



**The ECE Business
Collaboratory**

Strengthening Child Care Systems

ALASKA ACTION PLAN

Building the Supply of Sustainable, Quality Child Care

Developed with support from  **First Children's Finance**



WHAT IS THE ECE BUSINESS COLLABORATORY?

The Collaboratory is an innovative, cross-sector planning process designed to help states implement business-side improvements to ensure a robust child care system that meets local needs.

OUR FRAMEWORK



OUR PROCESS

Using the Ecosystem as an assessment and planning tool, state teams mapped current initiatives that impact child care businesses and analyzed their ecosystem’s alignment, equity, effectiveness, accessibility, transparency, and financial sustainability. Teams then developed strategies to address the biggest barriers to child care business sustainability and supply.



HOW WILL THIS ACTION PLAN BE USED?

This state Action Plan details pragmatic, actionable opportunities for systems alignment, program improvement, innovation, and new investment. During the second year of the Collaboratory, state teams will implement, fundraise, and promote the strategies within this plan with support from First Children’s Finance and other national thought leaders.

Alaska's Collaboratory Success

WHY



61% of residents
of Alaska live in a child care
desert.

The need is urgent.

In a child care desert, there are so few licensed child care options (or none at all!) that there are more than 3 children for every child care slot.

To meet the needs of families, communities, and regional economies, Alaska must sustain and grow its child care sector.

WHO



5 stakeholders
representing diverse perspectives
across Alaska worked collaboratively
to develop this Action Plan.

Together we can solve it.

Participating stakeholders represent:

- Child Care Subsidy Administration
- Licensing
- Quality and Quality Recognition and Improvement Systems (QRIS)
- Resource and Referral
- Training and Technical Assistance

WHAT



22 programs,
policies, and barriers that impact
child care business sustainability and
supply were mapped by the team.

Filling the gaps.

As a result of this analysis, the team found gaps in:

- Training and Education
- Subsidy
- Supply Building

Critical strategies to transform Alaska's child care system were identified as a result of this yearlong process.

Strategies to Build the Supply of Quality Child Care in Alaska

The Alaska Collaboratory Team will implement the following strategies to promote the sustainability and growth of Alaska's child care sector:

Supply-Building



Fully Implement Learn and Grow to Support the Quality and Sustainability of Alaska's Child Care Businesses

Led by: thread Resource and Referral Network

Timeframe: 2021–2024

Supported by the Child Care Program Office, thread will implement the Learn and Grow quality recognition and improvement system (QRIS) up to the highest levels of quality by 2024. The Child Care Program Office and thread will work to ensure the rollout of the additional quality levels addresses the cost and support needed for small, community-based child care programs to implement Learn and Grow as well as larger programs, Head Start, and pre-k programs. The Child Care Program Office and thread will also undertake activities to increase awareness and buy-in among families and programs on the value of quality.

Training & Education



Increase Access and Participation in Small Business Basics Training

Led by: thread

Timeframe: 2021–2024

The Alaska Collaboratory team is exploring multiple avenues to increase access to business training for child care entrepreneurs. Potential activities include supplementing the Office of Child Care's Strengthening Business Practices train-the-trainer curriculum with Alaska-specific material, increasing the capacity of the University of Alaska—Fairbanks to offer their child care business course to more members of the ECE workforce, and deepening partnerships with the Women's Business Development Center and Alaska Small Business Coalition.

Strategies to Build the Supply of Quality Child Care in Alaska (Continued)

Subsidy



Adapt Parents Achieving Self Sufficiency (PASS) to Better Support Family Choice

Led by: Child Care Program Office

Timeframe: 2021-2023

The Alaska Child Care Program Office will continue its work to adapt the Parents Achieving Self Sufficiency (PASS) subsidy program, including potential adjustments to reimbursement rates, parent co-pays, eligibility thresholds, and AlaskaNI! inclusive child care policies. These policy reforms will be informed by an analysis of the market dynamics of the Alaska child care sector and the needs and desires of working families. The program office will review existing data on child care demand and conduct additional research to gather information about family experiences with PASS. To document and understand the impact of concurrent program changes, the program office will develop a logic model and evaluation plan. The program office will also undertake marketing activities to increase awareness and participation in PASS among child care businesses and eligible families.

Supply-Building



Conduct Child Care Supply Gap Analysis to Determine the Need for Supply Building to Support Family Choice

Led by: Child Care Program Office

Timeframe: 2022-2024

In conjunction with PASS program updates, the Child Care Program Office will develop a shared set of assumptions and goals related to developing child care supply to meet to parent demand. It will then develop custom supply building programs, which could include interventions such as targeted grants, contracted slots, access to capital initiatives, and/or business supports. The program office will engage Early Childhood Networks to support the implementation of local supply building efforts in priority areas.

THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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For more information, visit ECECollaboratory.org