

Date of Hearing: January 28, 2008

Committee: Senate Education/Human Services  
and Housing

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

Title: S.B. 2661, Relating To Early Childhood Education

Purpose: Requires the department of education to plan, design, and implement a pre-kindergarten academy for four-year-old children and an educational resource program for parents of newborn children. Appropriates funds.

Department's Position: The Department of Education (Department) supports S.B. 2661 to develop a prekindergarten academy, as a program for incoming kindergarteners, and an educational resource program for parents of newborn children.

With respect to the latter, the Department respectfully requests that the opportunity to plan, design, and operationalize an educational resource program be provided to another state agency, one that is currently engaged in the provision of supports and services to parents of newborn children. The broader scope of providing services to parents of newborn children is currently beyond the purview of the Department and the Board of Education. The Department remains committed to working with any and all agency partners to ensure that parents have access to the appropriate education resources, such that the early learning goals of newborn children are met.

With respect to the prekindergarten academy, this proposal mirrors the efforts of some elementary schools to provide a summer orientation and transition program for incoming kindergarteners. Feedback from parents, teachers, and principals has indicated that these programs are valuable for all incoming kindergarteners. Consequently, the Department respectfully requests that the scope be extended to include all entering kindergarteners at ages four and five. This would provide equitable educational access for all students.

Regarding the funding for this initiative, two points must be made. First, the suggested appropriation would allow for a very small pilot program to be implemented. If possible, it would be prudent to increase the appropriation to allow the department to gather sufficient data regarding the success and challenges of the implementation.

Second, if the program is implemented in the summer of 2009, which is a realistic start date, the appropriation of 2008-2009 funds would result in lapsed general funds prior to the inception of the program.

To: Senate Education Committee and Human Services and Public Housing Committee

From: Malcolm Kirkpatrick

LATE

In re: SB SB2661.

Please oppose SB2661

*SECTION 1. The legislature finds that investing in early childhood education is in the best interest of our community. Statistics show that approximately fifty per cent of all children who enter kindergarten in public schools in Hawaii have inadequate skills needed to learn at that age, and that the skill deficit is often never made up. National studies show that for every dollar spent on early childhood education, the State saves \$7 in addressing subsequent remedial and social problems.*

False. Early institutionalization of children is counter-indicated.

a) States which compel attendance at age 7 have higher 4th and 8th grade NAEP Reading and Math scores than States which compel attendance at age 6.

b) According to a US DOE official quoted in a CATO institute study of homeschooling, the rate of dyslexia in a population is inversely related to the age at which reading instruction is institutionalized.

c) Studies which find a beneficial impact of early institutional care compare children from deficient environments who receive enhanced care to children from deficient environments who do not receive enhanced care. These results do not generalize. By analogy: polluted water and spoiled food may enhance the longevity of people starving and dehydrated in the desert but they are counter-indicated for the population at large.

d) Several studies of universal early daycare programs find significant adverse effects. See...

#### A Child Care Lesson from Canada

Sydney Morning Herald (Jan 19, 2008)

<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2008/01/18/1200620205875.html>

"A large Canadian policy experiment provides a lesson that might save us much grief in Australia. In 2000 the province of Quebec, populous and progressive, took the bold step of providing universal day care right down to newborn babies, at a cost to parents of \$5 a day. It was a well-intentioned attempt to come to terms with a large increase in the number of families where both parents were working, which had almost doubled in 30 years.

Three economists, Michael Baker, Jonathan Gruber and Kevin Milligan, seized the chance to evaluate what happened in real time. They had the rest of Canada as a control group, and a large study in place tracking children across the country to provide detailed data on their development. What they found was astonishingly clear cut in a field usually littered with carefully worded reservations and ideologically filtered reporting. The scheme was a disaster.

Evaluated in economic terms, it did not pay for itself; the tax gains from increased workforce participation (the workforce grew by 7.7 per cent) did not make up for the cost of the exercise. Also the system crowded out informal and family forms of care, so that many people simply switched the kind of care they used to take advantage of the massive subsidies.

But the human cost was the most significant. There were marked declines in child wellbeing; on measures of hyperactivity, inattention, aggressiveness, motor skills, social skills and child illness, children were significantly worse off than their peers who remained at home.

The family suffered, too: parent-child relationships deteriorated on all measured dimensions. There was a significant increase in depression rates among mothers and a deterioration in couple relationships among affected parents. None of these changes was minor. The hyperactivity increases were in a range of 17 to 44 per cent; the skills decline was between 8 and 21 per cent; childhood illnesses rose by 400 per cent. The study is littered with adjectives researchers are usually careful to avoid: strong, marked, negative, robust, striking. Yet it did echo, though more strongly, similar findings in the United States, Britain and Europe."

Consider also this article which describes a US study: San Francisco Chronicle 2005-Nov.-01

"The UC Berkeley-Stanford study found that all children who attended preschool at least 15 hours a week displayed more negative social behaviors such as trouble cooperating or acting up, when compared with their peers. The discrepancies were most pronounced among children from higher-income families."

"Children from lower-income families lagged behind their peers who didn't attend preschool an average of 7 percentage points on the measure of social behavioral growth. But children from higher-income families lagged 9 percentage points behind their peers. These wealthier children did even worse when they attended preschool for 30 hours or more: They trailed their peers by 15 percentage points."

" 'It's not clear why children from higher-income families exhibit more negative behaviors than their stay-at-home peers. Fuller speculated their peers might be in enriching home environments that include things like trips to the library as well as dance and music lessons. Other studies have found childcare centers negatively affect children's social development', said Jay Belsky, director of the Institute for the Study of Children, Families and Social Issues at Birkbeck University of London, in an e-mail interview."

" 'It is time to come to grips with what all too many have denied for all too long, namely, that all disconcerting news about adverse effects cannot be attributed to low-quality care, which has been more or less the mantra of the field of child development and the child-care advocacy community for decades,' Belsky said."