

Head Start, day care cut out, brought back

By Linda Lord-Jenkins

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A proposed budget cut for the state's portion of Head Start program financing was short-lived last week once the word got out about the proposal.

State Rep. Dave Cuddy of Anchorage, who is head of the House Finance Subcommittee on social services, last week announced that \$12 million in budget cuts would include eliminating the state's funding of Head Start and some state financing for day care facilities.

That plan was short-stopped, however, because when news of the proposal leaked out telegrams and letters started flowing to the Legislature opposing the cuts.

Cuddy and subcommittee member Rep. Mitch Abood of Anchorage, had proposed the cuts because House Finance Committee chairman Al Adams has dedicated the finance committee to maintaining a \$76 million budget for fiscal 1982. The same budget submitted by Gov. Jay Hammond is \$86 million.

Head Start is a pre-school learning program for young students. According to Dora Moore, a Head Start teacher for Tookluk Bay, Stebbins, Unalakleet, Marshall and Napsakiak, the program seeks to teach children their ABC's, colors, numbers and other simple learning tasks by the time they enter school.

A 10-year employee of Head Start, Miss Moore says that she has seen an appreciable improvement in the school performance of Head Start children.

Although the program has been viewed as a day care program for some, she and Eligio White, Head Start Child Development coordinator for Rural CAP, say that is not the case.

Parent participation in all Head Start programs is required. The programs also are run one or two days per week and parents participate.

White said he was "sincerely shocked that apparently Mr. Cuddy does not consider the children of this state to be a priority."

White said Head Start is not a holding facility for children but is a caring agency . . . "like a family."

"Head Start causes parents and children to come together. It not only assists and cares for the child but talks to the parents about their children.

"In the villages, Head Start provides an invaluable boost to children entering school," said White. He said that studies have shown that Head Start children do well in school when they first start and all through their life. "Basically that is because it makes people self-assured. The student feels confident and relaxed in the (Head Start classes) and he is apt to perform better. That attitude follows them through life," said White.

Jim Ayers, director of Rural CAP, was outspoken in his criticism of the Abood-Cuddy proposal.

Ayers said he was "flabbergasted" that the proposed cuts would be so directly aimed at the state's poor and rural residents. He estimated that if the Head Start cuts were to take
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Delbert Cabelas of Rogers Park Elementary school Headstart in Anchorage concentrates on a blockbuilding project.



Headstart is designed to help children co-ordinate large and small muscles, as well as to socialize, listen, and develop cognitive skills. Here, a youngster exercises finger muscles as he plays with a small doll.

PHOTO BY BILL HESS



Headstarters are taught proper nutrition by being fed wholesome meals, and cleanliness by brushing their teeth, as Rogers Park students Julia Vinuya and Joey Anaya demonstrate.



Teacher aide Sheridan Gregory tells Rogers Park Headstart class, Room 12, a story.

Head Start cuts to be restored, other programs not so lucky

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place, 300 of the 1,200 Alaska participants would be eliminated.

He emphasized that the program isn't just a training program but also has a nutrition and health program with it. Children get one hot meal each day they attend and health check-ups are provided.

He was equally critical of the elimination of the Coastal Zone Management program and the program which provides bulk fuel tanks to Bush villages.

The CZM program is the only state program that assists Bush villages on the coast to provide information about off shore drilling projects and other

projects.

Other programs now slated to be cut include the one CETA program, a Fire Prevention Task Force, Rural Development Administration grants, the bulk fuel program, and it looks now as if those cuts may stay in the House budget.

Finance Committee chairman Al Adams said those programs are being cut because they either duplicate other existing programs or haven't used up their 1981-82 funding so aren't needed.

The Head Start problem was solved when Cuddy and Abood took \$2 million from the municipal revenue sharing program and gave it to social services. Adams allowed that sub-

committee another \$2 million more but it says he will allow the program to go no higher.

One proposed CETA program isn't getting money because Adams says he doesn't want to start any new programs through the budget process. He says programs can be started by a vote of the Legislature but he opposes starting programs by simply granting them money.

The Fire Prevention Task Force program was cut because last year the Village Public Safety Officer program got a substantial amount of money to assume fire prevention duties, Adams said.

The Rural Development Administration grants are being cut for two reasons, says

Adams. Of the \$3 million granted to RDA last year, \$2.5 million remains unspent, which Adams says indicates that the program isn't being put to best use. He also says there are numerous other development programs for the Bush including Rural CAP-sponsored programs, the Community Enterprise Development Corp., Alaska Native Foundation-sponsored programs, and the various Native regional profit and non-profit corporation programs.

Adams said that the bulk fuel program still has \$701,000 of its \$2.6 million funding for this year left and he believes that this means that the program has served the villages which need it and isn't needed

anymore.

Ayers says he thinks the program is still needed and he warned that if the state funding for the Coastal Zone Management program is dropped, the federal government won't grant the program any money. The federal government helps fund the CZM only if the state also puts money in the program.

Whatever becomes of these programs on the House side of the state Legislature will have to be reconciled with the Senate version, Adams warned. He said that if the two houses of government don't agree on the budget, the entire matter will be handed over to a conference committee to resolve.