

May 27, 2020

Dear Petersburg Mayor and Assembly,

This letter is to urge you to invest a portion of the federal CARES funds just allocated to municipalities by the Alaska State Legislature. The recognition of the importance of child care to our economies, family stability, and education system has never been higher. For every child care teacher that is supported to return to a child care program, an average of eight families are able to return to work.

There are currently 151 spaces in the 4 licensed child care programs in Petersburg. Childcare, which runs on a very thin margins in the best of times, are in serious danger of permanent closure without immediate financial support. Re opening slowly and carefully care will be out of reach for many programs, and parents cannot reasonably be able to afford increases in tuition. These costs include:

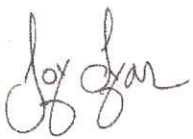
- Lower enrollment due to parent layoffs, and parents nervous to bring their child back to care
- Increased staffing to cover substitutes needed for any employees out with even "just a cold," as well as for smaller group sizes, and additional sanitizing and health checks.
- Hiring and training new staff to replace staff that do not return to the program due to their own medical issues.

**Recommendation:**

A reasonable investment to stabilize programs would be to provide monthly grants based on pre-Covid-19 enrollment rates. Half of the average tuition rates is approximately \$500 per child. Passing an emergency response ordinance starting immediately until the end of December would ensure programs have enough cushion to navigate and respond to any changes in community phases this fall. A reference would be consideration of between 2 and 5% of the CARES funding allocated for the community. This is one of the highest returns in generating economic recovery for Petersburg.

The City and Borough of Juneau recently voted to approve over one million dollars to child care sustainability grants. Petersburg could consider other methods of support such as emergency care for essential workers, parent tuition, but direct grants to programs is the most direct and lowest administrative cost. If desired, AEYC / thread Southeast would consider administering the grants at a nominal administration cost.

Please contact me by email if you would like more information about the child care demographics and needs in Petersburg, to discuss options, or for any questions.



Executive Director