

State of Alaska

Task Force on Child Care

Public Comment Opportunity: Deadline 5pm November 27, 2023

The Governor's Task Force on Child Care, per the State of Alaska [Administrative Order AO 346](#), is charged with delivering two reports to the Governor. The first report is due on December 31, 2023, and focuses on **background checks, licensing, and workforce**. The second report is due on July 31, 2024, and will focus on **access, quality, and subsidies**.

The Task Force is seeking **public comment** on preliminary recommendations for inclusion in the December 2023 report.

PROVIDE WRITTEN COMMENT

Written comment can be submitted by clicking on the following link: [HERE](#)

All recommendations are listed in the form with text boxes to provide comments on individual recommendations. This document provides a readable version of the recommendations.

VIRTUAL PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING

November 29, 2023

5:30 to 7:30PM

REGISTRATION REQUIRED: Members of the public must register to receive the meeting link.

Register [HERE](#) or visit the project website at ddaalaska.com/alaskachildcaretaskforce/

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Background Checks

Increase timely, efficient, and affordable background checks.

Recommendation
Implement livescan digital fingerprinting at State office buildings to increase accessibility and improve reliability; decreasing processing time and cost to providers and applicants.
Expand access to mobile livescan digital fingerprinting to increase accessibility for rural communities without a state office.
Establish a secure online portal for submitting background check applications to eliminate whitelisting requirements.
Evaluate barrier crimes matrix and identify differences between state and federal background check requirements. Determine appropriate changes to state regulations.

Evaluate the ability to use Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) or other funding sources to cover processing fees for background checks.

Licensing

Increase training for child care licensing staff to support consistent technical assistance and accountability to meet child care regulations.

Recommendation
Technical Assistance
Develop coaching or navigation services to guide current and prospective applicants through the licensing process.
Develop an online application process that can track progress, submissions, and approvals to increase communication transparency.
Improve navigation, usability, and accessibility of the Child Care Program Office (CCPO) website.
Develop web-based forms that can be digitally filled out for the convenience of all users.
Develop educational materials about the variance process that are accessible on the improved CCPO website.
Increase awareness and visibility of current resources on business plans, tax implications, and startup costs to meet the need for education and training to start a child care business.
Remove Barriers
Provide funding to offset the costs of the licensing process, particularly for startup support.
Remove the Child Care Associate requirement.

Workforce

Elevate a professionally paid and supported workforce ensuring access to benefits, professional development, and pathways to advancement.

Recommendation
Pathways
Develop an occupational endorsement to meet the Administrator qualifications through educational institutions and ensure that virtual options are available.
Build apprenticeship programs to support the educational pipeline for early childhood education.
Update regulations to broaden Administrator qualifications.
Update child care assistance regulations to remove diploma or GED requirement for relative and in-home care.
Update regulations to allow Administrators to delegate authority to appropriate staff in their absence.
Continue supporting access to affordable professional development, continuing to build on strengths of current investment and proven success.
Provide leadership, management training, and professional development to support current and new child care Administrators and business owners.

Enhance consultation support and access to Infant Early Childhood Mental Health and behavioral health services to build early educator skills to address challenging behaviors.
Benefits
Create a sustainable wage subsidy/award for licensed child care professionals to support a living wage in Alaska.
Develop an option for child care professionals to become part of a health insurance network.
Explore a child care substitute pool to bolster the child care workforce and provide wellness breaks and coverage for child care programs.
Establish categorical eligibility for subsidized child care for employees of licensed childcare facilities.
Recognize the Profession
Recognize child care professionals as essential workers in Alaska.
Recognize child care as a profession and adopt best practice language when addressing the child care sector in all state written and verbal communication. This includes for individuals: child care professional/early childhood educator (early educator). And for program businesses: child care program/early childhood education program.

Employers

Increase collaboration between the business sector and state government to design a child care system that meets the needs of Alaska's current and potential workforce.

Recommendation
Inventory state owned, school districts, and private sector facilities to identify space that may be available for employer sponsored child care programs.
Consider tax credits/incentives to encourage the private sector to transform existing spaces into child care facilities.
Establish a position or contractor to assist employers and/or businesses with technical assistance to provide on-site or near-site child care.
Consider capital funding options for remodeling spaces to meet child care health and safety requirements for employer programs.

Tribal Authority

Recognize Tribal authority and create pathways for tribal providers and parents to access state subsidies.

Recommendation
Tribal Coordination
The State of Alaska should request approval from the Administration of Children and Families to allow the Alaska Child Care Program Office (CCPO) to accept tribally approved health and safety standards and background checks; creating pathways for tribal providers and parents to access state subsidies.
Work with federal partners to recognize tribally approved background check processes.