

# Sample Child Care Talking Points



- In Alaska, 38,000 children under age 6 have working parents.
- Parents rely on child care in order to work, and working parents fuel our economy.
- Parents want their children to be safe and in a setting that promotes their healthy development.
- Parents want choices among quality child care providers.
- In too many communities, child care is hard to find, harder to afford, and often of questionable quality.
- A decade of studies show quality child care makes a difference for the healthy development of children.
- We can do better for our children. It's time to invest in quality child care.

## Child Care as an Economic Development Strategy

- Parents need child care in order to work and working parents pay taxes.
- When parents have quality, reliable child care, they are less likely to miss work and more likely to focus on their work.
- Quality child care benefits children as well as parents.
- The achievement gap does not begin in kindergarten, it is first noticed in kindergarten. School readiness is directly related to the quality of settings children are in before they attend school.
- About 7,000 school-age children in Alaska repeat a grade between kindergarten and high school. 21 percent of Alaska's high school students either drop out or do not graduate on time.
- Retaining children in school costs the state money. And, students who do not graduate from high school qualify for fewer jobs and earn less money.
- Investing in quality child care is an economic development plan for the next generation.

## Child Care is Unaffordable for Many Families

- The cost of child care in Alaska is high.
- The average annual cost of center-based child care for an infant is \$10,957.
- The average annual cost of center-based care for a preschool-age child is \$7,652.
- The average cost for care in a family child care home is slightly less, but still hard to afford for many families – particularly for families with more than one child.
- To assist families in affording child care and enabling them to make choices among quality providers, the state needs to pay realistic rates so that families can have real choices.
- Rates are important because they help attract and retain quality staff, invest in training and education of the workforce, and help provide classroom resources to promote child development.
- Low rates directly affect a program's ability to operate. Programs can't make up the difference by themselves. And, parents are already struggling to afford the cost of child care. Programs can't charge parents more.

## Investing in Workforce Professional Development:

- The quality of the child care workforce is directly related to the quality of care.
- Staff are low paid and many have little college or training.
- It's not just about the degrees. It's about teacher-child interaction, which is really a training issue not an academic issue learned in a classroom.
- It's time to invest in strengthening the quality of the child care workforce. You can't have a quality program without a quality workforce.