

# Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Members, KPB Assembly

**FROM:** Brent Johnson, Assembly President *BJ*  
Cindy Ecklund, Assembly Member *CE*  
Mike Tupper, Assembly Member *MT*

**DATE:** May 22, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Ordinance 2024-15, Establishing a Child Care Grant Funding Program for Economic Development Purposes (Johnson, Ecklund, Tupper)

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Child care shortages and workers leaving the child care industry is detrimental to Alaska's economy, in general, and specifically harmful to a thriving Kenai Peninsula Borough and the communities and cities within the borough. A lack of child care programs and opportunities disproportionately impacts mothers and results in women leaving the workforce. A lack of available child care options and opportunities further hurts the borough economy if the borough is not viewed as a good place to raise a young family.

This measure—to be funded by a tobacco excise tax, if enacted—aims to help alleviate a child care availability problem. Based on at least one estimate, the lack of early child care programs costs the Alaska economy \$165 million annually.

The Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2021-2026 identified this threat to the economy: Early childhood education access across the borough is limited and expensive. Gaps in early childhood education in the borough reduce quality of life in the region and impact the long-term strength of the region's economy.

Your consideration is appreciated.