

History of Early Childhood Programs & Initiatives in Alaska

The health and education challenges facing Alaskan children today have their legacy in education policies set even before Alaska was a U.S. territory.

Over the last 20+ years, as research has shown the importance of early childhood for future success in school and life, there has been a steady expansion of programming aimed at young children and families and a focus on health and development, as well as early education experiences.

Federal requirements and opportunities have seeded many of Alaska's initiatives to improve early childhood programs and services.

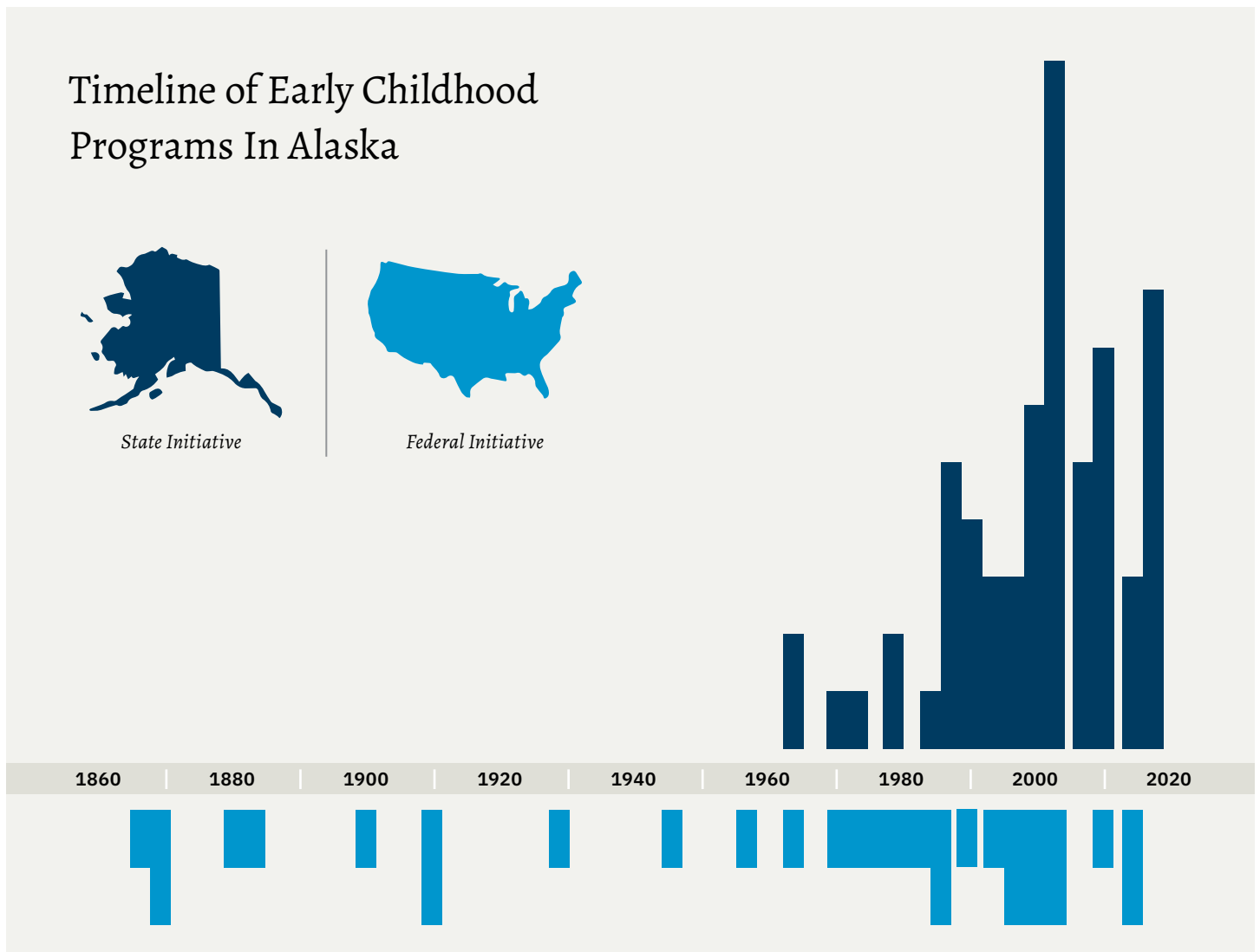
Timeline of Early Childhood Programs In Alaska



State Initiative



Federal Initiative



- State Initiative
- Federal Initiative

1860

1867 | Alaska purchased from Russia

1869 | The first public school is opened in Alaska under the American flag in Sitka

| 1869

President Grant signs the Peace Policy, marking the beginning of sending Alaska Native children to boarding schools

1880

1880's | Federal government establishes day schools in Alaska

1884 | Organic Act gives Sec. of Interior responsibility for providing schooling in Alaska

1900

| 1905

Nelson Act is passed allowing establishment of schools outside of towns, creating a dual system of education for Alaska Native and non-Native children

1912 | President Taft creates the Children's Bureau to improve lives of children and families

1912 | Alaska becomes a territory

1920

| 1929

National Association for Nursery Education - now the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) - is established and sets minimum standards for nursery schools

1940

1946 | National School Lunch Program is established to provide nutritional free & reduced cost lunches to children in schools

1959 | Alaska becomes the 49th state

1960

1964 | The University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) offers Child Development courses in the home economics degree program

| 1965

RurAL CAP opens first Head Start program in rural Alaska

1965 | Federal Head Start Act passes establishing Head Start as an 8-week summer program

1970

| 1971

UAF begins offering an Associate of Arts degree in Early Childhood Development

1972 | Women, Infants, & Children (WIC) Program starts as a pilot project to prevent malnutrition in pregnant women and young children

1974 | The Tanana Valley Community College begins offering a certificate in Child Care Occupations

1974 | The Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment Act (CAPTA) is passed treating child abuse as a preventable issue

1975 | Education of Handicapped Children Act is passed (renamed IDEA in 1990) to provide children with disabilities a public education in a least restrictive environment

1978 | The Indian Child Welfare Act is passed by Congress to end separation of Alaska Native and American Indian children from their families to non-native homes

1978 | The Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education is established

1978 | The Infant Learning Program (IDEA Part C) is established as a home-based educational, health and training program for parents and children

1980

1981 | Maternal Child Health Block Grant Program is established, providing funds to states to promote & improve health and well-being of mothers, children and families, including children with special needs

1984 | The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is first conducted by the CDC in 15 states

1985 | thread is launched under the name Child Care Connection

1986 | Early Intervention services for children birth to age two are included in reauthorization of IDEA, now Part C



1987

Governor Cowper creates a Governor's Interim Commission on Children & Youth with AO 97. Tasks include developing plan for a first class child care system, addressing infant mortality and child abuse and neglect

1987 | CDC develops the Pregnancy Risk Monitoring Assessment System (PRAMS)

1988 | Alaska Children's Trust is created to prevent child abuse and neglect

1989 | AO 108 extends the Governor's Interim Commission on Children & Youth until 1989

1989 | Governor Cowper creates the Governor's Task Force on Youth with AO 114

1989 | Alaska Head Start Association is formed

1990

1990 | Alaska sends out its first PRAMS survey

1990 | Child Care and Development Block Grant is created to provide child care assistance to low-income families

1992 | Alaska 2000 (AK2K) reform initiative begins, recommendations includes developing student academic standards

1992 | The University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) begins offering an Associates of Applied Science in Early Childhood Education

1993 | Medicaid waiver program for children with complex medical conditions and/or intellectual/developmental disabilities starts

1994 | Head Start Reauthorization Act includes Early Head Start for children 0-2



1995

Governor Knowles creates a Children's Cabinet

1995 | The All Alaska Pediatric Partnership is founded

1996 | Quality Schools Initiative (QSI) begins, focused in part on developing standards and assessments

1997 | Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) enacted to expand Medicaid eligibility for low-income children

1998 | Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) study is published by CDC & Kaiser Permanente

1998 | Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium incorporates & takes over Indian Health Service functions, providing self-governance for Alaska Native healthcare

1998 | SB 36 passes as part of the QSI, requiring a kindergarten assessment, and other standards-based assessments for the first time in Alaska

1999 | Denali Kid Care (CHIP) established, providing Medicaid coverage for low-income children

2000

2000 | First standards-based assessment given to 3rd, 6th, 8th graders

2000 | Landmark report 'From Neurons to Neighborhoods' is published on the science of early childhood development

2001 | The Alaska System for Early Education and Development (SEED) is created to help meet Head Start professional development standards

2001 | State Board of Education adopts resolutions calling for voluntary PreK for all 3 and 4 year olds, as well as supporting Pilot PreK in certain school districts

2001 | The University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) offers a Bachelor in Elementary Education for the first time

2002 | Hearts for Kids child care assessment program, a Quality Rating System (QRS) initiative, is piloted in Fairbanks North Star Borough

2002 | No Child Left Behind Act enacted, includes 'Good Start, Grow Smart' initiative for states to create early learning guidelines

2003 | Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems program is launched to help implement Maternal Child Health Board priorities at state level

2004 | BRFS is conducted in Alaska for the first time

2004 | Bring the Kids Home Initiative forms to reverse increase in children being sent out-of-state for mental health treatment

2004 | UAF begins to offer a Bachelor degree in Child Development and Family Studies

2005 | Alaska selected as Strengthening Families Initiative pilot site

2005 | Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (SLDS) Grant Program makes first grants to help states better manage, analyze and use education data to make decisions



2006

Alaska Early Learning Guidelines endorsed by the State Board of Education & Early Development

2006 | First Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Plan developed

2006 | Childhood Understanding Behaviors Survey (CUBS) is sent out as follow-up to PRAMS for the first time

2006 | Ready to Read, Ready to Learn Task Force (RTR) releases report calling for increased access to early literacy programs, quality early care and education, and family engagement

2006 | Best Beginnings is formed to carry out RTR recommendations

2006 | First Imagination Library program is started in Nome

2006 | The Alaska Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Institute is held for the first time

2007 | [Head Start Reauthorization Act](#) includes requirement for State Advisory Councils on early childhood education and care for children birth to school entry

2007 | Interdepartmental Early Childhood Coordinating Council (IECCC) is formed to meet federal Head Start requirements

2008 | Best Beginnings begins expanding access to Imagination Library across Alaska

2008 | Alaska SEED comes under the management of thread in Anchorage

2009 | The Alaska Alliance for Infant Mental Health is formed

 | **2009**

Alaska Pilot Pre-K Program (AP3) is started in six school districts

2010

2010 | UAA begins offering a graduate certificate in Children's Mental Health

2010 | ALCANLink project is initiated with the aim to understand the incidence and factors that increase risk of child maltreatment in Alaska

 | **2010**

Governor Parnell issues a Declaration of Authority remaking IECCC into the Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council (AECCC)

2010 | UAF begins web-based course delivery for Early Childhood Education

2010 | [Patient Protection & Affordable Care Act](#) offers states the opportunity to expand Medicaid eligibility

2011 | The Alaska Pre-K Program becomes permanent

2011 | State of Alaska purchases Competency Guidelines for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health™, including the foundation for an occupational endorsement

2012 | Moore vs State of Alaska settlement provides state funded PreK in the 40 lowest performing school districts, along with targeted grants for other improvements

2014 | UAA offers a Minor in Children's Mental Health for the first time

2014 | [Child Care Development Block Grant](#) is reauthorized, adding requirements for quality, safety, and access

2015 | Medicaid expansion takes effect in Alaska

2015 | [The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Subtitle VII-B](#) is authorized, outlining requirements for states to provide homeless youth with the free, public education that their peers receive, including preschool age

2016 | Learn & Grow, Alaska's Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), is launched by thread to encourage and measure child care program quality

2018 | Help Me Grow Alaska, a system to connect families to needed services, launches in Alaska

2018 | Alaska is one of 46 states awarded a one-year Preschool Development Grant to improve the early childhood system

2018 | Governor Walker creates a Children's Cabinet

2018 | The UAA Early Childhood Associates program receives national accreditation

 | **2018**

UAA loses accreditation for initial teacher licensure programs

2019 | UAF Early Childhood Education Associate of Arts program seeks national accreditation

2019 | The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and Alaska Department of Health and Social Services adopt the Integrated Mental Health Program Plan, including early childhood goals and strategies for the first time