to submitting them to the Child Care Program office for payment.
- 3) A child care licensing position is currently being reclassified to a position responsible for monitoring and initially investigating unusual child care payments.
- 4) State regulations will allow findings (if warranted) from the position identified in #3 to be referred to the Division of Public Assistance Fraud Unit for further investigation and possible action.

No. If no, are there plans underway to determine and implement such strategies?

- Yes.
 No.

1.10.3 Has your State developed strategies to identify errors in the determination of client eligibility?

Yes, and these strategies are:

- 1) A new monitoring tool for grantees/contractors who determine client eligibility is currently being piloted and will be revised and adapted in the next year.
- 2) A child care licensing position is currently being reclassified to a position that will investigate questionable client activities.

No. If no, are there plans underway to determine and implement such strategies?

- Yes.
 No.

PART 2 -- DEVELOPING THE CHILD CARE PROGRAM

2.1 Consultation and Coordination

2.1.1 Lead Agencies are required to *consult* with appropriate agencies and *coordinate* with other Federal, State, local, tribal (if applicable) and private agencies providing child care and early childhood development services (§98.12, §98.14(a),(b), §98.16(d)). Indicate the entities with which the Lead Agency has consulted or coordinated (as defined below), by checking the appropriate box(es) in the following table.

Consultation involves the participation of an appropriate agency in the development of the State Plan. At a minimum, Lead Agencies must consult with representatives of general purpose local governments (noted by the asterisk in the chart below).

Coordination involves the coordination of child care and early childhood development services, including efforts to coordinate across multiple entities, both public and private (for instance, in connection with a State Early Childhood Comprehensive System (SECCS) grant or infant-toddler initiative). At a minimum, Lead Agencies must coordinate with (1) other Federal, State, local, Tribal (if applicable), and/or private agencies responsible for providing child care and early childhood development services, (2) public health (including the agency responsible for immunizations and programs that promote children’s emotional and mental health), (3) employment services / workforce development, (4) public education, and (5) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and (5) any Indian Tribes in the State receiving CCDF funds (noted by the asterisks in the chart below).

	Consultation	Coordination
• Representatives of local government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Indian Tribes/Tribal Organizations, when such entities exist within the boundaries of the State	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Other Federal, State, local, Tribal (if applicable), and private agencies providing child care and early childhood development services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
• State/Tribal agency (agencies) responsible for		
○ Public health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
○ Employment services / workforce development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
○ Public education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
○ TANF	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
○ State pre-kindergarten programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
○ Head Start programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
○ Programs that promote inclusion for children with special needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	Consultation	Coordination
• Other (See guidance):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

** Required.*

For each box checked above, (a) identify the agency providing the service and (b) describe the consultation and coordination efforts, if any. Descriptions must be provided for any consultation or coordination required by statute or regulation.

Consultation

Local Government

Eight of fifteen of the state’s grantees for providing Local Administrator services are local governments or municipalities. In addition, the State of Alaska enters into an agreement with the Municipality of Anchorage to provide child care licensing services within the Municipality of Anchorage, which represents half of the population of the state.

Local government consultation occurs in the following ways:

- Bi-weekly teleconferences are hosted by the lead agency in which all grantees are invited to participate. It is at these meetings that exchanges of information and input into policy formulation occur.
- Staff from the Child Care Program Office meet on a regular basis with the Municipality of Anchorage licensing and child care assistance offices and participate in meetings regarding their municipal licensing code revision work.
- Staff from the Child Care Program Office meet with local government officials when visiting communities.

Coordination

Tribal

The Lead Agency initiated quarterly teleconferences with Tribal Organizations in 2004. The Lead Agency also participated in the Tribal Cluster training in 2004, where a day was added to promote networking and collaboration between the Tribal Organizations and child care licensing, child care assistance, and child care resource and referral staff.

Highlights of quarterly teleconferences and collaborative activities include:

1. Updates on the proposed Health and Social Services child care regulation changes.
2. A child care resource guide is being developed to include contacts and service areas for Resource and Referral agencies, licensing offices, child care assistance offices, Head Start programs, CCDF Tribal Programs, and child care food programs. The guide will be distributed to improve contact between parties and to ensure that appropriate entities are included on each other’s mailing lists.
3. Reports on collaborative activities of Tribal Organizations.
4. One Tribal Organization submitted their child care certification process and requirements to the state for review to see if their requirements meet or exceed the state requirements for provider approval. If they do, the state will accept

the Tribal Organization certification for state approval, rather than having child care providers complete two different processes.

5. Information sharing about training opportunities and upcoming events.

Public Health

The work of the Maternal, Child and Family Health unit in the Division of Public Health was distributed throughout other Divisions in the Department of Health and Social Services in 2003. The early intervention programs, WIC program and the work of the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant moved to the Office of Children's Services. The Lead Agency works closely, and meet regularly with representatives from the Office of Children's Services (OCS) serves on the governing councils of several initiatives sponsored by OCS, and coordinates policy and processes to ensure alignment and avoid duplication.

The child care licensing staff also work closely with Public Health to ensure that immunization requirements and information given to child care providers and parents of children in child care is current and correct. Public Health staff periodically review immunization records of children in child care, participate in health and safety training for child care providers, and provide consultation to child care centers.

Public Health staff were also consulted regarding recent changes to child care licensing regulations over issues such as required first aid kit contents, requirements for tuberculosis screening, and water safety in facilities not on municipal water systems.

Employment services

The Lead Agency was transferred from the Department of Education and Early Development to the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Assistance in 2003. The Division of Public Assistance is the TANF agency for the State of Alaska and works closely with the Department of Labor in developing job opportunities for all Alaskans, while targeting families on TANF. Child care is acknowledged as a necessary support for families who wish to enter and remain in the work force. Information about child care resources is available at job centers throughout the state; case managers and employment counselors receive child care information training for use as part of their resource portfolio for families.

The Lead Agency also participates on the early childhood professional development council for the state, as does a representative from the Department of Labor. This participation allows each agency, as well as other partner agencies, to network, update each other on changes and events, and to collaborate on efforts to promote early childhood professional development.

Public Education

The Lead Agency:

- Works with school districts to license before-and-after school child care in the schools
- Coordinates with the Department of Education and Early Development on program oversight and regulation of preschools
- Participates in statewide discussions regarding pre-K services for Alaskan families
- Funds training by the child care resource and referral agencies regarding serving young children with special needs and linking with school district services for 3-5 year olds
- Works with representatives from the public school system and the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) on the early learning guidelines to ensure alignment with DEED standards
- Participates on the System for Early Education Development (SEED) Council, along with several representatives from the Department of Education and Early Development

TANF

In 2003, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO) was moved from the Department of Education and Early Development to the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Assistance. The Division of Public Assistance is the TANF agency for the State of Alaska. The CCPO manager serves on the management team for the Division and participates in regular meetings with the team. Child care is an integral part of the Division's mission.

As a result of the CCPO move, all state child care assistance programs are now in one Division within the Department of Health and Social Services (previously the child care assistance program for families on TANF was in one Department and the child care assistance program for families transitioning from TANF and other low-income families was in another Department). This consolidation is allowing the programs to become better aligned and helps to ensure seamless services for families needing child care assistance as they transition from TANF.

State Pre-Kindergarten Programs

Lead Agency staff are participating in statewide meetings around the issue of pre-k programs in Alaska. A task force will be appointed in the near future; child care will be represented.

Programs that promote inclusion for children with special needs

The Alaska Inclusive Child Care Initiative has been incorporated into the work of the Regional Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. This initiative, through the work of the resource and referral agencies, provides enhanced referrals for families looking for child care for their children with special needs. In addition, the Resource and Referral Agencies train providers (or ensure providers are

trained) to meet the needs of these children. The child care assistance program offers a supplemental rate for the care of children with special needs – for parents who meet the income eligibility standards for child care assistance and for providers who need additional support to care for these children. This is a statewide collaborative effort overseen by the Lead Agency and involving the Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies and the child care assistance programs in coordination with early intervention programs and local school districts Tribal CCDF programs have expressed interest in participating in the initiative. This program is funded with CCDF funds.

Head Start Programs

Alaska Head Start/Child Care Collaboration – The Lead Agency and the Head Start Collaboration director continue to promote collaboration between child care providers and Head Start programs, including those run by Tribal Organizations. Recent collaborative activity between child care and Head Start includes:

- Inclusion of the Child Care Resource and Referral agencies in the development and dissemination of Head Start traveling training kits for use with all early childhood providers in communities where the kits are used. The first kit in this series was on Reflective Supervision. These kits were developed and disseminated in 2004. Additional kits on a variety of topics are slated for completion in 2005 and 2006, with a plan for at least one set of kits produced each year depending on funding.
- Preliminary development of Alaska’s Early Learning Guidelines. The Department of Education and Early Development Head Start Collaboration Office and the Lead Agency provide the leadership and funding for this project.
- Participation in Region X child care audio conferences.
- Regular and frequent meetings between the child care administrator and the Head Start Collaboration office.
- Inclusion of the child care administrator in the Alaska Head Start Leadership Council meetings.
- Inclusion of child care programs in collaborative models for the Alaska Community Preschool Project along with school districts, Head Start, Even Start, and Parents As Teachers.
- Joint participation on the System for Early Education Development Council, the Alaska Strengthening Families Initiative team, the Early Childhood Comprehensive Services grant team, and the Alaska pre-k initiative.

2.1.2 State Plan for Early Childhood Program Coordination. *Good Start, Grow Smart* encourages States to develop a plan for coordination across early childhood programs. Indicate which of the following best describes the current status of the State's efforts in this area.

- Planning.** Indicate whether steps are under way to develop a plan. If so, describe the time frames for completion and/or implementation, the steps

anticipated, and how the plan is expected to support early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts.

Steps are underway to document coordination efforts and to formalize coordination where it has not yet been done. The Lead Agency will compile a list of early childhood programs, their missions and roles, and the linkages between them by October 2005.

The entities involved will review the document and meet to discuss and plan how to specifically support early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts in their programs. The results of these discussions will be added to the plan, which will become a 'living document' to be reviewed and revised on an annual basis.

- Developing.** A plan is being drafted. The draft is included as Attachment
- Developed.** A plan has been written but has not yet been implemented. The plan is included as Attachment
- Implementing.** A plan has been written and is now in the process of being implemented. The plan is included as Attachment
- Other (describe)**

Describe the progress made by the State planning for coordination across early childhood programs since the date of submission of the 2004-2005 State Plan.

The Lead Agency has made a concerted effort to coordinate the efforts of the child care licensing offices, Child Care Resource and Referral programs, Tribal child care programs and the state's child care assistance programs. The major progress to date involves better communication between all programs.

Lead Agency staff are involved in numerous early childhood planning and coordination efforts. They participate in the SEED Council (council of early childhood professional development), the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems effort, the state Pre-K meetings, the Early Learning Guidelines team, the Strengthening Families initiative, and has regular meetings with the Head Start Collaboration Manager. The Lead Agency is also involved in discussions with the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) around preschool certification regulations and DEED's GSEG grant implementation.

Indicate whether there is an entity that is responsible for ensuring that such coordination occurs. Indicate the four or more early childhood programs and/or funding streams that are coordinated and describe the nature of the coordination.

There is not *one* entity responsible for ensuring that such coordination occurs. However, it is the way of doing business in this state with a relatively small

population involved in early childhood programs. Coordination occurs at the policy level as well as at the program level in varying ways around the state. At the policy level, regulations and policies are promulgated and coordinated between programs. An example is the proposed enhanced child care assistance rate for child care facilities that meet certain quality standards. This proposal relies on the child care licensing staff to determine whether a provider meets the standards for a program that the child care assistance program will implement. Another example is the Inclusive Child Care Initiative where the Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies provide enhanced referral and eligibility determinations for the supplemental rate paid by the child care assistance office. Both of these initiatives require close coordination at both the policy and program levels.

Other areas of coordination include: Head Start Programs, child care licensing staff, Child Care Food Programs, Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, and Tribal Organizations combine efforts to facilitate early childhood training; licensing staff contacting the Resource and Referral staff and Food Program staff when a child care provider needs training and further encouragement to improve the quality of care they offer; local administrators of the child care assistance program working with licensing staff to provide informational meetings for child care providers in the local communities; local administrators working with licensing staff in investigating provider complaints; and all groups working together to verify children's attendance records.

Meetings between early childhood programs in communities are formalized in some places (Early Childhood Development Commission in Fairbanks, Success by Six in Anchorage, Partnerships for Families and Children in Juneau) and are less formal in others.

Improved coordination between Tribal child care programs, the state licensing offices, and the Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, especially in rural areas, has resulted in more child care providers getting licensing. This coordination is in the form of joint training and assistance for applicants to complete the application process.

Describe the **results** or expected results of this coordination. Discuss how these results relate to the development and implementation of the State's early learning guidelines, plans for professional development, and outcomes for children.

The expected results of coordination include:

- More efficient and effective delivery of professional development services to child care providers.
- Increased supply of child care.
- More effective delivery of Child Care Assistance in coordination with Tribal Organizations.

Alaska has not adopted early learning guidelines as of this date, but it is the expectation that the early learning guidelines will provide the basis for developing outcomes for all early childhood programs and will be incorporated into their standards and regulations as feasible.

Describe how the State's plan supports or will support continued coordination among the programs. Are changes anticipated in the plan?

The state's plan will consist of documentation and formalization of coordination efforts among programs. Changes are anticipated in areas where coordination efforts have not been formalized. This 'plan' will support continued coordination by formalizing cooperative relationships with the hope of sustaining them as key players change.

2.2 Public Hearing Process

Describe the Statewide public hearing process held to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the provision of child care services under this Plan. (658D(b)(1)(C), §98.14(c)) At a minimum, the description must provide:

Date(s) of statewide notice of public hearing: May 6, 2005

Manner of notifying the public about the statewide hearing: State of Alaska On-Line Public Notice website <http://notes5.state.ak.us/pn>

Date(s) of public hearing(s): June 9, 2005

Hearing site(s): Anchorage, statewide call in

How the content of the plan was made available to the public in advance of the public hearing(s): 1. Electronically distribution to Local Administrators, Tribal Organizations and Child Resource and Referral Agencies

2. Posted on the Child Care Program's website

3. Posted on the State of Alaska's Online Public Notice website

A brief summary of the public comments from this process is included as Attachment 1.

2.3 Public-Private Partnerships

Describe (1) the activities, including planned activities, to encourage public-private partnerships that promote private-sector involvement in meeting child care needs, and (2) the results or expected results of these activities. (658D(b)(1), §98.16(d))

Alaska Job Center Network – The child care resource and referral agencies work with the network and whenever possible, provide services at the Job Center. In Anchorage, Child Care Connection, the southcentral Resource and Referral Agency, is operating a child care center in the Job Center for parents who utilize the Job Center.

Alaska Association for the Education of Young Children, Alaska School Age Child Care Alliance and Alaska Family Child Care Association– The Lead Agency supports

this professional organization comprised of regional affiliates by attending meetings, presenting workshops at regional conferences and supporting the conferences through the Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies.

Rasmuson Foundation – the Lead Agency participated in an early childhood roundtable with the Rasmuson Foundation aimed at discussing the pressing needs of young children in the state. Continued discussions are taking place, with a focus on early childhood literacy.

Child Care Resource and Referral Regional Agencies (CCR&R) – the Lead Agency funds the CCR&Rs to promote private sector involvement in child care. Staff from the CCR&Rs speak at public forums such as Chambers of Commerce and Rotary Clubs, work with the Small Business Development Centers to coordinate training for child care providers, work with United Way and local banks to promote individual saving plan agreements for child care providers, and recognize businesses that support families with young children by issuing *Family Friendly Awards*.

PART 3 -- CHILD CARE SERVICES OFFERED

3.1 Description of Child Care Services

3.1.1 Certificate Payment System

Describe the overall child care certificate process, including, at a minimum:

(1) a description of the form of the certificate (98.16(k));

The child care certificate is in the form of a child care authorization. The authorization identifies the children for whom child care is authorized; identifies the provider selected by the family; describes the child care that is authorized; states the anticipated eligible cost of care, the family contribution amount, and the anticipated state payment amount; and states the period of time for which the authorization is effective. Authorizations may be issued for a period up to 6 months at the discretion of the grantee or contractor (Local Administrators).

(2) a description of how the certificate program permits parents to choose from a variety of child care settings by explaining how a parent moves from receipt of the certificate to choice of the provider; (658E(c)(2)(A)(iii), 658P(2), 98.2, 98.30(c)(4) & (e)(1) & (2)) and

When parents are determined eligible and funding is available, they are given information about choosing a child care provider. If they have already selected a provider, a copy of the authorization is mailed to the provider. Parents who have not selected a provider are referred to the Child Care Resource & Referral Agency serving the region where they are provided consumer information and assisted in locating a provider to meet their needs.

In order to participate in the Child Care Assistance program, child care providers must declare their rates, sign a provider agreement and share a copy of their provider's policies with the parent.

If a parent prefers to use in-home care the Local Administrator supplies the parent with an In-Home Care Information Packet. The parent must agree to employ the provider and the provider must pass a background check. Payments are made to the parent choosing in-home care.

(3) if the Lead Agency is also providing child care services through grants and contracts, estimate the mix of §98.50 services available through certificates versus grants/contracts, and explain how it ensures that parents offered child care services are given the option of receiving a child care certificate. (98.30(a) & (b)) This may be expressed in terms of dollars, number of slots, or percentages of services.

3.1.2 In addition to offering certificates, does the Lead Agency also have grants or contracts for child care slots?

Yes, and the following describes the types of child care services, the process for accessing grants or contracts, and the range of providers that will be available through grants or contracts: (658A(b)(1), 658P(4), §§98.16(g)(1), 98.30(a)(1) & (b))

No

3.1.3 The Lead Agency must allow for in-home care but may limit its use. Does the Lead Agency limit the use of in-home care in any way?

Yes, and the limits and the reasons for those limits are: (§§98.16(g)(2), 98.30(e)(1)(iv))

No

3.1.4 Are all of the child care services described in 3.1.1 above (including certificates) offered throughout the State? (658E(a), §98.16(g)(3))

Yes

No, and the following are the localities (political subdivisions) and the services that are not offered:

3.2 Payment Rates for the Provision of Child Care

The statute at 658E(c)(4) and the regulations at §98.43(b)(1) require the Lead Agency to establish payment rates for child care services that ensure eligible children equal access to comparable care.

These rates are provided as Attachment 2

The attached payment rates were or will be effective as of July 1, 2001.

The rate schedule is also available at:

http://hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/ccare/files/CCAP_Rate_Schedule.pdf

The following is a summary of the facts relied on by the State to determine that the attached rates are sufficient to ensure equal access to comparable child care services provided to children whose parents are not eligible to receive child care assistance under the CCDF and other governmental programs. Include, at a minimum:

The month and year when the local market rate survey(s) was completed: May 2004.
(§98.43(b)(2))

- A copy of the Market Rate Survey instrument and a summary of the results of the survey are provided as Attachment 3.
- How the payment rates are adequate to ensure equal access based on the results of the above noted local market rate survey (i.e., the relationship between the attached payment rates and the market rates observed in the survey): (§98.43(b))

In 2001, state rates were generally set at the 75th percentile of the market rate. The following year's market rate survey indicated the state's rates quickly became closer to the 50th percentile of the market rate. The 2004 market rate survey indicates rates now tend to be around the 50th percentile of statewide rates for licensed family child care providers and below the 50th percentile of current market rates for centers in 4 of the 6 areas surveyed.

The Lead Agency continues to use its rate schedule of July 1, 2001 until a new computer system is implemented in the fall of 2005. At that time, rates that fall below the 50th percentile will be considered for changes.

In addition, regulations that are open for public comment at this time, propose a rate enhancement for parents who choose licensed child care that meets certain quality standards higher than current licensing standards. This enhanced rate will allow low-income families better access to higher costs programs.

- Additional facts that the Lead Agency relies on to determine that its payment rates ensure equal access include: (§98.43(d))

The contribution amount for families whose income is at or below 40% of the 2002 State Median Income, \$1596 per month for a three-person family, is 1% to 1.125% of countable income. (Countable income does not include Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend income the family receives)

A single parent:

- Making \$1596 per month.
- Living in Anchorage with two preschool children in full time care.
- Choosing care with costs equal to the 50th percentile would have \$98 per month in non-subsidized costs. This is 6% of countable income.

Families that are able to fully take advantage of The Child Care Tax Credit for 2004 will see their out of pocket expenses reduced to about 4% of countable income.

The co-payment amount for a family whose income is between 41% and 55% of the 2002 State Median Income, \$1597 through \$2349 per month for a three-person family, is between 1.25% and 3.5% of countable income, before

accounting for the Child Care Tax Credit. If the Tax Credit is fully used, actual family expenditures for child care would be less than 1% of countable income

Similarly, a single parent making \$2349 per month with two preschool children in full time care, and choosing care with costs equal to the 50th percentile, would have \$162 per month in non-subsidized child care costs. This is 7% of countable income.

If this family fully takes advantage of the Child Care Tax Credit, it will see its costs lowered by 27%, or about \$44 per month. This would reduce the family's costs to \$118 per month or about 5% of countable income.

- If the payment rates do not reflect individual rates for the full range of providers - center-based, group home, family and in-home care -- explain how the choice of the full range of providers is made available to parents.
- At what percentile of the current Market Rate Survey is the State rate ceiling set? If it varies across categories of care, please describe.

Rates were initially set at the 75th percentile of Market Rates, but in the several years since rates were set, as providers have increased their rates, the unchanged State Rate has moved towards the 50th percentile of Market Rates.

- Does the State have a tiered reimbursement system (higher rates for child care centers and family child care homes that achieve one or more levels of quality beyond basic licensing requirements)?

Yes. If yes, describe:

No, but proposed

3.3 Eligibility Criteria for Child Care

3.3.1 Complete column (a) and (b) in the matrix below. Complete Column (c) ONLY IF the Lead Agency is using income eligibility limits lower than 85% of the SMI).

Family Size	(a) 100% of State Median Income (SMI) (\$/month)	(b) 85% of State Median Income (SMI) (\$/month) [Multiply (a) by 0.85]	IF APPLICABLE	
			(c) Income Level, lower than 85% SMI, if used to limit eligibility	
			(d) \$/month	(e) % of SMI [Divide (d) by (a), multiply by 100]
1	NA	NA	NA	NA
2	4458	3790	3516	78.9
3	5016	4263	3853	76.8
4	5573	4737	4190	75.2
5	6019	5116	4433	73.7
6	6464	5495	4675	72.3

The median family income for a family of four in Alaska, Federal Register March 2002 is \$66,874. This number is used as a base to calculate the median income for different family sizes using the adjustment factor in Table 2 below. The adjusted gross income levels shown in column (d) are equal to 85% SMI less an estimated amount of the 2002 Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend. The dividend is not used in calculating the adjusted gross income amount when determining program eligibility. Thus, the eligibility limit for virtually all Alaskan residents is 85% SMI for 2002.

Table 2

Family Size	Family Size Adjustment Factor (Based on HUD adjustment Factors)	100% State Median Income (\$/Month)
2	0.80	4458
3	0.90	5016
4	1.00	5573
5	1.08	6019
6	1.16	6464

If the Lead Agency does not use the SMI from the most current year, indicate the year used: 2002

If applicable, the date on which the eligibility limits detailed in column (b) became or will become effective: July 1, 2002

- 3.3.2 How does the Lead Agency define “income” for the purposes of eligibility? Is any income deducted or excluded from total family income, for instance, work or medical expenses; child support paid to, or received from, other households; Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments? Is the income of all family members included, or is the income of certain family members living in the household excluded? Please describe and/or include information as *Attachment* (§§98.16(g)(5), 98.20(b))

The Lead Agency defines “income” for purposes of eligibility as:
The parents’ total monthly cash receipts before taxes from all sources except those specifically excluded below.

- Alaska Permanent Fund Dividends
- Back child support
- Federal earned income tax credit
- Foster care payments
- Loans
- Alaska Native Corporation Dividends if under \$2000 per year

The income of family members other than the parents is not counted, nor is income from household members who are not family member. Child support payments and catastrophic medical or dental payments are deducted from gross income calculations.

- 3.3.3 Has the Lead Agency established additional eligibility conditions or priority rules, for example, income limits that vary in different parts of the State, special eligibility for families receiving TANF, or eligibility that differs for families that include a child with special needs? (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.16(g)(5), §98.20(b))

Yes, and the additional eligibility criteria are: (Terms must be defined in Appendix 2)
An enhanced subsidy rate for children with special needs exists, based on the level of specialized care needed by the child.

No

- 3.3.4 Has the Lead Agency elected to waive, on a case-by-case basis, the free and income eligibility requirements for cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services, as defined in Appendix 2? (658E(e)(3)(B), (658P(3)(C)(ii), (§98.20(a)(3)(ii)(A))

Yes, and the additional eligibility criteria are: (Terms must be defined in Appendix 2)
Protective services child care is a support service designed to help keep families together. A social worker from the Office of Children’s Services may authorize protective services for a child at risk of abuse or neglect

and for whom child care during the day is part of a family treatment plan. Its objective is to enable the child to remain with his or her biological family or to return the child to the child's own family following an out-of-home placement. In addition, unlicensed relative foster parents are not eligible for foster care reimbursements due to regulations that stipulate that a foster home must be licensed in order to receive foster care reimbursements. Relative foster parents are often employed full time, with income too high to qualify for child care assistance, and yet unable to incur the full cost of quality child care. When children are removed by the State of Alaska from an unhealthy and/or unsafe home environment and placed into emergency foster care with relatives that are not licensed foster homes, the Lead Agency pays for incurred child care expenses when these children attend a licensed child care facility.

- No
 Not applicable. CCDF-funded child care is not provided in cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services.

3.3.5 Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children above age 13 but below age 19 who are physically and/or mentally incapable of self-care? (Physical and mental incapacity must then be defined in Appendix 2.) (658E(c)(3)(B), 658P(3), §98.20(a)(1)(ii))

- Yes, and the upper age is 18.
 No

3.3.6 Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children above age 13 but below age 19 who are under court supervision? (658P(3), 658E(c)(3)(B), §98.20(a)(1)(ii))

- Yes, and the upper age is 18.
 No

3.3.7 Does the State choose to provide CCDF-funded child care to children in foster care whose foster care parents are not working, or who are not in education/training activities? (§§98.20(a)(3)(ii), 98.16(f)(7))

- Yes. (**NOTE:** This means that for CCDF purposes the State considers these children to be in protective services.)
 No

3.3.8 Does the State choose to provide child care to children in protective services? (§§98.16(f)(7), 98.20(a)(3)(ii)(A) & (B))

- Yes
 No

3.4 Priorities for Children

- 3.4.1 Describe how the State prioritizes service for the following CCDF-eligible children: (a) children with special needs, (b) children in families with very low incomes, and (c) other. Terms must be defined in Appendix 2. (658E(c)(3)(B))

The Lead Agency presently serves all eligible children for whom application is made. If the state reduces available funding and initiates a wait list, families will be prioritized for participation in the program with highest priority given to those families in which the parent is working or attending school; followed by families in which the parent is seeking work. Within each of the two priority categories, families must be prioritized by income and family size, so that a family whose income is determined to be lowest on the department's family income and contribution schedule will receive the highest priority.

The following individuals will not be placed on a wait list, but will immediately receive benefits upon eligibility determination:

- (1) a new child of a participating family;
- (2) a child with special needs;
- (3) a child with parents who are less than 20 years of age and who are enrolled in a high school completion program; and
- (4) a child of a family who has left a temporary assistance program within the last 12 months because of employment.

When there is insufficient funding to serve existing families, the highest priority for retention is given to the families with the lowest income adjusted by family size and prioritized by lowest income within each of the two categories described in the waitlist procedure above.

- 3.4.2 Describe how CCDF funds will be used to meet the needs of: (a) families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), (b) those attempting to transition off TANF through work activities, and (c) those at risk of becoming dependent on TANF. (658E(c)(2)(H), Section 418(b)(2) of the Social Security Act, §§98.50(e), 98.16(g)(4))

TANF/ATAP Child Care – Parents Achieving Self-Sufficiency (PASS I)

The majority of child care funding for families who are receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (known in Alaska as the Alaska Temporary Assistance Program or ATAP) is direct TANF money. However, the state Maintenance of Effort funding is used to match both the TANF and CCDF block grants. The result is that approximately one-fourth of the child care funding for ATAP recipients is considered CCDF funding.

The Division of Public Assistance (DPA) provides child care assistance for families who are receiving cash benefits from the Alaska Temporary Assistance

Program and participating in approved work activities. The Division may not require a person to participate in work activities unless the Division agrees to pay for the child care that is necessary for the person's participation. All ATAP parents are eligible for child care assistance if they are in an approved work activity. The Division pays 100% of the state child care rate for families on Temporary Assistance.

The local Public Assistance Field Offices around the state administer the PASS I child care assistance program; DPA or contract case managers work with the family to determine the need for child care, parents choose their child care provider, a child care authorization is issued, and payment is made upon receipt of the child care provider billing report. Parents are offered assistance in locating appropriate child care through their case manager and/or their local Child Care Resource and Referral agency.

Transitional – PASS II

Families who leave ATAP may be eligible for PASS II child care assistance for up to 12 months following closure of their case. Parents must be working or participating in training and meet the income eligibility standards to qualify. Families who leave ATAP receive a case closure notice referring them to the local administrator of the PASS II child care assistance program in their community. In an effort to avoid disruptions in families' child care assistance, the PASS I program can fund child care for one month following ATAP case closure and the PASS II program can fund child care retroactively if necessary.

Local governments and private, not-for-profit agencies, (aka Local Administrators) determine eligibility for the PASS II program as well as the PASS III program discussed below.

PASS III

This program is for low-income families who fall within the parameters of income eligibility and are at risk for becoming dependent upon TANF.

3.4.3 Does the Lead Agency maintain a waiting list?

- Yes. If yes, for what populations? Is the waiting list maintained at the State level? Are certain populations given priority for services, and if so, which populations? What methods are employed to keep the list current?
- No. If no, does the Lead Agency serve all eligible families that apply?
- Yes
- No

Are there other ways that the Lead Agency addresses situations in which funding is not sufficient to serve all families that are technically eligible under State policies? If so, describe

The Lead Agency has several options (not in order of priority):

STATE PLAN FOR CCDF SERVICES
FOR THE PERIOD 10/1/05 – 9/30/07

- Start a wait list.
- After establishing a wait list, accept only the lowest income families on to the program.
- After establishing a waitlist it can stop providing subsidy support to parents looking for work or to the higher income parents.
- Establish increased family contribution amounts for more than one child in care.
- Change the family contribution schedule and increase family contribution amounts.
- Lower the family income eligibility limits.

3.5 Sliding Fee Scale for Child Care Services

- 3.5.1 A sliding fee scale, which is used to determine each family's contribution to the cost of child care, must vary based on income and the size of the family. A copy of this sliding fee scale for child care services and an explanation of how it works is provided as Attachment 4.

Families can use a web calculator to estimate their contribution amount at:
<http://hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/ccare/calculator/index.cfm>

The attached fee scale was or will be effective as of September 1, 2002.
Will the Lead Agency use additional factors to determine each family's contribution to the cost of child care? (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.42(b))

- Yes, and the following describes any additional factors that will be used:

The additional factor that may affect the family contribution is: number of children receiving child care assistance (if the Lead Agency decides to use this option as described in 3.4.3 item number 4.)

- No

- 3.5.2 Is the sliding fee scale provided in the attachment in response to question 3.5.1 used in all parts of the State? (658E(c)(3)(B))

- Yes

- No, and other scale(s) and their effective date(s) are provided as Attachment ____.

- 3.5.3 The Lead Agency may waive contributions from families whose incomes are at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size, (§98.42(c)), and the poverty level used by the Lead Agency for a family of 3 is:

\$15,120 (This is the income limit for a family of 3 to be eligible for Alaska's TANF program. It is lower than the federal poverty level for Alaska, which is \$19,590 for a family of 3. Families with incomes higher than \$15,120 are required to pay a fee.)

The Lead Agency must elect ONE of these options:

- ALL families with income at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size ARE NOT required to pay a fee.
- ALL families, including those with incomes at or below the poverty level for families of the same size, ARE required to pay a fee.
- SOME families with income at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size ARE NOT required to pay a fee. The following describes these families:

1. Families who are active recipients of TANF Benefits.
2. Families with zero countable income.

3.5.4 Does the Lead Agency have a policy that prohibits a child care provider from charging families any unsubsidized portion of the provider's normal fees (in addition to the contributions discussed in 3.5.1)? (§98.43(b)(3))

- Yes. Please describe:
 No.

3.5.5 The following is an explanation of how the copayments required by the Lead Agency's sliding fee scale(s) are affordable: (§98.43(b)(3))

As shown in Attachment 4, the family contribution does not exceed 10% of income for low-income families. The contribution amount, less estimated child care tax credit, does not exceed 10% of income, counting Permanent Fund Dividend income, until a family exceeds 74% of the 2002 state median income (or approximately 208% of the Alaska Federal Poverty Level for a family of three).

PART 4 -- PROCESSES WITH PARENTS

4.1 Application Process / Parental Choice

4.1.1 The following describes the process for a family to apply for and receive child care services (658D(b)(1)(A), 658E(c)(2)(D) & (3)(B), §§98.16(k), 98.30(a) through (e)). If the process varies for families based on eligibility category, for instance, TANF versus non-TANF, please describe. The description should include:

- How parents are informed of the availability of child care services and about child care options

Parents are informed of the availability of child care services and available child care options on the Lead Agency website <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/ccare/> through brochures distributed by local grantees and contractors, through state resource by resource and referral agencies, Public Assistance offices and Local Child Care Assistance Administrator offices.

TANF families are assisted in finding available child care services by their Public Assistance case worker. Families are also given information on how to access Child Care Resource and Referral services.

Eligible non-TANF families who need child care services may learn of available options from their Local Child Care Assistance Administrator, the regional Child Care Resource and Referral Agency or by referrals from partner agencies. The state lead agency also maintains information on its Internet website, including a listing of licensed and approved child care providers. The Southcentral Alaska Resource and Referral Agency, Child Care Connection, maintains an office in the Anchorage Job Center and all resource and referral agencies as well as child care assistance grantees maintain a working relationship with local Job Centers (Alaska's version of One Stops) to provide parents access to child care information.

- Where/how applications are made

TANF families are eligible to receive child care assistance during the time they are participating in TANF approved activities. When families transition off TANF, they are sent a letter referring them to the PASS II program and the local administrator for the area.

Non-TANF families apply for child care assistance with the local administrator for their area. Applications are available on the web and can be submitted by mail.

<http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/ccare/>

- Who makes the eligibility determination

The Public Assistance case manager determines eligibility for TANF families. Eligibility for non-TANF families is determined by the child care assistance program local administrator.

- How parents who receive TANF benefits are informed about the exception to individual penalties as described in 4.4

Parents are informed of the exemption from the requirement to participate in work activities due to lack of appropriate child care in their initial interview with their case worker. The PASS I Child Care Assistance Manual provides policy and guidance for case managers when they must determine whether to apply the child care exemption.

- Length of eligibility period including variations that relate to the services provided, e.g., through collaborations with Head Start or pre-kindergarten programs

For non-TANF families, once initial eligibility has been determined, families continue to receive child care assistance as long as they continue

to meet eligibility requirements and their contribution amount does not exceed the maximum allowable cost of care. Authorizations for Child Care Assistance may be made for up to six months when there is a stable work or training situation. Parents do not have to report increases in income unless they exceed \$200 per month.

TANF families receiving child care assistance are eligible as long as they continue to receive TANF benefits and are engaged in work or approved work activities. TANF families are responsible for notifying their case managers when their eligibility factors change. Case managers schedule eligibility reviews with TANF recipients to monitor parent participation and activities.

- Any steps the State has taken to reduce barriers to initial and continuing eligibility for child care subsidies

The Lead Agency monitors access to Child Care Assistance and encourages local administrators to increase access to subsidy services by:

- (1) Maximizing access and entry through supporting telephone, mail-in, fax and other methods of intake and eligibility processing.
- (2) Making program applications available at multiple sites throughout the service area.
- (3) Providing extended office hours.
- (4) Not requiring in-person office visits.
- (5) Promoting respectful, helpful and responsive interactions with parents

- 4.1.2 The following is a detailed description of how the State ensures that parents are informed about their ability to choose from among family and group homes, center-based care and in-home care including faith-based providers in each of categories.

The Lead Agency's policy manual for staff that determine eligibility for child care assistance includes a section entitled "Child Care Counseling and Guidance". In this section workers are advised to discuss parental choice and child options. In addition The Parent Interview Checklist for eligibility workers includes "Discussion about parental choice and child care options". A review of family files including the Parent Interview Checklist is a part of the state's monitoring of the delivery of child care assistance eligibility services.

Providers eligible to participate in the Child Care Assistance Program are:

- Providers who are exempt from licensure and are approved for non-relative care, relative only-care, or in-home care.
- Providers who are exempt from licensure and are approved for non-relative care, relative-only care, or in-home care who are certified by Tribal Organizations that meet or exceed the standards of the department.

- Child Care Homes, Child Care Group Homes or Child Care Centers that are currently licensed by the Department of Health and Social Services, Department of Defense or the Coast Guard.

Some of the eligible facilities mentioned above are operated by faith-based organizations.

4.2 Records of Parental Complaints

The following is a detailed description of how the State maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints and how it makes the information regarding such parental complaints available to the public on request. (658E(c)(2)(C), §98.32))

Complaints against approved and in-home providers are referred to the local administrator in each community where they are logged. Complaints become part of the provider's file and are available upon request. Approved providers who are not caring for children related to them must get licensed after one year. Approved provider files are forwarded to the licensing office for the area.

Complaints against approved and in-home providers concerning health and safety may also be referred to the appropriate child care licensing unit. Participation in the Child Care Assistance program may be discontinued when complaints in violation of health and safety requirements are substantiated.

Complaints against licensed providers are referred to the appropriate child care licensing unit. Complaints against licensed facilities are logged, investigated and recorded by the child care licensing staff. All complaints become part of the provider's permanent file and are open to the public upon request at the three state regional licensing office locations and the Municipality of Anchorage Child Care Licensing office.

4.3 Unlimited Access to Children in Child Care Settings

The following is a detailed description of the procedures in effect in the State for affording parents unlimited access to their children whenever their children are in the care of a provider who receives CCDF funds. (658E(c)(2)(B), §98.31))

State Child Care Licensing regulations stipulate that parents will have unlimited access to their children at all times. This stipulation is included in the self-certification packet that all Approved Providers must sign.

4.4 Criteria or Definitions Applied by TANF Agency to Determine Inability to Obtain Child Care

The regulations at §98.33(b) require the Lead Agency to inform parents who receive TANF benefits about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the work

requirement for any single custodial parent who has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care for a child under 6 years of age.

In fulfilling this requirement, the following criteria or definitions are applied by the TANF agency to determine whether the parent has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care:

NOTE: The TANF agency, not the Child Care Lead Agency, is responsible for establishing the following criteria or definitions. These criteria or definitions are offered in this Plan as a matter of public record. The TANF agency that established these criteria or definitions is:

The Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Assistance

- "appropriate child care":
Child care is appropriate when a provider who is willing to take care of the participant's child:
 1. Appears to have the ability to care for children of the same age and development level as the participant's children; and
 2. Is or is willing to become an Approved or Licensed provider.

- "reasonable distance":
Child care is within a reasonable distance when the provider's location is within 30 minutes travel time by public or private transportation from the participant's home or activity site.

- "unsuitability of informal child care":
Informal care is considered unsuitable when it is not available, appropriate or affordable
 1. "Not available" is when child care is not located in the community where the family lives or works and if a provider is unwilling to care for the family's children.
 2. "Not appropriate" is when the provider does not appear to have the ability to care for children of the same age and developmental level as the family's or when a provider's location is not within 30 minutes of travel time by public or private transportation from the family's home or work site.
 3. "Not Affordable" is when the family does not have sufficient income or access to a child care assistance program, to pay the cost.

- "affordable child care arrangements":
Care for which the family has sufficient income or access to assistance through a subsidy.

PART 5
ACTIVITIES & SERVICES TO IMPROVE THE
QUALITY AND AVAILABILITY OF CHILD CARE

5.1 Quality Earmarks and Set-Asides

5.1.1 The Child Care and Development Fund provides earmarks for infant and toddler care and school-age care and resource and referral services as well as the special earmark for quality activities. The following describes the activities; identifies the entities providing the activities; and describes the expected results of the activities. For the infant and toddler earmark, the State must note in its description of the activities what is the maximum age of a child who may be served with such earmarked funds.

Infants and toddlers:

The Lead Agency contracts with local government or not-for-profit Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&R) to manage the Infant/Toddler funds.

Alaska's efforts to increase the quantity and quality of infant/toddler care (0 – 36 months) include the following:

- Recruit and retain qualified infant/toddler providers through financial stipends through the Alaska System of Early Education Development (SEED).
- Educate and engage business and community partners to support working parents, particularly families with infants and toddlers.
- Provide specialized training to increase the ability of programs to offer safe, healthy care that meets the developmental needs of infants and toddlers.
- Implement regional projects based on the unique needs of infants and toddlers.

Specific activities performed by the CCR&R's include, but are not limited to the following:

- The First Steps Mentoring Program provides small incentives to providers for supporting other providers who may need additional assistance. Mentees meet with mentors once a month and attend six workshops. Additionally, mentors attend mentor meetings and teach or co-teach a workshop. Stipends are available to mentees for materials or training to meet their goals for improvement. Mentors receive a set stipend amount. The ITERS or FDCERS assessment tool is used to measure the improvement.
- The Infant/Toddler Quality Enrichment Project promotes increased retention, professional development and equipment needs. Participating teachers and caregivers receive 12 hours of specialized infant/toddler training, and set quality improvement goals based on an ITERS evaluation. Each program receives support to make quality improvements based on their goals, including

equipment purchases, and/or a training stipend to provide incentives and release time for the additional hours devoted to the project. Priority is given to programs that did not participate in previous sessions of the project. Monthly teleconferences are held with participants. Each year the project rotates to different communities. A follow-up ITERS observation is done to measure improvement.

- The Zero – Three: Partnering with Parents: Preventing Abuse and Neglect project offers training and a curriculum with new strategies and resources to strengthen the existing relationships between the child care community and families. Five teams were formed across the state to participate in training and lead this effort in their regions. Each team committed to providing training and support to child care providers. The training and materials the teams received will support child care providers in making a difference for your young children and their families, by helping reduce the risk for child abuse and neglect. CCDF infant-toddler earmark funds supported this effort.

Resource and referral services:

Three CCR&R grantees provide services to urban and rural communities throughout the state. Working to strengthen the early care and education infrastructure and the quality of services available, CCR&Rs collaborate with local organizations, employers, municipalities, and the broad spectrum of public and private programs that meet the early care and education needs of families and communities. CCR&Rs are funded to provide:

Family Services

- Provide consumer education to families looking for child care
- Establish and maintain a child care referral system for families *throughout the region* (or support and ensure referral systems exist in small communities). Referrals must be free of charge to families participating in the child care assistance program;
- Provide enhanced referrals for children with special needs; establish eligibility for supplemental Child Care Assistance Program rates for these children; assist families in determining the child care accommodations needed for their children;
- Provide access to CCR&R services through multiple channels;
- Publicize CCR&R services throughout the designated region;
- Solicit and consider input from families served;
- Maintain current program contact information of other family service agencies;
- Provide referrals for families to other service agencies as appropriate;

Child Care Provider Services

- Provide training for child care providers throughout the service area; ensure training relates to CDA and SEED, and licensing requirements;
- Maintain a resource library for access by child care providers within the service region;
- Recruit individuals interested in becoming child care providers, especially for infant care, care of children with special needs, and care during non-traditional work hours;
- Ensure a Provider Care and Training Plan is established for the care of children with special needs participating in the AK IN! Project;
- Provide information about becoming a child care provider, including information about licensing, approval, and in-home care requirements;
- Use 'earmarked' funds to improve the quality and availability of infant, toddler, and school-age child care;
- Provide opportunities for child care providers throughout the region to give input into planning for CCR&R services;
- Encourage and support local child care provider networks;
- Provide outreach to each community in the service area where there are child care providers to inform of training opportunities and options;
- Assist providers in the accreditation process;
- Maintain current program contact information of other family service agencies;
- Provide referrals for families to other service agencies as appropriate;
- Participate in local child care planning groups;
- Participate in state and local child care planning and policy-making groups.

School-age child care:

Alaska's efforts to increase the quantity and quality of school-age child care include the following:

- Provide specialized training to increase the ability of programs to offer safe and healthy care that meets the needs of school-age children. This has included providing financial support to school-age child care providers to complete the Concordia school-age child care program.
- Implement regional projects based on the unique needs of school-age children.
- Create a school-age child care certificate through the University of Alaska Anchorage Recreation Department. This 12-14 credit program has been authorized by the University and is currently in development
- Recruit and retain qualified school-age providers through financial stipends.
- Implement *School Age Bullying Prevention Programs* in several communities; school age child care providers have been involved in these programs, along with school district personnel. The program is aimed at

identifying bullies, learning methods to stop the bullying behavior, and promoting activities to discourage bullying in school-age programs.

5.1.2 The law requires that not less than 4% of the CCDF be set aside for quality activities. (658E(c)(3)(B), 658G, §§98.13(a), 98.16(h), 98.51) The Lead Agency estimates that the following amount and percentage will be used for the quality activities (not including earmarked funds):

\$ 7,500,000 (26.68 %) This estimate is based on previous reports.

5.1.3 Check either "Yes" or "No" for each activity listed to indicate the activities the Lead Agency will undertake to improve the availability and quality of child care (include activities funded through the 4% quality set-aside as well as the special earmark for quality activities). (658D(b)(1)(D), 658E(c)(3)(B), §§98.13(a), 98.16(h))

	Yes	No
• Comprehensive consumer education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Grants or loans to providers to assist in meeting State and local standards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Monitoring compliance with licensing and regulatory requirements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Professional development, including training, education, and technical assistance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Improving salaries and other compensation for child care providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Activities in support of early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Activities to promote inclusive child care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Healthy Child Care America and other health activities including those designed to promote the social and emotional development of children	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Other quality activities that increase parental choice, and improve the quality and availability of child care. (§98.51(a)(1) and (2))	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5.1.4 Describe each activity that is check “Yes” above, identify the entity (ies) providing the activity, and describe the expected results of the activity.

- **Comprehensive Consumer Education:**

The Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies deliver comprehensive consumer education with funding from the Lead Agency. They:

 - developed booklets explaining what to look for in child care
 - present consumer education information to various groups including TANF recipients, local businesses, and parent groups;
 - provide consumer education booklets to the public at various fairs, public forums, and social service offices; and
 - developed and distributed radio public service announcements and posters explaining the importance of quality child care.

- **Grants or loans to providers to assist in meeting state and local standards**
 - The child care resource and referral agencies provide training and travel-to-training grants to assist providers in meeting training standards.
 - Small grants to purchase items necessary to serve particular populations (i.e. infants, children with special needs, etc.) are also available through the resource and referral agencies.
 - The lead agency administers a child care grant program for providers, which can be used to purchase items needed to meet state standards.

- **Monitoring compliance with licensing and regulatory requirements**

CCDF quality funds support child care licensing efforts across the state. State licensing staff license facilities statewide with the exception of the Municipality of Anchorage; the Municipality is responsible for licensing child care facilities within its jurisdiction. During the past year, Municipality of Anchorage licensing codes were revised; revisions to State licensing regulations are currently in the required public comment period. Licensing staff continue to conduct site visits to monitor compliance with regulatory requirements, license facilities, and offer technical assistance. Site visits occur on an annual basis at a minimum, and when needed to investigate compliance issues. A special effort has been made in the past year to increase the number of licensed facilities in rural Alaska; licensing specialists are collaborating with partner agencies to assist new providers in completing the licensing paperwork, securing required safety items, and accessing training opportunities. Expected results of licensing efforts include safer and healthier child care and an increased number of licensed facilities in rural Alaska.

- **Other Activities that Increase Parental Choice and Improve the Quality and Availability of Child Care.**
 - Child Care Resource and Referral Internet Referrals – the Alaska child care resource and referral network is in the process of converting to use of the NACCRRAware Internet Mask Module which will allow parents to

access child care consumer information and on-line child care referrals at their convenience. This will improve parents' access to child care, and provide information about quality child care at the same time.

- The lead agency currently has regulations open for public comment, which propose an enhanced child care assistance rate for licensed child care providers who meet certain quality measures over and above licensing standards. When implemented, this enhanced rate will increase parental choice for low income parents who may not be able to afford higher cost, higher quality providers. It will also encourage child care providers to meet higher quality standards.
- **Professional Development, Including Training, Education, Technical Assistance**

- **System for Early Education Development (SEED)**

The Alaska SEED program is the comprehensive professional development system for the field of early care and education. SEED works to ensure appropriate and ongoing professional development for those who work with young children in the state. The SEED Council is comprised of representatives from the University system, Head Start programs, child care programs, the state's regional Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Tribal Child Care organizations, and State of Alaska Departments of Education and Early Development and Health and Social Services, and Labor, and the Alaska School-age Child Care Alliance.

The three primary goals of the Alaska SEED Project are:

- Continue to provide statewide leadership for early childhood professional development including coordination of planning and developing the infrastructure needed for delivery of a comprehensive array of education and training opportunities.
- Continue to establish, deliver and evaluate ECE degree enhancements and supports through innovative methods, especially for distance-delivery to Head Start staff rural in rural Alaska
- Support quality child care initiatives through Alaska's Child Care Resource and Referral and similar agency efforts in training, incentive programs, and support for professional development.

Distance Delivery Modules are being developed with SEED funding. AEYC-SE Resource and Referral agency is conducting a quantitative and qualitative research and evaluation of the four completed modules. Ten centers and approximately 30 staff are participating in the study. The study will evaluate the cost effectiveness, completion rate, and application skills and knowledge to work with children.

- o **Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies** The Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies are the primary training and technical assistance providers for child care throughout Alaska. They communicate with providers to assess their training needs, assist in the development of training plans for providers, provide training or refer to other training entities and work to promote quality child care with businesses. Trainings offered cover a range topics such as: math and science activities with children, literacy and language development, developing social competence, asthma and allergies, SIDS/shaken baby, CPR, parenting, child development, and child care business practices. Many of the trainings provided assist providers in meeting child care licensing training and CDA requirements. On-site consultations are provided when requested by child care programs or child care licensing specialist referrals.

- o **Alaska Inclusive Child Care Initiative** This is a statewide collaborative effort focused on increasing the quality and availability of inclusive child care programs for children with special needs. The Child Care Resource and Referral agencies work with providers and families to assess the child's needs, find suitable child care, and develop a care plan. In addition the Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies train, or ensure providers are trained, and provide on-site consultation to meet the needs of children in care.

- o **USDA Child Care Food Program Collaboration** The Lead Agency will continue to enhance collaboration with the Child Nutrition Program in the Department of Education and Early Development. The Child Nutrition Program works with Approved and Licensed Child Care Providers by offering training workshops and mentoring activities and assists Approved Providers in meeting required health and safety standards. Child care and food program staff work closely together in monitoring child care facilities, sharing information, holding joint training sessions, etc.

- **Improving Salaries and Other Compensation for Child Care Providers**
 - o **Child Care Grant** The purpose of the Child Care Grant program is to enhance the overall quality of child care by supporting licensed child care providers with small monthly cash grants for the long-term benefit of their facility and the children in their care. Providers may use grant funds only on specific items, which include staff salaries, substitute care providers, health and safety related items, activities, supplies, and equipment for children in care, and education and training related to child development.

Providers are reimbursed at a base rate per child, on a monthly basis. Approximately 46% of these grant funds are spent by providers on salaries

for child care staff in an effort to increase retention and attract qualified staff as employees. 37% of grant funds are used for supplies, equipment and activities; 10% for health and safety items and 7% on education and training. In addition, since this grant is only offered to licensed child care providers, the Child Care Grant Program creates an added incentive for child care providers to become licensed. This, in turn, increases the number of available slots for children, since licensed programs can care for more children than legally exempt programs. The number of providers participating in the Child Care Grant has steadily increased each year. There are currently 540 licensed providers utilizing the Child Care Grant Program.

- o **Retaining Our Outstanding Teacher awards (ROOTS)** ROOTs Awards continue to be provided through the CCR&R's. Annual awards are based on training obtained and continued employment in child care. This in turn, assists in retention and recognition of quality caregivers.
- o **Public Awareness of Child Care Worker Compensation** During Child Care Provider Month, the CCR&R's focused on the issue of compensation in the field of child care. Media efforts were made that included high ranking local government officials to highlight this issue. It is intended for these efforts to continue with the goal being public awareness of the importance of child care providers and the low wages they receive.
- o **Differentiated Rates** The Lead Agency continues with a differentiated rate scale paying licensed providers a higher rate than Approved Providers. This serves as an added incentive for child care providers to become licensed, meeting the higher requirements for increased quality indicators such as enhanced health and safety standards and child to caregiver ratios.
- o **Economic Impact Study** Plans are underway to initiate an economic study of the early care and education field in Alaska. This will provide a way to focus attention on the issue from a business standpoint.
- **Activities in support of early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts development**
 - o **Ready to Learn Grants**, funded through the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) promote language and literacy through workshops and distribution of free books. The CCR&R agencies deliver the workshops to programs/parents along with the free books. To date, there have been nearly 40 workshops supporting early language, literacy and pre-reading.

- o **Alaska One** is a consortium of public broadcasting stations in Alaska. that receives financial support from the Lead Agency, through the CCR&Rs. The CCR&Rs select an early childhood educational video for broadcast from over 60 choices on topics including language, child development, parenting, literacy and pre-reading. These are broadcast once a week on Alaska One stations.
- o **Early language, literacy and numeracy** resources are available from the Lead Agency such as *Teaching Our Youngest – A Guide for Preschool Teachers and Child Care and Family Providers; Reading Tips for Parents; Seven Super Things Parents and Caregivers Can Do; Put Reading First – Helping Children Learn to Read; Building Blocks for Teaching Children To Read.*
- **Activities to promote inclusive child care**
 - o **The Alaska Inclusive Child Care Initiative** has been incorporated into the work of the regional child care resource and referral agencies. This initiative, through the work of the resource and referral agencies, provides enhanced referrals for families looking for child care for their children with needs. In addition, the resource and referral agencies train providers (or ensure providers are trained) to meet the needs of these children. The child care assistance program offers a supplemental rate for the care of children with special needs – for parents who meet the income eligibility standards for child care assistance and for providers who need additional support to care for these children. This is a statewide collaborative effort overseen by the lead agency and involving the child care resource and referral agencies and the child care assistance programs. Tribal CCDF programs have expressed interest in participating in the initiative. This program is funded with CCDF funds.
- **Healthy Child Care America and other health activities including those designed to promote the social and emotional development of children.**
 - o In January 2005 the Healthy Child Care America (HCCA) grant ended. In an effort of extending HCCA support for on-site child care consultation efforts a list serve was created. The list serve is being used to strategize, plan and increase the resources available to individuals working with young children and families in Alaska. The Healthy Child Care America goals and objectives have been incorporated into the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant activities. Statewide the resource and referral agencies and Public Health nurses partner in providing training for child care providers as well as on site consultations.

- **Other Activities that Increase Parental Choice and Improve the Quality and Availability of child care.**

- o Alaska has an approved care system for child care providers who are legally exempt from licensing. This allows child care providers, especially family, friends, and neighbors to provide care prior to becoming licensed. The process includes self-certification of health and safety requirements. Approved providers are required to become licensed within one of becoming an approved provider. The one-year restriction does not apply to providers who are relatives or to children who are being cared for in their own home.
- o Alaska bases a family's required monthly contribution on a percentage of income, rather than a percentage of the cost of care.
- o Collaboration with Tribal organizations - during the last year, the Lead Agency has worked with Tribal Organizations to coordinate training and recruit child care providers especially in rural Alaska. Collaboration with tribes will be an on-going effort.

5.1.5 Is any entity identified in sections 5.1.1 or 5.1.4 a non-governmental entity?

Yes, the following entities named in this part are non-governmental:
Name: Child Care Connection
Type: Private non-profit

Name: Association for the Education of Young Children
Southeast Alaska
Type: Private non-profit

Name: Play n Learn (C.A.R.E.S.)
Type: Private non-profit

No.

5.2 Good Start, Grow Smart Planning and Development

This section of the Plan relates to the President's *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative which is envisioned as a Federal-State partnership that creates linkages between CCDF, including funds set-aside for quality, and State public and private efforts to promote early learning. In this section, each Lead Agency is asked to assess its State's progress toward developing voluntary guidelines on language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts and a plan for the education and training of child care providers. The third component of the President's *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative, planning for coordination across at least four early childhood programs and funding streams, was addressed in Section 2.1.2.

5.2.1 Status of Voluntary Guidelines for Early Learning. Indicate which of the following best describes the current status of the State's efforts to develop research-based early learning guidelines (content standards) regarding language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts for three to five year-olds.

- Planning.** The State is planning for the development of early learning guidelines. Expected date of plan completion: _____
- Developing.** The State is in the process of developing early learning guidelines. Expected date of completion: January 2006
- Developed.** The State has approved the early learning guidelines, but has not yet developed or initiated an implementation plan. The early learning guidelines are included as Attachment _____
- Implementing.** In addition to having developed early learning guidelines, the State has embarked on implementation efforts, which may include dissemination, training or embedding guidelines in the professional development system. The guidelines are included as Attachment _____
- Revising.** A State has previously developed early learning guidelines and is now revising those guidelines. The guidelines are included as Attachment _____
- Other (describe):**

Describe the progress made by the State in developing voluntary guidelines for early learning since the date of submission of the 2004-2005 State Plan.

A Statewide committee was formed to develop the early learning guidelines. The committee met face-to-face with representatives from NCCIC to coalesce as a group, review the task and group expectations, review other state's guidelines, and make some preliminary decisions. The committee met for several other sessions and has:

- Defined the project scope
- Selected domain areas (Physical well being, health & motor development; social and emotional development; language, communication and literacy; approaches to learning; and cognition and general knowledge)

- Determined guiding principles
- Selected Washington's benchmarks for possible use as a basis for the development of Alaska's guidelines, and
- Selected domain area experts for domain work groups.

The State of Washington's work group was contacted and approval obtained to use their benchmarks as a basis for Alaska's – with two caveats: Alaska wait until Washington completes the development of their benchmarks, and Alaska's guidelines cover children from birth to age 5. Washington's benchmarks will be finalized by July; the Alaska ELG Committee will begin meeting again at that time.

If developed, are the guidelines aligned with K-12 content standards?

- Yes. If yes, describe.
 No.

Please attach a copy of the guidelines. If the guidelines are available on the web, provide the appropriate Web site address:

5.2.2 Domains of Voluntary Guidelines for Early Learning. Do the guidelines address language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts?

- Yes
 No

Do the guidelines address domains not specifically included in *Good Start, Grow Smart*, such as social/emotional, cognitive, physical, health, creative arts, or other domains?

- Yes. If yes, describe.
 No

Have guidelines been developed for children in age groups not specifically included in *Good Start, Grow Smart* (children other than those aged three to five)?

- Yes. If yes, describe.
 No

5.2.3 Implementation of Voluntary Guidelines for Early Learning. Describe the process the State used or expects to use in **implementing** its early learning guidelines. How are (or will) community, cultural, linguistic and individual variations, as well as the diversity of child care settings (be) acknowledged in implementation? Materials developed to support implementation of the guidelines are included as Attachment ____

5.2.4 Assessment of Voluntary Guidelines for Early Learning. As applicable, describe the State's plan for **assessing** the effectiveness and/or implementation of the guidelines. Written reports of these efforts are included as Attachment ____

5.2.5 State Plans for Professional Development. Indicate which of the following best describes the current status of the State's efforts to develop a professional development plan for early childhood providers that includes all the primary sectors: child care, Head Start, and public education.

- Planning.** Indicate whether steps are under way to develop a plan. If so, describe the time frames for completion and/or implementation, the steps anticipated, and how the plan is expected to support early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts.
- Developing.** A plan is being drafted. The draft is included as Attachment ____
- Developed.** A plan has been written but has not yet been implemented. The plan is included as Attachment ____
- Implementing.** A plan has been written and is now in the process of being implemented. The plan is included as Attachment 5
- Other (describe):**

Describe the progress made by the State in a plan for professional development since the date of submission of the 2004-2005 State Plan.

If your State has developed a plan for professional development, does the plan include:	Yes	No
A link to Early Learning Guidelines	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
Continuum of training and education to form a career path	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articulation from one type of training to the next	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality assurance through approval of trainers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality assurance through approval of training content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A system to track practitioners' training	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assessment or evaluation of training effectiveness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
State Credentials – Please state for which roles (e.g. infant and toddler credential,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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directors' credential, etc.)		
Specialized strategies to reach family, friend and neighbor caregivers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

For each Yes response, reference the page(s) in the plan and briefly describe the Lead Agency's efforts.

The System for Early Education Development (SEED) Council is responsible for Alaska's comprehensive early childhood professional development system. The lead agency has two staff members who participate as members of the SEED Council.

- Continuum of training and education to form a career path: pages 6, 16-17
- Articulation from one type of training to the next: pages 3, 6, 16-17
- Quality assurance through approval of trainers: page 5
- A system to track practitioners' training: pages 8
- Assessment or evaluation of training effectiveness: pages 14-15

For each No response, indicate whether the Lead Agency intends to incorporate these components.

- A link to early learning guidelines: since the early learning guidelines are not developed at this time, there is no link to them. The core early learning guidelines committee is a committee of the SEED Council; plans include linking the early learning guidelines with the professional development plan.
- Quality assurance through approval of training content: the SEED Council plans to incorporate this component into the plan.
- State credentials: there is no plan to incorporate this component into the professional development plan at this time, but it will be considered.
- Specialized strategies to reach family, friend and neighbor caregivers: there is no plan to incorporate this component into the professional development plan at this time; rather it is included in the work of the Child Care Resource and Referral agencies.

Are the opportunities available:	Yes	No
Statewide	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Center-based Child Care Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Group Home Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Family Home Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To In-Home Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (describe):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Describe how the plan addresses early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development.

The plan does not address language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development specifically but training in curriculum development and child development offered through the university, Head Start, and Child Care Resource and Referral agencies address these topics.

Are program or provider-level incentives offered to encourage provider training and education?

- Yes. Describe, including any connections between the incentives and training relating to early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts.

There is no specific connection between the incentives and the training areas listed.

- No. If no, is there any plan to offer incentives to encourage provider training and education?

What are the expected **outcomes** of the State's professional development plan and efforts to improve the skills of child care providers? As applicable, how does (or will) the State assess the effectiveness of its plan and efforts? If so, how does (or will) the State use assessment to help shape its professional development plan and training/education for child care providers?

Outcomes: see pages 1 - 2 of the plan. (Attachment 5)

Assessment: see pages 13-15 of the plan. (Attachment 5)

The SEED Council, responsible for the professional development plan, uses results of the evaluation to modify and revise the plan from year to year.

PART 6
HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR PROVIDERS
(Only the 50 States and the District of Columbia complete Part 6.)

The National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care (NRCHSCC) of DHHS's Maternal and Child Health Bureau supports a comprehensive, current, on-line listing of the licensing and regulatory requirements for child care in the 50 States and the District of Columbia. In lieu of requiring a State Lead Agency to provide information that is already publicly available, ACF accepts this compilation as accurately reflecting the States' licensing requirements. The listing, which is maintained by the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center School of Nursing, is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/>.

6.1 Health and Safety Requirements for Center-Based Providers (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, §98.16(j))

6.1.1 Are all center-based providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under State law that is indicated in the NRCHSCC's compilation?

- Yes. Answer 6.1.2, skip 6.1.3, and go to 6.2.
 No. Describe which center-based providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.1.2 and 6.1.3.

6.1.2 Have center licensing requirements as relates to staff-child ratios, group size, or staff training been modified since approval of the last State Plan?

- Yes, and the changes are as follows:
 No, Proposed Regulations are out for public comment that will modify the staff training requirements.

6.1.3 For center-based care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

6.2 Health and Safety Requirements for Group Home Providers (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, 98.16(j))

6.2.1 Are all group home providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under State law that is indicated in the NRCHSCC's compilation? If:

- Yes. Answer 6.2.2, skip 6.2.3, and go to 6.3.
 No. Describe which group home providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.2.2 and 6.2.3.

6.2.2 Have group home licensing requirements that relate to staff-child ratios, group size, or staff training been modified since the approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2) & (3))

- Yes, and the changes are as follows:
 No

6.2.3 For group home care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

6.3 Health and Safety Requirements for Family Providers (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, 98.16(j))

6.3.1 Are all family child care providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under State law that is indicated in the NRCHSCC's compilation? If:

- Yes. Answer 6.3.2, skip 6.3.3, and go to 6.4.
 No. Describe which family child care providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.3.2 and 6.3.3.

Approved and In-home providers

6.3.2 Have family child care provider requirements that relate to staff-child ratios, group size, or staff training been modified since the approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2) & (3))

- Yes, and the changes are as follows:
- No, however, proposed regulations, which are out for public comment require Approved and Approved Relative Providers to have first aid and CPR certification.

6.3.3 For family care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

See Attachment 6 for the Certification Health and Safety Guidelines for Approved Providers.

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations):
Providers self certify they ensure children in their care have all required immunizations and they take precautions to make sure their home is free of hazards that can cause injury or disease.
- Building and physical premises safety:
Providers self certify they understand they must take specific precautions. A few examples from the Health and Safety Guidelines that Approved Providers self certify they agree to are:
 - Maintain sanitary areas for proper care, and storage refrigeration of food.
 - Storing of cleaners, medicines, and other harmful substances in a place inaccessible to children.
 - Have at least one working smoke detection device with AC primary power with battery backup or monitored battery powered smoke detection device.
- Health and safety training:
Complete annually a minimum of six hours of training relevant to a child care provider's job responsibilities, with a minimum of two hours in topics addressing health and safety for children.

6.4 Health and Safety Requirements for In-Home Providers (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, 98.16(j))

6.4.1 Are all in-home child care providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under the State law reflected in the NRCHSCC's compilation referenced above?

- Yes. Answer 6.4.2, skip 6.4.3, and go to 6.5.
- No. Describe which in-home child care providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.4.2 and 6.4.3.

6.4.2 Have in-home health and safety requirements that relate to staff-child ratios, group size, or training been modified since the approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2) & (3))

- Yes, and the changes are as follows:
 No.

6.4.3 For in-home care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

The Health and Safety guidelines for In-home Care, Attachment 7

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations):

Ensure your home is free of fire hazards, encouraging children to wash their hands, and that providers wash their hands for at least 10 seconds with soap and water and rinsing before food handling, preparation, serving, eating, or table setting; after toileting and assisting your children with toileting or diapering; and when hands are contaminated with bodily fluids including nose wiping are a few examples of controlling infectious disease.

- Building and physical premises safety:
Maintain sanitary areas for proper care, storage refrigeration of food and storing of cleaners, medicines, and other harmful substances in a place inaccessible to children are two examples of health and safety guidelines for In-home care providers.
- Health and safety training:
Complete annually a minimum of six hours of training relevant to a child care provider's job responsibilities, with a minimum of two hours in topics addressing health and safety for children.

6.5 Exemptions to Health and Safety Requirements

At Lead Agency option, the following relatives: grandparents, great grandparents, aunts, uncles, or siblings (who live in a separate residence from the child in care) may be exempted from health and safety requirements. (658P(4)(B), §98.41(a)(1)(ii)(A))
Indicate the Lead Agency's policy regarding these relative providers:

- All** relative providers are subject to the same requirements as described in sections 6.1 - 6.4 above, as appropriate; there are **no exemptions** for relatives or different requirements for them.
- All** relative providers are **exempt** from all health and safety requirements.

- Some or all** relative providers are subject to different health and safety requirements from those described in sections 6.1 - 6.4. The following describes those requirements and identifies the relatives they apply to:

6.6 Enforcement of Health and Safety Requirements

Each Lead Agency is required to certify that procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers of services for which assistance is provided comply with all applicable health and safety requirements. (658E(c)(2)(E), §§98.40(a)(2), 98.41(d)) The following is a description of how health and safety requirements are effectively enforced:

- Are child care providers subject to routine unannounced visits (i.e., not specifically for the purpose of complaint investigation or issuance/renewal of a license)?
 - Yes, and the following indicates the providers subject to routine unannounced visits and the frequency of those visits:

Licensed providers are visited no less than biennially. Approved providers and In-home providers are not subject to any routine unannounced visits.
 - No
- Are child care providers subject to background checks?
 - Yes, and the following types of providers are subject to background checks (indicate when such checks are conducted):
 1. Licensed
 2. Approved
 3. In-home
 - No
- Does the State require that child care providers report serious injuries that occur while a child is in care? (Serious injuries are defined as injuries requiring medical treatment by a doctor, nurse, dentist, or other medical professional.)
 - Yes, and the following describes the State's reporting requirements and how such injuries are tracked (if applicable):

Licensed child care facilities must report serious injuries to licensing authorities. Child care licensing units receive incident reports from the providers, reviews reports to determine whether or not follow-up is needed and tracks incidents for trends and other public health concerns. Approved providers report serious injuries to local administrators who receive the reports and notify the Lead Agency when further action may be needed.
 - No

- Other methods used to ensure that health and safety requirements are effectively enforced:

6.7 Exemptions from Immunization Requirements

The State assures that children receiving services under the CCDF are age-appropriately immunized, and that the health and safety provisions regarding immunizations incorporate (by reference or otherwise) the latest recommendations for childhood immunizations of the State public health agency. (§98.41(a)(1))

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The State exempts the following children from immunization (check all that apply):

- Children who are cared for by relatives (defined as grandparents, great grandparents, siblings (if living in a separate residence), aunts and uncles).
- Children who receive care in their own homes.
- Children whose parents object to immunization on religious grounds.
- Children whose medical condition contraindicates immunization.

APPENDIX 1
PROGRAM ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

The Lead Agency, named in Part 1 of this Plan, assures that:

- (1) upon approval, it will have in effect a program that complies with the provisions of the Plan printed herein, and is administered in accordance with the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 as amended, Section 418 of the Social Security Act, and all other applicable Federal laws and regulations. (658D(b), 658E(a))
- (2) the parent(s) of each eligible child within the State who receives or is offered child care services for which financial assistance is provided is given the option either to enroll such child with a child care provider that has a grant or contract for the provision of the service; or to receive a child care certificate. (658E(c)(2)(A)(i))
- (3) in cases in which the parent(s) elects to enroll the child with a provider that has a grant or contract with the Lead Agency, the child will be enrolled with the eligible provider selected by the parent to the maximum extent practicable. (658E(c)(2)(A)(ii))
- (4) the child care certificate offered to parents shall be of a value commensurate with the subsidy value of child care services provided under a grant or contract. (658E(c)(2)(A)(iii))
- (5) with respect to State and local regulatory requirements, health and safety requirements, payment rates, and registration requirements, State or local rules, procedures or other requirements promulgated for the purpose of the Child Care and Development Fund will not significantly restrict parental choice among categories of care or types of providers. (658E(c)(2)(A), §98.15(p), §98.30(g), §98.40(b)(2), §98.41(b), §98.43(c), §98.45(d))
- (6) that children receiving services under the CCDF are age-appropriately immunized, and that the health and safety provisions regarding immunizations incorporate (by reference or otherwise) the latest recommendation for childhood immunizations of the State public health agency. (§98.41(a)(1))
- (7) that CCDF Discretionary funds are used to supplement, not supplant, State general revenue funds for child care assistance for low-income families. (P.L. 106-554)

The Lead Agency also certifies that:

- (1) it has procedures in place to ensure that providers of child care services for which assistance is provided under the Child Care and Development Fund afford parents unlimited access to their children and to the providers caring for their children during the normal hours of operations and whenever such children are in the care of such providers. (658E(c)(2)(B))
- (2) it maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints and makes information regarding such complaints available to the public on request. (658E(c)(2)(C))
- (3) it will collect and disseminate to parents of eligible children and the general public, consumer education information that will promote informed child care choices. (658E(c)(2)(D))
- (4) it has in effect licensing requirements applicable to child care services provided in the State. (658E(c)(2)(E))
- (5) there are in effect within the State (or other area served by the Lead Agency), under State or local law, requirements designed to protect the health and safety of children; these requirements are applicable to child care providers that provide services for which assistance is made available under the Child Care and Development Fund. (658E(c)(2)(E))
- (6) procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers of services for which assistance is provided under the Child Care and Development Fund comply with all applicable State or local health and safety requirements. (658E(c)(2)(G))
- (7) payment rates under the Child Care and Development Fund for the provision of child care services are sufficient to ensure equal access for eligible children to comparable child care services in the State or sub-State area that are provided to children whose parents are not eligible to receive assistance under this program or under any other Federal or State child care assistance programs. (658E(c)(4)(A))

APPENDIX 2 ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY TERMINOLOGY

For purposes of determining eligibility and priority for CCDF-funded child care services, lead agencies must define the following *italicized* terms. (658P, 658E(c)(3)(B))

- *attending* (a job training or educational program; include minimum hours if applicable) – Regular attendance in an educational or training program.
- *in loco parentis* – A person acting in place of a parent, such as a guardian, relative, or friend, who provides care and supervision like a parent but without the formalities of legal guardianship or adoption.
- *job training and educational program* – Training program is a structured environment for participants which has specific learning objectives, identified skills to be mastered and a beginning and ending date. Educational program is a structured learning environment in which an instructor or teacher leads students through a course of study that includes specific learning objectives, goals, and standards, and leads to a certificate of mastery or completion, a state license, or a diploma or a degree.
- *physical or mental incapacity* (if the Lead Agency provides such services to children age 13 and older) - A physical or mental incapacity is defined as a disability under which a person is incapable of self-care, and which is attributable to one or more mental or physical impairments that are severe, chronic, and lifelong. For child care assistance purposes, the physical or mental incapacity must be documented by a professional (doctor, psychiatrist, nurse practitioner, public health nurse, licensed clinical social worker or licensed psychological associate).
- *protective services* - Child protective services are any services provided to a child who is the subject of a report of harm. The purpose is to identify, treat and reduce child abuse and neglect, as well as to ensure that reasonable efforts are made to protect and maintain children in their own homes. A social worker may authorize protective services for a child at risk of abuse or neglect and for whom child care during the day is part of a family treatment plan. Its objective is to enable the child to remain with his or her biological family or to return the child to the child's own family following out-of-home placement.
- *residing with* – living with, including taking meals and sleeping in the same house
- *special needs child* - a child who has, or is at increase risk for, chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional conditions and who also requires health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally.

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- *very low income* – A family whose income is equal to or less than 55 percent of Alaska’s State Median Income.
- *working* (include minimum hours if applicable) - engaged in an activity for a wage or salary, or engaged in a business with the intention of making a profit. For parents who are participating in the TANF program, “work activities” include paid employment (may be subsidized), work search and job readiness activities, community work experience, job sampling, and approved subsistence activities.
- *Additional terminology related to conditions of eligibility or priority established by the Lead Agency:* Additional terminology related to conditions of eligibility or priority established by the Lead Agency: Teen parent – a parent up to but not including the age of 20, who is attending an educational program that will lead to a high school diploma or GED. A teen parent under age 20 and his/her children are considered a separate family for income eligibility purposes.