

### ASK:

**Support SB 178** - Expand Eligibility for the Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program (ILP) from 50% to 25% developmental delay and increase their annual funding by \$5,716,865 (77%).

### WHY:

- Alaska has the most restrictive eligibility criteria for early intervention services in the nation. Currently to qualify for ILP services, a child must exhibit a 50% delay in one developmental area. In other words, a 2-year-old must be functioning at a 1-year-old level to qualify for services.
- Expanding eligibility from a 50% delay to a 25% delay will align eligibility for ILP services with eligibility for K-12 special education eliminating an inequity of services.
- A child's brain develops the most from birth to age 5. Expanding eligibility and funding for the ILP we will ensure the services for these children are provided at a time when they will have the most impact rather than delaying services until later years. National benchmarking predicts this will
  - lead to a 77% increase in children eligible for ILP in Alaska.
- Medicaid can be leveraged and billed for ILP services *in addition to the funding increase if*
  - "developmental therapies" becomes a billable service.

### FISCAL INVESTMENT = POSTIVE FISCAL IMPACT:

- Investment in early intervention can lead to substantial cost savings over the course of a child's education. According to national data, 46% of children who receive early intervention services meet developmental age expectations by age 3 and do not require special education when they enter Kindergarten.
- Each of those children represents a potential savings of \$229,071 over the course of their public education, when comparing the cost of 3 years of early intervention with 13 years of special education.
- With expansion, the projected additional number of children who would not require special education is 152 each school year, representing a potential annual cost savings of \$34,888,837\*.
  - \* It will take 2-3 years to develop the ILP system for expanded eligibility and another 6-7 for the initiative to break even. After that, net savings begin to accumulate, with full continual annual impact around 15 years after changes are implemented.

### ADDITIONAL ANTICIPATED BENEFITS AND COST SAVINGS:

- **Reinforce funding** after 12 years of flat funding which has made programs vulnerable to inflation.
- **Reduced need for adult home and community-based Medicaid services.**
- **Reduced Crime and Victimization:** Fewer children entering the Juvenile Justice system = less burden on child protective services, public safety, and corrections.
- **Reduced need for special needs daycare:** Allow parents to re-enter the workforce while lowering burden on public assistance programs.
- **Increase future workforce:** More high school graduates ready to enter post-secondary or vocational programs or to enter the workforce directly and contribute positively to society.