

Snapshot: Who is doing what on early childhood in Alaska? This document is a resource providing a high-level summary of statewide early childhood efforts and their goals, who is leading the work, and known timeframes. It is a work in progress. *Updated 6/27/23.*

Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council (AECCC) - was created in 2010 to facilitate the integration and alignment of services, planning efforts, resources, policy development, and funding between the health, mental health, education, family support, public, and private systems.

- Fulfills the federal requirement for a Head Start advisory council; required advisory body for Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV), Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five Renewal, and Child Care Development Block Grant program. Co-chaired by the commissioners of Department of Education and Early Development and Department of Health.
- Meets quarterly.
- AECCC website: [HERE](#).

Governor’s Task Force on Child Care – In 2023, Governor Dunleavy issued [AO346](#), establishing a task force on child care charged with the following deliverables:

- Identify evidence-based policy solutions to key child care workforce constraints, including recruitment, retention, compensation, and benefits.
 - Identify child care regulations that pose barriers to increasing availability of licensed child care slots, without compromising quality and safety.
 - Develop solutions to incentivize employer-sponsored child care facilities or benefits.
 - Identify opportunities to foster public-private partnerships in addressing child care workforce and affordability challenges.
 - Develop framework for a pilot program to offer on-site child care facilities in a State of Alaska office to serve as a model for employer-provided child care benefits.
 - Identify any other innovative solutions that the task force recommends to deliver affordable, quality child care to Alaskans
- Deliverable: Two reports with recommendations are due to the Governor: December 2023 and June 2023.
 - Meetings begin June 2023. View meeting schedule [HERE](#).
 - See membership roster [HERE](#).

The task force work will be informed with the following contractual support:

- Task Force facilitation – Denali Daniels + Associates, June 2023 through June 2024
 - Scope: provide task force on child care with administrative support, facilitation, and report writing.
- Market Rate Study – ISER April 2023 to January 2024
 - Survey child care providers statewide for provider rates following methodology prescribed by the federal HHS Administration for Children and Families.
 - Provide a summary of findings, a narrow cost analysis, and recommended rate schedules covering variables such as license type, age of child, level of care, and rate region.
- Workforce Study – Stellar Group, June 2023 to November 2023

- o Update the 2019 child care workforce study conducted by Johns Hopkins University.
 - o Quantify workforce shortages by geographical region, level of care, age range of care, and identify barriers and key challenges in recruitment and retention of child care workforce.
 - o Collect the motivation, commitment, and perceptions of the current child care workforce.
 - o Analyze instructor/teacher qualifications, access to training, and other relevant factors for recruitment and retention within the child care workforce.
 - o Analyze wage and benefits for the child care workforce with parity to the education workforce. Identify the impacts of low wages and other factors that affect the workforce.
 - o Provide recommendations for strategies that will best support Alaska's child care workforce.
- Cost of Care Study – TBD June 2023 to October 2023
 - o Develop a cost model to estimate the cost of providing child care under multiple scenarios, accounting for variables such as region within the state, age ranges of children in care, time of year (e.g., summer, school year, holidays), licensing types (e.g., family child care homes, group homes and centers), care delivery at various quality measures, inflation, population growth, business growth, and costs of compensation and benefits to child care employees.
 - o Ensure the cost model is modifiable and allows modeling the effects of altering certain variables to estimate the impact of differing policy decisions on the cost of care. Ensure the tool can be updated easily for future use and scenario planning.
 - o Model a variety of scenarios to show how a combination of policy choices and individual provider characteristics and quality practices shift the expenses and revenues of child care providers to include levers such as parent co-pays, reimbursement rates, and eligibility. Analyze modeling results.
 - o Complete a report that explains the methodology and assumptions behind the cost model, presents the findings of the cost model analyses, and identifies (1) the current costs to deliver child care, (2) major factors that drive variation in the costs of child care, (3) the relationship between provider revenues and the costs to deliver care, (4) major factors that enhance business sustainability of child care providers.
 - o Include in the report an evaluation of other rural/frontier states payment models as compared to Alaska's current model, as well as a set of recommendations for improving the early childhood sector in a mixed delivery model.
 - Focus Groups – contractor TBD, June 2023 to November 2023
 - o 10 focus groups statewide per audience: employers, providers and consumers.
 - o coordinate and schedule the focus groups, recruit participants based on your criteria, provide incentives for participations as needed, facilitate the groups (with the option of DOH/Child Care Task Force attending as observers and/or reviewing a recording later), analyze the findings, and write a final summary of the findings with recommendations.
 - o Statewide focus groups in both rural and urban communities.

Preschool Development Grant (PDG) and the “Joint Task Force (JTF)” – State of Alaska has received two competitive Preschool Development grants from the Administration for Children and Families. The first grant was in 2019 that funded a needs assessment and strategic plan. The second grant started in 2023 to update the two documents and carry out implementation activities through the following six grant activities:

- Updated needs assessment*
- Updated strategic plan*
- Maximize Parent and Family Engagement in B-5 System
- Support the Birth-5 Workforce and Disseminate Best Practices
- Support Program Quality Improvement
- Subgrants to Enhance Quality and Expand Access to Existing and New Programs

**Activities 3-6 will begin after the needs assessment and strategic plan are updated*

Joint Task Force (JTF) Composition and Scope:

- 40-member advisory group of individuals working across the early childhood sector in Alaska.
- Steering committee to PDG activities #1 and #2 is supported by DPA Child Care Program Office and Division of Public Health, Women’s, Children, & Family Health.
- Hiring contractor support for the needs assessment (summer 2023) and strategic plan (fall 2023).
- The strategic planning process will be informed through a robust stakeholder engagement process to include input from the AECCC, Task Force on Child Care and others.

thread, in partnership with the State of Alaska Child Care Program Office, has launched the 2023 Child Care Provider/Early Educator Survey. This survey is looking to find out more about what child care providers want and need for professional development. The survey is open to all licensed/approved child care programs and early educators working in the child care sector in Alaska.

- Take this 10-minute survey today: threadchildcareprovidersurvey.com

Hunt Institute - The Hunt Institute brings together people and resources to inspire and inform elected officials and policymakers about key issues in education to include early learning and provides technical assistance. Their presence in Alaska has included technical assistance and presentations to the legislature in 2022 and 2023.

- Website: [HERE](#)

Child Care Works Convening workgroup- A partnership of the Rasmuson Foundation, thread, and the Department of Health is working on a new child care initiative aimed at creating an implementation plan from two objectives in the AK Early Childhood Strategic Direction. The focus on access to child care with emphasis on rural/remote Alaska communities and building the pipeline of early childhood educators. The Child Care Works Convening was held in Jan 2023, and will meet again in Fall 2023. –

- Website: <https://www.threadalaska.org/thread-blog/thread-plans-for-the-future-of-child-care-in-alaska-2/>