



# Learn & Grow

*Alaska's Commitment to Quality Early Care & Learning*

## PROGRESS REPORT FY20

Learn & Grow, Alaska's Quality Recognition and Improvement System (QRIS), supports early childhood education programs in improving their quality of care. Learn & Grow is housed and managed by thread.

In FY20, nearly 140 programs across Alaska were voluntarily enrolled in Learn & Grow, demonstrating a statewide commitment to provide a higher level of care and learning opportunities to young children.

As you will see in this progress report, early childhood education programs continued to work towards improving their quality level in FY20 as Learn & Grow continued to evolve.

## WHAT IS LEARN & GROW?

Learn & Grow, Alaska's Quality Recognition and Improvement System (QRIS), supports early childhood education programs in improving the quality of their care.

To parents, high-quality child care is vital for their child's success. For programs, providing high-quality care is their goal. Learn & Grow brings these needs together in a system designed to improve and foster the success of Alaska's young children.

## YEAR IN REVIEW

### FY20 in Review

2019

Jul 01

#### Jump Start Pilot In Mat-Su Valley Concludes

Learn & Grow concluded a pilot project to expand in the Mat-Su Valley. Nine new programs were enrolled in Learn & Grow as a result. The pilot was supported by the Mat-Su Health Foundation.

#### Planning For Success

Learn & Grow's FY19-20 Strategic Plan launched with multiple focus areas and specific annual activities designed to advance the development and implementation of Learn & Grow.

Jul 15

Nov 01

#### Expansion

Learn & Grow (Levels 1 & 2) expanded to include Head Start, Early Head Start and licensed school-age programs. Information sessions were held through November for interested programs. As a result, one Head Start and three licensed school-age programs joined Learn & Grow.

**Keeping It Simple**

Because of the feedback provided by early educators to Learn & Grow in 2019, Level 1 and 2 Quality Activities were updated, making it easier for programs and educators to achieve success.

Nov 04

2020

May 01

**Support During Crisis**

To help programs during COVID-19, Learn & Grow updated its policies and procedures to better support distant participation and ensure programs maintained their Learn & Grow status. Programs were also able to take advantage of **thread's** free training to support staff professional development through the evolving crisis.

**Professional Development**

By the end of FY20, **819** early childhood educators increased their skills through Learn & Grow training (124% increase).

Jun 29

Jun 30

**Enrollment**

By the end of FY20, 138 licensed child care programs across Alaska were enrolled in Learn & Grow, advancing quality statewide. Of those, 85 programs achieved Level 1 while 32 programs achieved Level 2 (a 100% increase).

### WHAT'S NEXT?

Learn & Grow will launch its complete framework (Levels 1-5), giving programs an entire system of tools and resources they need to offer Alaska's children a high-quality early childhood education.

As part of **thread's** Powering Ahead with Technology Project, a new database system is in development for the Learn & Grow service. This will include program access to an online portal to self-manage quality improvement activities.