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Press Release

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State collaborates with *thread* to rate quality of child care, education programs

ANCHORAGE — The Department of Health and Social Services is pleased to announce a significant step forward in the development and implementation of a Quality Rating and Improvement System for children's early care and education.

Alaska's Statewide Child Care Resource and Referral Network, known as *thread*, has received state funding in the amount of \$50,000 to support a full-time position to move this effort forward. The grant is effective January through June 2013.

The rating system's goals are to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early care and education settings, to include child care, Head Start, pre-elementary and pre-kindergarten programs.

This system is similar to other consumer rating systems, in that it "rates" goods or services to provide customers with a better understanding about the quality of that item, similar to hotel star ratings.

The duties of the new *thread* position include researching steps taken in Alaska and elsewhere to develop a rating system, and establishing a timeline for implementation.

"When the rating system is fully functioning, consumers will be able to go online to review information about the quality of Alaska's early childhood programs and make informed choices about the care their children receive," said Health and Social Services Child Care Program Manager Marcey Bish.

The department and the Division of Public Assistance are excited to build on the strong partnership between the state and *thread*, and to collaborate and coordinate with other early-care and education partners and stakeholders. By leveraging resources, the aim is to improve the quality of early care and education services, and ensure positive outcomes for Alaska's children.

For more information, and to view *Alaska's Quality Rating and Improvement System—Final Report with Recommendations 2008* and *Alaska's QRIS Report 2011*, please visit the Child Care Program Office website at: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/ccare/reports.aspx>.

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