



Early Intervention: A Powerful Investment

Alaska Infant Learning Program 2012



A special thank you to Mr. & Mrs Johnson for opening their home and family to us. All of the beautiful images in this book were taken of the family in Anchorage, Alaska.



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Our Mission

To promote positive development and improved outcomes for Alaska's families by creating a culturally responsive, comprehensive and accessible service delivery system that links service providers, empowers families and engages communities.



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Alaska Infant Learning programs are:

Locally administered ILP contracts with agency grantees statewide to ensure services are available across Alaska.

Family centered Respecting parents' natural leadership role in caregiving and decision making for their children.

Flexible Recognizing the diversity of Alaska families' strengths, needs, roles, values and cultures.

Committed to partnerships Facilitating a dynamic partnership between families, agencies, providers and their communities.

Delivering services in natural settings Natural home and community settings promote the inclusion of the family, and help to maximize a child's development.

How we fulfill our mission


Educating Alaskans: Outreach

Connecting with Families: Referral


Partnering with Families: Setting goals, achieving goals

Supporting Families: Service delivery, forming a support system

Taking the Next Step: Planning for a successful transition



Carla's Story



When Carla Johnson first met her foster daughter, Tatianna barely moved. An assortment of serious medical problems — spina bifida, hydrocephalus requiring a shunt, and stage one kidney damage — combined with what Carla carefully refers to as “an extensive amount of non-proper care” had taken their toll. The 10-month-old mostly lay on her back, fists clenched to her shoulders, tiny face displaying no sign of emotion.

Continued on page 4



Still, Carla and her Air Force husband Eric immediately bonded with “Tati.”

“We took one look at her and knew she was ours,” Carla remembers. “We just knew. And we knew if anyone tried to take her from us, we’d fight tooth and nail to keep her.”

Now, two years later, Tati is an official member of the Johnson family. Her adoption was finalized Dec. 21, 2011.

“She was our Christmas present,” Carla says.

And that’s not all that’s changed in Tatianna’s young life. Even the barista at Carla’s favorite Starbucks has noticed.

“When I first met Tati, she was the cutest thing you’ve ever seen, but she couldn’t sit up by herself,” recalls barista Pauline Valdez. “Now she can sit, she can talk, she can say her ABCs, she can count, she can say my name.”

Pauline shakes her head at the transformation. “She just makes you melt,” she adds.

Carla and Eric, who also have two biological children, had always talked about fostering. And when Eric’s work in the Air Force brought the family to Elmendorf in Alaska, they lived next door to a foster family. That example

convinced them to become foster parents too. Tatianna came into the Johnsons’ life on Sept. 13, 2010.

“We’re not the perfect home, but at least we’re a home,” Carla points out. “It gives me so much joy to be able to impact a child’s life — even for a minute!”

Almost immediately after bringing Tati home, Carla and Eric, who live on base at Elmendorf, had to deal with a medical crisis — the baby’s shunt malfunctioned and she needed surgery. Carla describes receiving a “crash course” in all the ways she would need to care for this child. Rather than daunting the young mother, however, the challenges inspired her.

Key to Carla’s ability to face those challenges was Focus (Family Outreach Center for Understanding Special Needs), an Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program (EI/ILP) provider that serves Eagle River, Chugiak, Cordova, Valdez and Anchorage’s Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson (JBER).

“Without the program, so much of this wouldn’t have happened,” Carla says. “She has overcome a lot.”

Focus connected the family with what Carla calls Tatianna’s list of “ologists.” The toddler, whose lower body is paralyzed, has physical therapy twice a week, speech therapy, occupational therapy and an educator provided by Focus.

The Focus educator, a Developmental Specialist, coordinates with the other specialists, sometimes doing home visits with them and coordinating goals on the family’s Individualized Service Plan to match their work, as well as making suggestions for home-based activities as part of daily routines.

“They taught me about everything,” Carla says. “They were my huge support system.”

In addition, through the ILP, the family has accessed mini-grants to purchase materials and tools to help Tati with her therapies. One is a \$1,500 “ready racer,” a pediatric mobility aid which Carla describes as a “comfy wheelchair” in which Tati can learn to propel herself. They’ve also purchased therapy balls and other equipment designed to help Tati interact with the world like any other toddler.

It’s clearly working. In addition to all the sitting up and talking Tati is doing, “she’s even ‘Army crawling,’” Carla says. “And cognitively, she’s just about where she should be at her age.”

Considering where Tati started, that’s huge. But don’t think that means she gets special treatment from her parents.

“Eric and I have never treated her differently than our other children,” Carla says. “We believe that it doesn’t matter what you accomplish, as long as it’s your best.”

With Tatianna, the sky seems to be the limit as to what this little girl will accomplish — with the help of her amazing family and Focus. Carla also gives huge credit to her “very best friend,” Meghan Mustard, who helps her manage the juggling act of taking care of the kids at home while getting Tati and others to necessary appointments. Carla advises other parents in similar situations to do lots of research and learn about programs like Focus.

“Don’t be afraid to reach out to these programs. Someone there is going to hold your hand and walk you through



this,” Carla says she would tell another mom. “You have to do this for your child to succeed.”

Speaking of success, Carla hopes that — thanks to new leg braces — little Tati will someday be able to walk. And she’d like to see her start kindergarten in a couple years “in a normal classroom and at a normal age.”

Beyond that, Carla plans to just let Tati be Tati.



Gains during the **first three years** are critical and will continue to benefit children ...

throughout their lifetime



If you are concerned about a child's development

concern about a

don't wait...

Your referral to the Infant Learning Program is critical.

6

grams statewide.



Educating Alaska

Why is Early Intervention critical?

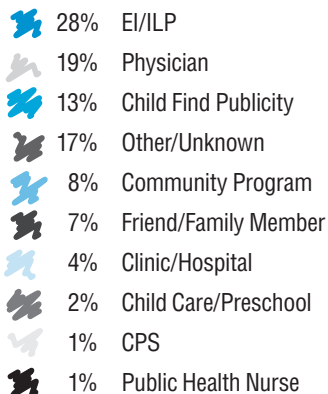
The early years of a child's life are critically important: From birth through age 3, rapid learning and brain development take place. During this time children form the foundation for future learning, problem solving, relationship building and independence. When children experience a developmental delay, early intervention can help guide them through this extraordinary time of growth to maximize their development.

Statewide outreach efforts educate families, providers and the general public about early intervention services available to children ages birth to 3 including:

- Developmental screenings and evaluations
- Hearing and vision screening
- Family service coordination
- Early education services



How did families learn about the Infant Learning Program?



- Play groups, support groups, and social services
- Developmental, physical, occupational and speech language therapy
- Early childhood mental health services

Children Referred to EI/ILP

*Fiscal Year	Referrals
2006	2331
2007	2557
2008	2657
2009	2503
2010	2548
2011	2668
2012	3008

Service Summary ILP FY12 (Analyst Reports)

Children screened by EI/ILP

*Fiscal Year	Referrals
2006	1185
2007	1220
2008	1316
2009	1230
2010	1149
2011	1287
2012	1063

Screened source: Service Summary FY12 (Analyst Reports)

Children newly evaluated by EI/ILP

*Fiscal Year	Referrals
2006	1078
2007	1152
2008	1278
2009	1120
2010	1138
2011	1289
2012	1786

Evaluated source: Service Summary FY12 (Analyst Reports)

Children enrolled by EI/ILP

*Fiscal Year	Referrals
2006	1777
2007	1834
2008	1892
2009	1831
2010	1788
2011	1873
2012	1952

Enrolled source: EI/ILP Data Compliance Report FY11 (Analyst Reports)

* Fiscal year begins July 1 and ends June 30 of the year noted



Connecting with Families

The earlier the referral is made the more successful the outcome

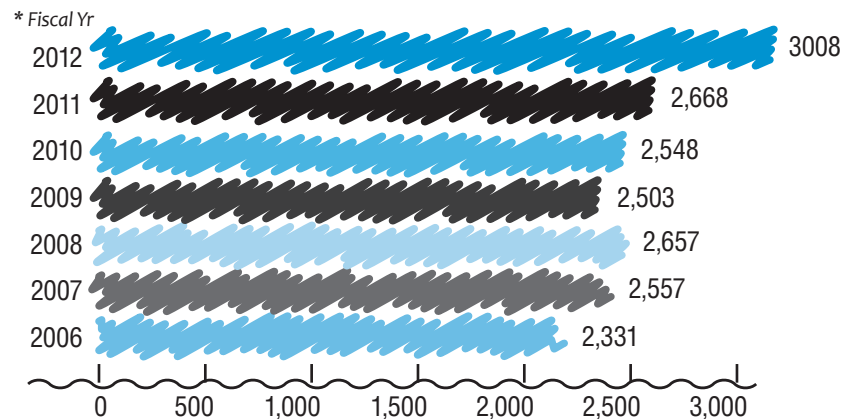
Children and their families are referred to regional Infant Learning Programs via fax, phone and email. Most referrals are made by those who know the child best: their families or health care provider.

Parents are often the first to know their baby needs a helping hand.

Referrals to the Infant Learning Program exceeded 3,000 in FY2012, representing an increase of more than 25% since FY2011.

During FY12, 3008 children were referred to an Infant Learning Program and 1,952 were enrolled.

Total Number of Children Referred



* Fiscal year begins July 1 and ends June 30 of the year noted. Referral source: Referrals by Status for ILP FY12 (Analyst Reports)

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The earlier a referral is made, the better.

“Research shows us that starting early has more impact than starting late. As brain circuits are built up and stabilize over time, they become increasingly more difficult to alter.”

(Sam Meisels, Ph.D., EdWeek (vol 25:20, pages 36-44) January 25, 2006)

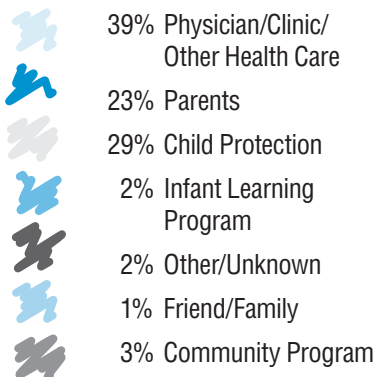
**Referrals to the Infant Learning Program can be made
by contacting the state office:**

1-877-HSS-FMLY (477-3659)

**in Anchorage
269-8442**

or by contacting a regional provider:
www.earlyintervention.alaska.gov

Referral Source





“Without the program, so much of this wouldn’t have happened,” Carla says. “She has overcome a lot.”

Intake

Assessing growth & development

Alaska’s Infant Learning Programs serve children across the state from diverse backgrounds.

When a child is referred to an Infant Learning Program, a developmental screening or evaluation is administered to assess the child’s growth and development in several areas, including:

- Using large muscles, moving around (*Gross Motor*)
- Using hands and fingers (*Fine Motor*)
- Thinking, learning (*Cognitive*)
- Understanding, talking (*Communication*)
- Getting along with others (*Social/Emotional*)
- Doing things for themselves (*Adaptive*)

A multidisciplinary assessment will gauge if a child is developing at a similar rate as children of the same age.

A multidisciplinary assessment will gauge if a child is developing at a similar rate as children of the same age. If a child experiences a delay they may be eligible for early intervention services.









Age at Referral (Enrolled Children)

42%	1 to 11 Months	1100
29%	12 to 23 Months	744
28%	24 to 36 Months	737
1%	Over 36 Months	13



Average age at referral: 15 months





Referral by Ethnic Background

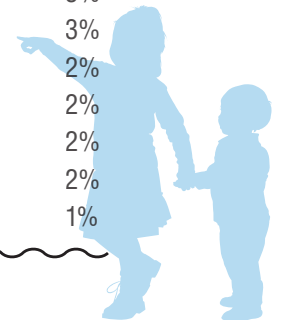
	35% White/Caucasian	1064
	29% American Indian/Alaska Native	881
	16% Unknown	488
	8% Two or more races	250
	5% Hispanic/Latino	147
	3% Black or African American	76
	2% Asian	54
	2% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	48



By far, most children qualify due to a developmental delay; children also qualify if they have a diagnosed physical condition likely to result in developmental delay.

Most Frequently Diagnosed Delays

Down Syndrome	41		12%
Hearing Impairment, Significant/Progressive	35		11%
Heart Disease, Congenital	21		6%
Cleft Palate with or without Cleft Lip	21		6%
Vision Impairment, Significant/Progressive	17		5%
Complex Seizure Disorder	15		5%
Cerebral Palsy	12		4%
Bronchopulmonary Dysplasia (BPD)	11		3%
Autism	9		3%
Hydrocephaly	8		2%
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)	8		2%
Microcephaly	6		2%
Cytomeglovirus (CMV), Congenital	6		2%
Spina Bifida	4		1%





Partnering with families

Setting goals, educating families

Early intervention services are designed to assist families to help their infants/toddlers maximize their development. The child's family plays a crucial role in both planning and delivering early intervention services. Infant Learning Programs embrace each family's unique capacity to support and promote their child's development.

Individualized Family Services Plan
Alaska Early Intervention / Infant Learning Program

Referral information
Child's Name: _____ Child Previous Name or Alias: _____
Gender: Female Male Birth Date: _____
Referral Date: _____ Referral Follow Up Date: _____ (letter/call)
Referral Source: _____ Phone: _____
If parent is referral source, how did parent hear: _____
Reason for Referral (include any important notes): _____

Parents decide if they would like their children to participate in early intervention assessments and services, and help set the developmental goals for their children.

Through the Infant Learning Program, families partner with providers to develop a written Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP). The IFSP outlines the child's strengths and current levels of functioning; the plan clearly outlines the developmental goals for the child and the specific early intervention steps that will be taken to help the child achieve his or her goals.



Infant Learning Programs educate families about the developmental steps they will see their child move through.

Families learn specific techniques they can use daily to support the developmental goals of their child. When a child reaches a goal, the family will receive additional support as the child works toward the next developmental goal.

Parents are a child's first and most important teacher.

Early intervention services are most effective when the family is directly involved in their delivery.

Early intervention services are most effective when delivered in a child's natural settings such as: home, preschool, childcare or other community settings. Delivery in these natural settings helps to educate everyone who interacts with the child, and strengthens the community's ability to support the child's growth and development.





Supporting families

Advocacy, support groups

Raising a young child with special needs presents both joys and challenges. Alaska's ILP believes supporting the family is a critical component to supporting the child's development.

Alaska's Infant Learning programs endeavor to:

- Ensure families feel respected and in control of their child's participation in the Infant Learning Program
- Educate families about the unique developmental steps they can expect their child to move through
- Teach families specific skills and techniques to promote their child's development
- Assist families to develop a strong support system including: extended family, neighbors, other families with special needs children and community resources
- Support families to become effective, lifelong advocates for their children

As a child enters each new learning opportunity, the family will need to advocate and educate on behalf of their child.

Research shows that family education and support can directly reduce the incidence of child abuse.

Families will guide their children through a lifetime of growth and learning. All parents benefit from a strong network of support, especially parents raising children with special needs.

Taking the next step

When a child reaches his or her third birthday, or no longer needs early intervention services, it is time for the child to transition out of the Infant Learning Program.

Most children will continue to receive services at home or in a preschool setting. Great care is taken to plan for a graceful and effective transition. Transition meetings will bring the family together with the child's current and future service providers to plan for the child's continued growth and development.

Reasons for Leaving ILP

Part B eligible	329	
Withdrawal by parent/guardian	140	
Attempts to contact unsuccessful	134	
Moved out of state	88	
Completion of IFSP prior to age 3	79	
Part B eligibility not determined	55	
Not Part B eligible, exit w/no ref.	43	
Not Part B eligible, exit to other prog.	39	
Deceased	4	

Where do children go after ILP?

41% Home	357
35% Preschool Special Education	303
10% Other Setting	83
7% Child Care/Preschool	60
5% Head Start	44
2% Outpatient Therapy	14





Celebrating success

Alaska Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program measures child outcomes by comparing how children are functioning before and after receiving early intervention services. The child outcomes focus on children's abilities to be successful in everyday activities and routines, and skills children need to be successful in future school settings. Three outcome areas are measured:

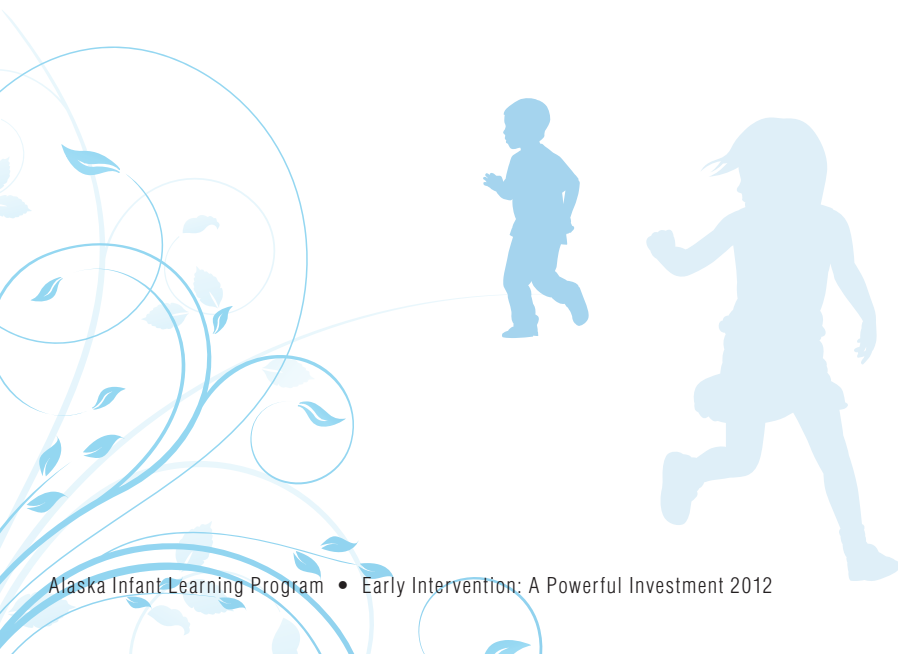
- Children have positive social relationships.
- Children acquire and use knowledge and skills.
- Children take appropriate action to meet their needs.

Percentage of Part C Children falling in each of five OSEP Categories FY12 7/1/2011-6/30/2012

OSEP Improvement Category Percent	Emotional	Knowledge	Action
Number of Children	434	438	433
e. Children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-age peers	24.88%	13.24%	15.01%
d. Children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-age peers	25.35%	32.65%	35.10%
c. Children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-age peers but did not reach it	22.81%	28.77%	27.02%
b. Children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-age peers	22.35%	22.60%	18.94%
a. Children who did not improve functioning	4.61%	2.74%	3.93%



Summary Statements for Part C Children FY12 7/1/2011-6/30/2012			
Summary Statement 1	Emotional	Knowledge	Action
Of those children who entered the program below age expectations in the Outcome Area, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exit the program.	64.11% 209 of 326	70.79% 269 of 380	73.10% 269 of 368
Summary Statement 2			
The percent of children who are functioning within age expectations in the Outcome Area by the time they exit the program.	50.23% 218 of 434	45.89% 201 of 438	450.12% 217 of 433



Percent of infants and toddlers enrolled birth to 3 with IFSPs December	Community	Percent Enrolled
Alaska Center for Children and Adults	Fairbanks, Copper River, Delta Junction, North Slope Borough	3.07%
Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation	Dillingham, Bristol Bay, Lake and Peninsula Region	5.06%
Center for the Community	Sitka, Kake, Angoon	2.80%
Community Connections Ketchikan	Ketchikan, Prince of Wales Island and Metlakatla	3.05%
FOCUS Inc.	Eagle River, Chugiak, Cordova, Valdez	2.19%
Program for Infants & Children	Anchorage, Whittier, Girdwood	
Frontier Community Services	Soldotna, Kenai, Sterling, Nikiski, Tyonek	3.40%
Homer Community Services	Homer, Anchor Point, Nikolaevsk, Ninilchik, Clam Gulch, Port Graham, Nanwalek, Seldovia, Vosnesanka, Kachemak Selo, Razdolna	
SeaView Community Services	Seward, Hope, Moose Pass	
Kodiak Area Native Association	Kodiak City, USCG Support Center Kodiak, Kodiak road system, villages: Akhiok, Karluk, Larsen Bay, Old Harbor, Ouzinkie, Port Lions	1.70%
Mat-Su Services for Children and Adults	Big Lake, Buffalo/Soapstone, Butte, Chase, Chickaloon, Farm Loop, Fishhook, Gateway, Glacier View, Houston, Knik-Fairview, Knik River, Lake Louise, Lakes, Lazy Mountain, Meadow Lakes, Palmer, Petersburg, Point MacKenzie, Skwentna, Susitna, Sutton-Alpine, Talkeetna, Tanaina, Trapper Creek, Wasilla, Willow	1.54%
Northwest Arctic Borough School District	Kotzebue, Ambler, Buckland, Deering, Kiana, Kivalina, Kobuk, Noatak, Noorvik, Selawik, Shungnak, and Point Hope	1.61%
Norton Sound Health Corporation	Nome, Brevig Mission, Diomedea, Elim, Gambell, St Michael, Savoonga, Shishmaref, Stebbins, Teller, Wales, White Mountain	1.98%
REACH Inc.	Juneau, Haines, Skagway, Hoonah, Yakutat, Gustavus, Pelican, Tenakee Springs. Our Petersburg office serves Petersburg and Wrangell	3.76%
Southeast Regional Resource Center	Aleutian, Pribilof Islands	0.00%
Tanana Chiefs Conference	Allakaket, Bettles, Hughes, Kaktovik, Manley, Minot, Nenana, Rampart, Stevens Village, Tanana, Arctic Village, Beaver, Ft. Yukon, Chalkyitsik, Circle, Venetie, Dot Lake, Eagle, Healy, Northway, Tanacross, Tetlin, Tok, Metasta, Galena, Hulsia, Kaltag, Koyukuk, Nulato, Ruby, McGrath, Nikolai, Takotna, Anvik, Grayling, Holy Cross, Shageluk	6.22%
Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation	Akiachak, Akiak, Alakanuk, Aniak, Anvik, Atmuauluk, Chefornek, Chevak, Chuathbaluk, Crooked Creek, Eek, Emmonak, Grayling, Holy Cross, Hooper Bay, Kasigluk, Kipnuk, Kongiganank, Kotlik, Kwethluk, Kwigillingok, Lime Village, Lower Kalskag, Marshall, Mekoryuk, Mountain Village, Napaskiak, Newtok, Nightmute, Nunapitchuk, Oscarville, Pilot Station, Pitka's Point, Quinhagak, Russian Mission, St. Mary's, Scammon Bay, Shageluk, Sheldon's Point, Sleetmute, Stony River, Toksook Bay, Tuluksak, Tuntutuliak, Tununak, Upper Kalskag	1.88%
Statewide Total		2.46%

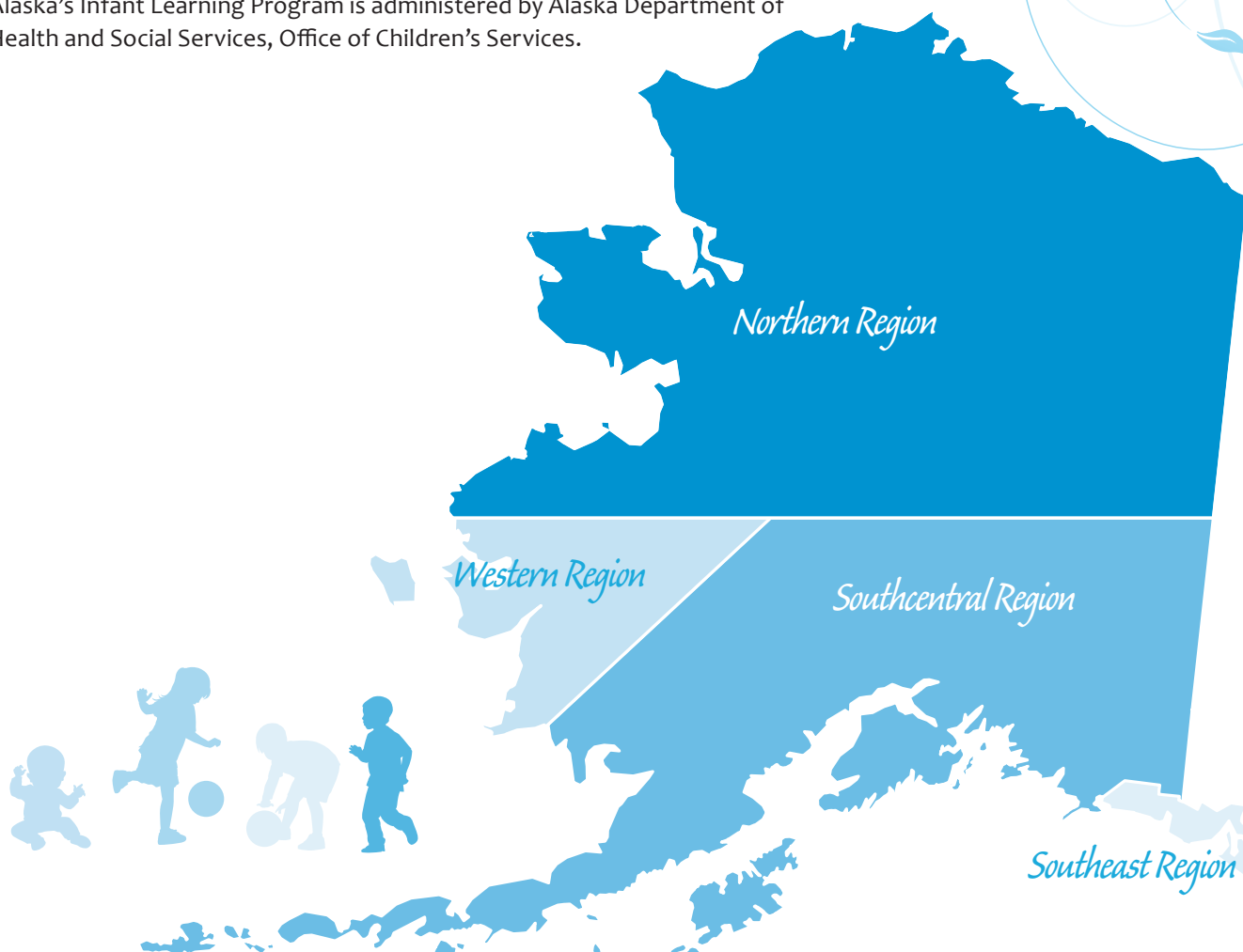
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Collaboration

Partners in supporting families

Alaska's Infant Learning Program is grateful to the many partners who join together to serve Alaska's children with special needs: the children and their families, regional grantee agencies, health care providers, early intervention service providers, and the communities that support them.

Alaska's Infant Learning Program is administered by Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Office of Children's Services.





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Collaboration



Alaska Infant Learning Program

This report, historical data and other publications available at earlyintervention.alaska.gov

Call toll free in Alaska: 1 (877) HSS-FMLY (477-3659); In Anchorage 269-8442

INFANT LEARNING PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT ALASKA



The Alaska Infant Learning Program offers developmental services to families of children birth to 3. If you have concerns about your child's development make a referral to your local Infant Learning Program. Our Mission is to promote positive development and improved outcomes for Alaska's children birth to 3 by creating a culturally responsive, comprehensive and accessible service delivery system that links service providers, empowers families and engages communities.

