

# **KCI COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2025-2026**

Prepared by  
ACTIONABLE DATA CONSULTING, INC.



Actionable Data Consulting

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# Abbreviations

ACF	Administration for Children and Families
ADC	Actionable Data Consulting
APA	Administrative Procedure Act
ASD	Anchorage School District
CCAP	State of Alaska’s Child Care Assistance Program
CPR	Cardiopulmonary resuscitation
CUBS	Childhood Understanding Behaviors Survey
DEED	Alaska Department of Education and Early Development
DEI	Diversity, equity, and inclusion
EHS	Early Head Start
EITC	Earned income tax credit
FOCUS	Family Outreach Center for Understanding Special Needs
FPL	Federal poverty level
GED	General Educational Development
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
HS	Head Start
ILP	Infant Learning Program
JBER	Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
KCI	Kids Corp Inc.
OCS	Alaska Department of Family and Community Services, Office of Children’s Services
OHS	Office of Head Start
PASS	Parents Achieving Self-Sufficiency
PIC	Programs for Infants and Children
PIL	Parent Interest List
PIR	Program Information Report
PRAMS	Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System
RuRAL CAP	Rural Alaska Community Action Program
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
WIC	State of Alaska, Women, Infants and Children Program

# Overview of state of grantee and communities in the service area

## Grantee type, history, and other programs administered

Incorporated in 1987, Kids Corp Inc. (KCI) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that supports low-income expectant families and families with children from birth through five years of age by providing preschool, childcare, and home visiting services in the Anchorage community. Kids Corps, Inc. is a Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS) grantee, operating centers in five Anchorage locations. HS is a comprehensive child development program serving children ages three to five and their families. EHS provides similar services for families with children aged to three years old. Their goal is to prepare children for success in school and life by supporting their social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development, and promoting family well-being. KCI is governed by both a Board of Directors and a Policy Council. The executive director and five managers oversee the daily operations and administration of KCI.

KCI has been in existence for 36 years, originally formed as a delegate agency in 1987, providing HS services under the administration of RurAL CAP. Kids Corps became an independent HS grantee in 1990. The following timeline provides a brief overview of KCI's history and present time plans.

- **1987** Incorporated as a 501(c) (3) non-profit agency
- **1988** Davis Center acquired from the Municipality of Anchorage
- **1989** Kids Corps becomes a HS delegate agency under RurAL CAP
- **1990** Kids Corps awarded grantee status, allowing the agency to receive direct federal and state funding to provide HS services to 133 children. Classrooms are in public schools.
- **1991** East Center opened. Classrooms are relocated from public school sites at the start of the 1991/1992 program year
- **1997** Kids Corps becomes a United Way agency. Increased federal funding expands enrollment to 358 children.
- **1999** Muldoon Center opened in collaboration with the Muldoon Community Development Corporation—Full-day HS services provided at a site in the Muldoon Job Center.
- **2000** South Center is opened to provide full-day and part-day HS services to families who live or work in south Anchorage.
- **2001** Mountain View Center opens as part of United Way's "Success by Six" initiative.
- **2009** In partnership with the Anchorage School District, KCI opens three HS classrooms in public schools.
- **2010** EHS (EHS) program begins. A Federal "stimulus" grant and a Community Development Block Grant result in the creation of new classrooms at East Center, expanding enrollment by 17 children.
- **2012** Parents as Teachers home-visiting program begins its first year with 40 families enrolled.
- **2013** Federal sequestration budget cuts result in the closure of South Center and the loss of 20 enrollment slots in August.
- **2014** KCI opens a 4th partnership site with the Anchorage School District.
- **2016** In partnership with Cook Inlet Housing Authority, KCI opens a new classroom enrolling 20 children at the Ridgeline Terrace mixed-housing development.

- **2019** We receive a federal “Duration” grant to double the hours of 2 classrooms at East Center.
- **2020** COVID-19 pandemic closure of all classrooms in March 2020. KCI develops virtual services option. Classrooms begin to reopen in July 2020 following strict health protocols.
- **2022** EHS expansion allows us to open three additional EHS classrooms, enrolling 24 infants and toddlers in Mountain View.
- **2024** Kids Corps, Inc. proactively adjusts services in response to guidance from the Office of HS’s Full Enrollment Initiative and the conclusion of a long-standing collaboration with the Anchorage School District. Plans include reducing HS services and transitioning EHS home-based to a center-based model to better meet community needs.
- **2026** We have begun preparing for a new collaboration with the Anchorage School District to occupy part of an existing elementary school and offer a new childcare partnership, independent of HS.

**Programming options offered**

Table 1 describes the program options for HS for children aged 3 to 5 years. KCI offers four distinct options for the 2025-2026 term, ranging from part-day classrooms (5 hours daily) ending in May to full-day childcare, which operates year-round for up to 10 hours daily. While most programs run from August 25, 2025, to late May 2026, the part-day option at the Muldoon Center extends through July 24, 2026, and the year-round childcare at the East Center requires childcare assistance and may involve a co-pay. The East, Boniface, Ridgeline, and Muldoon centers host these classrooms, typically capping enrollment at 15 or 16 children per room and occasionally requiring Friday closures or a commitment to summer attendance.

Source: KCI, 2025-2026 school year

**Table 1. HS program options (for children 3-5 years of age)**

Program options	Hours	Length of year	Location	Important information
Part-day classrooms	8:30 am-1:30 pm 5 hours/day	August 25, 2025— May 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2026	East Center 2 classrooms	15 children per classroom
	9 am-2:00 pm 5 hours/day		Boniface Ctr. (3 classrooms)	
Full Day	8:30 am-3:00 pm 6.5 hours/day	August 25, 2025— May 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2026	Ridgeline (1 classroom)	Center will be closed on one Friday each month. 1 classroom, 15 children
Part-day Duration	9 am-2:00 pm 5 hours/day	August 25, 2025—July 24, 2026	Muldoon Center only (2 classrooms)	Must be willing to attend in the summer. Limited buses 16 children per classroom
Full day childcare	7:30 am-5:30 pm Up to 10 hours/day	Year round <b>Closed:</b> August 10-August 21, 2026	East Center (1 classroom)	Childcare assistance required. May require co-pay. Closed on one Friday each month. 1 classroom, 15 slots

KCI EHS program offers three distinct options during the 2025-2026 term for expectant families and children from birth to age three, all of which operate year-round and observe closures for two weeks during winter break and one week during spring break. Families can choose a home-based option featuring weekly developmental visits, or center-based care at the Mt. View and East Centers for children at least four months old. Center-based choices include a full-day program (8:15 am – 3:00 pm) or full-day childcare (up to 10 hours daily), the latter of which requires childcare assistance, may involve a co-pay, and both are closed for one Friday each month, as well as a brief period in August 2026.

**Table 2. EHS program options (for expectant families & children birth to 3 years of age)**

Program options	Hours	Length of year	Location	Important information
Home-based	varies	Year round	N/A	Families receive weekly home visits from a trained home visitor. Visits include developmentally appropriate parent/child activities, parenting resources & family support. 12 children
Full Day	8:15 am-3:00 pm 6.75 hours/day	Year round Closed: August 10 - August 21, 2026	Mt. View Center & East Center	Children must be at least 4 months old to attend. Closed on one Friday each month. Max of 8 children per classroom.
Full-day childcare	7:30 am-5:30pm Up to 10 hours/day	Year round Closed: August 10 - August 21, 2026	Mt. View Center & East Center	Childcare assistance required may require a co-pay Children must be at least 4 months old to attend. Closed on one Friday each month. Max of 8 children per classroom.

Source: KCI, 2025-2026 school year \*All classes are closed for two weeks during winter break and one week during spring break.

## Delegate agencies

KCI has no delegate agencies.

## Eligibility criteria

KCI HS and EHS eligibility criteria include income qualification. There are also eligibility options for children with disabilities and for children who are homeless or in foster care. Income guidelines are below.

**Table 3. KCI eligibility guidelines, 2023-2024**

People in Family	Income Guideline
2	\$26,430
3	\$33,310
4	\$40,190
5	\$47,070
6	\$53,950
7	\$60,830
8	\$7,710
*For families/households with more than 8 people, add \$6,880 for each additional person.	

Data Source: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines>

Note. 100% of poverty adjusted for Alaska

## Number of eligible children and families to be served

For the 2025-2026 school year, 15 classrooms are split between HS (9) and EHS (6), across five sites. While HS programs are available at nearly every location, center-based EHS classrooms are concentrated specifically at the East and Mt. View locations.

**Table 4. Number of classrooms by location, 2025-2026**

	Boniface	East	Mt. View	Muldoon	Ridgeline	Total
HS	3	3	0	2	1	9
EHS (center-based)	0	2	4	0	0	6
Total	3	5	4	2	1	15

Source: KCI, 2025-2026 school year

Of 189, HS and EHS KCI slots, 32% are in East Anchorage, 24% are in the Boniface Area, 17% are in the Muldoon Area, 12.6% are in Mountain View community, 8% are in Ridgeline and 6% are not in a designated location because the funding is from the family and the location of families is not designated by area.

**Table 5. Number of slots for children by community, 2025-2026**

	Boniface	East	Mt. View	Muldoon	Ridgeline	Total
HS	45	45	0	32	15	137
EHS	0	16	24	0	0	40

Source: KCI, 2025-2026 school year

## Actual number of enrolled children and families, including cultural and linguistic features

Table 6 presents the actual number of children and families who were enrolled in 2025-2026. Enrollment numbers will differ from the number of child slots, as children come and go throughout the year.

**Table 6. Actual number of enrolled children and families by community (2025-2026) Aug-Dec**

	Boniface	East	Mt. View	Muldoon	Ridgeline	No location
HS	50	53	0	40	17	0
EHS (home-based)	0	0	0	0	0	12
EHS (center-based)	0	17	27	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>17</b>	

Source: KCI, 2025-2026 school year

Figure 1 and Tables 7 and 8 present the cultural characteristics and enrollee counts by KCI center. Expressed as percentages, 37% of enrollees in 2025-2026 were characterized by their parents as multi-racial, 17% were Pacific Islander children, 14% were Black, 12% were Asian, 10% were White, 9% identified as Alaska Native, and the remaining 2% identified with another cultural group. Twenty-three percent identified as Hispanic.

**Table 7. Cultural characteristics of enrollees by center – Count, 2025-2026**

	Boniface	East	Mt. View	Muldoon	Ridgeline	EHS home-based
White	10	2	3	4	1	0
Alaska Native	3	7	3	4	1	0
Black	8	10	3	3	3	1
Pacific Islander	13	7	2	8	4	1
Asian	2	13	5	4	0	9
Multi-Racial	12	29	10	17	8	1
Other	2	2	1	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>

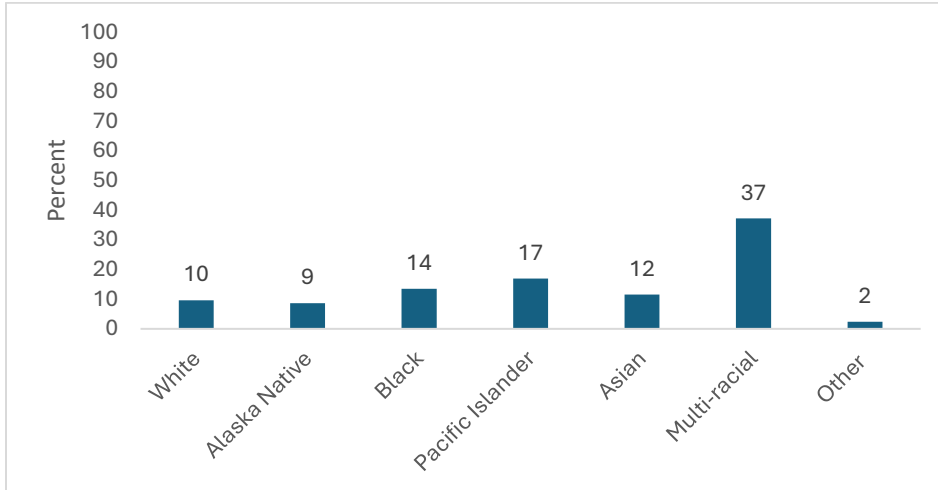
Source: KCI, 2025-2026 school year

**Table 8. Hispanic ethnicity of enrollees by center – Count, 2025-2026**

	Boniface	East	Mt. View	Muldoon	Ridgeline	EHS Home-Based
Hispanic	15	20	2	9	5	0
Non-Hispanic	35	50	25	31	12	12

Source: KCI, 2025-2026 school year

**Figure 1. Cultural characteristics of KCI Enrollees, percent, 2024-2025**



Source: KCI, 2025-2026 school year

English is the most common language spoken at every center, accounting for 131 enrollees. Spanish is the second most common language, with its highest concentration in the East Center (16 speakers), followed by the Boniface Center (6) and Muldoon (5). The East center has the most linguistic diversity, with seven different languages spoken by enrollees, including the highest counts for Spanish (16), Asian (8), and African languages (2).

**Table 9. Linguistic characteristics of actual enrollees by center 2025-2026**

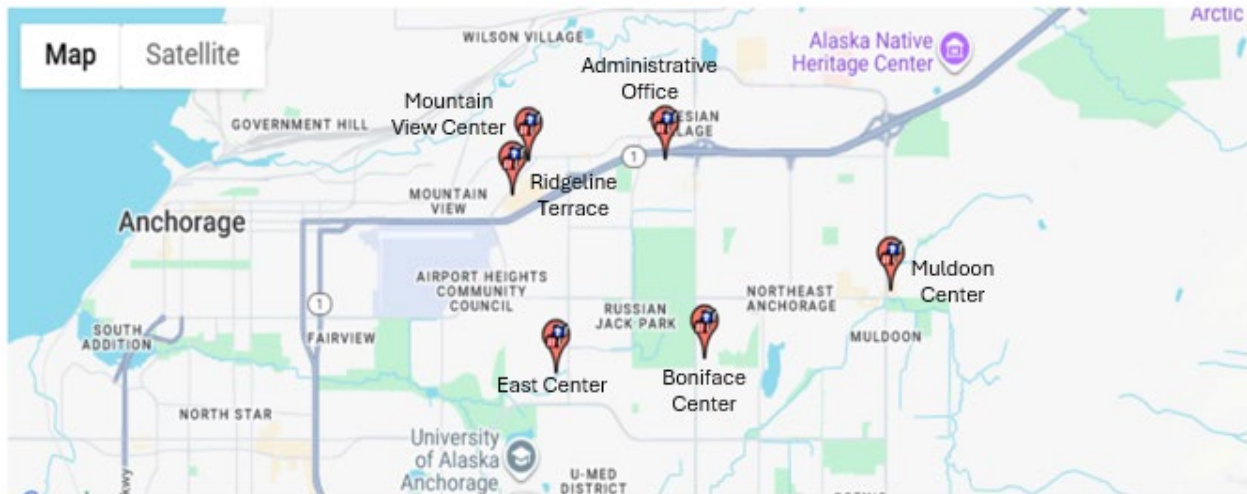
	Boniface	East	Mt. View	Muldoon	Ridgeline	EHS home-based
English language	37	35	19	26	9	5
Spanish	6	16	1	5	4	0
East Asian		8	4	4	0	0
Pacific Island languages	2	3	1	3	1	0
African Languages	0	2	0	0	2	0
Middle Eastern and South Asian languages	0	3	1	0	0	7
Eastern Slavic language (Russian, Ukrainian, etc.)	3	0	0	0	0	0
Alaska Native language	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>

Source: KCI, 2025-2026 school year

## Location of centers

The five KCI centers and the administrative center location are shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. Location of KCI centers**



Source: Google Maps. Accessed December 2025.

## Homes, central office, other offices

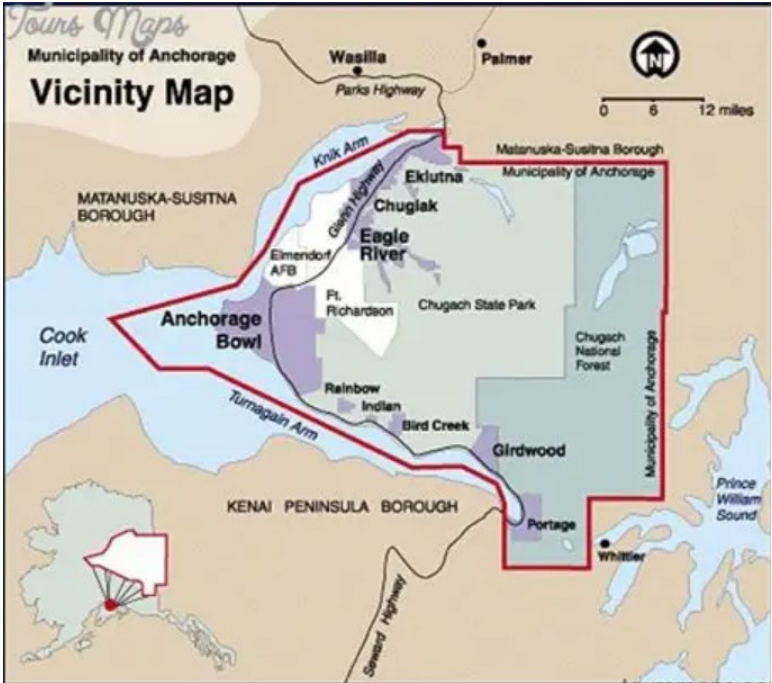
There are no other homes or offices. The central office is located at 101 Davis Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99508.

## Service and Recruitment Area

Figure 3 shows the geographical boundaries of the service and recruitment areas for each KCI center. In 2025, these communities had a total population of 289,221, which was the entire borough population. Figure 4 shows two map segments showing where the 2024-2025 KCI enrolled students lived, and Figure 5 shows the KCI bus route area. The bus route covers Muldoon from right before the curve to the highway. The “A” on the map is the East Center Location where the bus is stored.

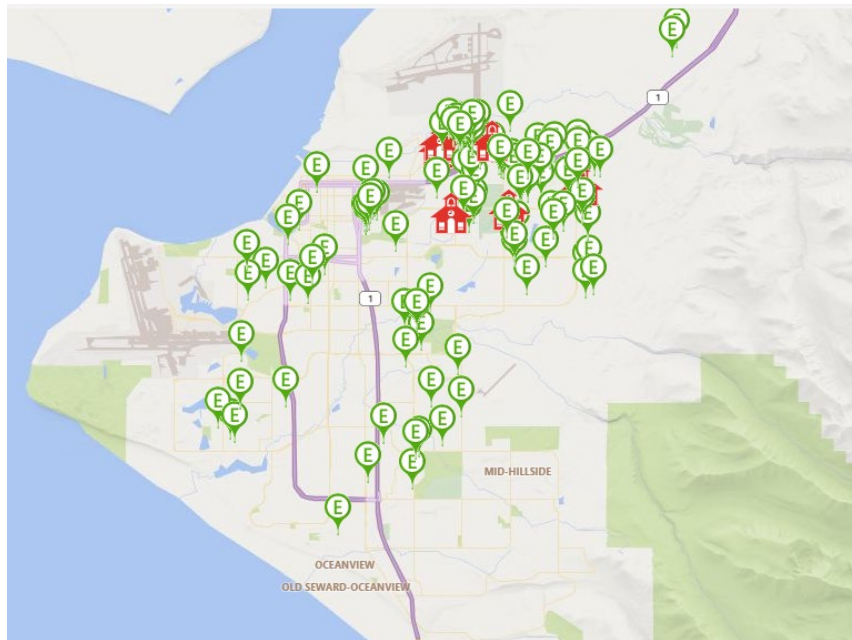
Table 10 shows the Anchorage subcommunities where the centers are located: East Mountain View, Russian Jack, Muldoon, and Scenic Foothills. Those neighborhoods have a total population of 19,213, which is 6% of the Anchorage population. KCI students come from many different subcommunities. The light-blue cells identify the nine communities with at least eight KCI students. These nine communities have a population total of 47,250.

Figure 3. Map of approximate KCI area recruitment boundaries

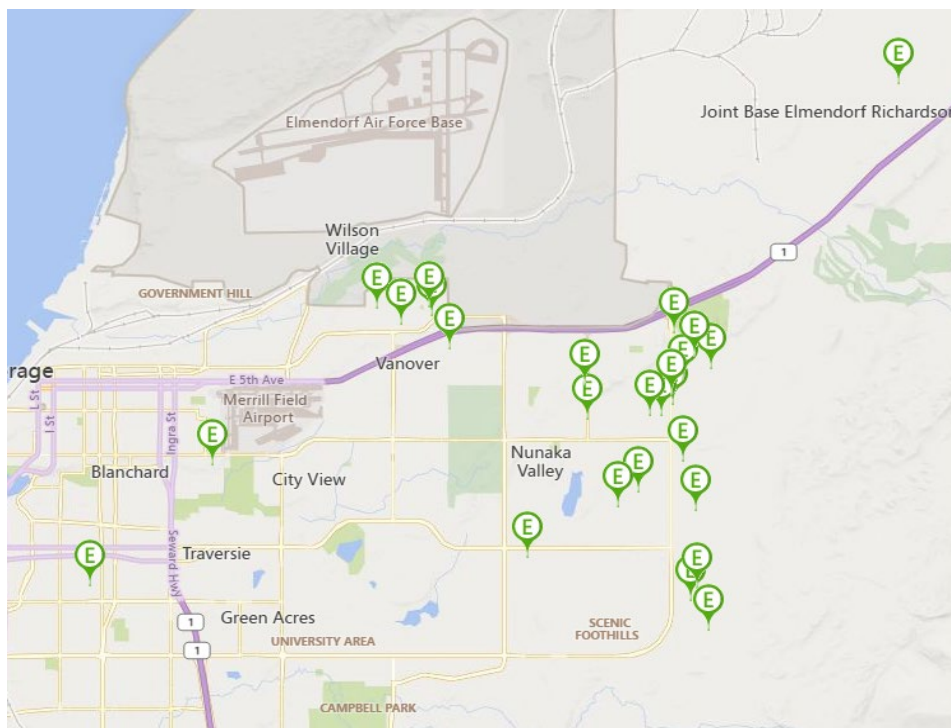


Source: KCI, 2025-2026 school year

**Figure 4. Maps of KCI currently enrolled students with sites as red schoolhouses**

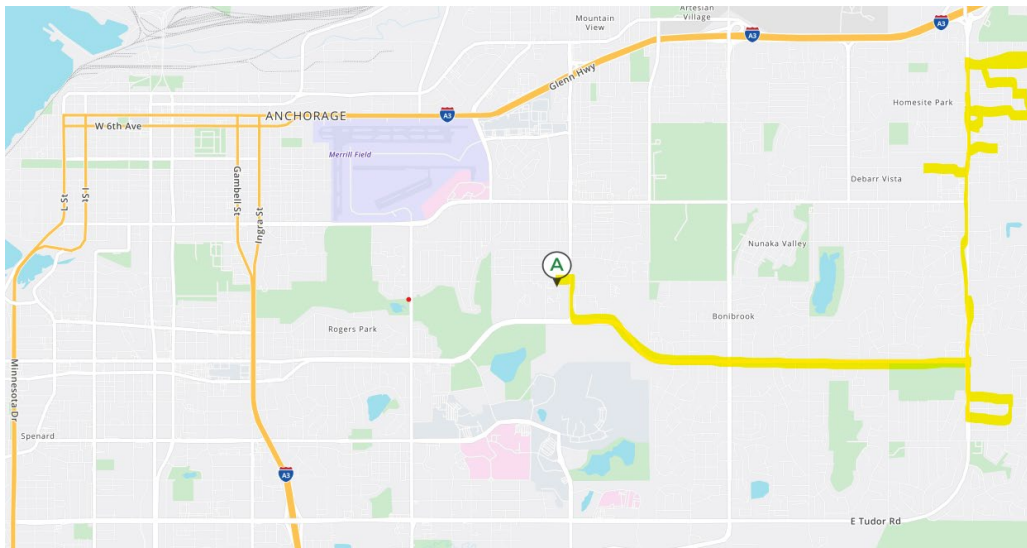


Source: KCI, 2025-2026 school year



Source: KCI, 2025-26 school year

**Figure 5. Map of KCI bus route area:**



Source: KCI, 2025-26 school year

## Location of delegate agencies

KCI Early Learning has no delegate agencies.

## Location of communities and population groups

In Table 10, the communities that make up Anchorage are listed along with their 2024 populations. Communities with a KCI center are highlighted yellow.

**Table 10. Anchorage communities and KCI centers**

Community	July 2025	Community	July 2025
Anchorage Municipality	289,221	Scenic Foothills <b>(8)</b>	6,004
Peters Creek/Eklutna	5,717	Campbell Park West	4,377
Chugiak	5,109	Campbell Park East	4,996
Downtown Eagle River	4,653	Midtown	3,642
Eagle River	6,541	Spenard	3,288
Upper Eagle River Valley	3,792	Woodland Park/Spenard	3,594
Lower Eagle River Valley South	7,880	Lake Spenard	4,691
Lower Eagle River Valley North	3,590	East Turnagain/Fish Creek	2,915
Government Hill	1,891	Airport/Kincaid	8,022
West Mountain View/Ship Creek	4,174	Connors Lake	4,477
East Mountain View <b>(14)</b>	2,601	Jewel Lake/Birch Lake	6,206
Ptarmigan Area <b>(11)</b>	7,294	Dimond/Northwood	2,506
Northwest Muldoon	5,529	Northwood	3,004
Northeast Muldoon	5,028	Arctic	4,648
Wonder Park <b>(13)</b>	6,457	Taku/Campbell	4,798
Russian Jack <b>(11+12)</b>	4,627	Abbott Loop West	4,915
Merrill Field Vicinity	4,924	Abbott Loop North	5,661
Chester Creek	3,203	Abbott Loop	6,377
West Fairview <b>(15)</b>	3,798	Campbell Lake/Bayshore	6,787
Downtown Anchorage Core	1,916	Dimond/Southport	9,027
Bootleggers Cove/Westchester	3,602	Oceanview	4,975
Turnagain	3,123	Klatt	4,457
South Fireweed	2,718	Independence Park	6,090
North Fireweed	2,212	Lower Hillside	8,473
Rogers Park/Tudor Area	5,167	Hillside East	4,792
Airport Heights <b>(10)</b>	3,633	Huffman	5,026
University Area	4,689	Rabbit Creek	4,112
Baxter <b>(10)</b>	6,855	Rabbit Creek/Bear Valley	6,028
Cheney Lake	4,876	Girdwood/Turnagain Arm	2,317
Muldoon <b>(14)</b>	5,981	Science Center	5
Fort Richardson	6,829	Elmendorf AFB	4,602

Source: State of Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, found at <https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/cen/maps/censustracts/ct170.pdf>

# Methodology

## Purpose of the community assessment

As outlined in the HS Program Performance Standards,<sup>1</sup> the purpose of this community needs assessment is to ensure that KCI programming meets community needs and builds on existing strengths and resources within our communities. The assessment is completed in full once every five years and updated annually to reflect significant changes in community demographics and resources.

## Community Assessment Team members, roles, responsibilities, and selection

The Community Assessment team is composed of KCI Early Learning Staff, Actionable Data Consulting consultants, and Community Stakeholders. Table 11 shows the roles of core team members. Team participants were selected for their expertise in conducting Community Needs Assessments, familiarity with KCI, and the needs of families with young children living in Anchorage.

**Table 11. Community assessment Core Team members and roles**

Name	Role
Melissa Toffolon, PhD, MPH	Consultant
Katrina Ahfield	KCI Executive Director
F. Tapu	Policy Board representative
Rachel Schafer	Family Services & Health Manager

Following an initial project kick-off meeting in September, the core team and consultant gathered data. They met regularly over a period of seven months to plan the needs assessment and conduct collaborative data collection, including the parent survey and focus group interviews.

## Consultant role

KCI hired Actionable Data Consulting (ADC) to conduct the community needs assessment. ADC completed qualitative and quantitative data analysis, facilitated regular progress meetings, and compiled the final report.

## Overview of training provided for the Team

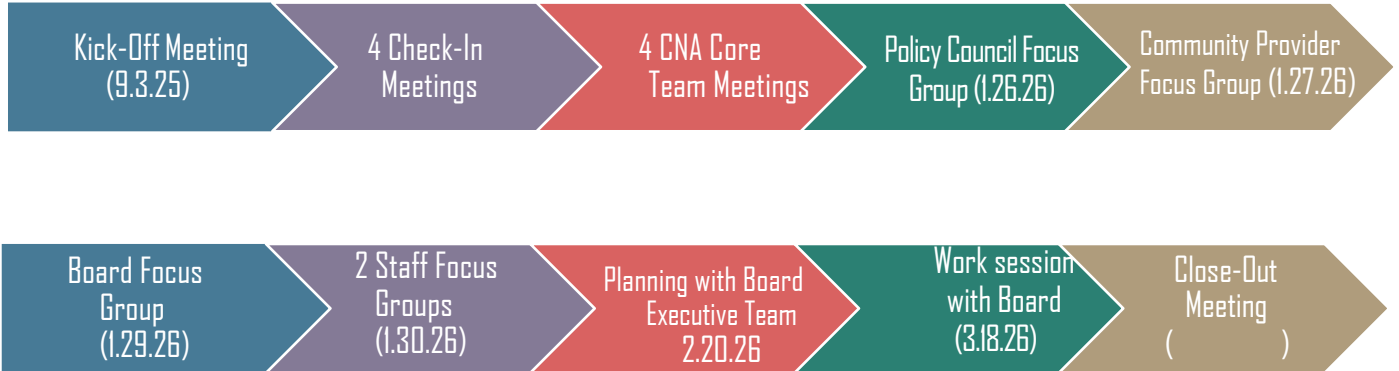
Due to the Team's expertise, they didn't need specialized training in community assessments.

## Role of the Policy Council and the Board

The Policy Council and Board of Directors for KCI provided oversight of the community assessment process, discussed the final product, provided feedback, and ultimately approved it as accurately reflecting the community's needs and KCI's efforts to meet them.

## Community assessment timeline

The timeline below illustrates the dates of major check-in meetings to support the community needs assessment. Correspondence and data sharing occurred throughout and are not illustrated on this timeline.



## Sources of secondary data

Secondary data was derived from a range of collection methods, including online and telephonic surveys, interviews, and collateral information from completed forms. The different secondary data sources are listed below.

### Internal data sources

Internal data sources used for the community assessment included:

- Program Information Report (PIR)
- Participation data
- Enrollment data
- Parent Interest List (PIL)

### External data, including census data, and data on underserved, new, or emerging populations

External data sources for the community assessment included:

- Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED)
- Alaska Department of Family and Community Services, Office of Children’s Services (OCS)
- Alaska Department of Health, Division of Public Health
- Alaska Economic Trends
- Childcare Assistance Program
- Childhood Understanding Behaviors Survey (CUBS)
- Community Health Rankings
- Kids Count
- Alaska Economic Trends
- Anchorage School District (ASD)

- Anchorage Homelessness Needs Assessment, 2022
- National Survey of Children’s Health
- Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS)
- State of Alaska, Maternal Child Health Epidemiology
- State of Alaska, Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC)
- State of Alaska Trauma Registry
- **thread** (Alaska’s Child Care Resource and Referral organization)
- Census data and other population figures, including information on underserved and new or emerging populations, were gathered from the following sources:
  - Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development
  - U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey 1-Year and 5-Year estimates)
  - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System

## Methods of data collection, trends, and analysis (surveys, interviews/focus groups/translation)

### Parent/guardian Survey

The Parent/Guardian Survey was conducted from November 1, 2025, until February 15, 2026. It was an online survey (using Alchemer software) that the teachers and family support staff promoted with parents. The survey was offered in English and Spanish. Seven parents filled out the survey in Spanish. The respondents had children at every KIC center and with every teacher (see Table 12).

**Table 12. Centers where parents surveyed have children enrolled, 2025-2026**

Center	Count
Boniface	32
Ridgeline	10
Parents as Teachers	11
EHS Home Visiting	5
East	20
Muldoon	11
Mt View	13

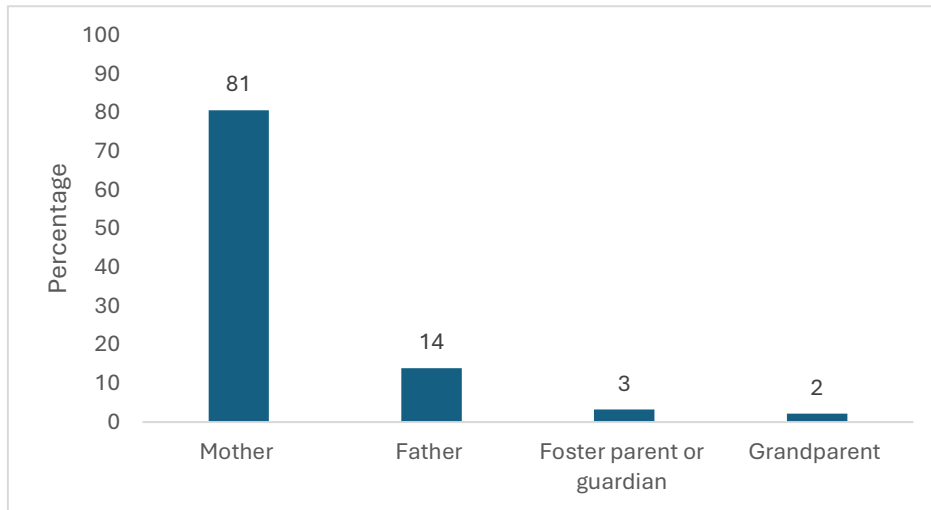
Source. KCI Parent Survey, 2025-2026

Most respondents were mothers (81%) (see Figure 6). The race/ethnicity of respondents was diverse, with the top race/ethnicities represented being Hispanic/Latino (20%), African American/Black (18%),

White (18%), and Pacific Islander (17%) (Figure 7).

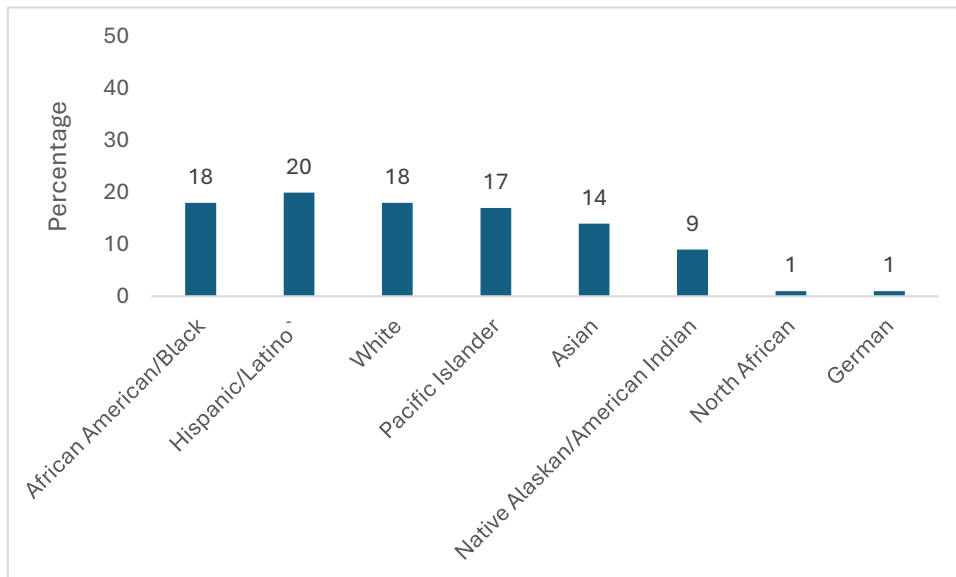
Quantitative data were analyzed in Excel and evaluated using percentages, counts, confidence intervals, estimates, trends, projections

**Figure 6. Respondent role with child, percentage, 2025-2026**



Source. KCI Parent Survey, 2025-2026

**Figure 7. Race/ethnicity of parent survey participants, percentage, 2025-2026**



Source. KCI Parent Survey, 2025-2026

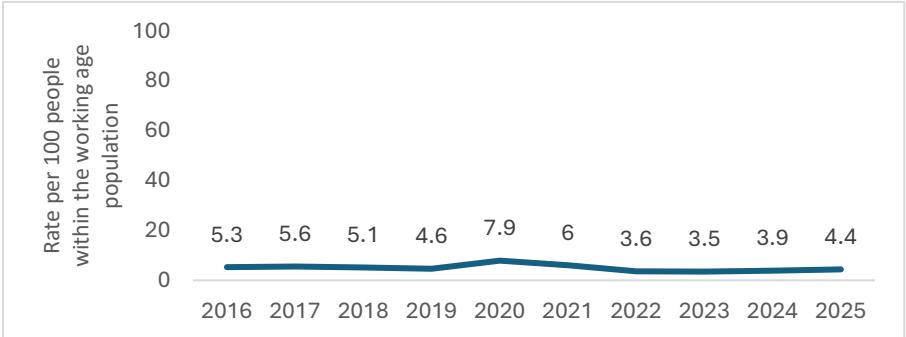
# Focus Group Meetings

There were four group meetings with key stakeholders – the KCI Board, the Policy Council, Community Providers, KCI family support staff, and KCI teachers. Each meeting lasted at least an hour, and a standard guide was used to set the questions asked of each group. For the Community Provider meeting, a cross-sectional group of community stakeholders was invited from a comprehensive list of child and family services providers in Anchorage. Approximately 19 organization representatives were invited to participate; seven did. The following organizations were represented: The Alaska Literacy Project, Help Me Grow, University of Alaska Education Department, Safe Alaskans, King Technical High School Early Childhood Education, **thread**, and Programs for Infants and Children, Inc. Qualitative data were analyzed using DeDoose Software using thematic analysis. Data collected and Findings

# Employment patterns, noting major businesses and industries

The percentage change in jobs in Anchorage from December 2024 to December 2025 was 0.8%. As of December 2025, the overall unemployment rate was 4.4%, up slightly from 4.0% in 2024. Figure 8 shows that over the last five years, the unemployment rate peaked at 7.9% in 2020 and dropped to 4.4% in 2026.

**Figure 8. Non-seasonally adjusted annual unemployment rate for Anchorage, 2016-2025**



Source: AK Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Labor Force Area Data, <https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/data-pages/labor-force-area-data?a=0&s=5>

There is little gender variation in the unemployment rate. Individuals who are below the poverty level have four times the unemployment rate of individuals at or above the poverty level.<sup>7</sup> Individuals who identify as having a disability and those with less than a high school diploma are also more likely to be unemployed (10% and 13%).

According to the KCI parent survey, parents identified these needs for themselves and for their neighbors, extended family, and families in their communities. Thirty-four percent of parents reported having an unmet financial need, and 48% said they knew others with an unmet financial need. Twenty-two percent of parents had an employment need, and 53% knew others who did.

**Table 13. Family unmet financial need for themselves and others**

HS Family needs		Needs of neighbors, extended family, and other families in the community	
Employment	22%	Employment	53%
Family-friendly employers	31%	Family-friendly employers	49%
Financial help	34%	Financial help	48%
Tax preparation assistance	16%	Tax preparation assistance	33%

Source: KCI Parent Survey, 2025-2026

Thirty-one percent of parents had a need related to wanting a family-friendly employer, compared with almost half who saw this need in others.

## Households and housing patterns

There were an estimated 109,479 households in Anchorage in 2024, with an average household size of 2.59 people. Of these households, 23% (24,615 households) were married or cohabitating couple households with children under 18 years. Two percent (2,229) were male-headed households with children, and 4% (4,550) were female-headed households. Thirty percent of households with children under 18 had children only under six years old (9,418 households), and 18.5% (5,808) had children under 6 years and between 6 and 17 years.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 14. Anchorage Household Type, 2024, percentage and count**

Type of Household	Percentage	Count
Married-couple household without children	29	31,451
Married couple households with children under 18 years	20	21,632
Cohabiting couple household	7	7,165
Cohabiting couple household with children (<18 yrs)	3	2,983
Male householder no children	17	18,337
Male householder with children (<18 yrs)	2	2,229
Female householder no children	19	21,132
Female householder with children (<18 yrs)	4	4,550
Total	100	109,479

Source: US Census Bureau, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2024.S1101?q=Anchorage+households+>

The median property value (\$395,900) increased 5.32% from 2023 to 2024. The rate of owner-occupied households was 63.9%, and the rate of renter-occupied households was 36.1%. Almost 17% of residents of Anchorage live with severe housing problems (overcrowding, high costs, lack of kitchen or plumbing facilities).

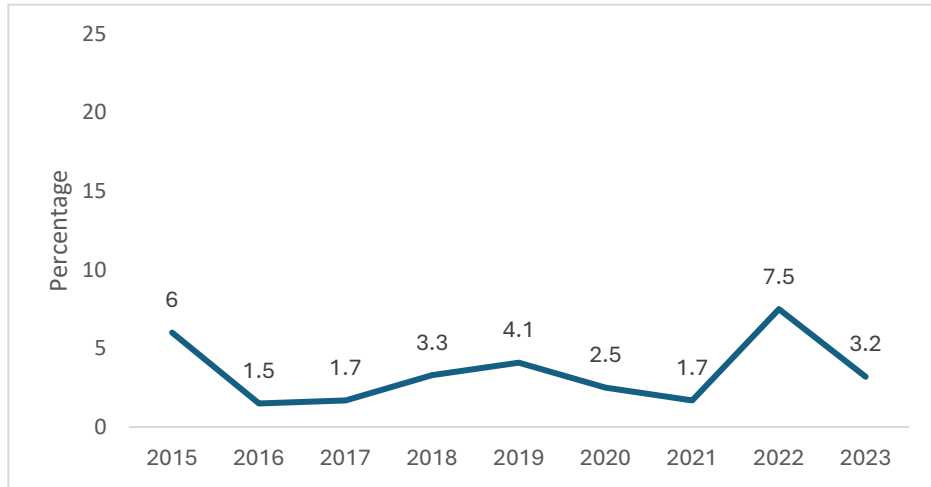
According to the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness, as of June 30, 2025, the homeless population consisted of 2,045 single adults, 270 unaccompanied youth up to the age of 24 years, and 620 people in families. The snapshot showed that 2,727 individuals were homeless. Most of these individuals were

<sup>1</sup> US Census Bureau, S1101, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2024.S1101?q=Anchorage+households+>

American Indian/Alaska Native (53.3%), followed by White (33.7%) and Black, African, or African American people (13.9%).<sup>2</sup>

Homelessness among mothers of three-year-olds shows a trend that fluctuates since 2015, peaking at 7.5 in 2022 and decreasing to 3.2% in 2023 (Figure 9).

**Figure 9. Anchorage mothers of 3-year-olds who were homeless, percentage, 2015-2023**



Source: State of Alaska, CUBS, <https://dph-data-hub-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/apps/8f2ae86ed9824a7084cb6e51e477f9c3>

HS parents and guardians reported their current housing in the parent survey. Eighty-four percent reside in rental housing, 18% have their own home, 11% stay with friends, and 4% are in shelter or temporary housing. In the KCI parent survey, parents identified needs for themselves and for their neighbors, extended family, and families in their communities (see Table 15). Forty-two percent of parents reported having an unmet housing need, and 58% said they knew others who did. Twenty-five percent of parents felt there was a need for greater neighborhood safety, and 55% knew others who felt the same. Table 15 presents illustrative quotes from KCI representatives and local providers on the housing challenges that families have.

**Table 15. Housing, transportation, and food assistance**

HS Family needs		Other needs	
Safe and affordable housing	42%	Safe and affordable housing	58%
Reliable transportation	22%	Reliable transportation	54%
Safe neighborhood	25%	Safe neighborhood	55%
Enough food to eat	24%	Enough food to eat	52%

Source: KCI Parent Survey, 2025-2026

<sup>2</sup> Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness, 2025, <https://www.muni.org/Departments/Assembly/Clerk/Documents/June%20Data%20Snapshot.pdf>.

**Table 16. Quotes on housing challenges from KCI representatives and local providers**

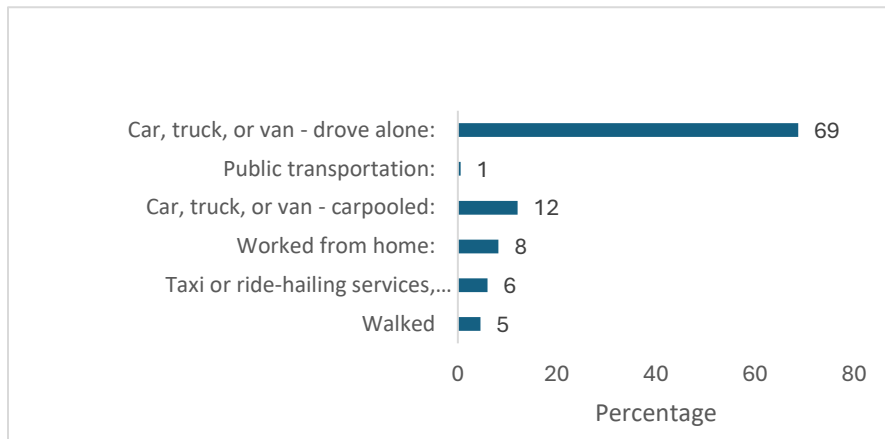
Themes	Quotes
The housing crisis and financial strain	<i>Right now, Anchorage is facing a homelessness crisis that is just continuing and continuing and with that high housing costs, even with food pantries and programs that are available, grocery prices are so high.</i> (Policy Council)
Impact on healthcare and education	<i>It's kind of based on priorities. If it's housing or like a dentist, they're going to choose housing that day.</i> (Teacher)
The transportation link	<i>It becomes difficult to think about how to consistently make sure that they have what they need to transport their child safely. Because they may have their whole life with them already and now, they're having to take this extra thing [a car seat] and they want to, but it's just an extra thing.</i> (Provider)

Source: KCI representative and community provider focus groups, 2025-2026

## Transportation patterns

In 2023-2024, Anchorage households spent 16.2% of their budget on transportation.<sup>3</sup> In 2024, the average commuter travel time was 18.8 minutes, and 1.45% of workers commute more than 90 minutes. Almost 70% drove alone to work, 12% carpooled, and 11% worked at home.<sup>4</sup> Among workers aged 16 years and older living in Anchorage, most reported driving alone to work in a car, truck, or van during the last week (72%). Twelve percent of workers carpooled, 9% reported working from home, and 1% took public transportation. See Figure 10.

**Figure 10. Anchorage adults means of transportation to work, percent, 2024**



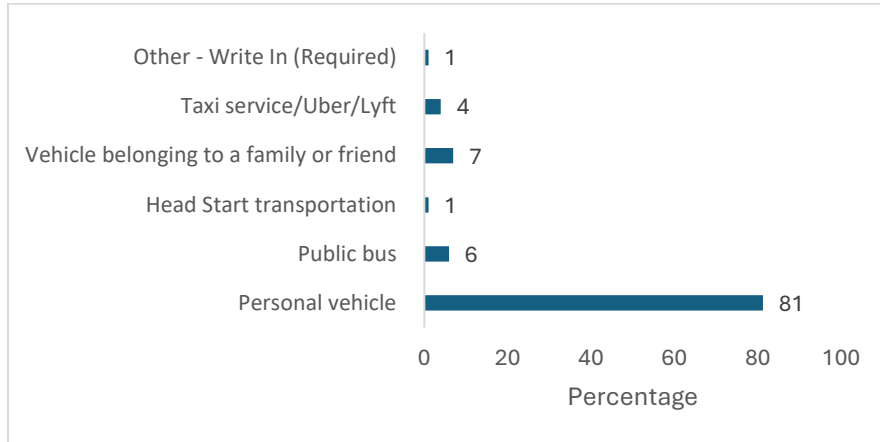
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. Table S0802. <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2024.S0802?q=commute+in+Anchorage+Municipality>. Accessed January 2024.

<sup>3</sup> US Bureau of Labor Statistics, [https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/consumerexpenditures\\_anchorage.htm](https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/consumerexpenditures_anchorage.htm)

<sup>4</sup> Data USA: Anchorage Municipality, AK <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/anchorage-municipality-ak>

The KCI parents and guardians who completed the parent survey reported the following transportation use (see Figure 11). Eight out of ten had a personal vehicle, and the remaining 10% used the bus system, HS transportation, borrowed a vehicle, or a ride service/taxi. The parent survey revealed that 22% of parents needed reliable transportation. The percentage who thought their neighbors and others had this need was 54%. Table 17 presents illustrative quotes.

**Figure 11. Type of KCI parent transportation, percentage, 2025-2026**



Source: KCI Parent Survey, 2025-2026

**Table 17. Quotes on transportation challenges, KCI representative, and local provider**

Themes	Quotes
Barriers to Education and Services	<i>General education preschool students used to be bused, but they are no longer. And that sometimes has to do with funding. When it was only Title 1 money, and those were the kids that we knew we were trying to reach. Busing was in our funding....., where we've been able to add classrooms, increase quantity, but that transportation's not there. I'm hopeful they start collecting data on that impact on families. They can't get their kids to school. (Board)</i>
Intersecting Socioeconomic Challenges	<i>Going back to transportation and the time it would take to get there, you know, if you have a person who works during the day or during those hours that food pantries are open, it's hard to do. (Provider)</i>
Infrastructure and Environmental Hurdles	<i>It does feel very limited in our community, there is the Child in Transition Program but then you only get that for what, like a year timeframe and then I don't know if we really have much other things 'cause the public transportation doesn't really reach all the places. (Family Support)</i>
Impact on Vulnerable Populations	<i>One of the things I put down on my list is families with strollers or young children. It's not like we have fixed route-to-route doors, you know, door-to-door routes for transportation. And so young families without a means of transportation can be really difficult for some families. (Policy Council)</i>

## Public school patterns

### Kindergarten Readiness

There was a slight increase in the percentage of children who met all Kindergarten Readiness goals in Anchorage between 2016-2017 (15.5%) and 2023-2024 (16.9%) (see Table 18).

**Table 18. Children who met all goals for kindergarten readiness, percentage**

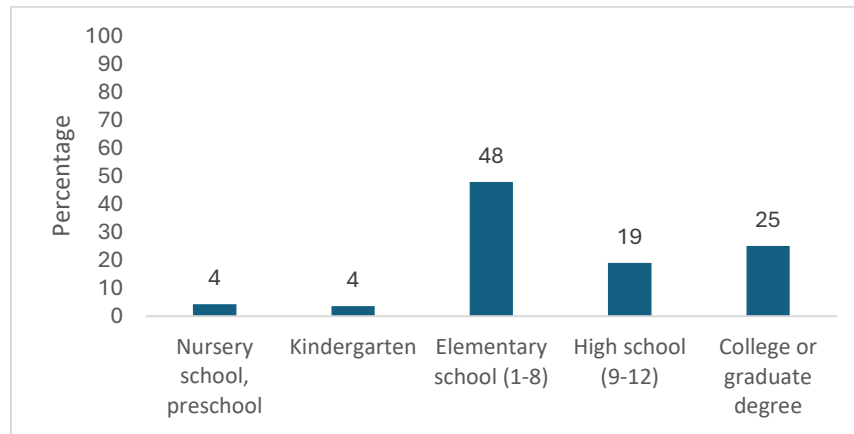
Year	Anchorage	Alaska
2016 - 2017	15.5%	17.9%
2017 - 2018	15.7%	17.5%
2018 - 2019	19.3%	19.1%
2019 - 2020	18.2%	19.8%
2021-2022	16.5%	18.1%
2022-2023	20.2%	19.1%
2023-2024	16.8%	18.4%

Source: Kids Count. <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/9823-kindergarten-readiness#detailed/5/185/true/2631,2529,2457,1986,1742,1655,1613/5986,5987/19121>

### School Enrollment

In 2024, 67,969 Anchorage individuals aged 3 and over were enrolled in school. Of these, 4% were enrolled in preschool or nursery school (2,936 children) (see Figure 12). The Anchorage School District had 43,000 students enrolled during the 2024-2025 school year.<sup>5</sup>

**Figure 12. School enrollment, Anchorage, percentage, 2024**



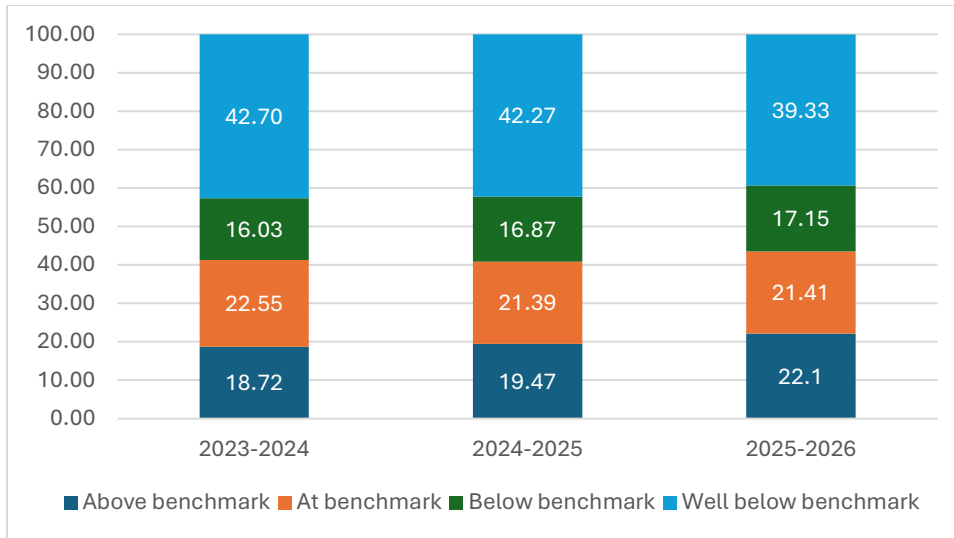
Source: US Census, Table DP02, <https://data.census.gov/table?q=DP02+anchorage>

### Literacy Levels

The percentage of kindergarten students in Anchorage who were above or at the benchmark for early literacy according to the Early Literacy Screener was 41.3% in 2023-2024, 40.9% in 2024-2025, and 43.5% in 2025-2026 (see Figure 13).

**Figure 13. Early Literacy Screener, Anchorage kindergarten students by school year, percentage**

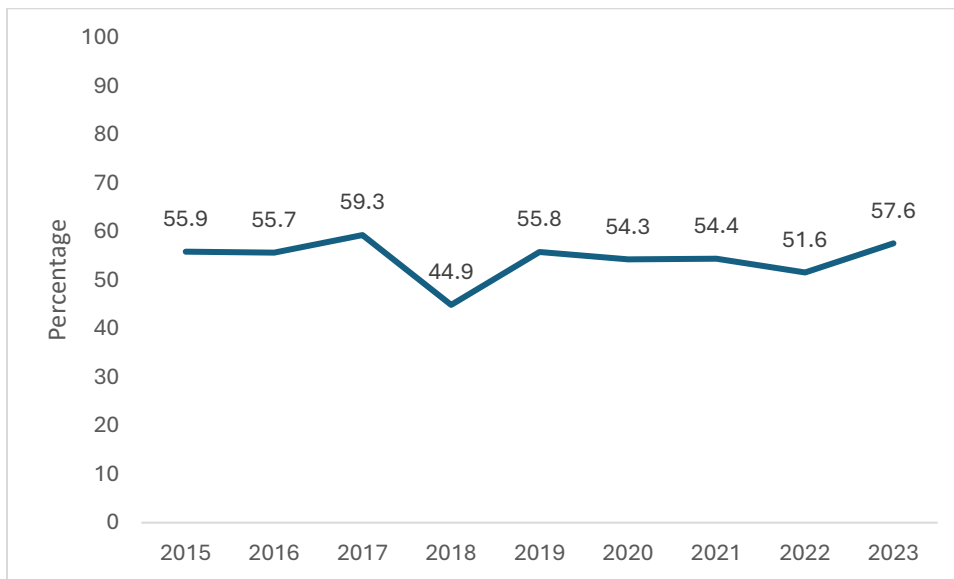
<sup>5</sup> US Census, Table DP02, <https://data.census.gov/table?q=DP02+anchorage>



Source: Anchorage School District Data Dashboard, <https://www.asdk12.org/aboutasd/data#:~:text=Here%20are%20some%20of%20the%20data%20points,2023%2C%20increasing%20to%2090%25%20in%20June%202022>

Before a child is enrolled in school, their first teachers are family members at home. In 2023, 57.6% of Anchorage mothers of three-year-old children reported that someone read aloud to their child for 30 minutes or more the day before (see Figure 14). The percentage has not changed a lot since 2015, when it was 55.9%.

**Figure 14. Anchorage mothers of 3-year-olds who said someone read to child daily in the past week, percentage, 2015-2023**



Source: State of Alaska, CUBS, <https://dph-data-hub-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/apps/8f2ae86ed9824a7084cb6e51e477f9c3>

When surveyed, parents reported unmet needs related to early childhood education (14%) for their own child, as well as for their neighbors and others (52%). Affordable childcare was also an unmet need for parents (33%) and others (51%). Access to care for a disability was an unmet need for 6% of KCI parents, and 51% reported it

as a need for others.

**Table 19. Early childhood education and childcare unmet needs**

HS Family needs		Other needs	
Early childhood education	14	Early childhood education	52
Access to care for a child with a disability	6	Access to care for a child with a disability	31
Affordable childcare	33	Affordable childcare	51

Source: Parent Survey, 2025-2026

Table 20 provides illustrative quotes from KCI representatives and other local providers in the focus groups on childcare and education challenges.

**Table 20. Quotes on childcare and education challenges from KCI representatives and local providers**

Themes	Quotes
Childcare and Staffing Challenges	<i>It's been really challenging for people who have children who have special needs. We are finding there is a program that if you are on childcare assistance, you can qualify to potentially have funding, go to a program to help accommodate special needs. But we find that that is not utilized. It's a cumbersome program. I think there's five to 10 families on it statewide. I think what we're also hearing is there is a lack of quality childcare for what people are wanting. But then we're also hearing that programs have spaces but they don't have staff in order to welcome in more kids. (Provider)</i>
Financial and Assistance Barriers	<i>Some families lose their job, which means they don't have a way to pay their [childcare assistance] copay. I think the options [for them to lose assistance] are endless. You can earn a hundred dollars a month over the limit, which is not that much in the economy we live in, and if they're over a hundred dollars on that contract, then they lose that contract. (Teacher)</i>
Impact on Families and Children	<i>I think about the school changes, the times for the Anchorage School District and how the times changed and how there's more latchkey kids going home to nobody because their older siblings are still in school. (KCI Board)</i>
Community Program Reductions	<i>It used to be there was an after-school program. We had activities. They learned a lot of stuff. Not just like [how to do] homework, but they have basketball, volleyball, something else. You know, this year none, there is nothing. Mostly the schools, they stop after-school programs. There is no funding. (Policy Council)</i>

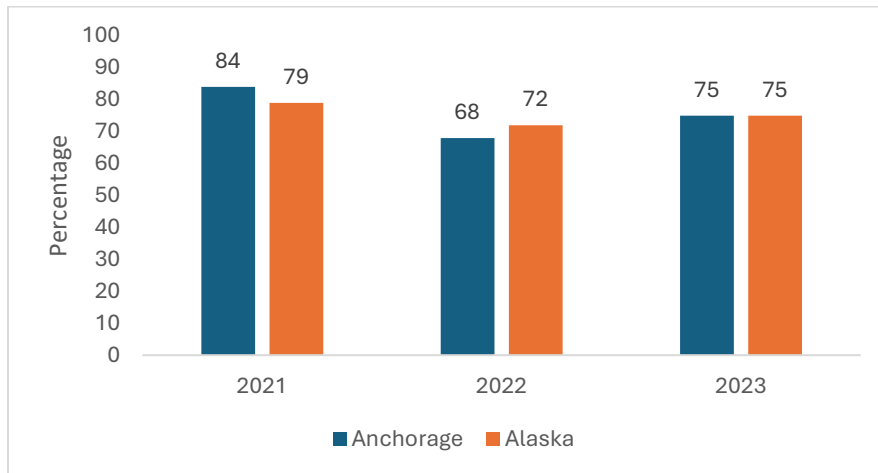
## Medical and environmental issues

PRAMS is a statewide telephone survey of women who have recently given birth. This survey found that:

- 95.8% of mothers reported receiving prenatal care for their most recent pregnancy (2022), with 87.8% starting in the first trimester.
- 34% of mothers reported having Medicaid coverage during pregnancy (2023).
- 1.4% of mothers reported not having medical insurance during pregnancy (2023).

As a follow-up to the PRAMS survey, the State surveys mothers of 3-year-olds to track health, development, and family environment. In 2023, 75% of mothers of three-year-olds in Anchorage reported taking their child to see a dentist. This percentage was down from 84% in 2021 (see Figure 15).

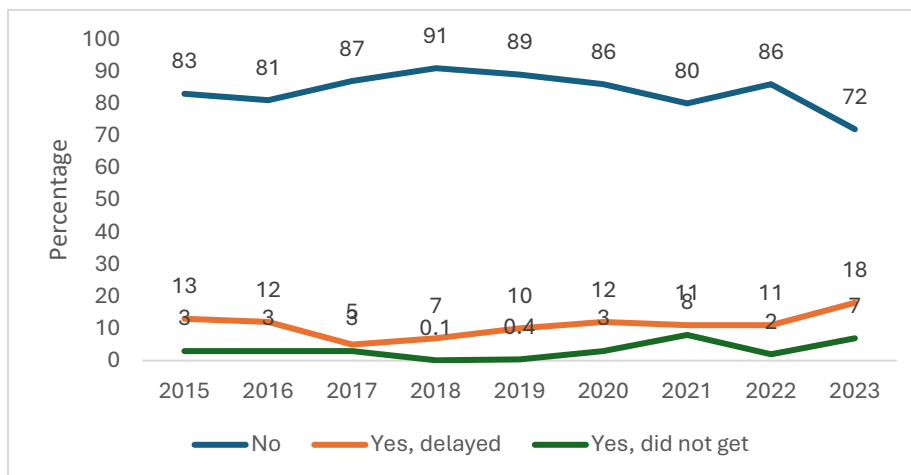
**Figure 15. Mothers of 3-year-old children who report taking their children to the dentist**



Source: State of Alaska, CUBS, <https://dph-data-hub-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/apps/8f2ae86ed9824a7084cb6e51e477f9c3>

In 2023, 72% of mothers of three-year-olds reported that they never delayed in getting their child vaccinated, down from 86% in 2022 (see Figure 16).

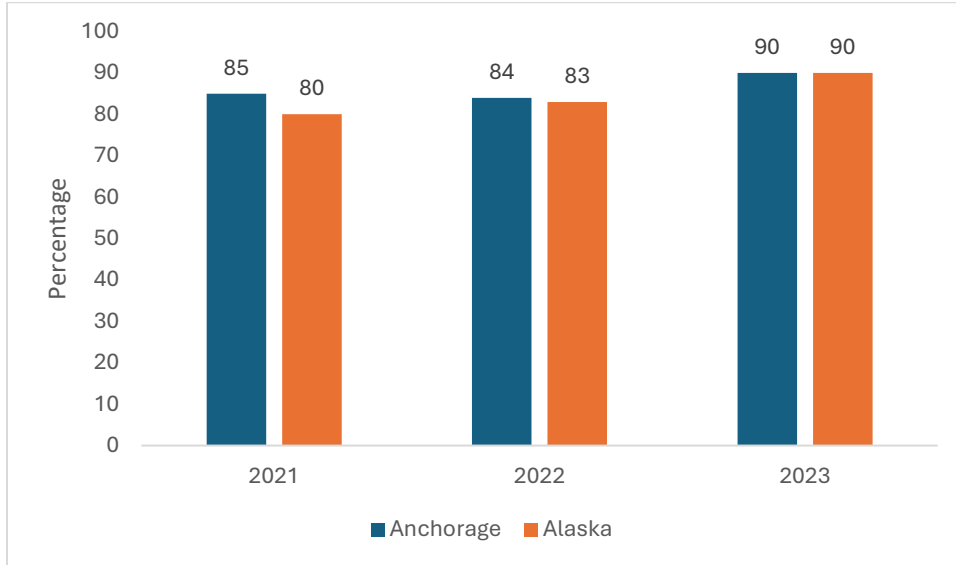
**Figure 16. Ever delayed or did not get their child vaccinated, among mothers of 3-year-olds, percentage, Anchorage**



Source: State of Alaska, CUBS, <https://dph-data-hub-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/apps/8f2ae86ed9824a7084cb6e51e477f9c3>

In 2023, 90% of mothers of three-year-olds from Anchorage reported that their child had a well-baby check-up in the last year, up from 85% in 2021 (see Figure 17).

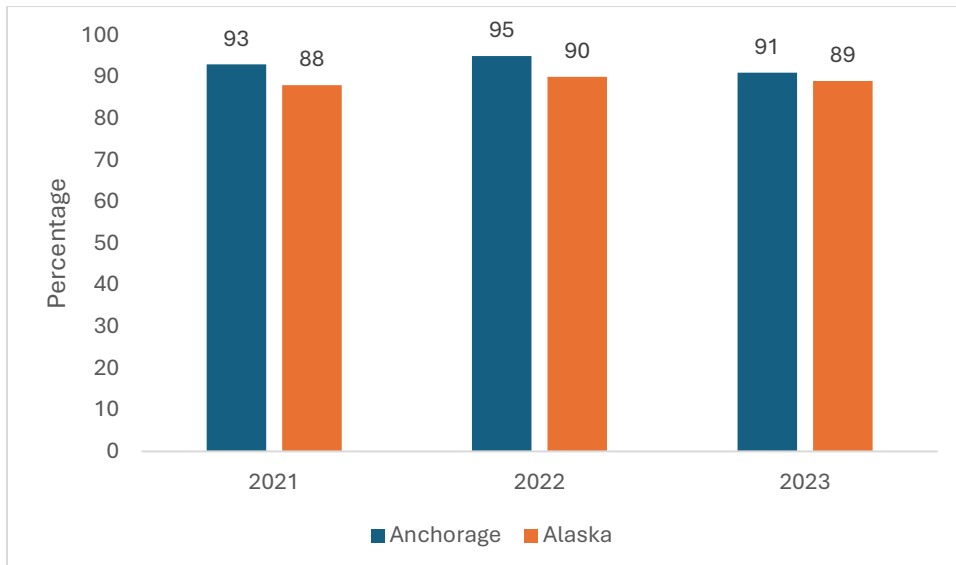
**Figure 17. Well-child check-up in previous 12 months among mothers of 3-year-olds**



Source: State of Alaska, CUBS, <https://dph-data-hub-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/apps/8f2ae86ed9824a7084cb6e51e477f9c3>

In 2023, 91% of Anchorage mothers of three-year-olds reported that their child has a provider who knows the child and is familiar with their history (see Figure 18).

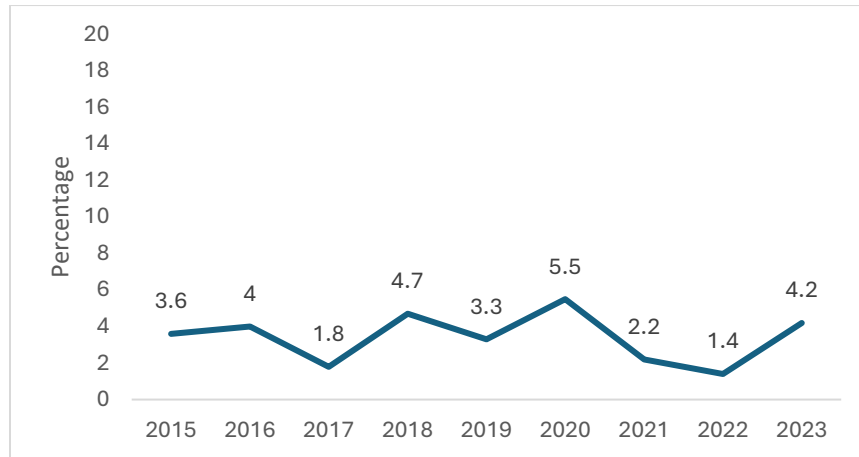
**Figure 18. Mothers of 3-year-olds report having a provider who knows the child and is familiar with child's health history, Anchorage and Alaska, percentage, 2021-2023**



Source: State of Alaska, CUBS, <https://dph-data-hub-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/apps/8f2ae86ed9824a7084cb6e51e477f9c3>

Adverse childhood experiences can start at any age. In 2023, 4% of Anchorage mothers of three-year-olds reported their child had witnessed violence or physical abuse. The trend for this data point fluctuated from a high of 5.5% in 2020 to a low of 1.4% in 2022 (see Figure 19).

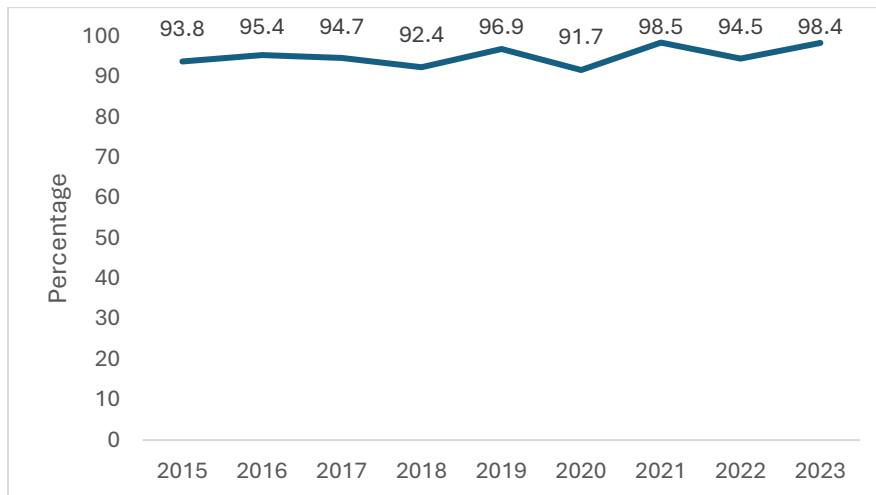
**Figure 19. Anchorage mothers reporting their 3-year-old witnessed violence or physical abuse, percentage, 2015-2023**



Source: State of Alaska, CUBS, <https://dph-data-hub-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/apps/8f2ae86ed9824a7084cb6e51e477f9c3>

In 2023, 98.4% of Anchorage mothers of three-year-olds reported that their child had a relationship with a caring adult other than parents. This percentage peaked in 2023 and 2021.

**Figure 20. Anchorage mothers of 3-year-olds whose child has a relationship with caring adult other than parents, percentage, 2015-2023**



Source: State of Alaska, CUBS, <https://dph-data-hub-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/apps/8f2ae86ed9824a7084cb6e51e477f9c3>

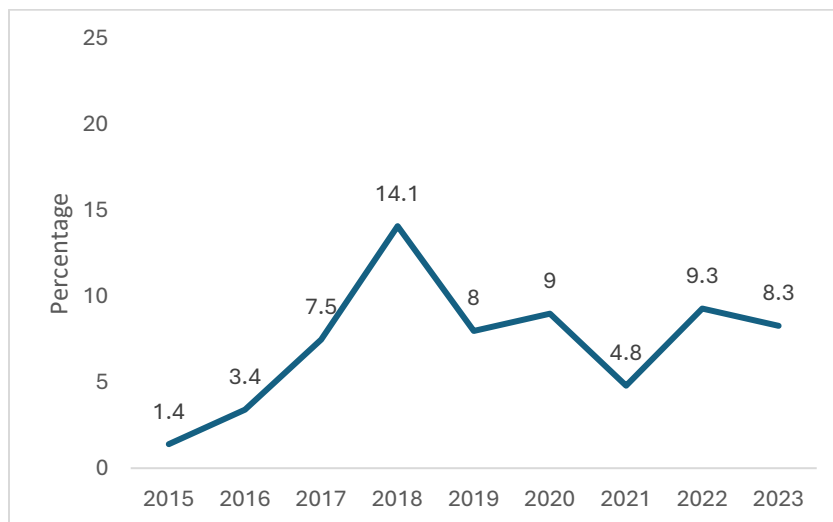
### Mother's health

A child's mental health, especially at a young age, is very closely linked with their environment. If their mother is struggling with stress, mental health, or substance abuse issues, it can affect the child. The CUBS survey revealed the following.

- A small percentage of Anchorage mothers of three-year-olds (.1%) reported physical abuse by a partner in 2013.
- 1.4% reported having a controlling partner (emotional abuse).
- 15% reported having someone close to them with drinking or drug problems.
- 13.9% had someone close to them who had a mental illness.
- 12.4% reported a recent change in marital status.
- 13.7% wanted treatment for behavioral health
- 1.1% wanted treatment for substance use or misuse.

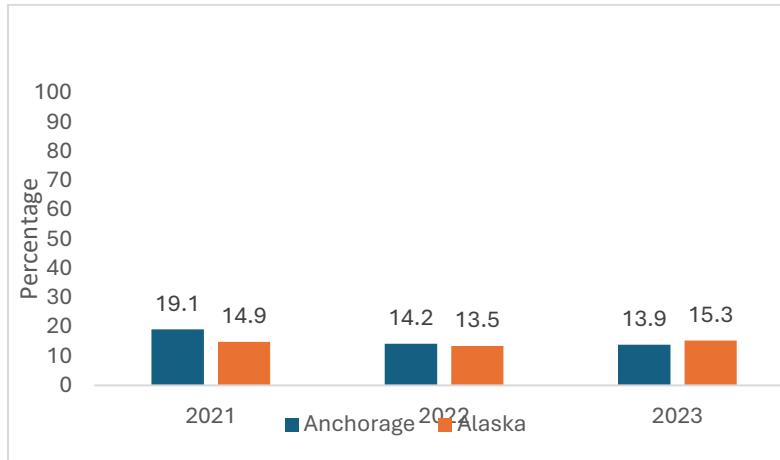
In 2023, 8.3% of Anchorage mothers of three-year-olds reported feeling down, depressed, or hopeless, often or always (Figure 21). Approximately 13.9% reported maternal depression (see Figure 22).

**Figure 21. Anchorage mothers of 3-year-olds who felt down, depressed, hopeless often or always, percentage, 2015-2024**



Source: State of Alaska, CUBS, <https://dph-data-hub-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/apps/8f2ae86ed9824a7084cb6e51e477f9c3>

**Figure 22. Anchorage, Alaska mothers of three-year-olds with maternal depression symptoms, percentage, 2021-2023**



Source: State of Alaska, CUBS, <https://dph-data-hub-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/apps/8f2ae86ed9824a7084cb6e51e477f9c3>

Social connection can help mothers in terms of their mental health, as well as help to meet their needs and their child’s needs. In 2023, the following data points on social support pertain to Anchorage mothers of three-year-olds.

- 90.2% report they have someone to take them to the clinic if they need help.
- 85.1% report they have someone who will loan them money if they need it.
- 76.7% report having someone to help when they are sick.

The Parent Survey revealed that access to medical and dental care was a need for 1 out of 3 parents surveyed, and access to mental health care (17%) and substance use treatment (8%) was less needed. However, parents saw the needs of the neighbors, extended families, and families in their community as more serious, with almost half needing access to medical care, mental health care, and dental care. Parents also reported that this group needed help for substance use problems and prevention of child abuse (40% each) (see Table 21).

**Table 21. Physical, mental, and dental health**

HS Family needs		Other needs	
Access to medical care	33%	Access to medical care	46%
Access to mental health care	17%	Access to mental health care	49%
Access to dental care	33%	Access to dental care	47%
Help for a drug or alcohol problem	8%	Help for a drug or alcohol problem	40%
Prevention of child abuse	7%	Prevention of child abuse	40%

Source. KCI Parent Survey, 2025-2026

KCI representatives and local providers shared the following illustrative quotes about healthcare challenges facing KCI families.

**Table 22. Quotes on healthcare challenges from KCI representatives and local providers**

Themes	Quotes
Socioeconomic and Systemic Barriers	<i>I think that's similar to both of our families, more so hers than mine, but depending on where the children or the parents were born, if they don't have some kind of legal immigration status, they don't qualify for services. A lot of them work under the table and there's no way that they can afford healthcare, well, they're not even eligible or able to go somewhere, even on a sliding fee scale. (Teacher)</i>
Physical Health and Preventative Care	<i>The other thing that I see quite a bit is children who have not seen a primary care provider or getting regular health checkups or well-child checks and then they come to school not being identified, which creates a whole different set of issues. (Board)</i>
Behavioral and Mental Health Challenges	<i>The lowering of age of the child who are needing behavioral health and mental health services- so, where adolescence used to look like, 11, 12, we're seeing that trend shift lower and lower where eight is where we're starting the adolescent behavioral health services now. (Provider)</i>

Source: KCI representative and community provider focus groups, 2025-2026

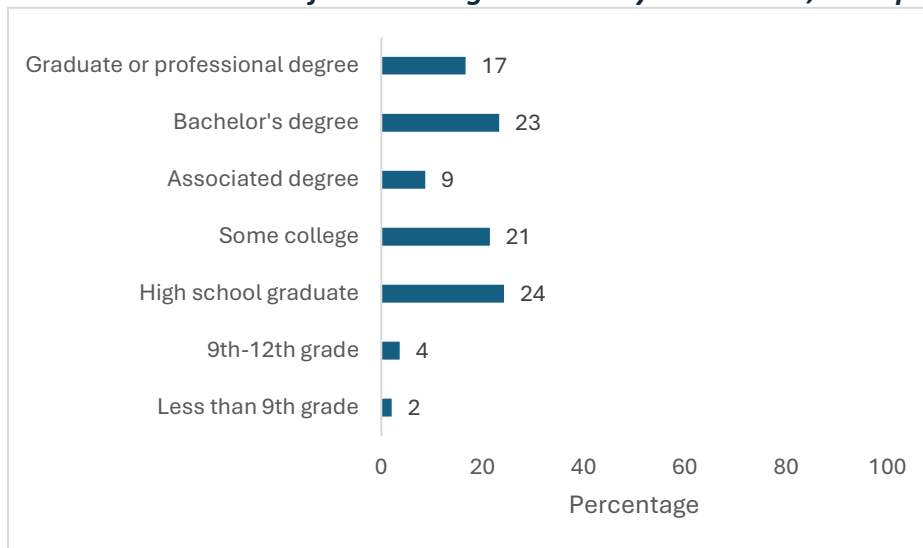
## Social and economic status of the Anchorage population

2024 demographic facts about Anchorage include the following:

- Twenty-three percent of Anchorage residents were under 18 years old.
- Fifty percent of the Anchorage population was female.<sup>6</sup>
- Two percent of adults were not proficient in English.
- Twenty-six percent had disability with functional limitations.<sup>7</sup>
- The percentage of high school graduates aged 25 years during 2020-2024 was 89.6%, and those with bachelor's degrees was 35.7%
- The foreign-born population in Anchorage in 2024 accounted for 10.9% (31,400) of the total population.<sup>8</sup>

Educational attainment refers to the highest level of education an individual has completed, distinct from the level of school they may be attending. In 2024, 23% of the Anchorage population aged 25 and older had earned a bachelor's degree or higher. Twenty-four percent of residents attained a high school diploma as their highest degree. Seventeen percent of Anchorage residents have attained a graduate or professional degree, and 6% did not have a high school diploma or equivalent.<sup>9</sup>

**Figure 23. Educational attainment for Anchorage adults 25 years or over, 2024 percentage**



Source: US Census, American Community Survey, <https://data.census.gov/table?q=S0101:+Age+and+Sex&g=050XX00US0>

The percentage of children under five years old in Anchorage was 6% in 2024. Adults in the typical childbearing age group (15-45 years) accounted for 45% of the population (see Table 23).

**Table 23. Anchorage population by age group, percentage, 2024**

Age group	Count	Percentage
Under 5 years	17572	6
5 to 9 years	19461	7
10 to 14 years	19515	7
15 to 19 years	16340	6
20 to 24 years	22097	8
25 to 29 years	21674	7
30 to 34 years	25727	9
35 to 39 years	23252	8
40 to 44 years	20184	7
45 to 49 years	17656	6
50 to 54 years	14698	5
55 to 59 years	13426	5
60 to 64 years	18840	7
65 to 69 years	13092	5
70 to 74 years	10936	4
75 to 79 years	7678	3
80 to 84 years	3943	1
85 years and over	3509	1

Source: US Census, American Community Survey, <https://data.census.gov/table?q=S0101:+Age+and+Sex&g=050XX00US0>

## Jobs and wages

According to the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) 2025 employment report, the top three employment sectors in Anchorage were healthcare and social services, retail trade, and public administration. Job numbers grew modestly, adding 3,100 more jobs in April 2025 as compared to April 2024. The gains were seen in private employment (2,900 jobs) and government employment (200). The three fastest-growing sectors were transportation, warehousing, and utilities (9.3%), construction (5.2%), and health care (4.1%).<sup>10</sup>

The average weekly wage in Anchorage in 2025 was \$1,502 for a workforce of 146,900, up from 4.7%

<sup>6</sup> US Census, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/SEX255224>.

<sup>7</sup>County Health Rankings. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/alaska/anchorage?year=2025>

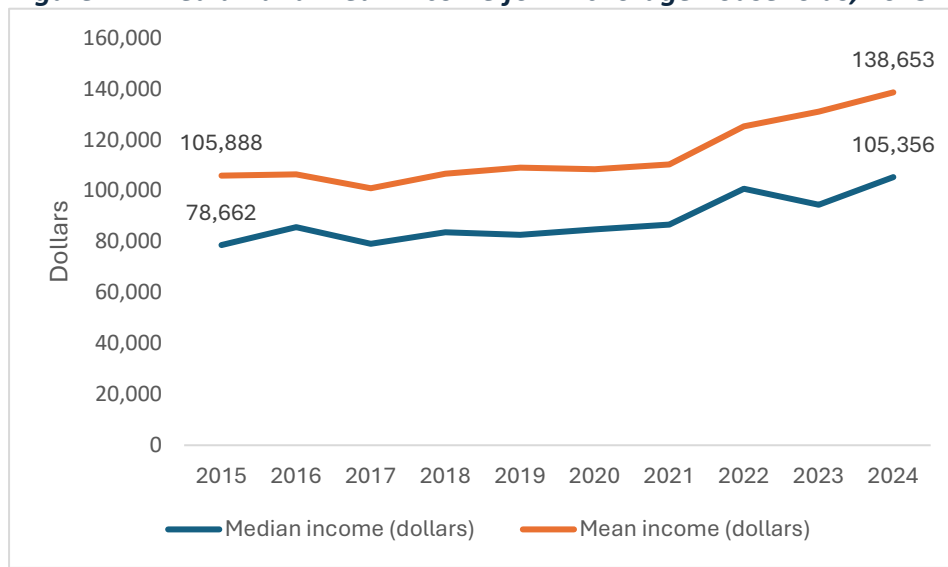
<sup>8</sup> Data USA: Anchorage Municipality, AK, <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/anchorage-municipality-ak>

<sup>9</sup> Source: US Census. Table DP02 <https://data.census.gov/table?q=DP02+anchorage>

<sup>10</sup> Anchorage Economic Development Corporation, April Employment Report 2025, <https://aedcweb.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/April-2025-Employment-Report.pdf>

the previous year. The state minimum wage was \$13 per hour in 2025.<sup>11</sup> According to the AEDC, the average hourly wage has just barely kept up with inflation, rising from \$28.22 in 2020 to \$35.25 in 2025 (24.9%), while the cost of living increased by 23.1%.<sup>12</sup> Figure 24 shows the change in the mean and median income for Anchorage households from 2015 to 2024. The mean, or average, can be influenced by high earners. The median is the exact middle point where half the earners make more and half make less, and it is closer to the typical income of most earners. Both data points have increased since 2015.

**Figure 24. Median and mean income for Anchorage households, 2015-2024**



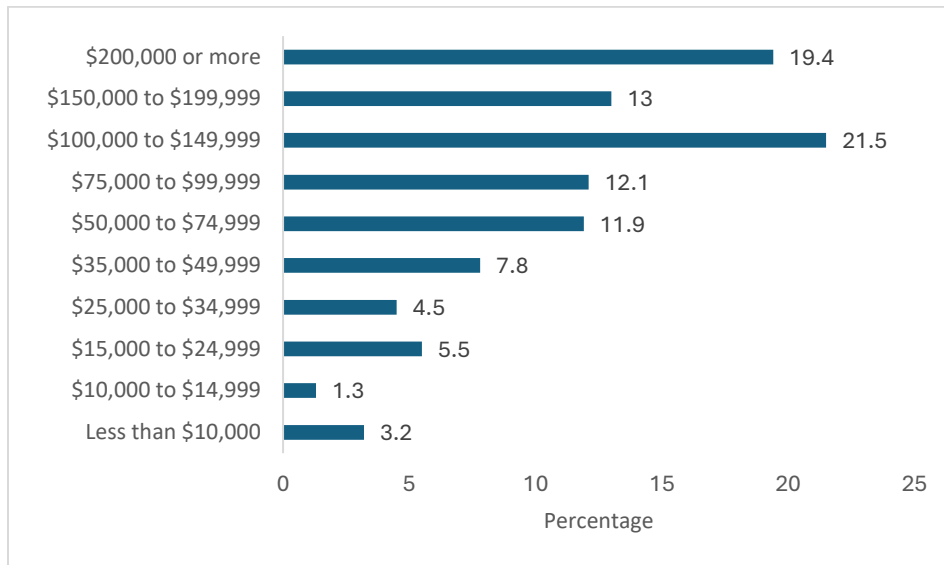
Source: AK Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Labor Force Area Data, <https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/data-pages/labor-force-area-data?a=0&s=5>

In 2024, over half of households in Anchorage (54%) earned over \$100,000, and 17% of households in the Anchorage Borough earned less than \$50,000.

<sup>11</sup> Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/SMU02112600500000003>

<sup>12</sup> AEDC, <https://aedcweb.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/January-2025-Employment-Report-1.pdf>

**Figure 25. Household income in past year, percentage, Anchorage 2024**

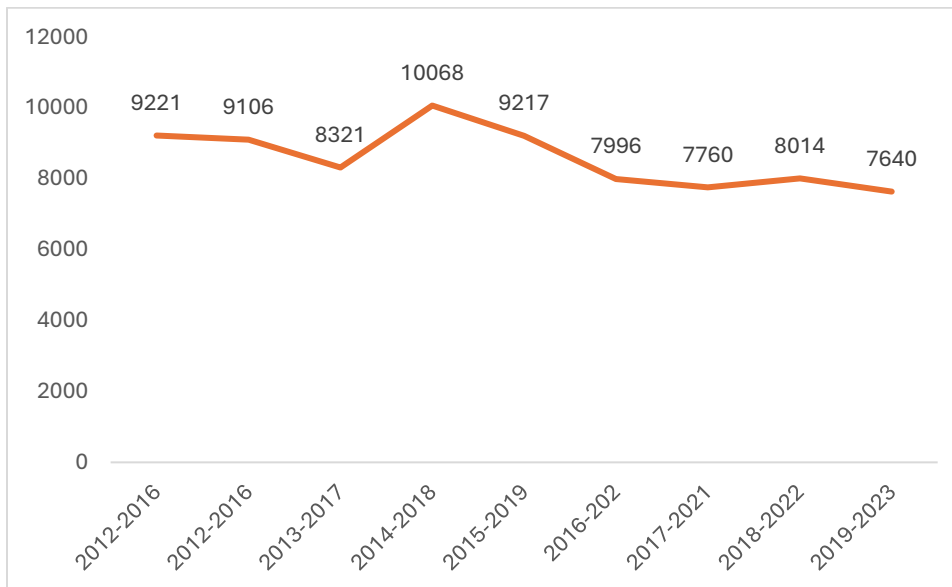


Source: AK Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Labor Force Area Data, <https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/data-pages/labor-force-area-data?a=0&s=5>

## Poverty

In 2024, 2,563 children under five lived below the poverty line in Anchorage.<sup>13</sup> The number of children under 18 years of age who live below the poverty level fluctuated but decreased from 9,221 households in 2015 to 7,640 households in 2024.

**Figure 26. Number of households with children under 6 years with incomes below the federal poverty level, Anchorage 2015-2024**



Source: <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/11576-children-living-in-poverty#detailed/5/185-191/false/2606,2543,2454,2026,1983,1692,1691,1607,1572,1485/any/22800,22801>

<sup>13</sup> State of Alaska <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2024.B17001?q=B17001&g=050XX00US02020>

Another measure of poverty is the percentage of children who qualify for the federal free or reduced school lunch program. Students in households with incomes below 130% of the poverty level qualify for free school lunch, while those between 130% and 185% qualify for reduced-price lunch. During the year 2024-2025 program, 47.3% of students enrolled in the Anchorage Borough School District qualified for free or reduced lunch (see Table 24).<sup>14</sup> KCI students come from 35 of the 46 elementary school zones in Anchorage. Sixty-seven percent of the zones from which the students come have over 50% of students eligible for free/reduced lunch, representing 80% of all KCI students.

**Table 24. Percentage of Anchorage elementary school students enrolled in free/reduced lunch, and the number of current KCI students from that area**

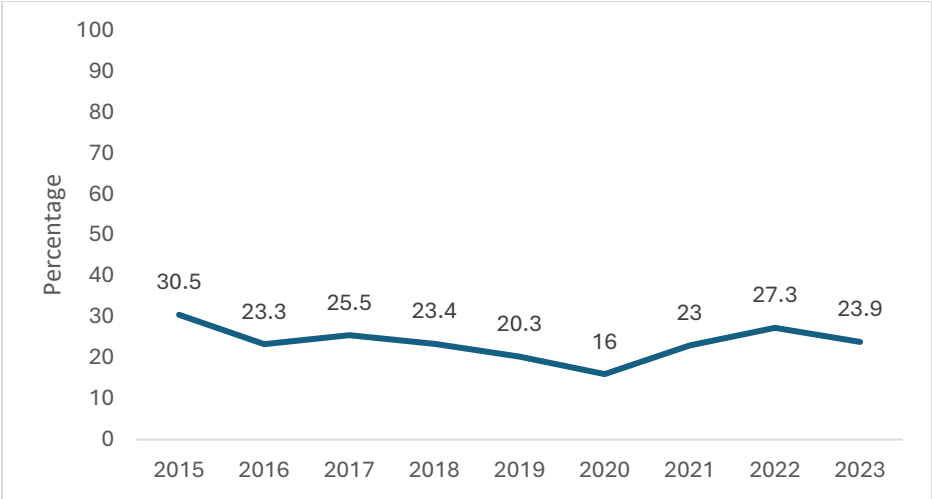
School (Count of HS students, zoned for school)	% enrolled in free/reduced lunch	School	% enrolled in free/reduced lunch
Airport Heights Elementary <b>(10)</b>	100.00%	<b>Mountain View Elementary (14)</b>	100.00%
Alpenglow Elementary	17.14%	<b>Muldoon Elementary (14)</b>	100.00%
Aurora Elementary <b>(1)</b>	22.93%	<b>North Star Elementary (7)</b>	100.00%
Baxter Elementary <b>(10)</b>	65.92%	Northwood ABC <b>(7)</b>	67.73%
Bayshore Elementary <b>(7)</b>	16.13%	Nunaka Valley Elementary	59.49%
Bear Valley Elementary	8.52%	O'Malley Elementary	10.92%
Bowman Elementary	28.44%	Ocean View Elementary <b>(4)</b>	44.14%
Chester Valley Elementary <b>(3)</b>	83.03%	Orion Elementary School <b>(3)</b>	31.59%
Chinook Elementary <b>(5)</b>	71.74%	Ptarmigan Elementary <b>(11)</b>	76.77%
Chugiak Elementary	17.30%	Rabbit Creek Elementary	20.55%
College Gate Elementary <b>(4)</b>	61.68%	Rogers Park Elementary <b>(3)</b>	34.90%
Creekside Park Elementary <b>(8)</b>	80.60%	Russian Jack Elementary <b>(12)</b>	89.76%
Dr. Etheldra Davis - Fairview Elementary School <b>(15)</b>	100.00%	Sand Lake Elementary	31.65%
Gladys Wood Elementary <b>(3)</b>	69.57%	Scenic Park Elementary <b>(8)</b>	38.46%
Government Hill Elementary <b>(1)</b>	36.51%	Spring Hill Elementary <b>(5)</b>	79.76%
Homestead Elementary	13.51%	Susitna Elementary <b>(5)</b>	65.11%
Huffman Elementary	17.04%	Taku Elementary <b>(4)</b>	71.92%
Inlet View Elementary <b>(2)</b>	26.56%	Trailside Elementary <b>(5)</b>	22.85%
Kasuun Elementary <b>(1)</b>	49.10%	Tudor Elementary <b>(7)</b>	46.25%
Kincaid Elementary	26.07%	Turnagain Elementary <b>(1)</b>	35.97%
Klatt Elementary <b>(1)</b>	59.39%	William Tyson Elementary <b>(7)</b>	100%
Lake Hood Elementary <b>(3)</b>	51.85%	Williwaw Elementary <b>(11)</b>	95.63%
Lake Otis Elementary <b>(2)</b>	77.34%	Willow Crest Elementary <b>(6)</b>	99.89%
		<b>Wonder Park Elementary (13)</b>	96.58%

Source: Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. Child Nutrition Program. <https://education.alaska.gov/cnp/reports/fr-eat>

<sup>14</sup> State of Alaska, School Districts Free and Reduced Lunch, [https://gis.data.alaska.gov/datasets/c439b3516a55454cb35acd85cdb5c123\\_1/explore?location=57.556817%2C-148.071869%2C4](https://gis.data.alaska.gov/datasets/c439b3516a55454cb35acd85cdb5c123_1/explore?location=57.556817%2C-148.071869%2C4)

In 2023, 23.6% of Anchorage mothers of three-year-olds reported that they couldn't pay all their bills. This percentage decreased from a high of 30.5% in 2015.

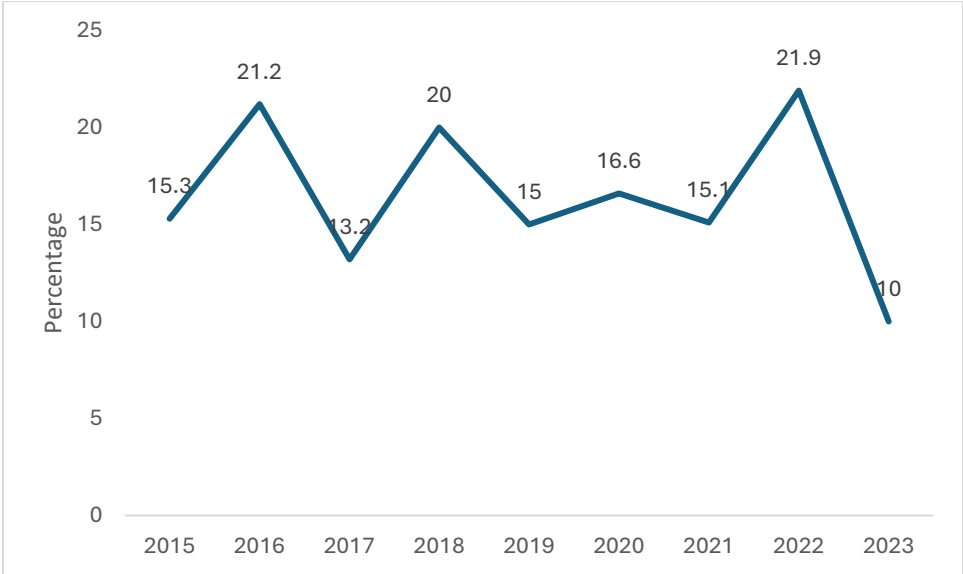
**Figure 27. Percentage of Anchorage mothers of 3-year-olds who couldn't pay bills, 2015-2023**



Source: State of Alaska, CUBS, <https://dph-data-hub-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/apps/8f2ae86ed9824a7084cb6e51e477f9c3>

In 2023, 10% of mothers of 3-year-olds lost a job or had a partner or husband who lost a job. This percentage fluctuated quite a bit since 2015 and decreased significantly from 21.9% in 2022.

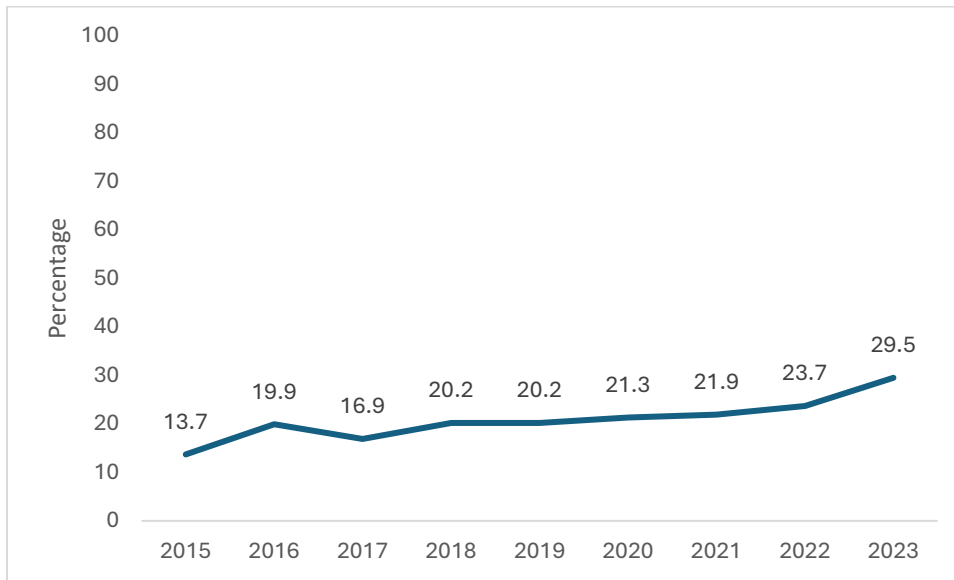
**Figure 28. Anchorage mothers of 3-year-olds who lost a job or whose partner or husband lost their job, percentage, 2015-2023**



Source: State of Alaska, CUBS, <https://dph-data-hub-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/apps/8f2ae86ed9824a7084cb6e51e477f9c3>

The percentage of mothers of 3-year-olds in Anchorage who report using WIC in the last 3 months rose from 13.7% in 2015 to 29.5% in 2023.

**Figure 29. Anchorage mothers of 3-year-olds who used WIC in last 3 months, percentage, 2015-2023**

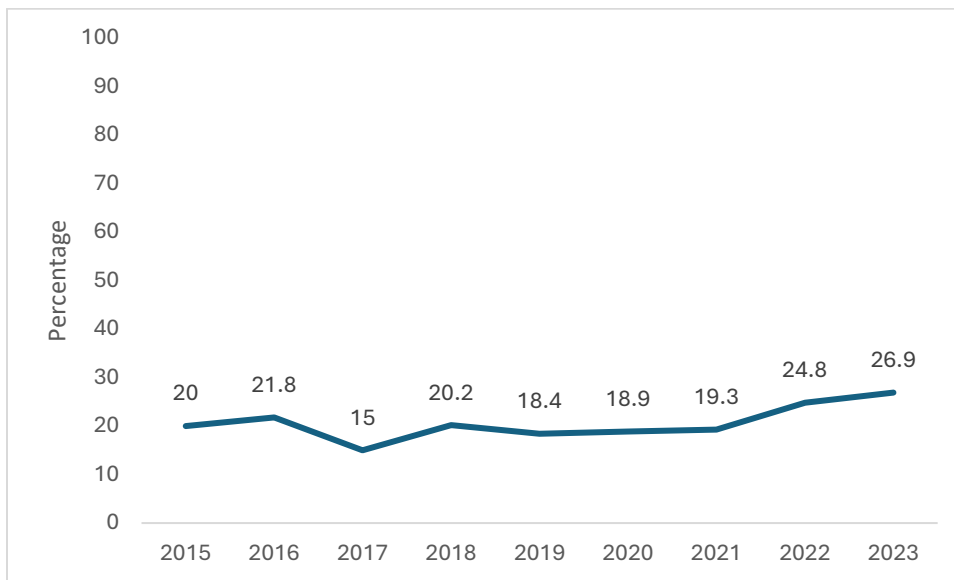


Source: State of Alaska, CUBS, <https://dph-data-hub-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/apps/8f2ae86ed9824a7084cb6e51e477f9c3>

In 2023, 26.9% of mothers of 3-year-olds used food stamps in the last 3 months. This trend increased from 20%

**Figure 30. Anchorage mothers of 3-year-olds who used food stamps in last 3 months, percentage, 2015-2023**

in 2015.



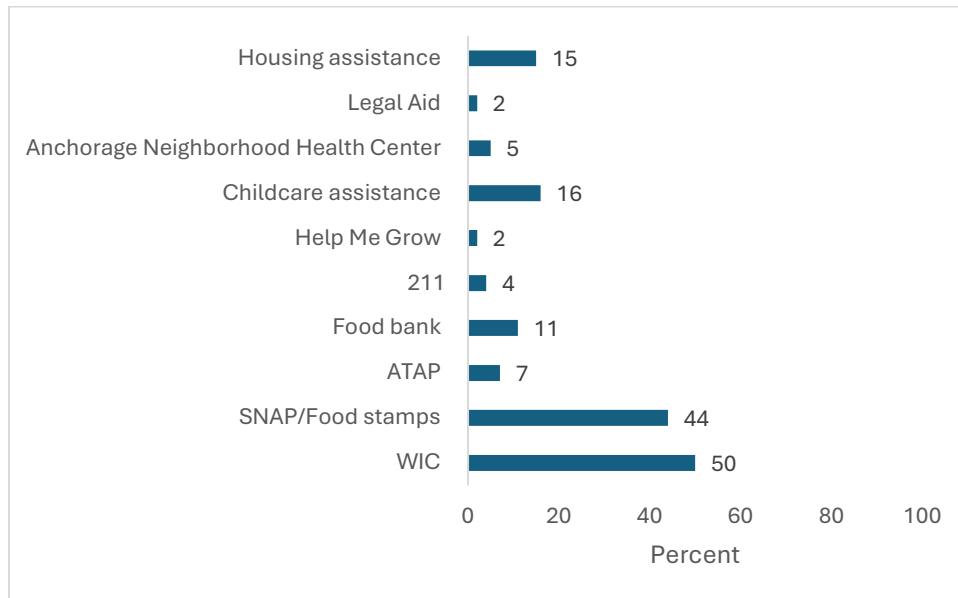
Source: State of Alaska, CUBS, <https://dph-data-hub-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/apps/8f2ae86ed9824a7084cb6e51e477f9c3>

The parents who KCI surveyed reported using several types of assistance. The most common forms of assistance

were WIC (50%), SNAP/Food stamps (44%), childcare assistance (16%), and housing assistance (15%) (see Figure 31). Table 25 has illustrative quotes from KCI representatives and local providers on the food security challenges facing KCI families.

In October 2024, 1,063 women, 2,461 children, and 1,092 infants participated in the two Anchorage WIC programs at the Anchorage Health Department and South Center Foundation.<sup>15</sup>

**Figure 31. Types of assistance that parents/guardians report receiving, percentage, 2025-2026**



Source: Parent Survey, 2025-2026

<sup>15</sup> 2026 data request from the State of Alaska Department of Public Assistance, WIC.

**Table 25. Quotes on food challenges from KCI representatives and local providers**

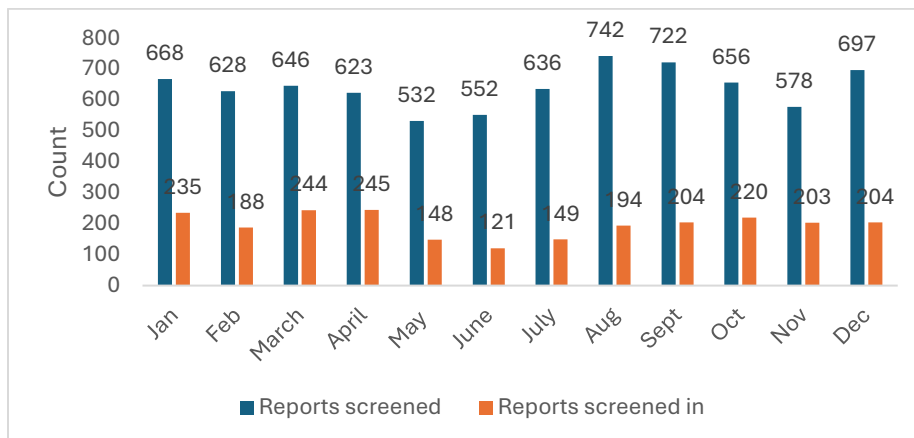
Themes	Quotes
Stringent Eligibility and Benefit Challenges	<i>Snap. It's hard to recertify. Especially for home visiting, where my staff have actually went up to translate for families or go through the process with them. We've helped where they contest the denial or things such as that because of a delay in the paperwork that was received (even though we had email documentation or text or things like that to verify that the steps were completed that needed to be done). (Family Support)</i>
Administrative and Navigational Barriers to obtaining benefits:	<i>One of the challenges that we're dealing with now is a backlog in Division of Public Administration. Many of you are probably familiar with that, and it's been an ongoing issue, it feels like forever now. Families do not have food stamps or SNAP, or maybe they make a hundred dollars over the income cutoff, but they still can't afford food. (Provider)</i>
Physical and Cultural Accessibility	<i>We serve a pretty multicultural group of individuals. And so sometimes maybe food is there, but it's not the food that is familiar to them. And so that's also been a big challenge. And I know people say, 'oh, well it's food, right'? That's like, no &lt;laugh&gt;, you know, it's deeper than that. (Provider)</i>
Economic Pressures and "Basic Needs" Competition	<i>I feel like if more things were taken into account, like when they say how much do you make? Right? And you put the annual amount that you make, but they don't take into consideration how much you're paying for rent, which has skyrocketed. And if you can't qualify for grocery or food stamps and Medicaid, then there's no insurance and these kids are not getting physicals or dental exams. (Teachers)</i>

Source: KCI representative and community provider focus groups, 2025-2026

## Foster care and OCS Involvement – child maltreatment

According to the Alaska Office of Children’s Services (OCS), in 2025, a total of 7,680 protective services reports were screened in Anchorage. Of those reports, 2,355 were “screened in” for investigation. Figure 32 shows the distribution of these reports throughout the year.

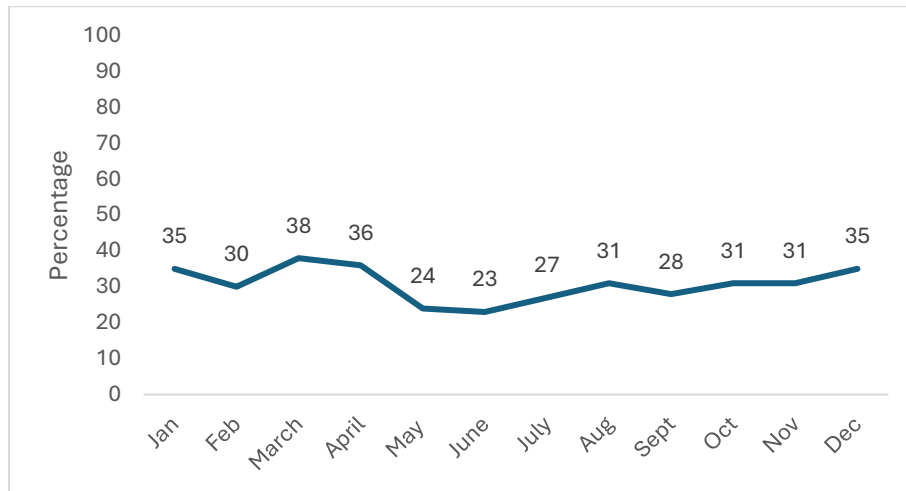
**Figure 32. Protective service reports for Anchorage, screened and screened in , 2025, count**



Source: Alaska OCS, <https://dfcs.alaska.gov/ocs/Pages/statistics/default.aspx>

Figure 33 shows the percentage of reports screened in for investigation each month relative to the reports submitted. The monthly percentage ranged from a low of 24% to a high of 38% (see Figure 33).

**Figure 33. Percentage of submitted Anchorage reports that were screened in, 2025**



Source: Alaska OCS, <https://dfcs.alaska.gov/ocs/Pages/statistics/default.aspx>

In January of 2026, in Anchorage, 950 children were in out-of-home placement (foster care); 42 children had been removed from the home that month, and 19 were discharged from OCS care.<sup>16</sup> That month, 697 reports were screened, and 230 were screened in. In Anchorage that month, 81 initial assessments were completed, and 22 substantiated cases were identified.

## Language and cultural base, and race/ethnic characteristics of the Anchorage population

English is the most commonly spoken language in Anchorage homes, followed by Spanish (11,915), Asian/Pacific Islander language (20,373), Indo-European languages (4,291), and other languages (4,657).<sup>17</sup> The Anchorage population is mostly non-Hispanic white (54%), followed by more than one race (11%), Asian alone (9%), Hispanic or Latino (9%), and American Indian/Alaska Native (8%) (see Table 26).

<sup>16</sup> Alaska OCS Statistical Information, <https://dfcs.alaska.gov/ocs/Pages/statistics/default.aspx>

<sup>17</sup> US Census, American Community Survey, <https://data.census.gov/table?q=DP02&g=050XX00US02020>

**Table 26. Anchorage population by race, count, and percentage, 2020**

Race	Count	Percent
Non-Hispanic population		
White alone	158,232	54
Black or African American alone	13,777	5
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	22,480	8
Asian alone	27,281	9
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	9,844	3
Some other race alone	1,922	1
More than one race	31,273	11
Hispanic or Latino population	26,438	9
Total	291,247	100

Source: AK DOL, Source: State of Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, found at <https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/cen/maps/censustracts/ct170.pdf>

Parents who were surveyed reported an unmet need for low- or no-cost family-friendly activities (43%) and for cultural activities for the family (27%). Their perception of this need in other families was higher at 49% and 48%. Similarly, assistance with language translation was mentioned as an unmet need by 11% of parents and perceived as a need for others by 40% of parents. Parents also thought there was an unmet need for support for healthy marriages, both for themselves (22%) and for other families (40%).

**Table 27. Family language, leisure, and cultural unmet needs**

HS Family needs		Neighbors, extended families, other families	
Low or no-cost family-friendly activities	43%	Low or no-cost family-friendly activities	49%
Support for healthy marriages	22%	Support for healthy marriages	34%
Cultural activities for families	27%	Cultural activities for families	48%
Assistance with language translation	11%	Assistance with language translation	40%

Source. KCI Parent Survey, 2025-2026

## Recent population changes, including immigration, new or emerging populations

The population of Anchorage decreased from 291,247 in 2020 to 289,221 in 2025, a decrease of 2,026 individuals. Alaska mirrors Anchorage in a population decline that is linked to a combination of fewer Alaska babies being born and more Alaskans dying, as well as to a greater number of people leaving the state than moving in.<sup>18</sup>

Birth rates in Alaska have been declining since 2016. The 2016 rate was 15.1 per 1000, declining to 12.1 per 1000 in 2024. Contributing factors to declining birth rates are the high cost of living and lack of access to childcare, women seeking more education and labor force participation, delays in starting a family, having smaller families, and fewer unplanned pregnancies. The fertility rate, the average number of children per woman, has dropped from 2.6 children in 1990 to 1.9 in 2024.<sup>19</sup>

The communities in Anchorage with the largest increases in population between 2020 and 2025 were:

- Downtown Anchorage Core (15.6%)
- University area (11.9%)
- Downtown Eagle River (7.8%)
- Lower Eagle River South (6.2%)
- Upper Eagle River Valley North (5.9%)
- Lower Eagle River Valley North (5.2%)
- Rabbit Creek/Bear Valley (5.4%)
- Ptarmigan Area (4.4%)

The communities in Anchorage with the largest decrease in population from 2020 to 2025 were:

- Government Hill (-11%)
- Northeast Muldoon (-9.5%)
- Girdwood/Turnagain Arm (-7.4%)
- South Fireweed (-7.2)
- Campbell Park East (-7.1%)
- Independence Park (-6.6%)
- Midtown (-6.0)
- Arctic (-5.7%)
- Dimond/Northwood (-5.3%)
- Wonder Park (-5.2%)
- Airport Heights (-5.0%)

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<sup>18</sup> Alaska Economic Trends, March 2026. <https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/trends-magazine/2026/March/a-quiet-driver-of-population-change>.

<sup>19</sup> Source: State of Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, found at <https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/cen/maps/censustracts/ct170.pdf>

**Table 28. Percentage change in population of Anchorage communities from 2020 to 2025**

Community	Percentage change from 2020 to 2025	Community	Percentage change from 2020 to 2025
Anchorage Municipality	-0.7	Scenic Foothills <b>(8)</b>	-1.8
Peters Creek/Eklutna	1.2	Campbell Park West	0.1
Chugiak	-2.0	Campbell Park East	-7.1
Downtown Eagle River	7.8	Midtown	-6.0
Eagle River	2.5	Spenard	-0.8
Upper Eagle River Valley	5.9	Woodland Park/Spenard	-2.5
Lower Eagle River Valley South	6.2	Lake Spenard	-1.1
Lower Eagle River Valley North	5.2	East Turnagain/Fish Creek	-0.5
Government Hill	-11.0	Airport/Kincaid	4.8
West Mountain View/Ship Creek	-3.6	Connors Lake	-3.5
East Mountain View <b>(14)</b>	-4.2	Jewel Lake/Birch Lake	-1.7
Ptarmigan Area <b>(11)</b>	4.4	Dimond/Northwood	-5.3
Northwest Muldoon	1.7	Northwood	-1.2
Northeast Muldoon	-9.5	Arctic	-5.7
Wonder Park <b>(13)</b>	-5.2	Taku/Campbell	-3.0
Russian Jack <b>(11+12)</b>	-2.8	Abbott Loop West	-2.4
Merrill Field Vicinity	-3.3	Abbott Loop North	-1.5
Chester Creek	1.4	Abbott Loop	-0.9
West Fairview <b>(15)</b>	-3.7	Campbell Lake/Bayshore	-0.4
Downtown Anchorage Core	15.6	Dimond/Southport	0.0
Bootleggers Cove/Westchester	-3.9	Oceanview	1.5
Turnagain	-3.2	Klatt	-3.0
South Fireweed	-7.2	Independence Park	-6.6
North Fireweed	2.0	Lower Hillside	1.4
Rogers Park/Tudor Area	0.0	Hillside East	-0.1
Airport Heights <b>(10)</b>	-5.0	Huffman	-1.1
University Area	11.9	Rabbit Creek	-0.6
Baxter <b>(10)</b>	0.5	Rabbit Creek/Bear Valley	5.4
Cheney Lake	-1.3	Girdwood/Turnagain Arm	-7.4
Muldoon <b>(14)</b>	-2.3	Science Center	0.0
Fort Richardson	1.5	Elmendorf AFB	0.2

Source: State of Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, <https://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/cen/maps/censustracts/ct170.pdf>

**Table 29. Foreign-born population by citizenship, count and percent, 2024**

Type of citizen	Count	Percent
Foreign-born population	32,241	
Naturalized US citizen	23,564	73%
Not a US citizen	8,677	27%

Source: US Census, American Community Survey,  
<https://data.census.gov/table?q=DP02&g=050XX00US02020>

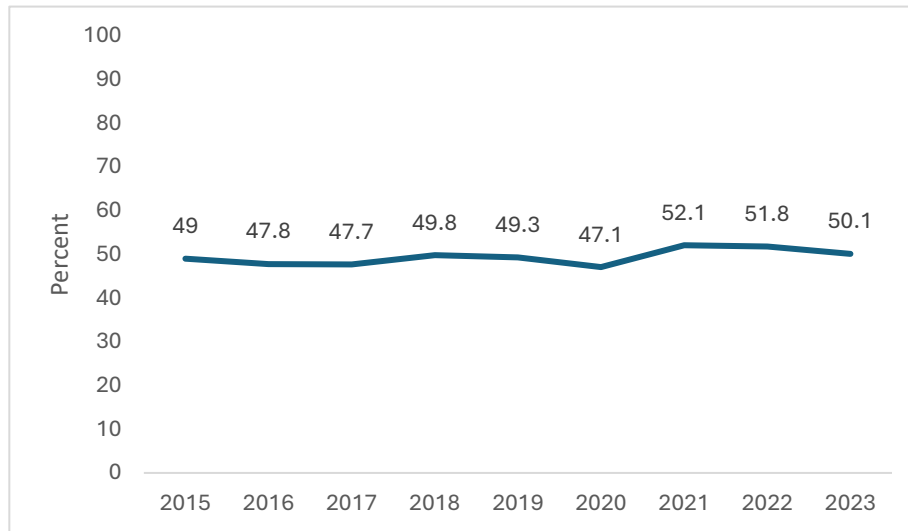
In 2024, Anchorage had 32,241 foreign-born residents. That represents approximately 11% of the total population. Of those born outside of the United States, 73% are naturalized US citizens. Only 8,677 Anchorage residents are not citizens.

## Types and locations of childcare programs/arrangements for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers

Access to childcare is often crucial to a family’s economic well-being because it allows both parents to work. It is especially important in single-parent families. This section will explore what mothers of three-year-olds report about their childcare preferences and decisions and examine the number of childcare/early education slots in Anchorage.

Figure 34 presents the percentage of mothers of three-year-olds who report they are currently using childcare. Here, childcare is defined as a regular arrangement in which someone other than the child's parents or legal guardians takes care of the child (including preschool). In 2023, half of these mothers reported using childcare. Twenty-six percent of mothers surveyed reported that childcare needs compromise their ability to work.

**Figure 34. Anchorage mothers of three-year-olds currently using childcare, percent, 2023**



Source: State of Alaska, CUBS,  
<https://dph-data-hub-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/apps/8f2ae86ed9824a7084cb6e51e477f9c3>

Table 30 presents the types of childcare used by mothers in 2023 and how each type of care has fluctuated since 2015.

**Table 30. Type of childcare center used by mothers of three-year-olds, percentage, 2023**

Type of childcare	Percentage	Change in usage since 2015
Childcare center	58	11.7 point increase
In-home, non-relative	19.1	4.2 point increase
In-home, relative	52.5	28 point increase
In a non-relative's home	26.4	0.8 point decrease
In a relative's home	41.6	18.4 point increase
Other type of childcare	4.9	2.1 point decrease

Source: State of Alaska, CUBS, <https://dph-data-hub-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/apps/8f2ae86ed9824a7084cb6e51e477f9c3>

Of those mothers who stated they do not use childcare, the reasons they selected were:

- Waiting list is too long (6%)
- There is no childcare in my community (4.4%)
- The childcare available doesn't fit into my schedule (6%)
- The cost is too high (8.8%)
- The childcare doesn't match my language/culture (.1%)
- Another reason (6.1%)

In 2019, 220 Anchorage mothers reported that their child had been removed from childcare due to their behavior.

## Childcare enrollment and slots

According to the 2020 census, there were almost 4,160 children enrolled in nursery school and 4,133 enrolled in kindergarten. Of those enrolled in nursery school, 47% were in public school and 53% in private school. Among kindergarten students, 88% were enrolled in public kindergarten and 12% in private schools.

**Table 31. 2020 Enrollment in nursery school and kindergarten**

Type of early learning	Type of school	Count
Enrolled in nursery school	Public school	1948
	Private school	2212
Enrolled in kindergarten	Public school	3640
	Private school	493

Data Source: US Census Bureau, <https://data.census.gov/table?q=preschool&g=050XX00US02020>

The number of reported HS slots in Anchorage varies depending on the source. According to a March 2026 search of the HS Service Location Dataset, in Anchorage, there were a total of 520

HS and EHS slots. Table 32 shows which organizations hold these slots.

**Table 32. HS childcare slots by organization and center, count, 2026**

Organization	Center	Number of slots
KCI	East Center	45
KCI	Muldoon Center	32
KCI	Ridgeline Terrace	15
KCI	East Center	16
KCI	Mt. View Center	24
KCI	Boniface Center	45
KCI	Home Visiting Center	12
Cook Inlet Native HS	Naqayeh't'ana T'uh	119
Cook Inlet Native HS	Chugach Square Mall	100
Cook Inlet Native HS	Naqayeh't'ana T'uh	24
Cook Inlet Native HS	Chugach Square Mall	16
Cook Inlet Tribal Council	Clare Swan Early Learning Center	72
<b>Total</b>		<b>520</b>

Data source: HeadStart.gov, <https://headstart.gov/about-us/article/head-start-service-location-datasets?latitude=61.218&longitude=-149.900&city=Anchorage&county=Anchorage%20Municipality&state=AK>

There are also two Nurse-Family Partnership Programs in Anchorage. Providence Nurse Family Partnership begins working with a family when the mother is pregnant. A nurse conducts home visits to discuss the baby's growth and development, labor and delivery, infant care, and other topics. The services last until the child is 2 years old. The Southcentral Foundation Nutaqsiivik Program is a nurse home-visiting program focused on American Indian and Alaska Native mothers that also works with families from pregnancy until the child is two years old.

## Eligible unserved children

There are two formulas to determine the number of eligible EHS and HS unserved children. The first is an estimate based on the percentage of children under five living below the federal poverty level (FPL). This formula produces a conservative estimate because:

- The US Census data used to determine the percentage of children living below the FPL does not account for Alaska's higher cost of living. The FPL for Alaska is adjusted upward by 25% to account for this fact, meaning more families are eligible for services under the Alaska Federal Poverty Level, which is 125% of the FPL
- More families are eligible and enrolled in EHS and HS based on additional reasons other than low income (families in crisis, homelessness, children in foster care, disabilities, etc.).
- HS is allowed to enroll children from families who live at 100%-130% poverty (using AK FPL) as income-eligible.

The other formula is less conservative because it substitutes the percentage of children in the school district who are eligible for the federal Free and Reduced Lunch program (FRL), which has a higher income threshold than the FPL.

The steps for the formula are as follows:

To determine the number of eligible unserved EHS and HS children using the federal poverty level:

Step 1:

Number of children under five living below the FPL in Anchorage in 2024: 2,563

HS and EHS slots currently exist in Anchorage: 520

Step 2:

The number of children served in the programs/the number eligible for programs:

$520 \text{ slots} / 2,563 = 0.129 * 100 = 20.3\%$ .

**Only 20.3% of eligible children are being served by EHS and HS in Anchorage using the more conservative formula.**

To determine the number of eligible unserved EHS and HS children using the percentage of children in Anchorage eligible for free and reduced lunch:

Step 1:

In 2024, there were 17,572 children under the age of five living in Anchorage.

The percentage of children in the ASD who qualify for free and reduced lunch was 47.3%.

$17,572 \times .473 = 8,311$  children

Step 2:

The number of children served in the programs/the number eligible for programs:

$520 / 8311 \times 100 = 6.3\%$ .

## Types/locations of childcare programs/arrangements for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities

### Children with disabilities

In the 2023-2024 school year, the Anchorage School District reported that there were 6800 students, 441 aged 3 to 5, and 6,359 aged 5 to 21. The ASD reports the following data points pertaining to students with disabilities:

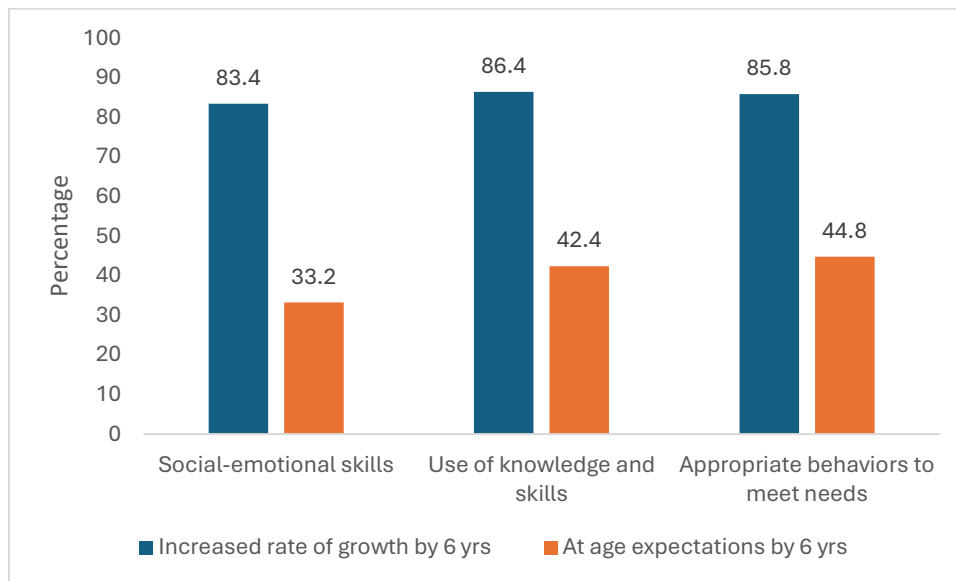
- The percentage of children aged five years with a disability who attend class in a regular classroom for 80% or more of the day was 62.6%.
- The percentage of children aged 3 to 5 years with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) attending a separate special education class, a separate school, or a residential facility was 80.3%.
- The percentage of children receiving special education and related services in the home was 2.5%.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Alaska Department of Education and Early Development,  
<https://education.alaska.gov/rcsped/Report/District?schoolYear=2023->

ASD measures how many preschoolers with disabilities progress in different areas by age six. By the time they turned six, 80.4% of those who entered preschool with below-age expectations in positive social-emotional skills had substantially increased their growth rate or had exited the program. Those who were at age expectations on turning six were 33.2%. The same pattern holds for those who had a use of knowledge and skills gain (86.4% substantial improvement, 42.4% at age level) and a gain in appropriate behaviors to meet their needs (85.8%, 44.8%). See Figure 35.

**Figure 35. Percentage of preschool students with disabilities who demonstrate improved skills, 2023-2024**



Source: Anchorage School District, Early Intervention Services Center, <https://www.asdk12.org/departments/academic-services/instructional-division/early-learning-department/early-learning-services/early-intervention-services-center>

## Programs for children with disabilities

In Anchorage, programs for children with disabilities are generally divided by age group (birth to 3 years vs. 3 to 5 years) and by the type of care needed (educational vs. private childcare). **thread** Alaska is a statewide resource and referral network that can provide a personalized list of licensed childcare providers who have specific training or accommodations for disabilities (e.g., sensory, physical, or cognitive).

### 1. Public and school-Based Programs

For children with diagnosed disabilities, the Anchorage School District (ASD) and state-funded partners provide free services:<sup>21</sup>

- Birth to Age 3 years (Early Intervention):
  - Programs for Infants and Children (PIC): Provides "Infant Learning Program" (ILP)

2024&districtName=Anchorage+School+District&Submit=Submit

<sup>21</sup> Anchorage School District, Early Intervention Services Center, <https://www.asdk12.org/departments/academic-services/instructional-division/early-learning-department/early-learning-services/early-intervention-services-center>

services, including physical, occupational, and speech therapy in the child's natural environment (home or childcare).

- FOCUS (Eagle River/Chugiak/JBER): Like PIC, this program serves families in the northern part of the municipality.
- Ages 3 to 5 years (Preschool Special Education):
  - Developmental Classrooms: ASD operates these in various elementary schools. They often include "Buddy Bears" (typically developing peers) to create an inclusive environment.
  - Specialized Programs: Includes "Listening & Spoken Language" for deaf/hard-of-hearing children at Williwaw Elementary and the Alaska State School for the Deaf at Russian Jack Elementary.
  - Itinerant Services: If a child is in a private childcare center, ASD staff can travel to that center to provide on-site speech or special education support.

## 2. Inclusive private childcare centers

Some private centers in Anchorage are "inclusive," meaning they accept children with special needs.

Examples of this type of private center include:

- Carousel Child Care Center: Known for its inclusive philosophy and play-based environment.
- Crystal Child Development Center: Focuses on individualized developmental processes for children with various needs.

## 3. Specialized Clinical Programs

- Southcentral Foundation (Child & Family Developmental Services) offers intensive neurodevelopmental evaluations and therapies.
- BrightStar Care provides specialized in-home childcare and nursing for children with more intensive medical or physical needs.

The State of Alaska Child Care Program Office administers the Inclusive Child Care Program. The program provides subsidies to eligible families with children who have a diagnosed disability or special need. Children must be under the age of 13 years and be diagnosed with a special need or developmental disability. The family must be participating in the State of Alaska's Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), including Parents Achieving Self-Sufficiency (PASS) I, PASS II, and PASS III.<sup>22</sup>

The program provides:

- Supplemental funding to providers for training, needed accommodation, and support to help them meet the child's individual needs
- Referrals, outreach, and education to parents of children with special needs about childcare options through Alaska's statewide Child Care Resource and Referral Network, **thread**
- On-site observation of your child in their care setting by **thread** and a Child Care Provider Inclusion Plan
- Specific training and support to providers who care for children with special needs
- Supplemental funding to providers, based upon each child's individual needs and/or needed accommodation

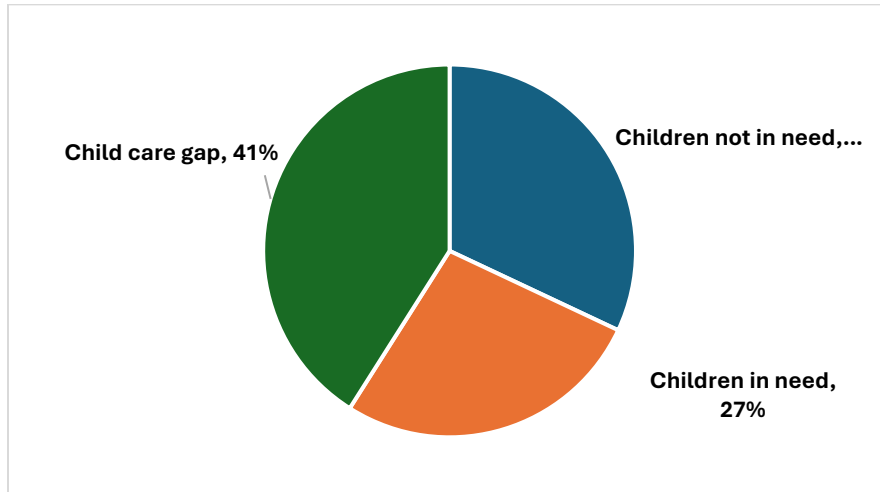
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<sup>22</sup> State of Alaska, Alaska Inclusive Child Care Program, <https://health.alaska.gov/en/services/alaska-inclusive-child-care/#:~:text=Supplemental%20funding%20to%20providers%20for,Resource%20and%20Referral%20Network%2C%20thread>

## Information/demographics of HS eligible children and their families, including new, emerging, and underserved populations

According to **thread**, in 2025, there were 20,483 children under six years old in Anchorage. Thirty-two percent did not need licensed or regulated early childhood education services because they had at least one caregiver who was not in the workforce. Of children in need of care, 32% were in a program, and 27% were not, leaving a 41% childcare gap.

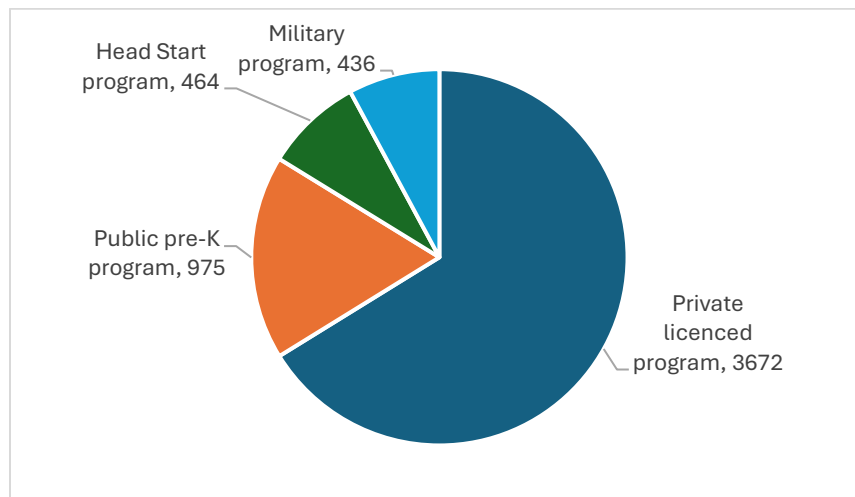
**Figure 36. Supply and demand for licensed or regulated early childhood education services, percentage, 2025**



Source. **thread**, <https://www.threadalaska.org/thread/business-community/tools-for-business/alaska-early-care-and-learning-dashboard/>

Of those in care, 66% were in private programs, 18% were in public pre-K programs, and 8% each were in HS or EHS, or a military program.

**Figure 37. Capacity in quality early childhood services, Anchorage, count, 2025**



Source. **thread**, <https://www.threadalaska.org/thread/business-community/tools-for-business/alaska-early-care-and-learning-dashboard/>

Looking at school readiness using the Alaska Developmental Profile, 31% of kindergarteners in Anchorage met 11 of 13 developmental goals. On average, early childhood education services cost 15% of household income (\$17,254 per year). For married couples, the percentage is 12%; for single male households, 21%; and for single female households, 35%.<sup>23</sup>

## Meeting the needs of current HS and EHS families

During enrollment in August and September, a KCI Early Learning staff member meets with parents to complete the Parent Interest List (PIL) and determine which services families enrolled at KCI Early Learning do and do not need or desire. The PIL covers 15 areas of focus and is revisited later in the year, once families have established a relationship with KCI Early Learning. Within each area, parents have four answer options: area of need, okay in this area, area of strength, and not applicable. The PIL is typically reviewed monthly throughout the year. The staff member schedules training courses and connects the family with resources, classes, or training to support the family's self-identified needs.

Forty-three parents filled out the 2024-2025 EHS Parent Interests List (see Figure 38). The areas that received the highest level of interest from parents involve emotional development and behavioral guidance:

- Helping children identify their feelings was the most requested area, with 53% of parents (23) expressing interest.
- Learning about positive discipline techniques ranked second, with 47% of parents interested (20).
- Learning about milestones and buying more food for less money tied for third, with 42% (18) of parents each.

The other most popular areas of interest were:

- Relationship training was selected by 40% of parents (17).
- Teaching children about personal safety and preparing children for kindergarten both received interest from 35% of parents (15 each).
- Mental wellness was of interest to 35% of parents (15).
- Learning about age-appropriate technology was selected by 30% of parents (13).

Interest in personal and financial stability was less common:

- Apprenticeship programs and budgeting/banking: 11 parents each
- Tax preparation/EITC and saving for a home: 10 parents each
- Trade schools: 9 parents

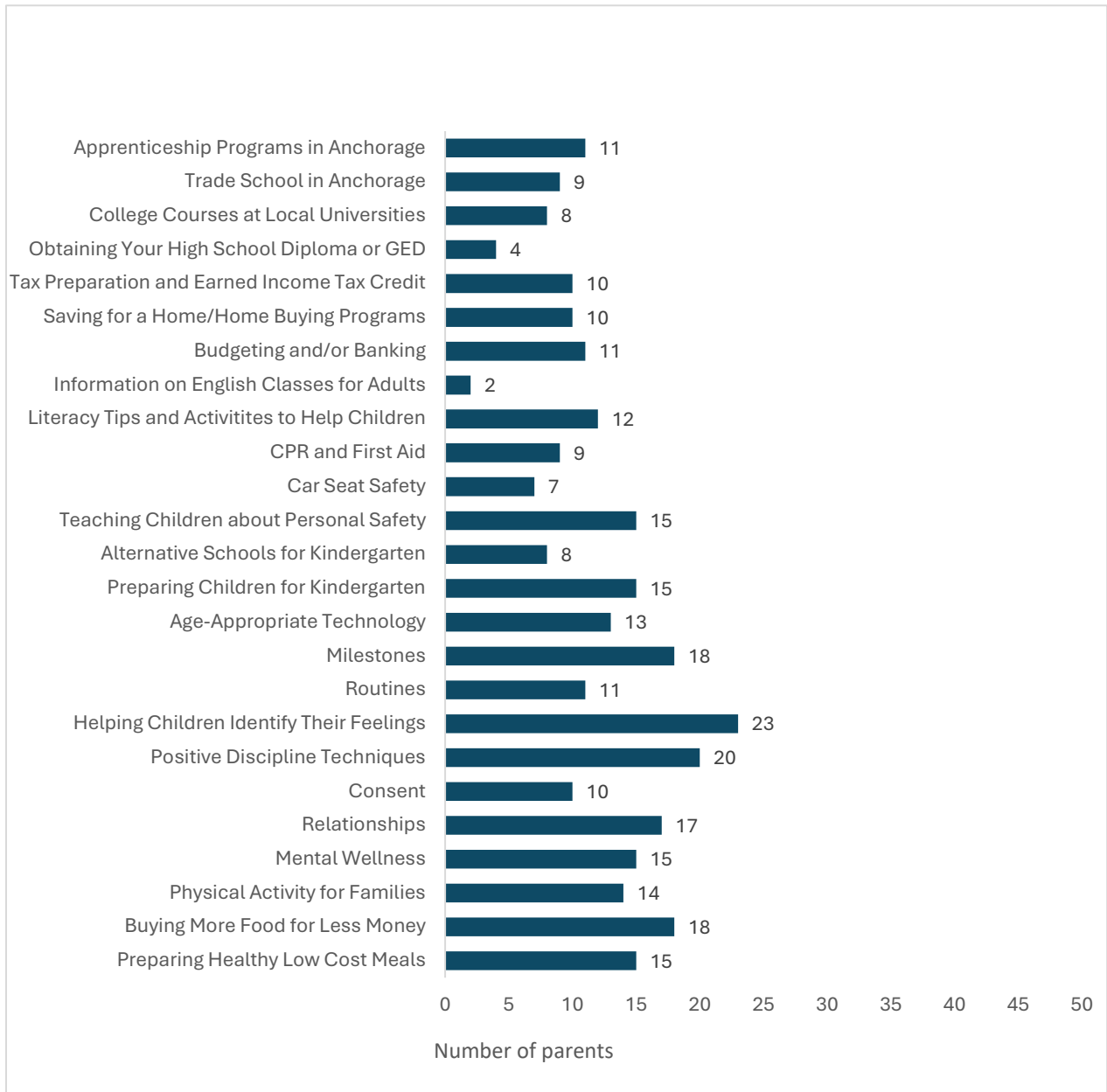
The topics with the least number of requests included:

- Information on English classes for adults: 2 parents
- Obtaining a high school diploma or GED: 4 parents
- Car seat safety: 7 parents

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<sup>23</sup> **thread**, <https://www.threadalaska.org/thread/business-community/tools-for-business/alaska-early-care-and-learning-dashboard/>

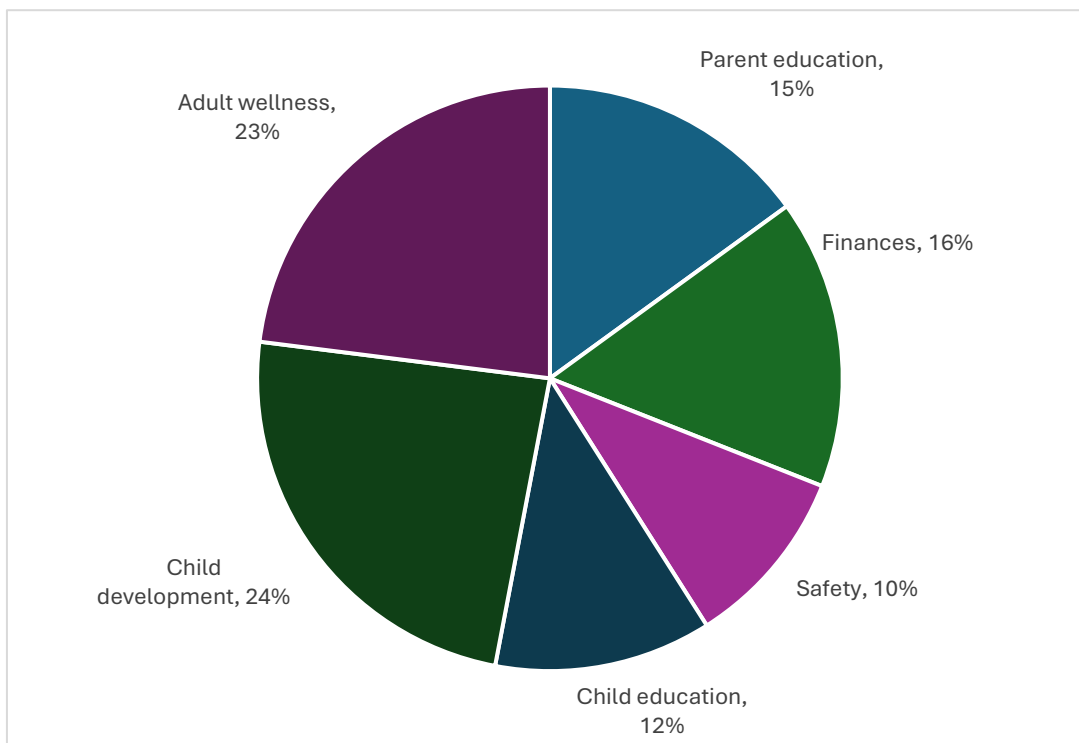
**Figure 38. Parent interest chart for EHS Parents**



Source: KCI Early Learning Data, 2025-2026

When the different training topics are grouped into larger categories (Figure 39), child development and adult wellness rank highest in parent interest.

**Figure 39. Percentage of EHS PIL need responses by area, Fall 2024**



Source: KCI Early Learning Data, 2025-2026

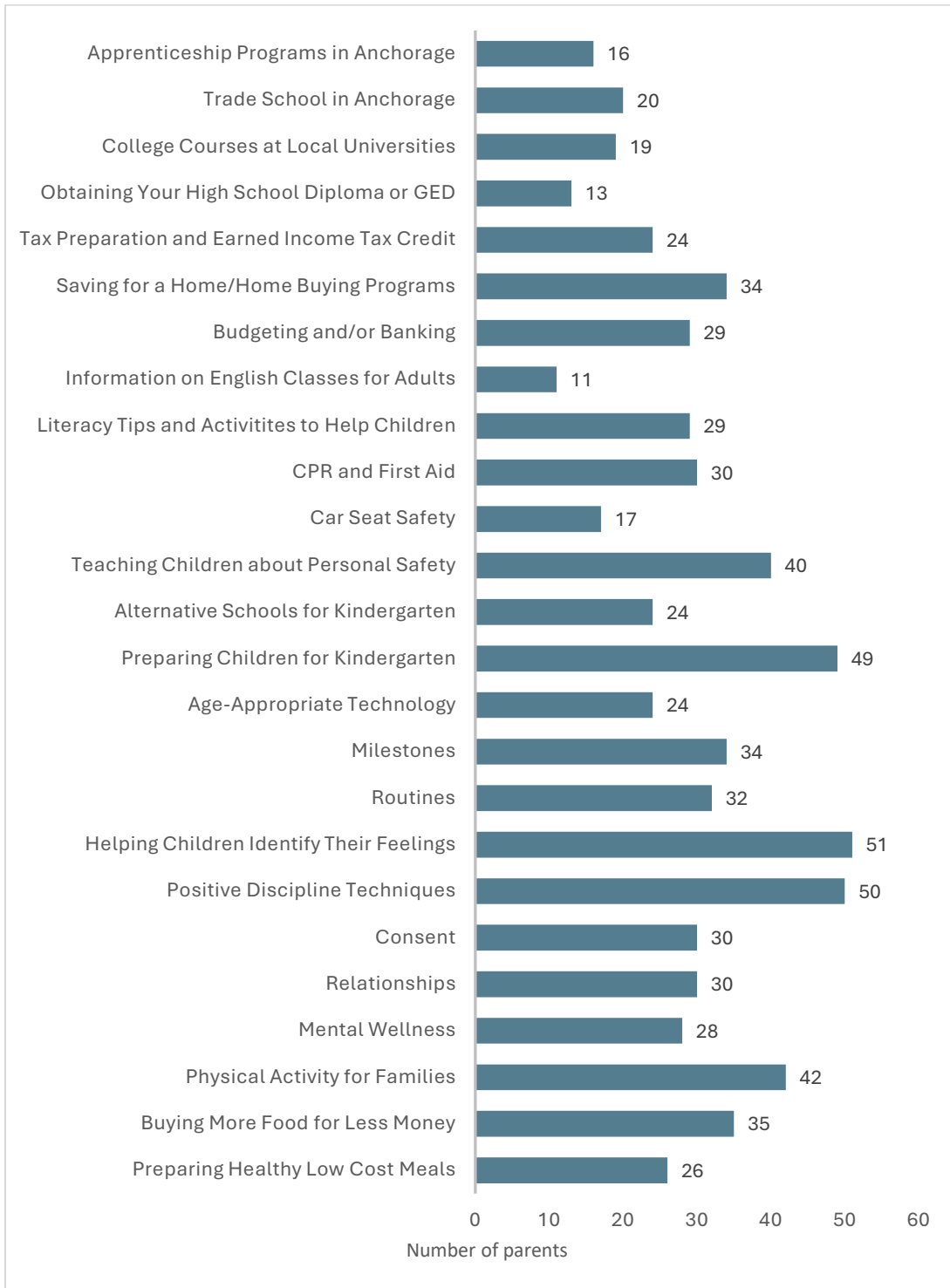
## HS Parent Interests

Due to a larger HS Program enrollment, more parents (n=107) completed the Parent Interest List. The priorities shift slightly toward school readiness and physical safety, while maintaining a high demand for emotional support.

- Like EHS, Helping Children Identify Their Feelings was selected by 48% of parents (51).
- Preparing Children for Kindergarten was the second most popular theme with 47% of parents (50) interested, followed by Positive Discipline, 46% (49 parents).
- Interest in Physical Activity for Families was the fourth most popular (39% / 42 parents), followed by Teaching Children about Personal Safety (37% / 40 parents).

There was the least interest in English Classes for Adults (10% / 11 parents) and High School Diploma/GED (12% / 13 parents).

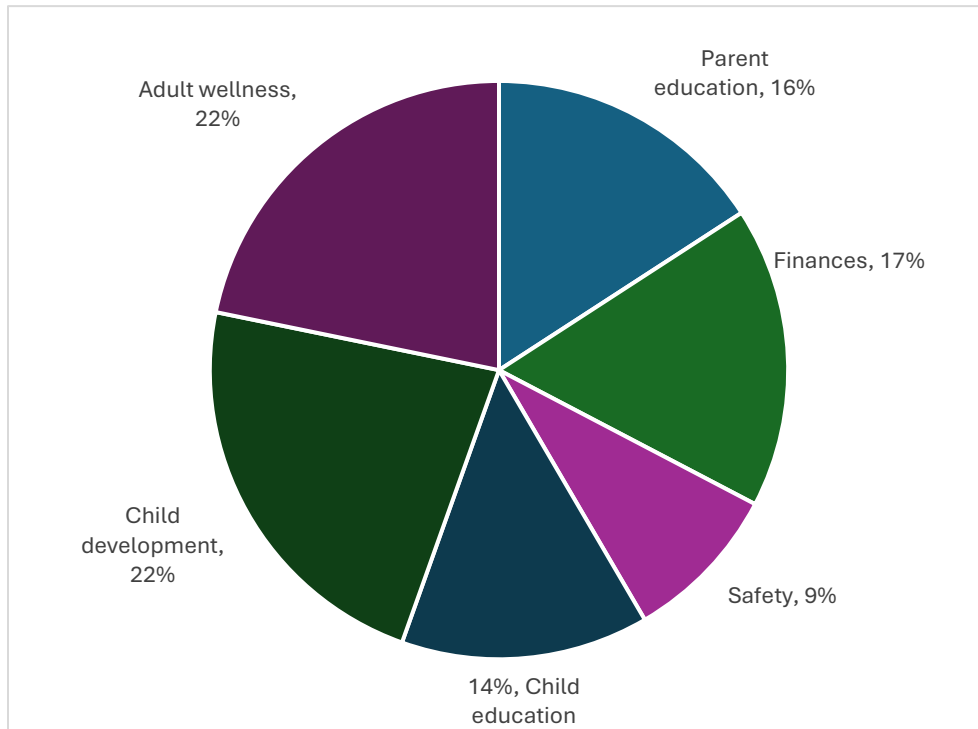
**Figure 40. Parent interest chart for HS Parents, 2024-2025, n=107**



Source: KCI Early Learning Data, 2025-2026

When the different training topics of interest to HS parents are grouped into larger categories (Figure 41), child development and adult wellness rank highest in parent interest (like the EHS parent group).

**Figure 41. Percentage of HS PIL need responses by area, Fall 2024**



Source: KCI Early Learning Data, 2025-2026

## Strengths and needs of HS-eligible children/families as defined by the HS program and the local institutions serving them

The following meetings were held to collect data on the strengths and needs of HS-eligible children and families.

1. KCI Policy Council, January 26, 2026
2. KCI Community Provider Focus Group, January 27, 2026
3. KCI Board of Directors Meeting, January 29, 2026
4. KCI Staff Meeting (KCI coordinators, directors, and family advocates), January 30, 2026
5. KCI Staff Meeting (teachers and teacher assistants), January 30, 2026

The data is presented by domain below.

## Domain 1: Physical, mental, dental health, and developmental disability

This domain describes the primary health and safety challenges facing families, highlighting how socioeconomic barriers, systemic gaps, and environmental factors impact overall well-being. These concerns are balanced by identifying critical support, such as school-based programs, financial assistance, and community partnerships that provide essential resources and navigational aid.

### *Challenge - Healthcare*

These are the primary challenges families face in healthcare, as described by KCI parents, staff, and community providers.

Socioeconomic and systemic barriers:

- Unstable housing and rising costs create stress, making it difficult for families to attend medical appointments or evaluations. Lack of reliable transportation prevents families from accessing providers.
- Families are being "kicked off" Medicaid or denied coverage for being slightly over the income limit. Rising insurance premiums and the high cost of groceries and rent leave little remaining for healthcare.
- Families without legal immigration status often do not qualify for services and cannot afford out-of-pocket costs. Additionally, some children are denied specialized help because their developmental delays are not considered "big enough" to meet strict qualification rules.

Physical health and preventative care:

- There is a concern regarding a decline in routine vaccinations.
- Barriers to Medicaid and insurance have led to long waiting times. One respondent mentioned a child suffering from dental pain waiting for months for surgery. Many children are not receiving regular well-child checks or physicals.
- Providers and municipal health agencies are often at maximum capacity, leading to care backlogs.

Behavioral and mental health challenges:

- Providers are seeing a trend where children as young as eight require behavioral health services.
- Parents sometimes deny that their child needs services (such as IEPs for ADHD) due to fear of "labels" or because of cultural differences.
- Families are dealing with trauma, depression, isolation, and domestic violence.
- There is also a noted increase in "electronic dependency" among children, leading to boredom and exhaustion in classroom settings.
- There is a shortage of accessible therapy, sliding-scale options, and full-day early childhood behavioral services.

A respondent noted that when families are struggling with "foundational needs" like food, diapers, and heat, therapeutic interventions often cannot take priority. Even when services are brought directly to the home, families may lack the emotional or physical capacity to engage because they are focused solely on survival.

### *Things that help families - Healthcare*

These are the primary supports for families in healthcare, as described by KCI parents, staff, and community providers.

School-Based and Early childhood supports:

- Some Title I schools provide a positive climate by offering access to food, counselors, and mental health consultants (such as those from Providence).
- Programs offer free dental, hearing, and vision screenings for students and home-visiting families. These screenings serve as a "jumpstart" for families to receive necessary medical referrals.
- Child in Transition (CIT) provides critical stability for families in crisis by arranging transportation (cabs or gas cards) so children can remain in their same school despite housing or health changes.

Financial and navigational assistance:

- Medicaid and Denali Kid Care provide vital financial relief, for example, drastically reducing the cost of medications like asthma inhalers and nebulizers.
- Hospital-based navigators (specifically at Providence) help families facing complex diagnoses coordinate specialized out-of-state care, including arranging free flights and lodging.
- Nurse-Family partnerships assist with answering medical questions and with helping families with complex applications.

Community partnerships and coordination:

- Collaborative efforts between organizations like Providence Nurse-Family Partners and local support centers allow for joint home visits, meet-and-greets, and specialized referrals for children with high needs.
- Nonprofits that assist families by providing transportation to appointments and support through the medical process, ensuring they can safely attend visits and understand medical information.
- Regular community events, such as health fairs, provide early childhood educators and families with access to vaccinations, blood tests, and wellness training.

**Table 33. Quotes on things that help families-healthcare**

Themes	Quotes
School-Based and Early Childhood Supports	<i>Twice a year, dental visits where our health department coordinates with pediatric dentists in our community to come in the classrooms and do free dental screenings.</i> (Family Support)
Financial and Navigational Assistance	<i>The Medicaid care, because my daughter has asthma so the ventilator, albuterol for the ventilator. I pay zero, that's \$700. I would love to not be low income, but it does help me out a lot.</i> (Policy Council)
Community Partnerships and Coordination	<i>At Thread we've done a couple projects. We did a health fair in partnership with the health fair organization for early childhood educators. We had probably 35 people attend, and they did health screenings and blood tests, and then they participated in a training in the afternoon on wellness.</i> (Provider)

Source: KCI representatives and local providers focus groups, 2025-2026

**Challenges-Safety**

These are the primary safety challenges facing families, as described by KCI parents, staff, and community providers.

Immigration and ICE concerns:

- Families are afraid to apply for services like HS or attend classes due to the "what ifs" and the fear of being detained.
- Teachers report that this fear affects attendance, as parents are hesitant to leave their homes or bring their children to school.
- There are cases of parents or family members being detained by ICE, which causes severe financial and emotional disruption to the household.
- There have been discussions about the need for preemptive laws to prevent ICE from entering childcare centers or churches without a specific warrant, ensuring these remain safe spaces.

Domestic violence and lack of crisis services challenges:

- Providers report cases of domestic violence and child abuse, but addressing these is complicated by cultural complexities and a lack of support services in certain areas.
- Existing crisis services are often "tapped out," maintaining long waitlists and strict priority criteria that make it difficult for families in crisis to get immediate help.

Environmental and community factors:

- Neighborhood safety and domestic violence are identified as persistent challenges for families with young children.
- There is a concern that children may be exposed to inappropriate content through unsupervised use of electronics.

### *Things that help families - Safety*

These are the primary supports for families regarding safety described by KCI parents, staff, and community providers.

Equipment and practical safety resources:

- Organizations offer professional development and hands-on training for those transporting children on car seat safety. Partnerships with the Center for Safe Alaskans provide free car seat checks, distribution of car seats, and bicycle helmets.
- Free winter visibility education includes the distribution of reflective tape.

Neighborhood and site safety:

- The removal of a local homeless camp and the demolition of an old gas station are significant improvements to the Mountain View area.
- The use of technology, such as Ring doorbells, allows staff and families to receive community alerts and stay informed about local activity.
- At one location near Stream Academy, the police department conducts regular patrols during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up to ensure student safety.

Support programs and training:

- A partnership with Awake provided simulations that helped participants understand survival outcomes based on different scenarios and choices.
- Resources for neighborhood and family safety include Help Me Grow Alaska and the Office of Children's Services (OCS).

**Table 34. Quotes on things that help families-safety**

Themes	Quotes
Equipment and Practical Safety Resources	<i>We offer that training, like a professional development thing, where the people transporting children can take an online module and then they come to us or we come to you and do hands-on training with the car seats in your vehicle. I want to promote that as a way to provide that extra level of safety for those who are transporting children. (Provider)</i>
Neighborhood and Site Safety	<i>My site is connected to Stream Academy and they reached out to law enforcement. Now they patrol every morning when the kids are getting dropped off and in afternoon. (Family Support)</i>
Support Programs and Training	<i>And then neighborhood safety.... this was a little bit on many different fronts whether it's OCS or there's a program called Help Me Grow Alaska. So, there are different resources that are able to be utilized. (Policy Council)</i>

Source: KCI representative and community provider focus groups, 2025-2026

## Domain 2: Housing, employment, transportation, education, nutrition, social services

Domain 2 outlines the primary challenges and support systems for Anchorage families regarding housing, employment, transportation, education, nutrition, and social services. Families face a deepening challenge where rising costs and administrative barriers force them to prioritize immediate survival needs over healthcare and specialized services. Key community partnerships—such as Kids Corp, Inc. (KCI) and the Anchorage School District were mentioned because they work to bridge these gaps and provide essential resources.

### *Challenges: Housing*

These are the primary housing-related challenges facing families, as described by KCI parents, staff, and community providers.

The housing crisis and financial strain:

- Anchorage is facing a homelessness crisis characterized by rising housing costs and a limited supply of available homes.
- Increasing prices across the board—including rent, groceries, and healthcare premiums—are pushing families to their limits.
- Some families are "doubled up," living with friends or relatives in multi-generational homes, or living in their cars.

Impact on healthcare and education:

- Unstable housing creates "stress and chaos," making it difficult for parents to keep regular doctor appointments or attend evaluations.
- Housing instability and lack of transportation frequently prevent children from attending school, particularly in winter when sidewalks are not plowed.

- Providers find that families often cannot access specialized services (such as speech or occupational therapy) until more immediate needs, such as housing and food security, are addressed.

### Things that help families - Housing

These are the primary supports for families regarding housing described by KCI parents, staff, and community providers.

Housing programs and partnerships:

- Cook Inlet Housing Authority collaborates with Ridgeline Terrace, which gives housing residents preference for preschool enrollment.
- Alaska Housing provides vouchers to families for affordable, low-income housing.
- Habitat for Humanity offers an application-based housing program, though availability can be limited. It has also assisted families with mortgage forbearance during financial crises.
- Boston Commons is a newer development providing low-income, affordable housing in a specific target area.
- Anchorage Hospitality Foundation works with United Way 211 to provide transitional housing referral services.

Transportation and educational support:

- Anchorage School District's Child in Transition (CIT) helps homeless families or those in transition with bus tokens, vouchers, or gas cards.
- Support is available to help families solve problems and keep their children in their original school, even if the family must move to a different part of town.
- A health coordinator works with the Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center to establish medical and dental support for homeless families or those without insurance.

**Table 35. Quotes on things that help families-housing**

Themes	Quotes
Housing Programs and Partnerships	<i>There are transitional housing referral services like the Anchorage Hospitality Foundation, which partners with the United Way 211. (Policy Council)</i>
Transportation and Educational Support	<i>The CIT, when kids get enrolled into our program, we set them up so if they're homeless the CIT helps them with gas cards, buses and things like that for transportation, that's a big one too. (Family Support)</i>
Financial and Health Assistance	<i>Our health coordinator also works well with Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center for our families that don't have insurance, medical homes or dental homes, they're able to get those homeless families' access to care. (Family Support)</i>

Source: KCI representative and community provider focus groups, 2025-2026

### Challenge-Food Insecurity

These are the primary challenges facing families regarding food insecurity, as described by KCI parents, staff, and community providers.

#### Stringent Eligibility and benefit challenges:

- Many families face strict eligibility requirements for assistance programs like SNAP.
- Qualifications are often based on income brackets that do not account for the high cost of living, such as increasing rent prices.
- Families lose benefits - if they make a small amount over the limit, they can't get benefits, leaving them unable to afford food despite being technically "over-income".
- Small fluctuations in income or losing a job can immediately impact a family's eligibility status.

#### Administrative and navigational barriers to obtaining benefits:

- Even when families qualify, the process of obtaining and maintaining benefits is described as a "battle".
- There is a significant backlog at the Division of Public Assistance (DPA) that prevents families from receiving timely SNAP benefits.
- The recertification process is difficult and often requires professional staff (such as home visitors) to help families translate, document steps, or contest denials.
- Navigating which specific items are WIC-approved in a grocery store is a "lot of work," requiring families to use apps to scan barcodes to ensure items are covered.

#### Physical and cultural accessibility:

- The physical ability to reach food and the types of food available present significant hurdles.
- Reduced bus routes and the closure of local grocery stores (e.g., Carrs in Fairview) make it harder to reach affordable food.
- Food pantries often have hours that conflict with working schedules, and families without transportation struggle to reach them.
- For multicultural groups, the food available at pantries may not be familiar or culturally appropriate.

#### Economic pressures and basic needs

- Food insecurity does not exist in a vacuum; it is "intertwined" with other survival needs.
- High housing costs, a homelessness crisis, and rising grocery prices make it difficult to stretch a budget.
- WIC benefits, such as \$40 a month for fruits and vegetables, do not go far in Alaska, especially during months when food supplies decline.
- When families are worried about "basic needs" like food and diapers, it becomes impossible to prioritize other things, such as therapeutic interventions or medical exams.

#### *Things that help families - Food*

These are the primary supports for families regarding food security described by KCI parents, staff, and community providers.

#### Core food assistance programs:

- WIC & SNAP are highlighted as essential for connecting families to nutritional resources. Organizations like Catholic Social Services provide SNAP outreach to guide families through the application process, and some centers host events where WIC representatives help families apply on-site.
- The Food Bank of Alaska, St. Francis House Pantry, and Lutheran Social Services are key providers. One respondent noted that being located next door to a food bank is particularly helpful for their families, especially for those who may not qualify for food stamps but still need assistance.

- The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provides reimbursements for early learning centers, allowing them to offer meals.

School and early learning support:

- Many programs provide three meals a day (breakfast, lunch, and snack), ensuring children are fed regardless of their situation at home.
- Centers often send leftover food home with parents. Additionally, some schools (such as Title I schools) are noted for having high food availability, which contributes to a positive school climate.
- Some programs partner with external organizations, such as the Senior Center, to provide daily lunches for children.

Direct community Initiatives:

- KCI board members and Family Service Teams have provided boxes of food and household goods to some families during winter breaks.
- KCI prioritizes feeding families during Policy Committee Meetings and other family events, often sending leftovers home afterward.
- Classrooms maintain "backup food" and ensure that if a child is hungry, they are fed, without exception.

**Table 36. Quotes on things that help families-food**

Themes	Quotes
Core Food Assistance Programs	<i>Food security would be like St. Francis House Pantry, Lutheran Social Services, the SNAP or WIC benefits program, Child and Adult Care Food Program. And that's something that KCI utilizes, and most early learning centers get that reimbursement. So, it's not just for children, that's also for adult care programs as well. And then Food Bank of Alaska. (Policy Council)</i>
School and Early Learning Support	<i>We're able to provide the kids with three meals, breakfast, lunch, and snack. And a lot of the families are experiencing food insecurities, so that's a really big deal for them to be able to come here and not have to worry about their child being fed. And we're able to give them that leftover food to send home. (Teacher)</i>
Direct Community Initiatives	<i>So, our KCI board members worked with Alaska Family Service Team and selected a limited number of families, and they provided food boxes and household good boxes for winter break this year. (Family Support)</i>

Source: KCI representative and community provider focus groups, 2025-2026

**Challenge - Transportation**

These are the primary transportation challenges facing families, as described by KCI parents, staff, and community providers.

Barriers to education and services:

- General education preschool students are no longer bused due to shifting funding priorities and budget cuts.
- Without reliable transportation, families struggle with school attendance and cannot access essential wrap-around services.

- Transporting preschoolers is logistically difficult because they require car seats and adult supervision twice a day. Child transport is particularly burdensome for families who do not own vehicles and must carry heavy car seats into taxis or Ubers.
- Service providers often lack the capacity to go to families and must require families to come to them, typically during restricted business hours.

Intersecting socioeconomic challenges:

- Transportation issues are often intertwined with housing instability; unhoused or frequently moving families face extreme "stress and chaos," making regular appointments nearly impossible.
- Families often cannot reach food pantries due to limited hours, lack of transportation, or the closure of neighborhood grocery stores, leading to food insecurity.
- Lack of transportation prevents families from completing multi-dose vaccinations or following up on vision screenings and health referrals.

Infrastructure and environmental hurdles:

- Public transportation routes do not reach all locations, and schedules are frequently changing or unreliable.
- Alaskan winters make walking or pushing strollers to bus stops challenging, especially when sidewalks are not plowed.
- Gas cards are often restricted to families specifically enrolled in certain programs.

Impact on vulnerable populations:

- Low-income families bear the "brunt of disinvestment" in public transportation, which limits their ability to exercise school choice or access higher-quality resources.
- Employers can be inflexible regarding the complicated schedules required to coordinate childcare and school pickups via public transit.
- Due to limited openings, some families must transport different children to multiple, separate school locations at the same time.

### *Things that help families - Transportation*

These are the primary things that help families regarding transportation, as described by KCI parents, staff, and community providers.

School-based and youth services:

- Children in Transition (CIT) assists families experiencing homelessness or housing instability by providing gas cards, bus passes, and cab vouchers. It has provided daily cab services to ensure students can finish the school year at their original school after a move.
- Students with special needs are provided with buses through the school district.
- People Mover Travel Training is a free municipal service where trainers come to a family's home to teach children how to navigate the city bus system safely, including route planning and "street smarts."

Medical and specialized transportation:

- Medicaid/Denali Kid Care has a dedicated line families can use to request transportation support to doctors' appointments. Travel vouchers are available through Medicaid, but typically require a request at least two weeks in advance.
- KCI offers round-trip taxi service for families attending KCI events.

- Hospital patient navigators (such as those at Providence) can refer patients to programs providing free flights and lodging for specialized medical care, such as surgery in Seattle.
- Family nurse partnership programs assist families and have vehicles available to bring families to appointments.

Community and nonprofit support:

- The municipality provides transportation vouchers (up to four per month) that families can use to visit clinics, grocery stores, or farmers' markets.
- Groups like the Beacon Hills Family Support Center and the Anchorage Hospitality Foundation (partnered with United Way 211) assist with transportation for appointments and family contact sessions.
- Safety training and online modules are available for those transporting children to ensure car seats are installed and used correctly.

**Table 37. Quotes on things that help families-transportation**

Themes	Quotes
School-Based and Youth Services	<i>People mover has people that will come to your house and do this questionnaire with your kids to help them feel comfortable riding on the city bus. What to look out for, who's your friend? Just because you talked to them, are they your friend? (Policy Council)</i>
Medical and Specialized Transportation	<i>I was thinking about the Family nurse partnership programs in Anchorage and I know a friend of mine who's a nurse and works there. They have vehicles that they can borrow, or check out through South Central and bring families to an appointment, which I think is so amazing. (Provider)</i>
Community and Nonprofit Support:	<i>We have something with the municipality for our participants that we refer them to. We have transportation vouchers where they can come to our clinic and they can go to the grocery store or the farmer's market when it's in season. (Provider)</i>

Source: KCI representative and community provider focus groups, 2025-2026

**Challenges - Childcare and education**

These are the primary challenges families face in childcare and education, as described by KCI parents, staff, and community providers.

Childcare and staffing challenges:

- There is a shortage of childcare slots in early childhood education that offer quality care.
- Families with children who have special needs struggle to find programs with the expertise, training, or staffing to accommodate them. One respondent reported being rejected by multiple centers before finding support.
- Teachers describe being "beyond capacity," making it difficult to provide the level of family connection and individualized teaching they desire.

#### Financial and assistance barriers:

- Families face "endless" ways to lose childcare contracts, such as losing a job or being only \$100 over the income limit. Some military subsidies are not accepted by all programs.
- Public service offices are described as "locked down," with long delays in processing Medicaid or childcare assistance renewals. One respondent noted they had not heard back on a 2022 application appeal, years later.

#### Recent trends:

- Frequent illnesses among children have caused attendance to "tank," leading to dysregulation in classroom routines and forcing parents to miss work.
- Educators have noticed a "drastic" decline in family participation in school events over the last several years, often because parents are working multiple jobs or lack transportation.
- Several respondents noted a concern regarding children's increased use of devices and the impact on their attention span.
- One respondent said there is a rise in "latchkey kids" due to changes in school start and end times.
- There is concern that the push for school choice will degrade the public school system and further disadvantage families in poverty who lack the resources to utilize these options.
- Families are dealing with rising costs for housing, groceries, and healthcare premiums, which are adding to childcare concerns.

#### Community program reductions:

- Many after-school programs, specifically the Boys and Girls Club and those within the Anchorage School District, have shut down due to a lack of funding and staffing shortages.
- There is a lack of "third spaces" where kids want to hang out, and the loss of after-school programs leaves children without safe places to go while waiting for siblings or for parents to finish work.

#### Behavioral and developmental shifts in the last five years/since the pandemic:

- Preschool and kindergarten children are exhibiting more aggressive behaviors, such as hitting, throwing, flipping tables, and yelling.
- There is a notable increase in developmental delays with children entering school who are not toilet-trained, are nonverbal, or have significant speech and sensory concerns.
- Respondents have seen a rise in children referred to with neurodivergence, particularly at higher support levels.
- Children who grew up during the pandemic struggle to read facial expressions due to masking and have shorter attention spans, often "bouncing" between activities quickly.

#### *Things that help families - Childcare and education*

These are the primary supports for families regarding childcare and education described by KCI parents, staff, and community providers.

##### School and educational support:

- Anchorage School District (ASD) is viewed as a "catchall" that prevents families from falling through the cracks. It provides essential services beyond academics, including access to food and behavioral support, such as positive behavior support initiatives.
- The Child in Transition (CIT) program helps families who meet specific criteria, such as those who are homeless or whose children have been moved from their homes. It ensures that children can stay in their home schools, maintaining a sense of community and safety. It also provides practical help, like gas cards and cab services, for transportation.
- KCI offers free early childhood education and childcare. It prioritizes families experiencing homelessness and offers full-day programs for parents needing full-time care.
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers is an afterschool program that helps children grow their learning and social abilities.
- Organizations like PIC (Program for Infants and Children) assist families with starting the IEP (Individualized Education Program) process.

#### Childcare and afterschool programs:

- Camp Fire Alaska is recognized for rebuilding its programs and providing after-school care.
- Stone Soup Group provides "hangouts" specifically for older teens and individuals with special needs.

#### Health and family wellbeing:

- Providence provides mental health consultants and counselors to some Title 1 schools.
- Trinity Family Services offers play therapy and one-on-one support during home visits.
- Nurse-Family Partnership is a program that provides medical support and assistance with filling out various applications.

#### Community and crisis assistance:

- KCI works with both foster and biological families to support children during the reunification process, including scheduling transportation for parents to attend discipline classes.
- Community pillars such as the Salvation Army and various school initiatives focus on meeting basic needs like food and domestic violence support.

**Table 38. Quotes on things that help families-childcare and education**

Themes	Quotes
School and Educational Support	<i>When I first came to Alaska, I was leaving a domestic violence situation and I didn't know about Head Start at all. I was stressed out. Where is my daughter going to go to school? And it's a new transition for us. And I've called all these places and there's a wait list and then also fees. And my caseworker recommended Head Start. Because we are temporarily homeless and that's something I appreciate is you guys have that system to where if you're homeless it does help with getting into [the program]. I was also working at that time and I don't have anyone to watch her. I called and asked questions and they were on it. I was like, 'well how much is it?' That's always a question I ask and they're like, 'oh no sweetheart, it's free'. Like there's nothing. It was such a weight lifted. (Policy Council)</i>
Childcare and Afterschool Programs	<i>Stone Soup Group does hangouts for older teens for special needs individuals. They also allow younger teens case by case. (Provider)</i>
Health and Family Well-being	<i>Providence has a mental health consultant there almost full-time as well as a counselor. (Board)</i>

Source: KCI representative and community provider focus groups, 2025-2026

### Domain 3: Culture, spirituality, language, and leisure

This domain explores the primary challenges families face regarding culture, religion, language, and community. It highlights significant language and communication barriers, such as the inadequacy of translation tools for technical information and the difficulty of navigating administrative systems. Additionally, the KCI representatives noted cultural and religious obstacles, including a lack of support services that accommodate specific needs. They also mentioned supportive resources, including community-led holiday programs, multilingual educational support, and organizational efforts to celebrate cultural diversity within schools.

#### Challenges - Culture, religion, language, community

These are the primary challenges families face regarding culture, religion, language, and community, as described by KCI parents, staff, and community providers.

Language and communication barriers:

- Even when translation services or apps are available, they are often inadequate for explaining "higher level" or technical information.
- There is a significant challenge for families who may speak English but cannot read or write it, making school enrollment and medical forms difficult to complete without assistance.
- Administrative systems are often not set up to handle non-English speakers; for example, some systems send forms in English even when a preferred language is selected.
- Challenges arise in multicultural households where parents have low English proficiency, and children have low proficiency in their parents' home language, leading to communication breakdowns.
- Bilingual students face challenges catching up in school while also learning English.
- Families new to the area struggle with basic tasks such as paying bills or opening accounts due to

language and cultural differences.

Cultural and religious challenges:

- There is a lack of childcare and family support services that can accommodate specific cultural or religious needs, such as Halal dietary restrictions for Muslim families.

Impact on education and community:

- Teachers feel challenged because they need more support from families and communities to support students effectively.

### *Things that help families - Culture, religion, language, community*

These are the primary supports for families regarding religion, language, cultural practices, and community as described by KCI parents, staff, and community providers.

Community and social connections:

- Most families are connected to others through their culture, extended family, or general social circles. It is considered rare for a family to have no external community connections.
- Multiple community organizations provide support during the holidays, including the Salvation Army (Adopt-a-Family and Gift Program), St. Elizabeth (Thanksgiving Turkey boxes), Providence, and the International Pilots Association, which hosts a large holiday party for KCI children.
- Families feel a sense of belonging when they see familiar, comfortable faces among school staff.

Language and literacy support:

- Many programs utilize Language Link or other interpretive services to communicate with families. Some organizations, like **thread**, have multilingual staff who speak Spanish, French, and German.
- Educational materials are being adapted for cultural and regional relevance, including translations into local languages like Spanish, Tagalog, Yup'ik, and Russian.
- The Alaska Literacy Program helps parents learn English and work toward their high school diploma or GED.
- Teachers encourage families to continue speaking their native languages at home to support dual language learning.

Cultural practices and Inclusivity:

- Schools celebrate diversity through "Culture Corners" or "Culture Tables," which feature photos, keywords in different languages, and items that represent the families in the classroom.
- Parents are encouraged to volunteer and share their culture through traditional dance, dress, and food.
- Efforts are made to provide culturally relevant books, such as a Samoan children's book coordinated with Pacific Island cultural communities.
- Organizations such as Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC), the Alaska Native Heritage Center, and the Hmong Cultural Center offer programs to promote cultural awareness and education.

**Table 39. Quotes on things that help families-religion, language, cultural practices, community**

Themes	Quotes
Community and Social Connections	<i>I think it's the staff that we have coming into a building and seeing familiar faces, being comfortable with those faces and working alongside them. (Board)</i>
Language and Literacy Support	<i>We use translation services for pretty much almost every language that exists in Alaska. (Provider)</i>
Cultural Practices and Inclusivity	<i>The families are able to volunteer in the classroom to come and share their culture with the kids, whether that's sharing a traditional dance or coming in their traditional wear, sharing foods. (Teacher)</i>

Source: KCI representative and community provider focus groups, 2025-2026

## Comparison of the needs and strengths of HS-eligible children and families as defined by the families themselves and local institutions serving them

### Needs

The providers were asked in a group interview (7 participants) for their views on the challenges facing families. The families' perspectives were drawn from open-ended questions (61 participants) in an online survey and from a separate group interview with parents on the Policy Council (9 participants). The family data was drawn from a large sample and may be more representative than the providers' views.

Table 40 lists the needs mentioned by the families and providers. Parents face the greatest challenges around safety and neighborhood crime. Many parents mentioned homeless camps and unhoused people as a safety issue, as well as violence, drug use in the community, and theft. One parent felt unsafe entering their building because of loiterers at the entrance, and another said their children were harassed on the bus. Inadequate snow removal that hinders access to cars or public transportation creates challenges as well. Access to affordable medical care, and in particular dental care, was also a major concern for many parents.

In comparison, providers focused on challenges in childcare and education, noting a general shortage of staff, long waitlists, and difficulty finding high-quality care for most families. Transportation to services, as well as child car seat safety, rose to the top of providers' concerns for families. Both families and providers noted a lack of services for special needs children, mental health services, and a lack of empathy from employers to accommodate school and childcare schedules.

**Table 40. Challenges identified by families and providers**

Families	Providers
<p><b>Disability service:</b> Difficulty finding childcare providers trained to handle children with special needs</p>	<p><b>Disability service:</b> Lack of specialized staff to accommodate children with special needs</p>
<p><b>Childcare/education:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lack of available slots and long waitlists for quality early childhood education.</li> <li>•Loss of after-school programs and school closures due to a lack of funding or staffing.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Childcare/education:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Long waitlists and finding quality care</li> <li>•School schedule conflicts for parents</li> <li>•Finding care for multiple siblings</li> <li>•Staffing shortages to enroll more kids</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transportation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lack of reliable door-to-door transportation for families with young children or strollers</li> <li>•Inadequate snow removal makes it difficult to get to school, work, or an appointment.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Transportation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Transportation to services, groceries, and appointments</li> <li>•Public transit issues, reduced routes</li> <li>•Safety issues with installing car seats properly</li> </ul>
<p><b>Employment:</b> Lack of jobs and a lack of employer empathy for parents' schedules.</p>	<p><b>Employment:</b> Inflexible employees, especially regarding childcare pickup and school schedules</p>
<p><b>Culture:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•A lack of childcare that meets specific cultural or religious needs</li> <li>•Isolation and lack of strong support networks</li> </ul>	<p><b>Culture:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Language barriers with services and paperwork</li> <li>•Language proficiency gaps in the household</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social Services:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Difficulty with public service offices; rigid eligibility rules for childcare assistance and delays in Medicaid renewals.</li> <li>•Not enough support, reliable aid, and services for minority groups. Need for food resources, diapers, wipes,</li> </ul>	<p><b>Social Services:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Accessing resources if unfamiliar with electronics and computers</li> <li>•Long waitlists for supportive services</li> </ul>
<p><b>Nutrition:</b> High grocery prices</p>	<p><b>Nutrition:</b> Food insecurity from benefits backlog, high AK food cost of food</p>
<p><b>Healthcare:</b> Rising medical insurance premiums and difficulty accessing affordable dental and medical care</p>	<p><b>Healthcare:</b> Rising healthcare costs and potential changes to Medicaid, such as work requirements</p>
<p><b>Mental Health:</b> Lack of adequate mental health and drug addiction programs</p>	<p><b>Mental Health:</b> Need for more mental health services for younger children</p>
<p><b>Safety/health:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Homelessness, nearby camps, harassment of children, and related criminal activity</li> <li>•Neighborhood safety, theft, and community drug use</li> </ul>	<p><b>Safety/Health:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Fear of immigration (ICE) prevents some families from seeking help</li> <li>•Domestic violence issues</li> </ul>

<p><b>Housing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Rising housing costs that exceed family income levels</li> <li>•Limited housing supply and long waiting lists</li> </ul>	<p><b>Housing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Families contact providers for medical or therapeutic services, but it becomes clear that housing instability is the more urgent need that must be addressed first.</li> <li>•Lack of available housing</li> </ul>
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Source: Parent Survey, 2025-2026

*Strengths*

Families emphasized direct assistance for basic needs and local community ties, whereas providers highlighted administrative logistics and professionalized support. Families specifically noted the value of food resources like SNAP and WIC, housing assistance through Habitat for Humanity, and the "free services" provided by HS and Campfire. In contrast, providers focused on the mechanics of service delivery, such as offering transportation vouchers, employing multilingual staff, and utilizing professional translation services to bridge language gaps. While families focused on the immediate impact of programs on their daily lives, providers emphasized partnerships and specialized training, such as car seat safety programs, that facilitate those services.

Both groups identified "Help Me Grow Alaska" as a vital resource for child development and wrap-around support. They also collectively recognized the importance of healthcare accessibility through Medicaid, noting its role in both medical coverage and travel assistance. Additionally, both groups valued cultural awareness, though they viewed it through different lenses: families appreciated the "neighbors looking out for each other" community spirit and specific heritage centers. At the same time, providers focused on the practical adaptation of educational materials and "culture corners" to celebrate diversity.

**Table 41. Strengths identified by families and providers**

Families	Providers
<p><b>Transportation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•People Mover travel training helps families navigate the city.</li> <li>•Hospital patient navigators help with lodging and travel for medical crises.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Transportation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Transportation vouchers for appointments and groceries</li> <li>•Direct transport through programs like South Central</li> <li>•Partnerships to distribute car seats and safety training for proper car seat installation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Health:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Healthcare support through Medicaid and Denali Kid Care.</li> <li>•The Nurse Family Partnership and Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center provide medical support.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Health:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Medicaid travel vouchers (need to be in advance)</li> <li>•Health fairs and wellness training</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Language:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Multilingual staff in school, childcare, or home-based care</li> <li>•Professional translation services</li> </ul>
<p><b>Culture:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Parents value ethnic and cultural diversity. Specific mentions were made of the Alaska Native Heritage Center and CITC for cultural awareness.</li> <li>•Many parents highlighted a "neighbors looking out for each other" culture where people are friendly, kind, and helpful during times of need.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Culture:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Adapting education materials for cultural diversity</li> <li>•Celebrating different backgrounds with "culture corners"</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disability services:</b> Support services like PIC are helpful for children with special needs</p>	<p><b>Disability services:</b> Social opportunities like those hosted by Stone Soup Group for kids with special needs</p>
<p><b>Social Services:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The Salvation Army and Angel Tree provide holiday support.</li> <li>•"Help Me Grow Alaska" assists with child development needs</li> <li>•211 for connection to resources and services</li> </ul>	<p><b>Social Services:</b> Programs like "Help Me Grow Alaska" for wrap-around support</p>
<p><b>Childcare/education:</b> Parents value HS (KCI) for its free services. Other valued programs include Parents as Teachers PAT, Campfire, and 21st Century.</p>	<p><b>Childcare/education:</b> Relationship-based home visiting</p>
<p><b>Housing:</b> Habitat for Humanity and temporary assistance programs help families during medical or financial emergencies.</p>	
<p><b>Nutrition:</b> SNAP, WIC, the Food Bank of Alaska, and local pantries like St Francis House and Lutheran Social Services</p>	

Parents and guardians were asked in the parent survey to identify whether certain needs were met for them or for their neighbors, extended family, and families in their community. More parents/guardians identified needs for others than for themselves. The top ten most-mentioned needs for both groups were: safe and affordable housing, awareness of local services and supports, safe neighborhoods, affordable childcare, and family-friendly employers. Table 42 compares the most frequently mentioned needs for HS parents with what they said about those needs for their neighbors, extended family, and other families in the community.

**Table 42. Perception of unmet needs for HS parents and their neighbors, extended family, and families in their community, percentage, 2025-2026**

HS Family Needs	Unmet need	Needs of neighbors/extended family	Unmet need
Low or no-cost family-friendly activities	43%	Safe and affordable housing	58%
Safe and affordable housing	42%	Awareness of local services and supports	57%
Financial help	34%	Safe neighborhood	55%
Access to medical care	33%	Reliable transportation	54%
Access to dental care	33%	Employment	53%
Affordable childcare	33%	Enough food to eat	52%
Family-friendly employers	31%	Early childhood education	52%
Cultural activities for the family	27%	Affordable childcare	51%
Safe neighborhood	25%	Access to mental health care	49%
Awareness of local services and supports	24%	Family-friendly employers	49%

Source: KCI Parent Survey, 2025-2026

## Collaborative arrangements

KCI has key collaborative arrangements with partners to facilitate connections between the organization and HS families to address health, economic, and social service needs. In the focus groups, KCI parents, staff, and community providers highlighted the following important linkages and suggested future linkages. Table 43 describes these collaborative arrangements.

### Key Organizational Linkages:

- KCI maintains a strong relationship with the Anchorage School District.
- Help Me Grow Alaska is an organization that provides long-term, over-the-phone support to help families identify and overcome barriers to services.

### Partnerships to pursue in the future

- There is interest in reinstating WIC services at KCI centers for on-site interviews and wellness checks, as they were offered before COVID-19.
- Anchorage Health Literacy Collaborative: KCI has been invited to rejoin this group to share information on supporting families and improving financial and health literacy.
- One respondent suggested creating or partnering with an agency to provide a "navigator" or a drop-in center where families can receive immediate, one-on-one help with various service plans.
- There is a desire to host "all-in-one" fairs at KCI centers featuring WIC, childcare assistance, food pantries, and mental health resources to make help more accessible to both families and staff.
- KCI aims to hold quarterly meetings with community partners to conduct joint leadership training.

**Table 43. KCI Collaborative arrangements with partners**

Collaborative Partner	Area of Partnership	Type of Agreement
Anchorage School District	Preparing children for success in school. Eligibility and enrollment. Disability services (3-5). Data/facility sharing. Student transition.	Formal Agreement
Trinity Family Counseling, Inc.	Mental Health Consultation Services	Formal Contract
Anchorage Child Care and Early Education Board (ACCEE)	The municipal board guides the allocation of resources and ensures effective implementation. Provides strategic direction to the municipality based on public input and best practices.	HS director on ACCEE implementation team
PIC	Mutual referral system.	Formal agreement
PIC Diaper Pantry	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday HS Team registers, and picks up diapers/wipes for children birth to age 3	informal partnership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Just kids</li> <li>• Aurora dentistry</li> <li>• Kids Dental Tree</li> <li>• Anchorage Pediatric Dentistry</li> </ul>	Our dental partners donate time to complete screenings for all children. Have done pro-bono dental work for children without insurance	Informal partnership
Therapeutic Health and Home	Occupational and physical therapy in classrooms support and advisement.	MOA - Formal agreement

Speech Language Therapy Services, LLC	Our SLPs provide classroom services, advise us on classroom needs, and support us with community resources.	Formal agreement
Anchorage municipal libraries	Connection with the youth services librarian who presents at KCI and hosts field trips	Informal agreement
Anchorage School District Child in Transition Program	Mutual referral system. Provides gas cards and other support for families in transition.	
WIC	WIC provides on-site events to help families sign up. They provide food boxes to distribute to KCI families.	Formal MOA
Providence Nurse Family Partnership program	HS and PNFP staff do Joint home visits as needed to support families.	Informal
University of Alaska Anchorage	Partnership for students in the early childhood education major at UAA to complete live observations and coursework.	Informal
King Tech High School	High School Students in ECE classes, partner for their social events, and for students to pursue future employment after completing high school	Informal
Center for Safe Alaskans	Families are referred for free car seat checks and free car seats	Informal

## Data review and analysis, including major issues, trends, and concerns

In this section, key areas affecting HS families will be analyzed using data from all the sources presented in this report (Secondary data trend analysis, Parent Survey, Parent Interest List, and KCI Focus Groups). All data that is mentioned pertains to the Anchorage area. The different areas that are covered in this section are not mutually exclusive. It takes a cohesive approach to housing, transportation, financial well-being, and food security to form a solid foundation for a family to operate from and complete activities that produce a thriving, healthy life. When one pillar of this foundation, such as housing, is unstable, it affects all the other pillars and, in turn, the components that contribute to a healthy environment for a child.

### Employment and poverty

#### *Trend data*

The 2026 percentage change in Anchorage-based jobs was up only 0.8% from last year, along with a slight increase in the overall unemployment rate (4.4%). The lowest income individuals in the borough are more likely to have a disability, no high school diploma, and be unemployed. Anchorage added 3,100 jobs in 2025, with most of the gains in private employment. The average hourly wage barely kept up with inflation.

Poverty-related data for mothers with three-year-olds revealed that almost a quarter could not pay all their bills in 2023, and for 10% there was a loss of a job in the household. Almost 30% availed themselves of WIC and 27% of food stamps in the last three months of 2023. These support programs were also popular with HS parents who were surveyed – 50% used WIC, and 44% received SNAP/food stamps benefits. Other population assistance programs used by HS parents were housing assistance (15%) and childcare assistance (16%).

The number of children under five living below the federal poverty level was 2,563. Many of the students from KCI live in areas with elementary schools where over 50% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

### *Parent Interest List*

Many parents in both EHS and HS expressed interest in learning about how to increase their job opportunities such as apprenticeships programs (EHS – 11 parents, HS – 16), trade school opportunities (EHS – 9 parents, HS – 20) college courses (EHS – 8 parents, HS 19 ), obtaining your high school diploma/GED (EHS – 4 parents, HS – 13); and budgeting and banking (EHS – 11 parents, HS – 29).

### *Parent Survey*

The KCI Parent Survey revealed that parents perceived a high need (between 48% and 53%) among their neighbors, extended families, and families in the community for employment, family-friendly employers, and financial help. Smaller percentages of parents also reported those unmet needs for themselves (22%-34%).

In response to the open-ended question asking families what the biggest challenge they face is, responses included:

- Difficulty with public service offices, including rigid eligibility rules for childcare assistance and delays in Medicaid renewals
- Not enough support, reliable aid, and services for minority groups
- A need for food resources, diapers, and wipes
- Lack of jobs
- Lack of employer empathy for parents' schedules

In response to the open-ended question about the support that is available for parents related to income and poverty, some responded:

- Health care support through Medicaid/Denali Kid Care
- The Salvation Army and Angel Tree, which provide holiday support
- Temporary assistance programs help families during medical or financial emergencies.
- SNAP, WIC, the Food Bank of Alaska, and local pantries like St Francis House and Lutheran Social Services

### *KCI representatives and community provider focus groups*

Lack of financial security was woven into many topics discussed in the focus groups, such as how to prioritize paying bills when one doesn't have enough money to cover them all. It was mentioned that paying for housing would take priority over going to the doctor or owning reliable transportation, and that paying for healthcare would not rank as high as paying for food and housing.

## Housing and Transportation

### *Trend data*

In 2025, 620 families were homeless. Three percent of mothers of three-year-olds reported being homeless in 2023. In 2023-2024, Anchorage households spent 16.2% of their budget on transportation.

### *Parent Interest List*

Parents expressed interest in learning how to save for a home and buy a home (EHS – 10 parents, HS 34).

### *Parent Survey*

KCI parents and guardians reported their current housing status in the parent survey. Eighty-four percent reside in rental housing, 18% have their own home, 11% stay with friends, and 4% are in shelter or temporary housing. About 8 out of 10 HS families reported having their own vehicle, while the others used a ride service, a bus, or a friend or family member's car.

When asked to identify unmet needs in the survey, 25% of KCI parents reported an unmet need related to safe and reliable housing (42%) and a safe neighborhood (25%). A higher percentage of parents mentioned this need for their neighbors, extended family, and other families in their community: safe and affordable housing (58%) and a safe neighborhood (55%). The parent survey revealed that 22% of parents needed reliable transportation, while 54% of respondents thought their neighbors and others had this need.

In response to the open-ended question about the biggest challenges for parents, some responded:

- Lack of reliable door-to-door transportation for families with young children or strollers
- Inadequate snow removal makes it difficult to get to school, work, or appointments.
- Rising housing costs that exceed family income levels
- Limited housing supply and long waiting lists

In response to the open-ended question about the biggest supports for parents, some responded:

- People Mover travel training helps families navigate the city.
- Hospital patient navigators help with lodging and travel for medical crises.
- Habitat for Humanity assists with housing.

### *KCI representatives and community provider focus groups*

KCI representatives stated that there is a local homelessness crisis due to rising costs and a limited supply of housing, which is further exacerbated by higher prices for other essentials like groceries, heat, and healthcare. They stated that a family sometimes needs to prioritize housing over health and dental care. Additionally, unstable housing can make everything more difficult. For example, having unstable housing with unreliable transportation can make attending appointments and bringing children to school difficult.

KCI representatives said that the lack of transportation was a barrier to children attending preschool and K-12 school and impeded the receipt of “wrap-around” services. Transportation issues are often intertwined with housing instability; unhoused or frequently moving families face extreme "stress and chaos," making regular attendance nearly impossible. Families often cannot reach food pantries due to limited hours, lack of

transportation, or the closure of neighborhood grocery stores, leading to food insecurity. Lack of transportation prevents families from completing multi-dose vaccinations or following up on vision screenings and health referrals.

Taking public transportation can be difficult if it doesn't reach the family's home, or if they must walk and push a stroller on unclear, snowy roads or sidewalks. Additionally, employers can be inflexible about allowing time for getting kids to school, especially if the child travels on a school bus and the parent takes public transportation to work.

Supports that KCI representatives said were helpful included that ASD Children in Transition (CIT) provides gas cards, bus passes, and cab vouchers to ensure students can stay at their home school, even if their living situation changes. Other supports that were mentioned were that special needs students are bused to school and that People Mover will come to a person's home to train the family on how to use the bus system. Also, Medicaid has a dedicated line for transportation to medical appointments, if requested at least two weeks in advance.

Housing support that was mentioned as crucial to families includes the Cook Inlet Housing Authority and their collaboration with the Ridgeline Terrace Center, Alaska Housing vouchers, Habitat for Humanity housing program, and the Anchorage Hospitality Foundation/United Way program that provides transitional housing referrals.

## Food security

### *Trend data*

Many KCI students live in low-income communities where students qualify for free and reduced lunch. KCI students come from 35 out of 46 different elementary school zones in Anchorage. Sixty-seven percent of the zones where students are from have over 50% of students eligible for free/reduced lunch, representing 80% of all KCI enrollees. WIC and food stamp use among mothers of three-year-olds increased in 2023.

### *Parent Interest List*

Food security-related interests for parents included learning about buying more food for less (EHS – 18 parents, HS – 35) and preparing healthy, low-cost meals (EHS – 15 parents, HS – 26).

### *Parent Survey*

Twenty-four percent of parents reported an unmet need for enough food to eat, while they said that others in their community or extended family had an even greater need (52%). Of the parents surveyed, half received WIC benefits, and 44% received SNAP/food stamps.

In response to the open-ended question about the biggest challenges for parents, some responded: High grocery prices. In response to the open-ended question about the biggest supports for parents, some responded: SNAP, WIC, the Food Bank of Alaska, and local pantries such as St. Francis House and Lutheran Social Services.

### *KCI representatives and community provider focus groups*

KCI representatives reported that major challenges around food security for parents were related to stringent eligibility and benefit challenges for SNAP/Food stamps, a backlog of applications that prevents immediate

benefits, needing to “recertify” requires much effort, especially for English as a second language families, and navigating the WIC system and buying appropriate food can be hard for some people. Also, a lack of a personal vehicle can make it difficult to get to food banks during open hours, and the food may not align with the family's cultural practices. Additionally, general economic insecurity pits buying food against all the other goods and services a family needs.

KCI representatives appreciated that food assistance programs existed (WIC, SNAP, and Food Banks), and they also liked that education programs often provide meals for children, sometimes three meals a day. They reported that the center sometimes sends extra food home with children, and programs provide food boxes during winter break, and classrooms often have “back-up” food if kids are hungry.

## Physical, mental, and dental health

### *Trend data*

While prenatal health and medical care appear sufficient for most Anchorage women and their babies, the percentage of mothers in 2023 who reported delaying or not having their child vaccinated rose from 2022. Only about 10% of mothers have not taken their three-year-old child to a well-child check-up in the past year or have a relationship with a provider for their child.

Maternal well-being can set the tone of the home for young children. Eight percent of mothers reported that they were often sad, depressed, or felt helpless, and 15.3% reported having maternal depression. Mothers also reported wanting behavioral health treatment (13.7 %) or substance misuse treatment (1.1%). According to mothers of three-year-olds, 4.2% of their children saw violence or physical abuse in the last year.

On the positive side, almost all mothers (98.4%) reported that their child had a positive relationship with another adult (not a parent). A high percentage of mothers (90.2%) can rely on social connections for help, have someone to take them to the clinic if needed (85.2%), and can identify someone to loan them money in a crisis or to help out when they are sick (76.7%).

### *Parent Interest List*

Health-related interests for parents included learning about relationships (EHS – 17 parents, HS – 30), mental wellness (EHS – 13 parents, HS – 28), physical activity for families (EHS – 14 parents, HS – 42)

### *Parent Survey*

HS parents who said they had an unmet need for access to medical care was 33%, and dental care – 33%. They stated that their neighbors and others had an even higher need for medical care access (46%) and dental care access (47%).

HS parents who were surveyed reported needing access to mental health care (17%) or drug and alcohol treatment (8%), and identified the need as very high for their neighbors and others – mental health care (49%) and substance use treatment (40%).

In response to the open-ended question on the biggest challenges facing parents, some responded:

- Rising medical insurance premiums and difficulty accessing affordable dental and medical care
- Lack of adequate mental health and drug addiction programs

In response to the open-ended question about the support that is available for parents, some responded:

- Healthcare support through Medicaid and Denali Kid Care.
- The Nurse Family Partnership program
- Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center

### *KCI representatives and community provider focus groups*

Community providers said they are seeing more mental health challenges in younger children than in the past, and sometimes parents are fearful about admitting their child needs help and seeking out that help. Also, the whole family can face challenges that affect their mental health, such as isolation, trauma, and domestic violence. It was also noted that there is a shortage of accessible counseling support.

KCI representatives noted the following strengths that help families access healthcare: programs and support such as screenings, professionals providing school-based counseling, and the ASD Child in Transition program. Other support programs, such as Medicaid, hospital-based navigators, and the Nurse-Family Partnership program, were also mentioned, as were nonprofits that help with transportation to appointments and community events, such as health fairs, which provide access to vaccinations, blood tests, and wellness information.

## Safety

### *Parent Interest List*

The Parent Interest List asked parents if they were interested in learning about different aspects of child safety. Parents were interested in learning about teaching children about personal safety (EHS – 15 parents, HS – 40), CPR and first aid (EHS – 9 parents, HS – 30), and car seat safety (EHS – 7 parents, HS – 40).

### *Parent survey*

The main safety challenges mentioned by parents were the existence of homeless camps and related criminal activity near where they are living. They said their children had experienced harassment by unhoused people.

### *KCI representatives and community provider focus groups*

KCI representatives and community providers recognized that some parents had safety concerns regarding potential ICE involvement, domestic violence situations, needing crisis services but not having those accessible, lack of neighborhood safety, and children not being safe while using electronics.

Safety supports mentioned included organizations that teach about and provide resources for safety, such as a car safety program and a program that offers reflective tape for winter visibility and survival simulation training. Also mentioned were regular neighborhood safety patrols, the removal of nearby homeless camps, and the use of devices like Ring doorbells.

## Child Welfare

### *Trend data*

According to the Alaska Office of Children’s Services, there were a total of 7,680 protective services reports screened in Anchorage in 2025. Of those reports, 2,355 were “screened in” for investigation. In January of 2026,

in Anchorage, there were 950 children in out-of-home placement, 42 children had been removed from their homes that month, and 19 were discharged from OCS care.<sup>24</sup> That month, there were 697 reports and 230 reports screened in. In Anchorage that month, 81 initial assessments were completed, and 22 substantiated cases were identified.

## Population Trends including language, culture, and race/ethnicity

### *Trend data*

The Anchorage population is mostly non-Hispanic White (54%), followed by White, more than one race (11%), Asian alone (9%), Hispanic or Latino (9%), and American Indian/Alaska Native (8%). English is the most spoken language in Anchorage homes, followed by Spanish (11,915), Asian/Pacific Islander language (20,373), Indo-European languages (4,291), and other languages (4,657).

### *Parent survey*

Parents who were surveyed said they had unmet needs for low- or no-cost, family-friendly activities (43%) and for cultural activities for the family (27%). Their perception of this need in other families was higher at 49% and 48%. Similarly, assistance with language translation was mentioned as an unmet need by 11% of parents and perceived as a need for others by 40% of parents.

In response to the open-ended question of the biggest challenges for parents, some responded:

- A lack of childcare that meets specific cultural or religious needs
- Isolation and lack of strong support networks

In response to the open-ended question about the biggest support for parents, some responded:

- "Neighbors looking out for each other" culture where people are friendly, kind, and helpful during times of need
- The Salvation Army and Angel Tree, which provide holiday support to low income families
- Help Me Grow Alaska assists with child development needs.
- 211 for connection to resources and services
- The Alaska Native Heritage Center
- CITC for cultural awareness

### *KCI representatives and community provider focus groups*

The main challenges mentioned by KCI representatives and community providers were language and communication barriers, especially in filling out forms and translating more complex technical texts. They also stated that difficulties can arise in homes when the children and parents have different proficiency levels in different languages. They also mentioned that families from non-dominant cultures face challenges in finding culturally aligned childcare and educational programs.

Supports that help parents are being connected to others of the same culture, community programs that provide support during the holidays, Language Link and other interpretive services, translated and adapted educational materials, the Alaska Literacy Program, and specific efforts by programs to have "culture corners"

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<sup>24</sup> Alaska OCS Statistical Information, <https://dfcs.alaska.gov/ocs/Pages/statistics/default.aspx>

and have children and parents share their culture.

## Early Childcare and Education

### *Trend data*

The percentage of children who met all kindergarten-readiness goals was 16.8% (2023-2024), down from 20.2% the year before. In 2024, 2,936 children were enrolled in preschool/nursery school, and a similar number in kindergarten. Forty-two percent of kindergarten students in 2025-2026 were above or at the benchmark for early literacy, up from the previous year's percentage of 40.9%. Additionally, 31% of kindergarteners in Anchorage achieved 11 of 13 developmental goals. The percentage of mothers of three-year-olds who reported that someone read to their child daily in the past week showed a slight increase (57.6%).

In 2023, half of Anchorage mothers of three-year-olds reported using childcare services. The most common type of care is a childcare center (58%), followed by in-home care with a relative or by bringing the child to a relative's home. The next most popular is bringing the child to a non-relative's home, or having a non-relative come into the home. The types of childcare use that have increased the most since 2015 are in-home care by a relative (28-point increase) and bringing a child to a relative's home (18.4-point increase), followed by using a childcare center (11.7-point increase).

The gap in the number of slots for early education and the need identified by **thread** was 27% of the population of Anchorage children under six years old (5,530 children). Childcare costs take up a significant share of household income for low-income households, especially single-parent households. For single male households, childcare takes up 21% of household income, and for single female households, 35%. These data points to the need for more affordable early childhood education slots.

Only 20.3% to 6.3% of eligible children are receiving HS and EHS services. This gap indicates a significant need and suggests that expanding programs could be successful in achieving full enrollment. However, a review of recent national policy related to HS and EHS funding and regulations indicates uncertainty about support for expanding programming, as maintaining programs has been challenging due to funding freezes and new compliance requirements.

### *Parent Interest List*

Current HS and EHS parents expressed interest in several different aspects of early childhood education: helping children identify feelings (EHS – 53 parents, HS – 48), learning about milestones (EHS – 42 parents, HS – 34) and positive discipline techniques (EHS – 47 parents, HS – 46), and age-appropriate technology (EHS – 30 parents, HS – 24). For both groups of parents, the most popular training interests were child development topics. HS parents were interested in learning how to prepare their child for kindergarten (47) and teaching children about personal safety (37).

### *Parent Survey*

Thirty-three percent of parents surveyed reported that affordable childcare was an unmet need for them, and 51% thought it was an unmet need for other local families and extended family. KCI parents were less likely to feel they had an unmet need for care for a child with a disability (6%) or need early childhood education (14%) than they perceived this as a need for other families (31% and 61%).

In the open-ended question about the biggest challenges for parents, some responded:

- Lack of available slots and long waitlists for quality early childhood education.
- Loss of after-school programs due to lack of funding or staffing.

In response to the open-ended question on the biggest support for parents, some said they value HS (KCI) for its free services. Other valued programs include Parents as Teachers, Campfire, 21st Century, and PIC, which is helpful for children with special needs.

### *KCI Focus Groups*

In the area of childcare and education, KCI representatives felt that parents face many challenges related to the “system,” such as a lack of childcare slots, especially those for children with special needs. It is easy to lose childcare assistance due to minor technicalities, and difficult to sign up for the support at the outset due to long delays in processing applications and a complex application process. KCI staff reported that parents are less involved than in the past in their child’s classroom, and the children are demonstrating behavioral health challenges at a younger age. Staff were concerned about children using devices excessively, which was affecting their attention span. As with all other costs, childcare expenses compete with food, rent, and transportation costs for low-income families. Finally, changing start and stop times for public schools has complicated parents’ ability to adhere to their work schedules.

Supports for families include ASD, which provides essential services beyond academics, like food and behavioral health support, and the Child in Transition Program. Other programs that were mentioned that help families and children include KCI, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, PIC, Camp Fire Alaska, Stone Soup Group, Providence behavioral health providers in some schools, Nurse-Family Partnership Programs, and Trinity Family Services, which offers play therapy and support during home visits.

## **Childcare programs for infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities**

The primary providers of early learning and childcare for children diagnosed with disabilities are ASD and state-funded programs such as:

- Programs for Infants and Children (PIC)
- FOCUS (Eagle River/Chugiak/JBER)
- ASD Developmental Classrooms
- Some private centers that are inclusive of children with disabilities

Additionally, there are some helpful support services such as

- Southcentral Foundation (Child & Family Developmental Services) offers intensive neurodevelopmental evaluations and therapies.
- BrightStar Care provides specialized in-home childcare and nursing for children with more intensive medical or physical needs.
- The State of Alaska Child Care Program Office administers the Inclusive Child Care Program.

### *Parent Survey*

Some parents expressed frustration that it was difficult to find appropriate care for their child with disabilities/special needs, such as autism. They said that the school district will only accept children into specialized preschool classrooms if the need is severe enough.

Access to care for a disability was an unmet need for 6% of KCI parents who were surveyed, and 51% reported it as a need for others.

### *KCI representatives and community provider focus groups*

KCI representatives and local providers reported that access to early learning and childcare that is appropriate for children with disabilities is a need in Anchorage. They said that it is often difficult to find staff who are trained to work with children with disabilities.

## Recommendations and Priorities

### Key issues facing eligible children and families to be addressed by the HS Program

The findings from the Community Assessment confirm that families served by KCI face interconnected challenges related to housing stability, transportation access, financial insecurity, food access, and access to early childhood education. These challenges directly impact children’s ability to attend consistently, access services, and fully benefit from early learning opportunities. At the same time, the data highlights strong family interest in education, employment advancement, and child development, as well as community strengths such as existing support networks and resource programs.

In alignment with KCI’s 2031 Vision, to increase kindergarten readiness while strengthening family stability and well-being, these findings inform the following priorities for program planning, service delivery, and resource allocation.

### Prioritized recommendations

Based on analysis of trends, parent input, and community provider feedback, KCI will prioritize the following:

1. Strengthen family stability as a foundation for child outcomes  
KCI will enhance its two-generation approach by prioritizing connections to housing, food, transportation, and financial resources. Addressing these foundational needs is critical to improving attendance, health follow-up, and school readiness outcomes.
2. Increase access to early childhood education services  
Given the significant gap between available slots and community need, KCI will explore strategic opportunities to expand access, particularly for infants, toddlers, and high-need populations.
3. Improve attendance through barrier reduction and family partnership  
KCI will strengthen systems to monitor attendance in real time, identify barriers early, and partner with families to address transportation, housing, and scheduling challenges that impact consistent participation.
4. Invest in workforce stability and first-year success  
Recognizing that staffing shortages impact both quality and access, KCI will prioritize strong onboarding, coaching, and support systems to improve staff retention and effectiveness.

5. Expand access to health, mental health, and developmental supports  
KCI will continue to strengthen partnerships and internal systems to ensure timely access to medical, dental, and behavioral health services for children and families.
6. Strengthen responsive services  
KCI will continue to enhance services, programming, and practices to better serve families and reduce barriers to participation.

## Strategic goals and measurable objectives

These priorities align with KCI's strategic domains and 2031 benchmarks:  
KCI 2031 Priority Domains

### Priority Domain I: Fund Development

We will develop and implement a growth-oriented, sustainable funding system that aligns resources with our strategic priorities and core services. Through strong financial stewardship and intentional, diversified fund development, we will build our capacity to invest in our workforce, maintain high-quality services for children and families, and ensure organizational stability. By aligning funding to what matters most, we will avoid overextending staff while maintaining the flexibility to respond to emerging needs and opportunities.

### Priority Domain II: Governance

We will strengthen a high-performing shared governance system where the Board and Policy Council partner effectively to steward the organization through strong financial management, fund development, advocacy, and continuous leadership development. Together, and in collaboration with community partners, we will ensure accountability, sustainability, and expanded impact for children and families.

### Priority Domain III: Workforce Stability and First Year Success

We will build and sustain a stable, supported, and high-performing workforce by prioritizing first-year success and long-term staff development. Through strong onboarding, coaching, and ongoing support, we will ensure that staff are equipped to succeed from their first day of employment through their last. We will invest in supervisor capacity, so leaders have the time and skills to effectively develop and support their teams, while fostering a culture where employees feel valued, recognized, and connected to purpose. By maintaining sustainable workloads and creating clear internal career pathways, we will strengthen retention, prevent burnout, and sustain instructional quality across our programs.

### Priority Domain IV: Kindergarten Readiness and Attendance

We will ensure that children are prepared for kindergarten by prioritizing consistent attendance and strong family engagement as essential drivers of school readiness. We will build systems that track and respond to attendance in real time, empower staff to take shared ownership of attendance outcomes, partner with families to address barriers to participation, and support multiple avenues of involvement for each family. By helping families understand the importance of daily attendance and creating responsive and supportive systems, we will increase participation, strengthen learning experiences, and improve outcomes for children.

## Priority Domain V: Family Engagement as a Two-Generation Strategy

We will strengthen family engagement as a core, two-generation strategy that supports both child outcomes and family well-being. By building authentic, trusting relationships, staff will partner with families in meaningful and relevant ways that honor their strengths and goals. We will connect families to resources and opportunities that promote stability and financial mobility, while ensuring engagement is purposeful and aligned to improved outcomes for children. Through this approach, families will be empowered as partners in their child’s development and supported in achieving long-term success.

## Priority Domain VI: Health and Safety

We will maintain safe, healthy, and compliant program environments that support every child’s health, nutrition, safety, and well-being across all settings. Through established monitoring systems, including internal dashboards, licensing inspections, and federal reviews, staff will ensure timely screenings and follow-up on identified needs, including vision, hearing, and dental care. Health and nutrition support will be integrated into learning and family engagement, while preventive care and connections to community resources will be sustained to promote children’s overall well-being and readiness to learn.

## KCI’s 2031 Benchmarks

#	Benchmark	Threshold 2031
I	Fund Development	KCI raises \$750,000 annually through its external funding system to invest in wages, educational innovation, social services, and contingency funds.
II	Governance	KCI sustains a high performing shared governance system in which the Board and Policy Council actively and effectively engage in executive leadership, fund development, financial stewardship, and advocacy resulting in a 90% confidence rating among internal stakeholders in the strength, clarity, and impact of governance and the governance self-assessment demonstrates improvement across all domains.
III	Workforce Stability	KCI sustains a stable and effective workforce by achieving at least 70% retention of staff in their first 12 months and maintaining an overall staff retention rate of 75%.
IV	Kindergarten Readiness and KCI Attendance	KCI increases average annual attendance to 80% or higher, with at least 75% of children attending 80% or more of their scheduled service days, and demonstrates continuous improvement in kindergarten readiness outcomes, with a growing percentage of children meeting or exceeding school readiness expectations each year.
V	Family Engagement as a Two Generation Strategy	90% of KCI families establish goals as part of the Family Partnership Process and 90% of families participate in 2 or more agency events during the program year.
VI	Health and Safety	KCI sustains full compliance in health and safety across all program environments, with no systemic findings in monitoring reviews, and achieves at least 95% timely follow-up on identified health needs (vision, hearing, dental).

## Recruitment area for grantee

KCI's recruitment area includes the Municipality of Anchorage, where data indicates significant unmet need for early childhood education services among low-income families. Recruitment efforts will prioritize communities with:

- High rates of poverty and eligibility for free and reduced-price lunch
- Limited access to affordable childcare

KCI currently serves children from most elementary school attendance areas within Anchorage, with a significant concentration of enrolled families residing in high-need communities.

## Recruitment area for each delegate, if applicable

KCI does not currently operate delegate agencies.

## Locations for centers and home-based programs

KCI will continue to strategically locate center-based and home-based services to maximize access for high-need families.

### *Center-Based Programs*

Centers are in areas with:

- High concentrations of low-income families
- Proximity to elementary schools and community resources
- Access to public transportation routes

Future site planning will prioritize areas with demonstrated childcare shortages and high demand for services.

### *Home-Based Programs*

Home-based services will be used to:

- Reach families with significant transportation barriers
- Serve families experiencing homelessness or housing instability
- Provide flexible service options for infants, toddlers, and families with unique needs

## Criteria for recruitment and selection

KCI utilizes a comprehensive, data-informed, point-based selection process to ensure enrollment prioritizes children and families with the greatest need, consistent with Head Start Program Performance Standards and Community Assessment findings. Family Services staff assign points to each application based on factors including family composition, child age, income level, disability status, and risk factors impacting family stability and child development.

The selection system gives greatest weight to families experiencing significant barriers to stability and access, including:

- Children experiencing homelessness
- Children in foster care or involved with child welfare
- Families with the lowest income levels, particularly below 50% of federal poverty guidelines
- Children with diagnosed or suspected disabilities

Additional consideration is given to families experiencing multiple risk factors such as housing instability, overcrowding, recent homelessness, and family hardship. Income is a primary factor in eligibility and prioritization. Families with the lowest incomes receive the highest points. Additional consideration is given to families receiving public assistance (e.g., SNAP, SSI, ATAP) or experiencing homelessness, reflecting the strong connection between economic hardship and barriers to child outcomes.

Selection criteria also account for circumstances that impact school readiness and family well-being, including:

- Housing instability or recent homelessness
- Single or teen parents, or parents in school
- Family crises (e.g., medical issues, death, incarceration)
- Limited support systems or recent relocation
- Child health, developmental, or behavioral concerns
- Need for childcare to support employment or education

To support stability and relationships, additional points are assigned for:

- Children transitioning from Early Head Start
- Currently or previously enrolled children
- Siblings of enrolled children

While selection points guide enrollment, final placement also considers classroom composition, developmental appropriateness, and health and safety to ensure a successful fit for each child. KCI may reserve limited slots for children experiencing homelessness or in foster care. All applications are date-stamped, and in the case of tied scores, enrollment is based on application date. Enrollment of over-income families is limited and requires administrative approval.

## Financial implications of recommendations

The findings of the Community Assessment have important implications for KCI's financial planning, resource allocation, and long-term sustainability. The identified needs, particularly related to housing instability, transportation barriers, workforce challenges, and access to early childhood services require both strategic investment and careful stewardship of existing resources.

First, strengthening family stability as a foundation for child outcomes will require continued investment in family services, partnerships, and supportive resources. While many supports are accessed through community partnerships, KCI will need to allocate resources to staff capacity, coordination efforts, and limited direct support (e.g., emergency assistance, transportation support, or basic needs items) that help reduce barriers to attendance and participation. These investments are expected to improve program performance outcomes, particularly

attendance and family engagement, which are directly tied to funding stability and long-term impact.

Second, the significant gap between the demand for early childhood education and available program slots highlights a potential need for future expansion. While current funding constraints and uncertainty at the federal level require a cautious approach, KCI will prioritize maximizing full enrollment and minimizing vacancies to fully utilize existing funding. Any consideration of program expansion will require identification of sustainable funding sources, including grants, partnerships, and increased unrestricted revenue.

Workforce stability also presents a critical financial consideration. Investments in competitive compensation, onboarding systems, coaching, and professional development are necessary to improve retention and reduce turnover-related costs such as recruitment, training, and lost productivity. Strengthening workforce stability is expected to yield long-term cost efficiencies while maintaining program quality and compliance. Additionally, expanding access to health, mental health, and developmental supports will rely primarily on strengthening community partnerships rather than direct service expansion. However, KCI may need to invest in coordination, data tracking systems, and staff training to ensure timely follow-up and integration of services. These efforts support compliance with Head Start Performance Standards and reduce the risk of findings in monitoring reviews.

Across all priority areas, KCI's financial strategy will focus on aligning resources to high-impact activities that directly support attendance, enrollment, family stability, and school readiness outcomes. This includes strengthening internal systems to improve efficiency, leveraging community partnerships to extend capacity, and increasing unrestricted and discretionary funding to provide flexibility in responding to emerging needs. Finally, these findings reinforce the importance of a diversified and sustainable funding approach. KCI will continue to pursue grant opportunities, community partnerships, and philanthropic support to supplement federal funding and reduce reliance on a single funding source. Strong governance and financial oversight will be essential to ensuring that resources are used effectively and aligned with strategic priorities.

## Priority assigned to serving new, emerging, or underserved populations that have been identified during the community assess

The Community Assessment identified ongoing unmet need for early childhood services across the service area, including among populations that may face barriers to access. KCI remains committed to ensuring services are responsive and accessible within its current service delivery model.

Currently, available funding and operational capacity require KCI to focus on strengthening the quality and effectiveness of existing services rather than expanding into new service areas. Priority will be placed on improving attendance, enhancing family engagement, and ensuring that enrolled children and families receive consistent, comprehensive services that support positive outcomes.

KCI will continue to serve a broad range of families within its recruitment area and will enhance service delivery through responsive practices, strong community partnerships, and ongoing monitoring of community needs. The program will use Community Assessment data to inform continuous improvement and ensure services remain aligned with identified needs.

KCI will continue to assess opportunities for growth and will consider expansion in the future as resources become available and can be sustained.

## Conclusion

The Community Assessment reinforces that improving outcomes for children requires a comprehensive approach that addresses both educational needs and the broader conditions affecting family stability. KCI is well-positioned to respond to these needs through its integrated service model, strong community partnerships, and clear strategic direction. By aligning resources, services, and systems to the priorities identified in this assessment, KCI will continue to expand its impact, strengthen family outcomes, and ensure that more children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.