

# Sponsor Statement for CCS SB 11 Compulsory School Attendance/Alaska History

*An Act relating to required school attendance;  
and providing for an effective date.*

**Released:** May 13, 2002  
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SB 11 requires a parent or guardian who elects to enroll a child in first grade at the age of six to maintain the child in attendance. The bill allows the child to be withdrawn within 60 days of enrollment if it is determined to be in the best interest of the child. SB 11 does not take away the parent's option of choosing public, private or home schooling. It also does not take away the option of enrolling a child in Kindergarten at age 5 or 6. Finally, it does not take away any of the exemptions for allowable absences currently provided under existing law.

Research indicates that earlier education is beneficial, and in fact most children in Alaska are enrolled by the age of 6. However, a small percentage of students who are enrolled do not actually attend on a regular basis because state law does not require attendance until age 7. So even though a six-year-old might be enrolled in school, he/she could miss unlimited number of days and still not be considered truant. This places a burden on teachers to keep that student up with the rest of the class and increases the potential for the student to be "held back."