
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The purpose of this Act is to implement, upon
2 its ratification, the amendment to article X, section 1, of the
3 Hawaii state constitution, which would permit the appropriation
4 of public funds for private early childhood education programs,
5 by establishing a statewide early childhood education program
6 consisting of providers of high-quality early childhood
7 education to assist families in establishing a solid foundation
8 for success in school so that children graduate from high school
9 prepared for college and a career.

10 Significant research affirms the positive effects of high-
11 quality early childhood education programs on the physical,
12 cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional outcomes of young
13 children.

14 For example, early childhood education is one way to reduce
15 high school dropout rates. A report released by the Annie E.
16 Casey Foundation in 2011, and updated in 2012, found that
17 students who do not read proficiently by third grade are four
18 times more likely to drop out of school without a diploma, when



1 compared to their counterparts who are proficient readers. The
2 number increases when those students come from low-income
3 families. After third grade, students use their reading skills
4 to learn other subjects, and if they do not have the skills by
5 then, they will be faced with enormous challenges.

6 When provided with opportunities for early childhood
7 education, children are more likely to succeed in kindergarten
8 and beyond, and more likely to grow into healthy, capable, and
9 contributing adults. Research emphasizes that high-quality
10 programs are necessary to produce positive outcomes for
11 children, both in the near- and long-term. Studies have proven
12 that high-quality early childhood education programs are
13 especially effective for at-risk children, including children
14 from low-income families and otherwise disadvantaged children,
15 with the great potential to alter their lifetime trajectories
16 for success.

17 Well-executed and well-targeted early childhood education
18 programs have immediate and long-term benefits not only for the
19 children participating in the programs, but also for the
20 societies in which they live, as determined by seminal studies
21 such as those conducted by the HighScope and Chicago Parent-
22 Child Centers programs. Societies that invest in such programs



1 realize higher levels of educational attainment; reduced
2 homelessness, crime, and substance abuse rates; improved health;
3 and better overall social and economic well-being. A 2008 study
4 commissioned by the Good Beginnings Alliance found that every
5 dollar invested today in high-quality early childhood education
6 for Hawaii generates more than four dollars in future savings
7 and increased earnings through state, federal, and social
8 benefits.

9 The purpose of this Act, therefore, is to establish an
10 early childhood education program as part of the State's early
11 learning system.

12 SECTION 2. Chapter 302L, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
13 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
14 and to read as follows:

15 "§302L- Early childhood education program. (a) There
16 is established within the early learning system an early
17 childhood education program to be administered by the office.

18 The program shall:

- 19 (1) Prepare children for school; and
20 (2) Provide access to high-quality early childhood
21 education that addresses children's physical,



1 cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional
2 development.

3 (b) The early childhood education program shall serve
4 three- and four-year-old children, with priority extended to:

5 (1) Four-year-old children; and

6 (2) Underserved or at-risk children.

7 (c) Enrollment in the early childhood education program
8 shall be voluntary. Families of enrolled children shall share
9 in the costs of the program through a copayment according to a
10 sliding fee scale that is based on need and through fulfillment
11 of family participation requirements, pursuant to rules adopted
12 by the office. Children who are enrolled in or eligible for
13 public elementary education shall not be eligible for enrollment
14 in the early childhood education program.

15 (d) The office may contract with eligible providers of
16 early childhood education to increase the capacity of the early
17 childhood education program to provide high-quality early
18 childhood education to children across the State. Eligible
19 providers shall meet, or develop plans to meet, the standards
20 established under the program pursuant to rules adopted by the
21 office. The office may provide support to providers to meet
22 these standards.



1 Contract payments shall be made to the providers.

2 (e) The early childhood education program standards shall:

3 (1) Include research-based, developmentally appropriate
4 practices that are associated with better educational
5 outcomes for children, such as one teacher with a
6 bachelor's degree with twelve credits in early
7 childhood education or child development, curriculum
8 aligned with the Hawaii Early Learning and Development
9 Standards, and individual assessments of children
10 based on all areas of childhood development and
11 learning including cognitive, linguistic, social-
12 emotional approaches to learning, health, and physical
13 development; and

14 (2) Align with the state content and performance standards
15 for grades kindergarten to twelve to facilitate a
16 seamless and high-quality educational experience for
17 children.

18 (f) The office shall coordinate with other agencies and
19 programs to facilitate comprehensive services for early
20 childhood education.

21 (g) The office shall collect data to evaluate services
22 provided, inform sound policy, and improve the provision of



1 early childhood education through the early childhood education
2 program.

3 (h) The office shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91
4 necessary to carry out the purposes of this section."

5 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

6 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval
7 and upon ratification of the constitutional amendment permitting
8 the appropriation of public funds for private early childhood
9 education programs.



Report Title:

Early Childhood Education Program

Description:

Establishes the Early Childhood Education Program within the Early Learning System. Effective upon the ratification of the proposed constitutional amendment permitting public funds for private early childhood education programs. (HB864 HD1)

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