

### **Education Incentive Program**

This program is modeled after the Juneau HEARTS program with adjustments to fit Petersburg\*. The objective is to improve the quality of care through encouraging educators to pursue degrees in the early childhood education field as well as enroll in continuing education credits related to the early childhood field.

1. Incentivize early childhood training – degree pursuing or continuing education credits – for childcare professionals.
2. Improve staff retention by increasing earnings with a bonus each six months.

This serves as a trial program to inform the longer-term approach toward decreasing the turnover rate of early childhood educators as well as increasing staff training to strengthen the quality of childcare in Petersburg. Bottom line, providing a monetary value for continuing education in the early childhood field serves strengthens the education for the 0-5 age group and 5-12 age group outside of school hours.

**Tier 1:** Current Child Development Associate (CDA) or current Childcare Associate (CCA) or Alaska Early Childhood Family Child Care Credential or 6 SEED early childhood (EC) credits. Similar to SEED levels 6-7.

\$2,000/year (A \$1,000 check 2x/year)

**Tier 2:** Associate's Degree related to Early Childhood Education or Montessori/Waldorf certificate or Bachelor's Degree in unrelated field AND 12 SEED early childhood credits. Similar to SEED levels 8-9.

\$3,500/year (A \$1,750 check 2x/year)

**Tier 3:** Bachelor's Degree or higher related to Early Childhood Education or Master's Degree or higher in unrelated field AND 24 SEED early childhood credits. Similar to SEED level 10+

\$5,000/year (A \$2,500 check 2x/year)

**Bridge:** This is a one-time only opportunity that provides a grace period for individuals who meet all requirements but who do not meet the Tier criteria. If the individual obtains the necessary education credentials prior to the one-year anniversary of the program, they would receive a retroactive bonus for the first period as well as the bonus for the second period at the appropriate Tier level.

### **Requirements:**

1. All childcare professionals must have a high school diploma, GED or equivalent.
2. Employment in the childcare profession for a minimum of six months, working at least 15 hours a week. Full-time employees will receive the full bonus; employees working a reduced schedule will be prorated (e.g. 20 hours/week = 50%).
3. The year is calculated from the date of hire.
4. Own or be employed by a licensed childcare facility that operates at least 30 hours a week.
5. If caring for fewer than six full-time children the incentive will be prorated.

**Administration:**

Petersburg Medical Center will administer the program. Thread has a career ladder established as a State of Alaska standard and the Tiers are attached to the ladder. (Thread Alaska vets the courses for appropriate content and tracks the educator's training for SEED classification).

\* One key difference: the Juneau HEARTS program provides a wage increase for the three tiers. The Petersburg program requests ARPA funds to provide a bonus based on the tiers, with the hope that a long-term program can be implemented. This program serves as a trial run (recognizing that many variables influence staff retention).

Rough cost: \$40,000/year