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The new year has been off to an exciting start at Southeast Childhood Collective! One of our biggest highlights so far was hosting our Early Childhood Conference, which was a tremendous success and brought together early childhood professionals from across the region for learning, connection, and inspiration.

We are also thrilled to welcome three new team members to our growing organization, filling the roles of Childcare Development & Partnerships Specialist, PAT Home Visitor, and Finance Manager. Their expertise and enthusiasm will help strengthen the support we provide to children, families, and educators throughout Southeast Alaska.

Check out the rest of our newsletter for program highlights, updates, and a look at all the exciting work happening across Southeast Childhood Collective so far this year!

PROGRAM NEWS

2026 Early Childhood Conference Success!

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the 2026 Southeast Childhood Collective Annual Early Childhood Conference, Nurture: Grounded in Relationships, Growing in Connection.

Together we created a space grounded in relationships, reflection, and connection, where learning, laughter, and shared purpose truly flourished. We gathered dozens of highly qualified and inspiring presenters offering 40 sessions over 2 days with nearly 250 participants from communities across Southeast Alaska and beyond! There was food, friends, and LOTS of fun! From meaningful conversations to inspiring sessions, this time together was a powerful reminder of what's possible when we come together in support of children, families, and one another. The care and commitment you bring to this work each day is deeply meaningful, and it was an honor to learn and grow alongside you.

We look forward to continuing to nurture these connections and grow together. We are so grateful to be in this work with you.

Save the date! Our next Conference will take place March 12 & 13, 2027!

conference@childhoodcollective.org.

Baby Raven WINGS Program

This year, SCC partnered with Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI) to implement the WINGS (Wisdom In Nurturing Guides & Storytelling) program in childcare centers throughout Juneau. **The goal of the program is to help early childhood educators foster culturally responsive classrooms.** The WINGS program achieves this by connecting a teacher with a Roving Reader and a Cultural Specialist from SHI to help bring Alaska Native culture into the classroom. This is done through monthly on-site classroom visits where the Roving Reader reads a book focused on Alaska Native Culture. After reading the book, the Roving Reader and Cultural Specialist set up and help facilitate several paired and culturally sustaining literacy activities. After the visit, all materials are left with the teacher to continue using in the classroom. Our wonderful Childcare Provider Mentor, Colleen Brody, provides on-site, biweekly, one-on-one coaching and mentoring support to participating teachers. These meetings focus on the goals and needs of the individual teacher, so they are supported as they work towards creating more culturally responsive classrooms. This holistic approach is key to implementing long-term systemic change.

Five Juneau programs chose to participate in Year One of this three-year grant. Enrollment for Year Two will open up in the fall of 2026. If you have any questions about this program or would like to be contacted when enrollment opens up, please reach out to Molly Briggs at babyravenread@sealaska.com or Colleen Brody at cbrody@childhoodcollective.org.

The Support Circle for Childcare Administrators and Managers

We are excited to introduce SCC's new program: **The Support Circle**. The Support Circle is a monthly, counselor-facilitated Peer Support Group for Childcare Administrators and Managers. This nine-part series is designed to foster connection, support, and resilience among childcare administrators across Southeast Alaska as they explore and problem solve around issues commonly experienced in this field of work. The emphasis is on **mutual support, storytelling, and collective problem-solving while holding space for community, resilience, and healing in the midst of professional challenges.**

This series is at capacity, though interested parties may contact the Circle Coordinator, Joanna Forst, at joannaforstlcsw@gmail.com for more information or to further support this program.

Meet SCC's New Childcare Development & Partnerships Specialist

Fisher Stevens joined Southeast Childhood Collective in March as a Childcare Development & Partnerships Specialist. A lifelong Juneau resident, Fisher has over 16 years of experience working in childcare, and has also supported providers through coaching, professional development, and advocacy work. In his new role, he focuses on strengthening childcare systems and partnerships across Southeast Alaska.



Partnership for Families & Children

The 17th Annual Early Learning Fair took place on April 17th and brought together more than 400 families, children, and community members for an energetic and meaningful evening. Children

Free vision and hearing screenings were especially popular, serving 150 children and helping connect families to important early supports.

There is also a new Little Free Library at the Field House. It's stocked with books especially for young children and brought to the community through the PFC Early Literacy Committee.



Southeast Childhood Collective

SUPPORTING FAMILIES, BUILDING CHILDCARE

Little Free Library at Dimond Field House

Parents as Teachers

We honor our incredible Parents as Teachers Home Visitors who show up week after week with open hearts and steady support for families. They nurture strong parent-child connections, create space for confidence and growth, and help families build community through group connections and weekly playgroups. Their work strengthens families, empowers caregivers, and helps children thrive!



window for her to pull into our driveway. As soon as he sees her car, he runs to the door to open it for her and leads her to the table where he has already chosen where she will sit (most times, it's next to him). Liesel is so patient and great with both our boys. She has had great tips and suggestions for us for a multitude of things, and she's also a great sounding board for all things kids, no matter their ages (even our big kids). Liesel is such a bright light and we look forward to our visits with her every month!"



already shown up with so much love, kindness, and compassion. We celebrate you today and everyday!

Celebrating
home visiting
& the professionals
who make this
field special.



ADVOCACY

Childcare Funding Update

There is important momentum building around childcare funding in Alaska. The State House recently added **\$7.5 million** to the budget to support the childcare workforce — a meaningful investment in stabilizing programs and strengthening support for early educators across the state.

As the budget now moves to the Senate, now is the time to act! **Please consider reaching out to your senator and asking them to fight to keep this funding in the final budget.**

At the local level, the City is currently facing difficult budget decisions, including proposed service reductions and grant cuts. While these conversations continue, childcare funding is not currently included in the list of proposed reductions — an encouraging sign of its value as vital community infrastructure.

STAY CONNECTED WITH US!

Join our online community and stay connected with SCC. Follow us for agency updates, helpful family resources, upcoming events, and highlights from our programs across Southeast Alaska.



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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

SCC's valuable services and resources are made possible through a variety of grants and contributions from generous community members like you. Please consider supporting the SCC Imagination Library or Diaper Bank by selecting one of the following buttons below or contacting SCC directly.

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