

A L A S K A

Culturally responsive, comprehensive & accessible service delivery system for young children, linking service providers, empowers families, & engages communities.



The purpose of the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Project is to build and implement a comprehensive early childhood system. The ECCS PLAN is the blueprint for carrying out multi-agency systems building activities.

The ECCS Plan was developed in a collaborative effort with public and private partners and was published in the fall of 2006. Efforts have since focused on implementation of the recommendations.

ECCS CRITICAL COMPONENTS:

Primary recommendations in the plan are to support or establish the following things:

System Infrastructure:

- A strong and effective guidance structure to provide oversight of a comprehensive, integrated service system
- Integrated state-level plans and policies
- A network of local and regional partnerships between parents, health and social services, early care and learning programs, elementary schools, local boards and organizations

Access to Health Insurance and Medical Homes:

- Standardized, comprehensive developmental screening for developmental and mental health concerns
- Screening for maternal depression and caregiver mental health issues in primary care facilities
- Care coordination to assist families with services
- Access to public health insurance programs

Mental Health and Social-Emotional Development:

- Access to appropriate mental health services
- A qualified, well-trained early childhood mental health workforce

Early Care and Education:

- Quality early care and education services that support learning, health, and development of social competence
- A qualified, well-trained early childhood workforce
- Programs that include families as full and respected partners

Family Support/Parenting Education:

- Access to community based parenting and family support programs

KEY ELEMENTS IN COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM BUILDING:

- **Governance** — Allocation of responsibility for decision-making and delivery across and throughout government departments and public and private sector partners
- **Financing** — Work to integrate early childhood funding streams across health, mental health, early care and education, parenting education and family support
- **Family Leadership** — Providing opportunities for parents and other family members to enhance their leadership skills and to exercise leadership within the state early childhood system
- **Provider/Practitioner Support** — working across service systems to deliver training and technical assistance
- **Communication** — Develop communications to inform providers, practitioners and family members about effective strategies to support child development AND build support for investment in effective early childhood practices
- **Standards** — Work to develop and put in place standards that reflect effective practices, programs, and practitioners that are aligned across the system
- **Monitoring & Accountability** — Development of logic models, cross-sector objectives, performance/outcome indicators for early childhood systems and evaluation of projects

Early Childhood System Progress:

Infrastructure:

- The Interdepartmental Early Childhood Council has been established.
- Head Start, Child Care, Title V, and ECCS have been integrated.

Access to Medical Insurance and Medical Homes:

- Alaska participated in the national Assuring Better Child Development (ABCD) project focused on embedding comprehensive developmental screening in pilot primary care offices.
- In FY'09 Denali KidCare eligibility was increased to 175% of poverty.

Mental Health and Social-Emotional Development:

- A “cross-walk” was developed for diagnosing young children with mental health concerns.
- Two Early Childhood Mental Health (ECMH) Institutes were held at the University of Alaska.
- A “Learning Network” was established to provide telephonic consultation and training to mental health providers and early interventionists.
- A Medicaid study was done to analyze services/associated costs with serving this age group.
- Funding has been provided to implement early childhood mental consultation projects.
- Policy change recommendations have been developed to increase access to services for this age group.
- The new developed Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program professional development plan includes infant mental health.
- An early childhood PBS (Positive Behavioral Support) workgroup has formed. PBS training will be provided to providers in upcoming months.

Early Care and Education:

- An Economic Impact Study and Report was developed and distributed.
- An Early Childhood Professional Development Plan was developed and published.
- An Early Intervention/Infant Learning Professional Development Plan was developed.
- A professional development “Registry System” was developed and is being implemented.
- Early Learning Guidelines were developed, printed and distributed.
- The Best Beginnings public/private partnership was established.
- The Governor’s Early Learning Summit was held.
- The Education Summit included a track on early learning.
- A QRIS (Quality Rating and Improvement System) model was developed.
- In FY'09 funding was increased for Head Start programs and Child Care Assistance.
- In FY'09 child care assistance rates were increased for foster children.
- Universities developed a coordinated, consistent EC education curriculum across all MAU's.
- A distance delivered BA Degree in Child Development and Family Studies was established.
- A statewide office for the Parents As Teachers program was re-established and there are now two trainers in Alaska.

Family Support/Parent Education:

- The Strengthening Families in Early Care and Education program of family support was established in 2005 by a State Leadership Team. This child abuse prevention program focuses on building protective factors around all families in early care and learning programs. The program was piloted in 2006-07 and new programs were added in 2008. A “Learning Network” has been established to provide ongoing support to early learning programs implementing this model. Numerous presentations and trainings have been conducted on Strengthening Families.

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