



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MICHAEL J. DUNLEAVY

Office of the Governor

COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

800 A Street, Suite 204
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3669
Main: 907.274.4692 / 907.276.7474
TTY/TDD: 711 for Alaska Relay
Fax: 907.278-8588

RESOLUTION 2022-7

Access to childcare for disabled children

WHEREAS, parents frequently experience hardships trying to find access to childcare; and,

WHEREAS, those hardships are compounded when a child has a disability; and,

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the percentage of children with a disability in the United States increased from 3.9% in 2008 to 4.3% in 2019; and,

WHEREAS, in 2019, disability rates in the U.S were highest among American Indian and Alaska Native children at 5.9%; and,

WHEREAS, children in poverty were more likely to have a disability than children above the poverty threshold in both 2008 and 2019; and,

WHEREAS, in 2019, there were approximately 7000 children in Alaska with a disability; and,

WHEREAS, parents of disabled children are often turned away by childcare programs or find that the facility will accept the child but charge an exorbitant fee, which sometimes forces one or both parents to reduce their work hours or leave the workforce; and,

WHEREAS, according to a 2020 report from the Center for American Progress, the intentional or unintentional discrimination against people with disabilities further compounds the childcare crisis; and,

WHEREAS, that report goes on to state that half of the nation lives in “child care deserts” where the number of children under age 5 far exceeds the number of available childcare slots, and childcare openings are frequently in programs that are inaccessible to children with disabilities; and,

WHEREAS, childcare facilities often operate on very thin margins, and although the Americans with Disabilities Act requires facilities to make reasonable modifications to integrate disabled children and prohibits providers from excluding children with disabilities unless the care requires fundamentally altering the program, the cost of modifications or the alteration of the program often gives the center a reason to exclude disabled children; and,

WHEREAS, the report describes how 34% of parents with disabled children experience difficulty finding care compared to 25% of all families, and the difficulty is typically reported as being a lack of available slots; and,

WHEREAS, even when slots are available, parents are concerned about a childcare provider's knowledge or experience serving disabled children, such as deaf children, who need consistent exposure to American Sign Language for important language and social development; or providers who willingly violate the principle of inclusion by barring disabled children from specific activities or inappropriately holding older disabled children back with younger peers.


WHEREAS, there are inadequate resources available to children with disabilities, particularly those with neurodevelopmental, cognitive, and speech delay to help provide services in person on a consistent basis, effectively impacting the child's ability to learn and thrive or develop skills necessary to function independently; and,

WHEREAS, school bus drivers are not allowed to help a child or physically assist a child with a disability in and out of the bus during bus pick up and drop off, exposing that child to accidental fall and injury on a repeated basis.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights calls on all childcare providers operating within the State of Alaska to provide equal access to care for children with disabilities. The Commission further calls on policymakers to address investment and reform to the childcare industry to support working parents who help drive the state's economy.

Copies of this resolution shall be forwarded to licensed childcare providers, members of the Alaska Legislature, and the Governor of Alaska.

ADOPTED at Fairbanks, Alaska, this 13th day of December, 2022

DocuSigned by:

953643CF08314A2...
Zackary Gottshall
Chairperson
Alaska State Commission for Human Rights

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution
2022-7 is a true and accurate copy of the
language adopted by the Commission on
December 13, 2022.

Angela Park

Angela Park
Secretary
Alaska State Commission for Human Rights

