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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE HAWAII ZERO TO THREE COURT.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the Hawai'i zero to  
2 three court is a specialty court in the family court of the  
3 first circuit court, established in 2009 with initial funding  
4 from the national Zero to Three program. Zero to three courts  
5 are rooted in developmental science and aim to improve outcomes  
6 for maltreated infants and toddlers, reduce the reoccurrence of  
7 substantiated abuse and neglect of infants and toddlers in the  
8 court's jurisdiction, and change the courts' culture to focus on  
9 the needs of infants and toddlers.

10           Specifically, the Hawai'i program trains professionals,  
11 secures effective service resources, encourages collaboration  
12 among existing community service providers, and increases  
13 parent-child contact. Key features of this specialized court  
14 include monthly case conferences for each family, monthly court  
15 hearings, and a court team composed of a lead family court  
16 judge, designated guardian ad litem, parents' counsel, deputy  
17 attorneys general, and social workers from the department of



1 human services. The court hearings provide intensive judicial  
2 oversight and accountability for all parties while keeping the  
3 team focused on timely permanency. Parent activities are held  
4 the same day as the monthly court hearing to enhance parenting  
5 skills and build a support system with the other families in the  
6 program in a safe, judgment-free environment. Infants and  
7 toddlers in the program receive a comprehensive developmental  
8 assessment which results in appropriate referrals to services,  
9 and zero to three court families also participate in parent-  
10 child interaction therapy or child-parent psychotherapy to  
11 promote healthy family functioning.

12 The legislature further finds that there are sixteen  
13 families in the Hawai'i zero to three court and the program is  
14 seeking to expand its capacity to twenty families.  
15 Participation in the Hawai'i zero to three court is voluntary for  
16 parents who meet the criteria of having been adjudicated in the  
17 family court and having at least one child between the ages of  
18 zero to three. National funding ceased in 2012 and the  
19 judiciary has continued to support the program by transferring  
20 the program for administrative purposes to the first circuit  
21 family drug court.



1           The legislature additionally finds that the University of  
2           Hawai'i center on disability studies conducted an evaluation of  
3           Hawai'i zero to three court activities from August 2013 to July  
4           2016. The study concluded that the Hawai'i zero to three court  
5           is successfully meeting the objectives of reducing parental  
6           alcohol or drug use, improving reunification outcomes for  
7           families, decreasing the number of placements and the length of  
8           stay in foster care, increasing visitation frequency, ensuring  
9           timeliness of service availability, and increasing access to  
10          services. The legislature therefore concludes that stable  
11          funding is critically needed to continue and enhance services  
12          and resources and to further develop the capacity of the Hawai'i  
13          zero to three court team.

14          The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to support  
15          the Hawai'i zero to three court. It is not the legislature's  
16          intent that the appropriated funds supplant the judiciary's  
17          existing funding or budget requests.

18          SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
19          revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$212,072 or so much  
20          thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2019-2020 and the  
21          same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year



1 2020-2021 for the Hawaii zero to three court to be distributed  
2 as follows:

- 3 (1) \$59,616 for a permanent program manager position;
- 4 (2) \$52,956 for a case manager position;
- 5 (3) \$7,000 for visitation transportation cost for parents;
- 6 (4) \$35,000 for housing assistance;
- 7 (5) \$3,500 for a parent incentive program similar to the  
8 model used in family drug court;
- 9 (6) \$18,000 for training and professional development of  
10 court team members and community partners; and
- 11 (7) \$36,000 for service contracts for visitation and  
12 parent coaching.

13 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the judiciary  
14 for the purposes of this Act.

15 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2019.



**Report Title:**

Keiki Caucus; Hawaii Zero to Three Court; Appropriation

**Description:**

Appropriates funds for the Hawaii Zero to Three Court. (SD1)

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

