
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, as proposed in Senate Bill No. 1084,
4 introduced in the Regular Session of 2013, by establishing a
5 statewide early childhood education program consisting of
6 providers of high-quality early childhood education delivered in
7 either of Hawaii's two official languages to assist families in
8 establishing a solid foundation for success in school so that
9 children graduate from high school prepared for college and a
10 career.

11 It is not the intent of this Act to establish a voucher
12 system.

13 Significant research affirms that experiences and the
14 environments in which children develop in their earliest years
15 can have a lasting impact on their later success in school and
16 life. When provided with the opportunity for high-quality early
17 childhood education, children are more likely to succeed in
18 kindergarten and beyond and grow into capable adults who



1 contribute positively to the larger community. They are more
2 likely to reach higher levels of educational attainment, earn
3 higher salaries, and may even be healthier.

4 High-quality early childhood education programs also
5 generate significant returns on investment for society as a
6 whole--so much so that some of the country's most respected
7 economists are now touting early childhood education as an
8 economic development strategy. The investments yield a return
9 that far exceeds the return on most public projects considered
10 to spur economic development: several of the most rigorous
11 long-term studies done in this area determined returns between
12 four to nine dollars for every dollar invested. The public sees
13 returns in the form of reduced welfare, crime, and special
14 education costs; reduced homelessness and substance abuse; and
15 increased tax revenues from program participants later in life.
16 This was validated for Hawaii in a 2008 study commissioned by
17 the Good Beginnings Alliance, which found more than four dollars
18 in return for every dollar invested in high-quality early
19 childhood education for our State.

20 Of particular concern are the low-income children of
21 Hawaii. Currently, one in six children lives in poverty in
22 Hawaii, making children the poorest members of our society,



1 according to data reported by the University of Hawaii center on
2 the family in 2013. This number, which continues an increasing
3 trend, is alarming because an impoverished childhood puts
4 children at greater risk of teen pregnancy, failure to graduate
5 from high school, poor health, and lack of secure employment in
6 later years.

7 The future is likely to be grim for this population of
8 children, especially if left without the opportunity for early
9 childhood education. Reading proficiency is the leading
10 indicator of long-term academic and life success in life; high
11 school dropout rates are heavily associated with the inability
12 to read proficiently by the end of grade three, and the
13 shortfall in reading proficiency is especially pronounced among
14 low-income children. As stated by the 2010 national report
15 "Learning to Read" from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, "(If) we
16 don't get dramatically more children on track as proficient
17 readers, the United States will lose a growing and essential
18 proportion of its human capital to poverty, and the price will
19 be paid not only by individual children and families, but by the
20 entire country."

21 Lack of readiness for school directly undermines reading
22 proficiency. If a child does not arrive at kindergarten ready



1 to learn, he or she will most likely struggle to keep up, then
2 eventually lose the interest and motivation needed to learn.
3 The achievement gap only widens with each subsequent year of
4 schooling.

5 All children need high-quality, developmentally appropriate
6 early childhood education programs to arrive at school ready to
7 learn. Sadly, however, too many of our children are starting
8 kindergarten already behind. Only about forty per cent of
9 Hawaii's four-year-olds receive services to prepare them for
10 kindergarten. In addition, not all pre-kindergarten services
11 are of high quality--close to seventy-five per cent of fourth
12 graders are not reading proficiently, according to data reported
13 by the University of Hawaii center on the family in 2013. The
14 numbers are telling.

15 Early childhood education can help close the achievement
16 gap between children of different socioeconomic backgrounds.
17 The Academic Pediatric Association's Task Force on Childhood
18 Poverty in 2013 identified providing high-quality early
19 childhood programs and high-quality affordable child care to
20 poor families as one of the key strategies to reducing poverty.
21 Studies have proven that high-quality early childhood education
22 programs are especially effective for children from low-income



1 families--it is one of the strongest factors in school readiness
2 for that population--as well as otherwise disadvantaged
3 children, with the great potential to alter their lifetime
4 trajectories for success.

5 It is important to note, however, that every child,
6 regardless of his or her family income, needs and can benefit
7 from early childhood education: three-quarters of children from
8 families with moderate or high incomes are not ready for school
9 at kindergarten entry. More than ninety per cent of
10 kindergarten classrooms in the department of education reported
11 that students did not meet benchmarks in all dimensions of
12 school readiness, which include literacy, math, and school
13 behaviors (Hawaii State School Readiness Assessment, 2012-2013
14 school year). Unfortunately, studies show that students who
15 struggle early in school rarely catch up, and consequently have
16 less than a one in three chance of being ready for college or a
17 career at the end of high school.

18 Teachers in Hawaii, including some at the middle-school
19 level, have shared that they can tell which students in their
20 classrooms have and have not gone to preschool. Early childhood
21 education helps teachers because children will enter their
22 classrooms better prepared; teachers will spend less time



1 helping individual students to play catch up and can focus their
2 energies on helping all of their students to master the
3 knowledge and content needed to progress on time.

4 Although it has been argued that the benefits of early
5 learning disappear by the third grade, as reported by some
6 studies of the federal Head Start program, which promotes school
7 readiness for children from low-income families, reliable
8 studies have found that gains made in life skills do not fade.
9 Head Start graduates were less likely to repeat grades or be
10 diagnosed with a learning disability, and more likely to
11 graduate from high school and attend college.

12 The executive office on early learning has been planning
13 for a program that will provide access to high-quality early
14 childhood education for all of Hawaii's children. The United
15 States Census Bureau estimates there are 17,000 four-year-olds
16 in Hawaii, who come from families of varying incomes. Although
17 low-income families require the most assistance, many moderate-
18 income families, especially those who are just entering the
19 middle class, also struggle to meet the cost of early learning
20 on their own. Hawaii ranks twenty-seventh among the least
21 affordable states for center-based care for a four-year-old. In
22 2012, the average annual cost of full-time center-based care for



1 a four-year-old in Hawaii was \$8,172, totaling more than nine
2 per cent of the state median income for a married couple.

3 Once the constitutional amendment passes, the State will
4 establish a program through which:

- 5 (1) Capacity can be built to serve four-year-old children;
- 6 (2) The infrastructure made available by the private
7 sector would reduce the amount of public dollars that
8 will be spent on facilities to accommodate four-year-
9 old children; and
- 10 (3) Higher quality can be instituted across all providers
11 participating in the program through the required use
12 of quality standards that are linked to children's
13 educational outcomes, which research emphasizes is
14 necessary to produce significant outcomes for children
15 both in the near- and long-term.

16 To help more of our four-year-old children have a quality
17 early childhood education experience, various program options
18 must be available to them based on community resources.

19 Families face unique circumstances and every community has its
20 limitations in regards to access, such as proximity and
21 transportation to a program, which factor into a family's
22 ability to send their children to a program.

1 Therefore, this program will be delivered through several
2 vehicles: center-based programs, group child care homes, and
3 family child care homes, including those run by faith-based
4 providers as far as state and federal laws allow; programs on
5 department of education school campuses; and family-child
6 interaction learning programs.

7 Private programs have been the backbone of the State's
8 early childhood services for decades. The State has invested
9 very little of its own general funds in early care and education
10 supports and services to ensure that children are ready to learn
11 and succeed in school. Center-based programs are those found in
12 preschools, nursery schools, and child care centers that are
13 operated by private organizations and that are licensed by the
14 department of human services. Group child care homes provide
15 care by two adults for seven to twelve children and must be
16 licensed. Family child care homes provide care for three to six
17 children in the provider's own home and must be licensed if more
18 than two unrelated children are enrolled.

19 Programs on department of education campuses will be
20 staffed by department of education teachers. Currently, there
21 are several experimental programs of this type, funded through
22 the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and Race to



1 the Top. Other school-based programs that exist consist of
2 special education programs staffed by department of education
3 special education teachers and those participating in the Pre-
4 Plus Program, a public-private partnership through which
5 seventeen preschool facilities have been developed and built on
6 public elementary school campuses and private, department of
7 human services-licensed preschool providers contracted to
8 operate them.

9 Family-child interaction programs are provided in a variety
10 of public and private facilities, including public schools and
11 parks, operating, on average, several hours a day and a few days
12 each week. They require the child's caregiver to participate
13 with the child and educate the caregiver about how to encourage
14 the child's learning at home. These programs provide an
15 important option for our native Hawaiian community.

16 The program involves public-private partnerships to enable
17 the State to make the best use of available resources--of
18 capacity and expertise--in the public and private sectors and
19 foster the development of new ones.

20 The portion of the program that will be delivered through
21 private providers will be done through contracts with the
22 providers; this program does not institute a voucher system.



1 The program requires participating providers to use quality
2 standards that are linked to children's educational outcomes.
3 Research has shown that there are certain components that are
4 associated with an early childhood education program's ability
5 to produce positive child outcomes. Although the early
6 childhood field lacks consensus on a single approach for
7 categorizing factors that define program quality, there are two
8 broad dimensions commonly associated with promoting higher rates
9 of learning and development in children: structural aspects
10 such as physical environment, child-caregiver ratios, group
11 size, caregiver qualifications, and caregiver compensation; and
12 the quality of curriculum and intentional teaching. Recent
13 research has shown that the latter category has more significant
14 impact on children's outcomes, and is the basis for the quality
15 standards that will be required by this program--positive
16 teacher-child interactions, individual child formative
17 assessments, and family engagement.

18 There is substantial evidence that children who attend
19 early childhood education programs are significantly affected by
20 their interactions with teachers or caregivers and their
21 responsiveness. A recent study found that of the five quality
22 indicators most often used in program evaluation systems,



1 teacher-child interactions were the strongest predictor of
2 children's learning.

3 Another key indicator linked to children's outcomes is the
4 use of a curriculum that is based on child development. The
5 degree to which it is implemented fully is dependent on the use
6 of an ongoing, authentic child assessment that is used to
7 individualize and is both intellectually rich and broad enough
8 to meet children's social and emotional development needs.
9 These are known as formative assessments.

10 Research has also demonstrated that quality programs
11 involve families and communicate with them on an ongoing basis.
12 One of the evidence-based methods for engaging families is home-
13 based instruction programs through a home visiting approach,
14 which help families prepare their child for success in school
15 and beyond.

16 The legislature has been interested in early learning for
17 decades.

18 1989

19 State funding approved for the preschool open doors program to
20 help families pay for early education and care using a sliding
21 fee scale based on ability to pay. Components include child



1 development workshops and staff development in participating
2 preschools.

3 1991

4 The University of Hawaii board of regents created the University
5 of Hawaii center on the family in response to Senate Concurrent
6 Resolution No. 82, Regular Session of 1989, to enhance the well-
7 being of Hawaii's families through interdisciplinary research,
8 education, and community outreach. Early childhood is one of
9 its focal areas.

10 Act 77, Session Laws of Hawaii 1997, as amended by Act 60, Session
11 Laws of Hawaii 2000 and Act 13, Session Laws of Hawaii 2002.

12 Recognized a public-private partnership between the State and a
13 private nonprofit corporation created as a focal point for
14 policy development and dedicated to enhancing, developing, and
15 coordinating quality early childhood education and care
16 services--the Good Beginnings Alliance. Tasked the Good
17 Beginnings Alliance with overseeing at least four community
18 councils, each county except Kalawao to be represented by a
19 community council, to develop plans to provide services to
20 children and families and possible local funding sources.
21 Established an interdepartmental council to assist with the
22 work.



1 House Concurrent Resolution No. 38, Regular Session of 1998
2 Established in state policy the goal that "all of Hawaii's
3 children will be safe, healthy and ready to succeed."
4 Act 177, Session Laws of Hawaii 2002
5 Appropriated funds for the pre-plus program, including capital
6 improvement project moneys, to build preschools on elementary
7 school campuses throughout the State. The lieutenant governor's
8 office assumed planning oversight until oversight was
9 transferred to the department of human services.
10 Act 13, Session Laws of Hawaii 2002
11 The legislature led the nation by statutorily defining "school
12 readiness," which acknowledged the joint responsibility of
13 families, schools, and communities in preparing children for
14 lifelong learning.
15 Act 219, Session Laws of Hawaii 2004
16 Established an unfunded, two-tiered junior kindergarten and
17 kindergarten program in the department of education beginning
18 with the 2006-2007 school year.
19 Act 151, Session Laws of Hawaii 2005
20 Created the early childhood education task force with the focus
21 of "young children are ready to have successful learning
22 experiences when there is a positive interaction among the



1 child's developmental characteristics, school practices, and
2 family and community support."

3 Act 259, Session Laws of Hawaii 2006

4 Established the early learning educational task force to develop
5 a five-year plan for a comprehensive and sustainable early
6 learning system. The plan, completed prior to the Regular
7 Session of 2008, included detailed costs for the establishment
8 and operation of an early learning system in Hawaii that would
9 include children from birth to age five. It also included, as
10 requested by the legislature, an implementation and financing
11 schedule that begins with services to four-year-old children and
12 proceeds to younger age groups; mechanisms to ensure cross-
13 sector and interdepartmental collaboration; measures to ensure
14 the continuing professional development of teachers and
15 administrators; and provisions for the promotion of the
16 importance of early learning to families, policymakers, and the
17 general public.

18 Act 14, Special Session Laws of Hawaii 2008

19 Established the State's early learning system, known as keiki
20 first steps. Research has indicated that a preschool setting
21 might be a more appropriate placement (than junior
22 kindergarten). Established the early learning council, to be



1 attached to the department of education for administrative
2 purposes only, to develop and administer the early learning
3 system to benefit all children throughout the State, from birth
4 until the time they enter kindergarten. Established the keiki
5 first steps grant program. Statutorily established the pre-plus
6 program within the department of human services and designated
7 the department of human services and department of education to
8 work collaboratively to develop suitable pre-plus classrooms on
9 department of education campuses statewide, including conversion
10 charter school campuses. Promoted the development of early
11 learning facilities.

12 Act 194, Session Laws of Hawaii 2009

13 Required the department of education, beginning with the
14 2010-2011 school year, to use successful assessment tools and
15 protocols for determining a student's initial placement and for
16 decision-making about a student's movement between junior
17 kindergarten, kindergarten, and into grade one. Required the
18 early learning council to develop a plan to ensure the needs of
19 junior kindergarteners are addressed.

20 Act 183, Session Laws of Hawaii 2010

21 Amended the public school kindergarten entry age beginning the
22 2013-2014 school year, so that children must be at least five



1 years old on the first day of instruction. Also required the
2 department of education and early learning council to develop a
3 plan to assess the success of junior kindergarten programs at
4 individual schools, that would also address providing
5 educational opportunities for those who would have been eligible
6 to attend kindergarten prior to the age change.

7 Act 178, Session Laws of Hawaii 2012

8 Established the executive office on early learning; charged the
9 office with creating a comprehensive early childhood development
10 and learning system for Hawaii's keiki, prenatal to age five;
11 established the early learning advisory board to replace the
12 early learning council, as an advisory body to the office;
13 repealed the existing junior kindergarten program for four- and
14 early five-year-olds at the end of the 2013-2014 school year;
15 and required that beginning with the 2014-2015 school year,
16 students must be at least five years old on July 31 of that
17 school year to attend kindergarten. The office was tasked with
18 developing a plan to implement an early learning program in the
19 2014-2015 school year.

20 S.B. No. 1084, Regular Session of 2013

21 Proposed an amendment to the Hawaii State Constitution to permit
22 the appropriation of public funds for private early childhood

1 education programs passed, with more than a two-thirds majority
2 in each house.

3 Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to fulfill the
4 State's intent to provide a much-needed early childhood
5 education program for our children prior to its obligation for
6 education from kindergarten to grade 12, which addresses the
7 unique needs of families and communities and institutes the use
8 of quality standards that are most linked to children's
9 educational outcomes.

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

13 "§302L- Early childhood education program. (a) There
14 is established within the early learning system an early
15 childhood education program to be administered by the office.

16 The early childhood education program shall:

17 (1) Through either of the State's two official languages,
18 prepare children for school and active participation
19 in society; and

20 (2) Provide equitable access to high-quality early
21 childhood education that addresses children's



1 physical, 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) Children in the year prior to being eligible to attend
6 kindergarten; and

7 (2) Underserved or at-risk children.

8 (c) Enrollment in the early childhood education program
9 shall be voluntary. A child who is enrolled in or eligible to
10 attend a public elementary school, or who is required to attend
11 school pursuant to section 302A-1132, shall not be eligible for
12 enrollment in the early childhood education program.

13 (d) The office may contract with eligible providers, which
14 may include private providers, of early childhood education to
15 increase the capacity of the early childhood education program
16 to provide high-quality early childhood education to children
17 across the State. Eligible providers shall incorporate quality
18 standards in their programs as required by the early childhood
19 education program pursuant to rules adopted by the office. The
20 office may provide support to providers to incorporate these
21 quality standards, including support related to teacher-child
22 interactions, individual child assessments, and family



1 engagement. Eligible providers shall comply with all applicable
2 state and federal laws.

3 (e) Eligible providers of the early childhood education
4 program shall incorporate quality standards in their programs
5 that are research-based, developmentally appropriate practices
6 associated with better educational outcomes for children, such
7 as:

- 8 (1) Positive teacher-child interactions;
- 9 (2) Use of individual child assessments that are used for
10 ongoing instructional planning, based upon all areas
11 of childhood development and learning, including
12 cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional
13 approaches to learning and health and physical
14 development;
- 15 (3) Family engagement; and
- 16 (4) Alignment with the Hawaii early learning and
17 development standards, which align with department of
18 education standards, including common core state
19 standards, state content and performance standards,
20 and general learner outcomes for grades kindergarten
21 to twelve, to facilitate a seamless and high-quality
22 educational experience for children.

1 The office shall monitor implementation of the quality standards
2 pursuant to rules adopted by the office.

3 (f) The office shall coordinate with other agencies and
4 programs to facilitate comprehensive services for early
5 childhood education.

6 (g) The office shall collect data to evaluate services
7 provided, inform policy, and improve the provision of early
8 childhood education through the early childhood education
9 program.

10 (h) The office shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91
11 necessary to carry out the purposes of this section, including
12 compliance with all applicable state and federal laws.

13 (i) Nothing in this section shall be construed to enable
14 the establishment of a voucher program for educational
15 purposes."

16 SECTION 3. Section 302L-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
17 amended by adding three new definitions to be appropriately
18 inserted and to read as follows:

19 "Early childhood education program" means an education
20 program for children provided for in section 302L- ."

21 "Family engagement" means practices that engage families in
22 meaningful ways and recognize the need for families to actively



1 support their child's learning and development, including
2 classrooms that make families feel welcome, communication with
3 families, the promotion of responsible parenting, and
4 involvement in decisions that affect families and their
5 children.

6 "Underserved children" means children who, because of
7 circumstances such as their place of residence, limited
8 transportation, or family's financial standing, have little or
9 no access to early learning services."

10 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

11 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050, and
12 upon ratification of a constitutional amendment permitting the
13 appropriation of public funds for private early childhood
14 education.



Report Title:

Early Childhood Education Program

Description:

Establishes the Early Childhood Education Program within the Early Learning System established by section 302L-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD1)

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

