



**HAWAI'I EDUCATIONAL POLICY CENTER**  
*Informing the Education Community*

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Education  
and  
Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing  
January 28, 2008, 1:15 p.m., Room 225

By

Valere McFarland, Associate Director  
Hawai'i Educational Policy Center  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

**SB 2878: Relating to Early Learning**

Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Takuda, Chair Chun-Oakland, Vice Chair Ihara, and members of the Committees:

The Hawai'i Educational Policy Center supports SB 2878, which incorporates the recommendations of the Hawai'i Early Learning Task Force. The Task Force was charged in Act 259 with examining a broad range of complex issues and making recommendations to address early learning needs. They set forth these recommendations in a report to the 2008 Legislature. We commend the members of the Task Force for meeting its challenge to develop a five year plan of action for an early learning system and their thoughtful deliberations on providing for optimal childhood learning and development. The Task Force Report clearly demonstrates the learning gap that exists in a large number of children entering Hawai'i's public schools

**SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS**

While SB 2878 incorporates the basic recommendations of the Task Force, we realize that more details will need to be provided to definitively direct the establishment of an early learning system. We respectfully submit the following additions to SB 2878:

1. The College of Education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa plays a significant role in providing training for early childhood educators.

We recommend including the Dean of the College of Education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa or the Dean's designee on the Early Learning Council.

2. We recommend including a research component that will allow the Early Learning Council to develop research-based policies and innovative practices that encourage quality learning and development that will sustain social and economic progress. The research component would provide documentation of the development and implementation process and resulting outcomes.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

# LATE TESTIMONY



CENTER ON DISABILITY STUDIES

January 28, 2008

TO: The Honorable Norman Sakamoto, Chair  
Senate Committee on Education, and  
The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair  
Senate Committee on Human services and Public Housing

**Subject: SB 2878, Relating to Early Learning**

*Aloha:*

On behalf of the Center on Disability Studies, I strongly support the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council, and the Early Learning System and Keiki First Steps Program.

As an early childhood educator and a Board Member of the Good Beginnings Alliance, I know how important early learning opportunities are for children to enable them to be healthy and ready to continue learning when they get to school. Extensive research has documented the value of high-quality preschool education as an economic investment that pays off handsomely in lower special education rates, fewer high school dropouts, and fewer young people entering the juvenile justice system.

But the operative word is high quality. We must have well qualified teachers, with appropriate staff-child ratios, and safe environments for learning to take place. Highly qualified teachers are the pivot on which quality preschool education rests.

The real question is not, "how can we afford it," but instead, "how can we not afford it?" Our children, and ultimately our communities, our state, and our country will greatly benefit by adopting and funding Keiki First.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and I commend you for your leadership in addressing this critical issue.

Sincerely,

/s/ *Jean Johnson*

Jean Johnson, DrPH  
Associate Director

## LATE TESTIMONY

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair  
Senator Jill Tokuda, Vice Chair  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair  
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC HOUSING

From: Liz Chun  
Executive Director, Good Beginnings Alliance

Date: Monday, January 28, 2008  
1:15 p.m., Room 225

**Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning**

**The Good Beginnings Alliance strongly supports the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council, and the Early Learning System and Keiki First Steps Program.**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding SB2878. I am Liz Chun, Executive Director of the Good Beginnings Alliance and a member of the Early Learning Educational Task Force. I have been working in the field of early childhood education over 30 years, and I can think of no finer calling in life.

Brain research tells us that children begin their learning even before they are born and that nearly 85% of a child's intellect, personality and social skills are developed by age 5. Additionally by age 6, there are large and preventable gaps between the development and academic abilities of high and low income children. High-quality early childhood education programs help make up these gaps in educational, social, emotional, and physical outcomes, especially for high-risk, low-income children. Moreover, society as a whole benefits too, as both educators and noted economists have demonstrated that investing in quality early experiences has short and long-term savings for us as a society in lower special education, high school dropouts, adult incarceration, and welfare.

Hawai'i, like many states, is grappling with how to best serve our children in the years before kindergarten. Almost 40% of our young children in Hawai'i come from families who cannot afford to send their children to early education programs. The early childhood programs that do receive federal and state subsidies – such as Head Start - are filled to capacity and have waiting lists. This is troubling because low-income families require this support if they are to seek employment and lift themselves out of poverty.

We also recognize an increased number of “gap group” families. These parents earn too much to qualify for federal or state need-based subsidies or programs such as Head Start,

and yet do not earn enough to pay for preschool tuition. Their choices of placements for young children are limited, often not stable, and of unknown quality.

The early learning programs which would be eligible to receive funds in the Keiki First program include center-based programs as well as family childcare and family child interaction learning programs. The Task Force felt very strongly that we must respect family choice and offer a variety of settings. However, note that each setting would be expected to follow the Hawaii Preschool Content Standards and have the staff with the required professional degrees beginning with an associates' degree lead teacher and eventually by year ten have a teacher with a bachelors' degree.

The Keiki First Program described in our task force report is not just about increasing access but also **improving quality**. We regularly hear about our public schools' challenges to improve academic achievement. Quality early learning will provide the strong foundation for our children's lifelong learning. Currently, many of our young children are entering kindergarten not prepared for success in school. The 2007 Hawai'i State School Readiness Assessment reports that in more than 80% of our kindergarten classes, most of the students unable to demonstrate the literacy skills needed to succeed in kindergarten.

While 60% of entering public school kindergarten children attended some preschool or formal early learning experiences before kindergarten, a significant percentage of children had no such experience. Even for those children lucky enough to attend preschool, the quality of their early education programs is not even. We estimate that nearly 7,000 children are currently in programs that need quality improvements to instruction and program. Approximately 22% of our preschool programs are nationally accredited mostly by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Hawaii has been fortunate to have an ongoing mentoring program for early childhood programs seeking National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation. However, Hawaii needs new investment to encourage programs to seek accreditation and gradually address program improvements leading to higher quality.

Additionally, our current teacher resources are woefully lacking. To meet the 80% access goal of providing quality early learning to 4-year-olds, we estimate we will need 370 new early education teachers with an additional 470 new recruits for associate teachers. Furthermore, 310 of our existing teachers will require more early childhood education courses, and 200 existing teachers will need to attain a bachelor's degree. We essentially need to double our early childhood educator workforce immediately if we are to provide access to quality early learning to our 4-year-olds. Our teachers will need scholarships and loan forgiveness. They will need community based resources to assist them as they pursue their higher education. Our public universities will need incentives to provide expanded access to early childhood education courses. Further, our early childhood programs will need quality improvement funding.

As to the components of the current SB 2878, we support the creation of an early learning council and encourage neighbor island representation be included as their perspective is

crucial. Further details will need to be given as to the support for the early learning council, its leadership, and the administration of the keiki first steps program.

Other task force members are including in their testimonies other sections of the bill which we would all like to emphasize. My final recommendation is that the Family Services Coordinator as described in the Keiki First Act 259 Report be included as a critical component of a quality early childhood program. Especially considering the tragic events in our community recently concerning young children, the role that a support person such as this who can support parents, identify difficult situations, and refer parents in crisis to needed resources cannot be underestimated.

The real question is not, "how can we afford it," but instead, "how can we not afford it?" Our children, and ultimately our communities, our state, and our country will greatly benefit by adopting and funding Keiki First.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and we offer our help to the Committee to craft this bill to best meet the needs of Hawai`i's young children.

BIG ISLAND GOOD BEGINNINGS ALLIANCE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**LATE TESTIMONY**

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair  
Senator Jill Tokuda, Vice Chair  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

From: Angela Thomas  
Member, Early Learning Educational Task Force  
Hawaii Island Coordinator, Good Beginnings Alliance

Date: Monday, January 29, 2008

**Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning**

**The Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force strongly supports the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council, and the Early Learning System and Keiki First Steps Program.**

Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Tokuda, and members of the Senate Education committee. Thank you for the opportunity to express my support of SB2878. My name is Angela Thomas and I had the privilege of serving as the Hawaii County representative to the Early Learning Educational Task Force. I am also the Good Beginnings Alliance Hawaii Island Coordinator.

Part of the Good Beginnings Alliance structure includes neighbor island councils. The Hawaii Island council, Big Island Good Beginnings Alliance Community Council (BIGBACC) includes over 40 organizations, agencies and preschools working with families and their young children in diverse communities. We have worked together over the years to identify community needs and to direct resources to meet those needs. Some of the programs we are proud of include: the creation of an island wide resource directory for families, the distribution of baby baskets that include snuglis and resource directories to all families of newborns, a car seat and booster seat awareness program, continuous parenting articles in local newspapers, and the implementation of a drug and alcohol screening program for all pregnant women to prevent Fetal Alcohol Syndrome in island newborns. We recently were awarded a \$100,000 P-3 grant to work with transitioning children to kindergarten, and we are planning a collaborative professional development conference in April. This council understands the Big Island - our clients, parents and students, and our island needs. It is this council that was asked by the County to take their seat on the Early Learning Educational Task Force, and elected me to represent them.

The task force has worked very hard to look at all components of creating an early childhood system from access to programs, to increasing professional development opportunities and the workforce, to maintaining options for parental choice and financing. If indeed our youngest children are a priority, it is time to direct our money and resources to support them.

## BIG ISLAND GOOD BEGINNINGS ALLIANCE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

On Hawaii Island, most of our communities are small, and rural in nature. We lack facilities, qualified teachers, early childhood courses through our colleges (both offerings as well as consumer friendly delivery methods), and funding for families to ensure that all children have equal access to a variety of program models. The task force has prioritized implementing 4-year old programming for at-risk children and rural communities – populations such as ours.

The diversity and the cultural make up of some of our more isolated pockets of population as well as our unique concerns and resources have been represented on the task force by the appointment of our County/council representative. While I support the creation of a council in SB 2878 and HB 2973, I do not see the place for further neighbor island input. I would like to suggest that as this bill develops, neighbor island representation on the council be considered. Representation of neighbor islands on the Early Learning Council would facilitate the implementation of programming appropriate to the more sparsely populated and rural neighbor islands.

It is a very exciting time for our field and our Big Island Good Beginnings Alliance Community Council looks forward to further involvement and participation in the development and implementation of Keiki First!



# LATE TESTIMONY

To: Senator Sakamoto, Chair  
Senator Jill Tokuda, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Education

From: Sandie Kelly  
Kula, Maui, HI

Date: Monday, January 29, 2008

Subject: SB2878

Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Tokuda, and members of the Senate Committee on Education,

As a kindergarten teacher in Ha'iku, Maui, I'd like to testify on behalf of early learning. I'm on the front line of children entering the school system and see first hand the children that have not had the opportunity to be prepared to learn. These children begin with a handicap socially, emotionally, and many times physically without the experience and activities that early learning provides. This year nine of my 21 students came to kindergarten with no prior learning experience. This bill would provide the quality early learning experiences children need to succeed in school. Thank you, Sandie Kelly

## LATE TESTIMONY

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair  
Senator Jill Tokuda, Vice-Chair  
House Committee on Education

From: Phyllis Ida, M.Ed., Special Education Teacher  
45-284 Pahikaua Street  
Kaneohe, HI 96744, 235-6577

Saturday, January 26, 2008  
9:00 a.m., Room 309

RE: Support of **SB2878**, "Relating to Early Learning"

My name is Phyllis Ida and I am in support of the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council, and the Early Learning System and Keiki First Steps Program. I am a special education teacher with more than 30 years of service to the children of Hawaii in which 5 years were in a private preschool and 26 years in the Department of Education. I have taught preschoolers, special needs preschoolers, kindergarten to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and special education students' kindergarten to 6<sup>th</sup> grade. I hold two masters degrees, one in early childhood education and the second in special education in early childhood and I have received my National Teacher's Certification in early childhood. Early childhood education is not only my career but also my passion to ensure quality education.

Every year I observe the lost of preschool teachers as well as assistant teachers due to their need to seek employment that provides a livable wage. As soon as private preschool and Head Start teachers earn their bachelor's degree, they leave preschool to work with the DOE, other teaching jobs, or jobs with higher pay. This leaves our current teacher resources severely lacking. To provide services to 4-year-olds, we will need to increase the number of qualified early childhood teachers as soon as possible. We will need incentives to increase our teacher workforce by providing scholarships and loan forgiveness. Our public universities will also need incentives to provide expanded access to early childhood education courses. Early childhood programs will need quality improvement funding to encourage program improvements leading to higher quality.

In summary, I am in support of SB2878. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

## LATE TESTIMONY

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair  
Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC HOUSING

From: Anna Peters  
Member, Early Learning Educational Task Force  
Kauai Island Coordinator, Good Beginnings Alliance

Date: Monday, January 29, 2008

**Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning**

**The Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force strongly supports the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council and the Early Learning System, Keiki First Steps Program.**

Chair Sakamoto, Chair Chun-Oakland, and members of the Senate Education and Human Services and Public Housing Committees, thank you for the opportunity to express my support of SB2878. My name is Anna Peters and I had the opportunity of serving as the Kauai County Alternate representative to the Early Learning Educational Task Force. I am also the Good Beginnings Alliance Kauai Island Coordinator.

As part of the Good Beginnings Coordinator, I also facilitate a Community Council made up of different early childhood agencies, preschools, state departments, and parents. We meet regularly to address on-going issues on our island such as turnovers from our teachers, not enough qualified teachers, a long waiting list for our families as they try to find an appropriate space for their child and not having enough facilities on our island just to name a few.

The task force has come together to propose what is "right" for our children, and **we need your support during this legislative session.** Research shows that 85% of a child's intellect, personality and social skills are formed by age 5, Keiki First will provide the quality early learning experiences to improve school readiness, literacy and comprehension skills (just to name a few) required for school success no matter what income level. We need to provide the opportunity for our children now to ensure a wise investment for Hawaii's future.

Anna Peters  
Good Beginnings Alliance  
Kauai Coordinator  
P.O. Box 3077  
Lihue, HI 96766  
Phone: 632-2114

LATE TESTIMONY

TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION January 28, 2008  
FR: Amy Ng, Retired, Department of Education, Educational Specialist for  
Early Childhood Education  
RE: SB2878, Relating to Education

Senator Sakamoto and members of the Senate Committee on Education: It is a given that a child's early learning experiences impact a child's success in school and in later life.

Knowing this, please support SB2878.

SB2878 provides us the avenue to refine and to act on a measure that will impact not only young children but their families and communities. The investment is for a better Hawaii.

As a former teacher, principal and educational specialist who has served in the public school system for over 30 years, and citizen concerned with the future of our state, I believe that the time is critical for lawmakers to invest in what is needed and necessary.

Your continued interest and support is appreciated.

Please contact me should you have any questions.

Amy Ng  
Ph. 295-5426

## LATE TESTIMONY

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair  
Senator Jill Tokuda, Vice Chair  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair  
Senator Les Ihara, Vice Chair  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC HOUSING

From: Linda Buck  
Coordinator, Early Childhood Programs  
Honolulu Community College

Date: Monday, January 28, 2008  
1:15 p.m., Room 225

**Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning**

**This testimony concurs with the Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force in its strong support for the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council and the Early Learning System and Keiki First Steps Program.**

Chairs Sakamoto and Chun Oakland, Vice Chairs Tokuda and Ihara, and members of the Senate Committees on Education and Human Services and Public Housing, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding HB2973. I am Linda Buck, Coordinator of Early Childhood Programs at Honolulu Community College and an alternate to the Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force, representing the University of Hawaii Community College system.

Hawai'i has a long history of providing education and care for its youngest citizens, primarily through the efforts of the private sector in response to the desire to support the participation of a variety of cultures in mainstream society and to the high degree of workforce participation by parents and guardians of young children. The effort to increase public support to this important endeavor is commendable.

I have been involved in various task forces and initiatives striving to bring coherence and support to early childhood education and care in Hawai'i for twenty years. I have also studied the work of other states in early childhood system building and taught a course in public policy related to early education in the Masters Program in Early Childhood Education at UH-Manoa College of Education. From this vantage point I can sincerely state that the Act 259 Task Force has provided you with a report and recommendations that combine not only the best in current understanding of how to create and sustain an early learning system but also the consensus of a large and representative group of critical stakeholders in the outcomes of such a system. Implementation details have been left to the entity that will be responsible for the system, as they should be, but the solid foundation of policies to guide system building and the solidly researched cost

## **Testimony in Support of SB 2878 intent**

projections provide a road map to success. I recommend that the proposed Early Learning Council and the administrative entity charged with development of the Early Learning System be required to consult and take seriously the recommendations of the Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force.

The emphasis on workforce development in the first few years is critical to the long-term success of the Early Learning System, as well-educated and trained teachers are required if quality learning experiences are to be provided for Hawai'i's keiki. Support to the University of Hawaii Early Childhood Education teacher preparation programs to expand access through new modalities such as distance learning, to maintain and strengthen research-based teacher preparation curriculum and to support cultural diversity in the early education workforce will be essential. The faculty of these programs has a history of working collegially as a system to enable students to achieve their educational goals. Most recently we established a full articulation among the UH Community Colleges Early Childhood Programs and a new concentration in Early Childhood Education in the Social Sciences Program at UH-West Oahu. Now any early educator or prospective early educator in the state can obtain a bachelors degree in early childhood education. We hope to continue to be proactive in supporting the need for highly qualified teachers in the Early Learning System with your support.

Thank you for your support of early learning and Keiki First.

## LATE TESTIMONY

January 28, Monday, 2008  
1:15 a.m., Room 225  
Hawai'i State Capitol

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair  
Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Education

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair  
Senator Les Ihara, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

From: Wayne Watkins  
Director, University of Hawaii at Manoa Children's Center  
Board President, Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children

Subject: Senate Bill 2878 – Relating to Early Learning

Chairs Sakamoto and Chun Oakland, Vice Chairs Tokuda and Ihara and members of the Senate Committees on Education and Human Services and Public Housing thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding SB 2878. I am Wayne Watkins, Director of the University of Hawaii at Manoa Children's Center and Board President of the Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children. Today I am testifying from my position as a life-long advocate for young children and would like to speak to the portion of the bill that calls for high-quality education with standard-based content, curriculum, and instructional approaches for accountability and an adequate number of well-qualified educators and administrators who are fairly compensated and have access to continuing professional development.

I am one course away from a Masters Degree in Early Childhood Education and for over 30 years I have worked with young children and the people that teach young children. As a classroom teacher for 15 years I was always the highest qualified person on the staff. Having a BA is not the norm in most preschool settings. Over the years I worked with many wonderful teachers. However, I had always felt that level of early childhood teacher's skills, knowledge and competence would be much greater if more of them had at least a BA degree. That supposition was confirmed for me three years ago when I assumed the position of director at the University of Hawaii at Manoa Children's Center. All the teachers at the center have at least a BA, some have Masters Degrees and their level of teaching and their dedication to teaching is so much greater than any I have ever seen in my career. These teachers are well qualified, fairly compensated and have access to continuing professional development and they know their stuff. They know and understand the myriad of ways that young children learn and how to provide for that

learning. They know and understand the Hawaii Preschool Content Standards inside and out and are able to use those standards to inform their curriculum. They have the skills and knowledge to create classroom environments that respect the home culture and language of a widely diverse group of children while at the same time providing them appropriately challenging experiences that fully prepare them for whatever their future holds.

As a life-long advocate for young children I strongly support the intent of Senate Bill 2878 and truly believe that if it includes a commitment to securing high quality, fairly compensated educators it will be enormously successful and positively impact the educational landscape of Hawaii forever.



LATE TESTIMONY

January 28, Monday, 2008  
1:15 a.m., Room 225  
Hawai'i State Capitol

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair  
Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Education

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair  
Senator Les Ihara, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

From: Shelley Ng, Vice President of Public Policy  
Board of Directors  
Hawai'i Association for the Education of Young Children (HawaiiAEYC)

Subject: Senate Bill 2878 – Relating to Early Learning

Chairs Sakamoto and Chun Oakland, Vice Chairs Tokuda and Ihara, and members of the Senate Committees on Education and Human Services and Public Housing, mahalo nui for providing the opportunity to offer testimony regarding SB 2878.

My name is Shelley Ng. I live in Nu'uuanu, and work for Aloha United Way, an 89-year old charity that has raised millions of dollars, since its beginning, to improve community welfare by funding health and human services and working with other organizations to impact community-level change on key social-economic issues.

Today, however, I represent the Hawai'i Association for the Young Children (HawaiiAEYC) as its vice president of public policy. HawaiiAEYC is a membership organization of approximately 950 early childhood professionals from across Hawai'i. Our mission is to promote, support, and expand quality and professionalism in early childhood programs and services for Hawaii's children (0-8) and their families.

The HawaiiAEYC board met this past Friday evening and voted unanimously in favor of SB 2878. The board supports many of the details contained in SB 2878 regarding the early learning system. We offer our assistance to the committee with this bill, so that it will generate far-reaching and positive, life-long impacts for all of Hawaii's young children and families.

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair  
Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC HOUSING

From: Bob Peters and Kathy Murphy  
Co-Chairs, Early Learning Educational Task Force (Act 259)

Date: Monday, January 28, 2008  
1:15 p.m., Room 225

**Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning**

**The Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force strongly supports the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council, and the Early Learning System and Keiki First Steps Program.**

Chair Sakamoto, Chair Chun-Oakland, and members of the Senate Committee on Education and Committee on Human Services and Public Housing. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding SB2878. I am Kathy Murphy, Co-Chair along with Bob Peters of the Early Learning Educational Task Force. As many of you know, we have been involved with early education for many years now, and we strongly believe in the power and importance of quality education for all children.

Our task force conducted a rigorous study over the last 18 months to develop a quality early learning system for Hawai'i's 4-year-olds and to determine its costs, which culminated in our final report to the Legislature. An extensive number of volunteer hours were devoted to obtaining reliable data, researching and evaluating the efforts of other states and learning about the connections among the various agencies and institutions involved in delivering early learning services to Hawaii's children. After much discussion, we were able to come to consensus on the following areas:

- Hawaii Preschool Content standards for 4 year olds to ensure an age appropriate researched based curriculum
- Appropriate teacher-student ratios, and
- Teachers, Associate teachers and Program Administrator Qualifications

The task force supports the creation of the Early Learning Council, and we recommend it be attached to a state agency or perhaps a shared responsibility of two agencies for fiscal and administrative purposes only. We believe that including 3- and 4-year-olds in this early learning system is an admirable goal since it ensures that we won't stop with a program for 4-year-olds alone. Yet we must be wary that we do not dilute services to 4-year-olds and that we are capable of delivering quality to 3-year-olds at the same time. Additionally, as we rightfully focus initially on our at-risk children, we recommend including these children in heterogeneous educational settings with non at-risk children.

## Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force

Research has shown that doing so truly facilitates learning for at-risk children and maximizes their educational potential.

Additionally, we must point out that the current Hawaii Preschool Content Standards only address 4-year-olds. We do have early learning guidelines for birth to 3-year-olds. We also note that the task force did not have the opportunity to develop the opportunity for birth to 3-year-olds yet, and we recommend we be given more time to develop this important part of the quality early learning system. The Hawaii Preschool Content Standards is just one aspect of quality, as it only addresses curriculum. It does not guide or encourage improvement of the overall program. Therefore, it is extremely important that this quality early learning program also focus on helping our programs achieve the high and necessary standards outlined in our report.

Further, our Task Force is totally committed to provide quality early learning opportunities to all children over the course of our 10-year proposed schedule. We must not lose sight of our middle-income, gap-group children, whose families do not qualify for early education subsidies and who cannot afford the cost of quality early education. Our plan ramps up over 10 years to include these gap-group children and all children. Additionally, our Task Force recommends that parents who have the ability to pay also share in the cost of quality early learning. While recognizing that the majority of funding will be public monies, we anticipate that private resources will also support the program.

Currently, there are 389 programs serving 4-year-olds in our state, with 96 of them accredited. Additionally, 150 of these programs are engaged in voluntary quality improvement through the Hawaii Early Childhood Accreditation Project, a private program of HAEYC. It is the task force's and HAEYC's goal to provide high quality early learning opportunities to all children, and thus adoption of the principles of Keiki First are both a necessity and reality.

Moreover, we must not forget about helping our teachers, associate teachers, and directors obtain their college degrees and early childhood education courses. These educators are critical to successful education of our young children. They are operating where the "rubber meets the road"—directly with our young children—and we must support their professional development journeys. Our children need and deserve the best.

Majority of the cost of the program will be directed at servicing children in these quality early learning environments. However, the first few years' focus on workforce development is critical to this program's long-term success, as well-educated and trained teachers are required if quality learning experiences are to be provided for Hawaii's keiki.

Finally, we support many of the details contained in this bill regarding the early learning system, and we offer our help to the committee to further develop this bill into one that will have far-reaching impact on all of Hawai'i's young children and families for years to come. Attached is the bill with our comments for your review and consideration.

Thank you for your support of Keiki First.

Attachment:  
SB2878 with Comments

**Report Title:**

*Early Learning Council; Keiki First Steps Program*

**Description:**

*Creates the Early Learning Council to govern the state's early learning system. Establishes an early learning system. Establishes the Keiki First Steps Program.*

THE SENATE  
TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE,  
2008  
STATE OF HAWAII

**S.B. NO. 2878**

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**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

*RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING.*

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

PART I

PURPOSE

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii's children, starting at birth, need support and guidance from parents, caregivers, and teachers to reach their full potential as citizens. As a report released in 2007 by the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, *The Science of Early Childhood Development, Closing the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do*, so aptly states:

*"The future of any society depends on its ability to foster the health and well-being of the next*

generation. Stated simply, today's children will become tomorrow's citizens, workers, and parents. When we invest wisely in children and families, the next generation will pay that back through a lifetime of productivity and responsible citizenship. When we fail to provide our children with what they need to build a strong foundation for healthy and productive lives, we put our future prosperity and security at risk."

Yet, many of Hawaii's children lack the fundamental skills they should have when they enter kindergarten, a problem for which our state, let alone society as a whole, cannot afford a delayed response. From *Neurons to Neighborhoods*, a report developed by a committee of seventeen national experts in the fields of education, psychiatry, neuroscience, economics, and public policy, found that

"striking disparities in what children know and can do are evident well before they enter kindergarten. These differences are strongly associated with social and economic circumstances, and they are predictive of subsequent academic performance".

Research has confirmed that a large gap exists between the academic abilities of high- and low-income children by age six: the latter "lag further behind in acquiring more sophisticated reading and math knowledge and skills such as recognizing words by sight or solving simple addition and subtraction problems" (National Child Care Association, 2002).

The gap can be closed by building an early learning system for Hawaii. Decades of research have determined that investments in high-quality early learning systems, grounded on the collective involvement of parents, caregivers, and teachers, produce significant, long-term benefits for all children. These benefits include improved school success, reduced dropout rates, reduced crime, and increased workforce preparedness and productivity.

Thirty-six states now offer some type of publicly-funded preschool program. Two states, Oklahoma and Georgia, offer universal preschool programs for all four-year-olds statewide, and New York, Florida, and Illinois are in the process of establishing similar systems.

Hawaii is now one of the only states in the nation that lacks an early learning program, despite the fact that it was one of the leaders in providing universal access for

kindergarten and providing in 2001 a definition for "school readiness", which acknowledged the joint responsibility of families, schools, and communities in preparing children for lifelong learning. However, it is not too late for Hawaii to move forward, and Hawaii can benefit from the lessons learned and best practices developed across the rest of the country.

The legislature finds that the state needs a comprehensive early learning system that ensures a spectrum of quality early learning opportunities for young children from birth to age five. It is vital that the system be universally accessible and comprehensive, and provide high-quality education and services that are preschool content standards-based and require accountability, all the while maintaining sensitivity to family choice and cultural elements.

Deleted: continuum

In 2006, the twenty-third legislature passed Act 259, establishing the early learning educational task force, a diverse group of public and private stakeholders that was tasked with developing a five-year plan for such an early learning system. This Act takes into consideration the findings and recommendations of the task force.

The purpose of this Act is to help Hawaii's children reach their full potential by:

- (1) Creating the early learning council to govern the state's early learning system;
- (2) Establishing an early learning system; and
- (3) Establishing the keiki first ~~steps~~ program.

Comment [DT1]: Recommend eliminating "Steps" given confusion with programs already containing that name.

## PART II

### EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL

SECTION 2. (a) There is established an early learning council within the ~~department of education~~ for administrative purposes only. The council shall work toward fulfilling the vision of a ~~universally accessible~~, comprehensive, and high-quality early learning system that is sensitive to family choice and cultural elements, to benefit all children from birth to age five throughout the state, including:

Comment [DT2]: Is the DOE set up to handle the program as outlined? Perhaps there is a role to play by DHS? Or a joint responsibility of both departments with segmented duties.

Comment [DT3]: Meaning?

- (1) Establishing policies and procedures governing its operations;
- (2) Developing a plan, with goals and objectives, for the early learning system, including the development, execution, and monitoring of a phased implementation plan;
- (2) Coordinating, improving, and expanding upon existing programs and services for children from birth to five years of age;



- (3) Establishing policies and procedures governing the inclusion and establishment of additional programs and services;
- (4) Developing and implementing methods of maximizing the involvement of parents, caregivers, and teachers in the early learning system;
- (5) Providing for accountability within the early learning system to ensure improvement of programs and services and high-quality results;
- (6) Providing for the most effective and efficient allocation of fiscal resources within the early learning system;
- (7) Collecting, interpreting, and releasing data relating to early learning in the state; and
- (8) Promoting awareness of early learning opportunities to families and the general public.

(b) The early learning council shall include representation from both public and private organizations, and its membership shall reflect regional and cultural and ethnic diversity to ensure representation of the needs of all children in the state. The members of the early learning council shall ~~consist~~ of 15 members as follows:

- (1) One representative of the office of the governor;

**Comment [DT4]:** Recommend membership reflect the representation of the Act 259 Task Force

- (2) The superintendent of education or the superintendent's designee;
- (3) The director of human services or the director's designee;
- (4) The director of health or the director's designee;
- (5) The president of the University of Hawaii or the president's designee;
- (6) One representative from a government agency to represent federal children's programs and services;
- (7) One member appointed by the president of the senate;
- (8) One member appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives; and
- (9) Seven members appointed by the governor who represent interests in the early learning community, including:
  - (A) Child development, including maternal and child health;
  - (B) Child care and early learning programs and services;
  - (C) Children with special needs;
  - (D) Child advocacy, including parenting support;

(E) Business; and

(F) Labor.

(c) The early learning council shall select a chairperson by a majority vote of its members. A majority of the council shall constitute quorum to do business. The concurrence of a majority of all the members to which the council is entitled shall be necessary to make any action of the council valid.

(d) Members of the early learning council shall serve three-year terms; provided that half of these members, as determined by the council, shall be appointed to two-year terms to allow for staggered terms.

(e) The early learning council may adopt rules as necessary to effectuate the purposes of this part.

(f) All meetings of the early learning council shall be exempt from chapter 92, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

(g) The early learning council shall submit to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular session, a report regarding:

(1) Its progress; and

(2) The status of the early learning system in the state.

SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$            or so

much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 to support the operations of the early learning council, including supplies, personnel, and travel expenses.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of education for the purposes of this Act.

### PART III

#### EARLY LEARNING SYSTEM & KEIKI FIRST STEPS PROGRAM

SECTION 4. There is established an early learning system that shall ensure a continuum of quality early learning opportunities for children from birth to age five throughout the state, to be developed and administered by the early learning council. The system:

**Comment [DT5]:** Recommend membership reflect the representation of the Act 259 Task Force

- (1) Shall be universally accessible. In its first phases, the system shall focus on all three- and four-year old children in the state, giving priority to underserved or at-risk children. When complete, the system shall provide a seamless experience for children from birth to five years of age;

- (2) Shall be a comprehensive system in which:

- (a) All existing programs, whether publicly- or privately-run, which consist of a variety of early learning approaches, service deliveries, and settings, are coordinated.

**Comment [DT6]:** What type of coordination is intended?

(b) Public and private resources are maximized;

and

(c) The use of public facilities for either publicly- or privately-run early learning programs is maximized;

(3) Shall provide high-quality education with Hawaii preschool standards-based content, and curriculum, and instructional approaches for accountability, an appropriate teacher-to-child ratio, and an adequate number of well-qualified educators and administrators who are fairly compensated and have access to continuing professional development;

Deleted:

and

(4) Shall be sensitive to family choice and cultural elements.

SECTION 5. There is established the keiki first program, to be developed and administered by the early learning council as the first phase in the development of the state's early learning system. The program shall focus on the coordination, improvement, and expansion of existing programs and services within the early learning system for three- and four-year-old children in the state, with

Deleted: steps

priority for underserved or at-risk children. The core components of the program shall be:

- (1) The identification of research-based and proven curricula and methods, and implementation of various means of improving existing curricula and methods, including:
  - (A) Research-based early learning program models for three- and four-year-old children;
  - (B) Research-based early learning program models for at-risk children from birth to three years of age;
  - (C) Ensuring that written program standards exist and are implemented in early learning programs;
  - (D) Developing incentives to enhance quality in child care and early learning programs; and
  - (E) Developing an effective, comprehensive, and integrated system to provide training, technical assistance, and monitoring to ensure high quality services are provided in all early learning programs;
- (2) Low staff-child ratio and group size in early learning settings;
- (3) Parent and community engagement;

(4) Health and developmental screenings for children;

(5) Well-qualified and adequately-compensated staff,  
including:

(A) Ensuring more staff have opportunities to  
receive early childhood education degrees;

(B) Providing access to continuing professional  
development for all staff;

(C) Establishing a structure for standardized  
roles across the early learning system and  
for incentives such as awarding credentials  
to staff who have received certain levels of  
achievement; and

(D) Addressing the early learning labor market  
and working conditions to build a qualified,  
diverse, and stable early learning  
workforce;

and

(6) Child assessment and program and service  
evaluation to maintain and promote high quality  
in early learning programs and services,  
including:

(A) Developing guidelines for developmental  
screening and ongoing assessment of  
individual children served by early learning

- programs to facilitate appropriate instruction and document progress;
- (B) Developing guidelines for the use of child and program data for programs to perform self-assessments to assist continuous efforts to improve the programs;
  - (C) Developing an evaluation plan for programs and services; and
  - (D) Sharing of data across programs and services to assist evaluation and planning.

SECTION 6. For the purposes of this part, "at-risk children" shall be defined as children who, because of their home and community environment, are subject to language, cultural, economic, and like disadvantages that cause them to have been determined through screening procedures to be at risk for academic failure.

SECTION 7. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$        or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 for the keiki first steps program.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of education for the purposes of this Act.

PART IV



SECTION 8. This Act shall take effect on July 1,  
2008.

INTRODUCED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force

LATE TESTIMONY

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair  
Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC HOUSING

From: Elaine Yamashita  
Co-Chair, Professional/Workforce Subcommittee

Date: Monday, January 28, 2008  
1:15 p.m., Room 225

**Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning**

**The Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force strongly supports the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council, and the Early Learning System and Keiki First Steps Program.**

Chair Sakamoto, Chair Chun-Oakland, and members of the Senate Committees on Education and Human Services and Public Housing. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding SB2878. I am Elaine Yamashita, Co-Chair along with Christina Cox, of the Task Force's Professional/Workforce Development subcommittee. I represent the University of Hawai'i Community Colleges on the Task Force. Hawai'i, Honolulu, Kaua'i and Maui CCs house Associate in Science degrees that articulate into the UH West O'ahu BA Social Sciences, Early Childhood Specialization.

The community college students typically work full-time, have families, and come to school. Some are able to take more than two classes a semester, but many find two classes a good balance between family life, work, and school. This means many take up to six years to earn an Associate's degree. The report takes this and other factors that impact the workforce into account in its 10 year plan.

As a group of my Maui CC students told Sen. Baker in a presentation on Act 259, they are excited about the potential of being able to earn a decent living wage as they continue their education. They look forward to scholarships that may help them to finish their formal education in a more timely manner.

The Task Force was very cognizant of the issues around workforce development and how higher qualifications have to be linked to higher compensation, and those considerations are reflected in the report. There is a statewide shortage of qualified people to work in early childhood programs. The Programs and Workforce Development subcommittee met over the last year and a half to hammer out consensus decisions around qualifications and terms for staffing in the high quality programs that are envisioned. The current legislation could use more specificity from the report to assure that staff are highly qualified and adequately compensated, so that turnover is minimal, further assuring that children can build stable, healthy relationships with their teachers.

## **Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force**

The 10-year plan accommodates building the workforce to meet the current and future needs of this program. It does require state funding other than what is currently in place to provide the compensation commensurate with the proposed qualifications. As an educator in a state institution, I appreciate the fact that the state subsidizes my salary – I know that student tuition does not cover the full cost of my salary and benefits. The report's potential funding mechanisms are similar to the higher education system, with student tuition, state subsidies, and other funding streams (scholarships, grants, etc.) in place.

The Task Force and its subcommittees have drawn on and will continue to depend on the best thinking in the state and from national experts to refine its proposals. We are happy to assist in redrafting the legislation to reflect the professional development, workforce, and other issues and to answer any questions for the committee.

## Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force

To: SENATE COMMITTEE  
Senator Chun-Oakland  
Senator Norm Sakamoto

From: Katy Chen  
Executive Director, PATCH – People Attentive to Children

Date: Monday, January 28, 2008  
1:15pm; Room 225

**Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning**

**The Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force strongly supports the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council, and the Early Learning System and Keiki First Steps Program.**

Senator Chun-Oakland and Senator Sakamoto, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding SB2878. I am Katy Chen, Executive Director of PATCH, and Cynthia Ballard, Oahu Coordinator, and a member of the Early Learning Educational Task Force. PATCH is Hawaii's only statewide child care resource and referral agency and a member of the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral agencies. PATCH receives more than 10,000 enquiries a year from parents and guardians looking for referrals for affordable, quality care of their young children. PATCH also provides professional development opportunities for those working in the field of early childhood education and care.

Our task force worked very hard over the last year and a half to develop a quality early learning for Hawaii's 4 year olds in both home-based and center-based settings. The Keiki First Steps early learning system must be supported – it is the only plan that addresses parents' choice in child care setting and simultaneously seeks to increase both accessibility and quality of early childhood education programs. The plan provides initiatives to help children in home-based and center-based settings and family interaction programs. Thus, it allows for parents to choose the type of care they deem is best for their children and family and by doing so, ultimately honoring a family's culture.

We understand the desire to include 3-year-olds in this first phase of the early learning system. However, the Task Force had initially focused its efforts on providing a quality system for only 4-year-olds, later adding birth to 3. We ask that the Committee allow for the additional work required for the development of a 3-year-old program before it is incorporated in the first phase of the early learning system.

Moreover, our Task Force is united in wanting to offer a quality early learning system to all children, birth through 5. Particularly though, the system must include the growing number of middle-income gap group families. Studies show that after housing, child care for young children is the second highest expense for families. Gap group families do not qualify for early education subsidies, but cannot afford the cost of existing quality early

## Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force

education. Ultimately they go without and this problem is only growing. Even for low-income families, there is not enough capacity to meet demand with long-waiting lists.

Although there have been some recent gains in increasing capacity, the need still far outweighs the demand. In follow-up calls to parents and guardians who used our services to find care last year, 60% of them reported that they were unable to find any type of licensed, regulated care due to a lack of available spaces. We know these parents often have no choice but to put their children in care that is not properly regulated and thus of unknown quality. It may not even meet very basic health and safety standards.

This very problem highlights that we must increase our investment if we are to accommodate the growing demand for early education and care. We do not have enough facilities to meet the need, whether it is a home-based or center-based setting. Nor do we have enough qualified teachers and caregivers for the future – in fact, we do not even have enough qualified educators to staff existing preschools. To meet the 80% access goal of providing quality early learning to just our 4-year-olds, we estimate we will need to double our early childhood educator workforce immediately. Factor in the desire to support staff for 3-year-old programs and the need becomes even greater.

The Keiki First Program described in our task force report addresses the point of increasing access while simultaneously improving quality. It will provide for educational opportunities from community based training to university sponsored degrees, so that a new workforce will obtain the necessary credentials outlined in the report.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and we offer our help to refine this bill to best meet the needs of Hawaii's young children.

BIG ISLAND GOOD BEGINNINGS ALLIANCE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair  
Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC HOUSING

From: Angela Thomas  
Member, Early Learning Educational Task Force  
Hawaii Island Coordinator, Good Beginnings Alliance

Date: Monday, January 28, 2008

**Subject: SB2878, Relating to Early Learning**

**The Act 259 Early Learning Educational Task Force strongly supports the intent of this bill to create an Early Learning Council and the Early Learning System, Keiki First Steps Program.**

Chair Sakamoto, Chair Chun-Oakland, and members of the Senate Education and Human Services and Public Housing Committees, thank you for the opportunity to express my support of SB2878. My name is Angela Thomas and I had the privilege of serving as the Hawaii County representative to the Early Learning Educational Task Force. I am also the Good Beginnings Alliance Hawaii Island Coordinator.

Part of the Good Beginnings Alliance structure includes neighbor island councils. The Hawaii Island council, Big Island Good Beginnings Alliance Community Council (BIGBACC) includes over 40 organizations, agencies and preschools working with families and their young children in diverse communities. We have worked together over the years to identify community needs and to direct resources to meet those needs. Some of the programs we are proud of include: the creation of an island wide resource directory for families, the distribution of baby baskets that include snuglis and resource directories to all families of newborns, a car seat and booster seat awareness program, continuous parenting articles in local newspapers, and the implementation of a drug and alcohol screening program for all pregnant women to prevent Fetal Alcohol Syndrome in island newborns. We recently were awarded a \$100,000 P-3 grant to work with transitioning children to kindergarten, and we are planning a collaborative professional development conference in April. This council understands the Big Island - our clients, parents and students, and our island needs. It is this council that was asked by the County to take their seat on the Early Learning Educational Task Force, and elected me to represent them.

The task force has worked very hard to look at all components of creating an early childhood system from access to programs, to increasing professional development opportunities and the workforce, to maintaining options for parental choice and financing. If indeed our youngest children are a priority, it is time to direct our money and resources to support them.

Post Office Box 6376, Kamuela, Hawaii 96743  
Phone: (808) 887-1228

To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair  
Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC HOUSING

From: Nalani Galariada, CDBG Program Specialist  
Good Beginnings Alliance

Date of Hearing: January 28, 2008

Time: 1:15 PM

Title: SB 2878

Aloha Chair Sakamoto and Chair Chun-Oakland,

My name is Nalani Galariada, and I have been the Oahu Partnership Coordinator for Good Beginnings Alliance since July of 2005. GBA is a public/private partnership dedicated to achieving the statewide goal that "All of Hawaii's children are safe, healthy, and ready to succeed." The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to GBA provides funds to service Honolulu's largest homeless shelter, Institute for Human Services (IHS) and Palolo Valley Homes Federal Public Housing.

During the past two years, I have observed and witnessed an increase in the homeless population requesting temporary shelters and the need of more public or affordable housing. How does this problem align with SB 2878 that supports a quality four-year-old early learning program?

Families residing in homeless shelters and public housing are faced with issues that sometimes hinder their ability to develop strong attachments to their child and provide learning opportunities, in stark contrast to surviving on a daily basis or working towards livable wages. The greatest challenges for these families are to recognize that their child's brain absorbs learning skills everyday that prepares them for kindergarten and to see that their home environment is able to provide early learning resources. I have found that Family Child Interaction Learning (FCIL) approach provides "at risk" young children an opportunity to receive a quality educational programming and encourages parents to see themselves as their child's first and most important teacher. FCIL can be a keiki's first step that prepares the child and parents for school.

In conclusion, I strongly support the intent of this bill to establish a quality early learning program for all of Hawaii's keiki. KEIKI FIRST!

Contact: Nalani Galariada, CDBG Program Specialist

January 28, 2008

## LATE TESTIMONY

To: Senator Rosalyn Baker  
Suzanne Chun-Oakland

From: Donna M. Flores

Subject: Senate Bill 2878- Relating to Early Learning

My name is Donna Flores. I live in Kaneohe, Oahu. I have been an early childhood professional and member of the Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children (HAEYC) since 1976. I currently serve as HAEYC's Past President. I have taught public and private kindergarten, and for 23 years was employed in a Head Start program on Oahu as preschool center teacher, home base teacher, teacher mentor, program manager, and staff development and training manager. I am adjunct faculty with Pacific Oaks College in Pasadena, California where I facilitate distance learning. I am submitting this testimony as a concern educator.

I support this bill. I believe that a state system needs to be implemented and funds dedicated to the early learning of Hawaii's keiki to develop and maintain the resiliency of Hawaii's diverse children and their families.

In order to deliver quality programs we must recruit and invest in the early childhood workforce and provide various innovative avenues of teacher preparation, training opportunities, ongoing mentoring, tuition assistance, a living wage, and quality working conditions. We must also honor a hallmark of resiliency that is basic to Hawaiian culture; ohana-parents, caregivers, families must be acknowledged and supported as the most important teachers of their children. The ohana, in its respective community, needs opportunities to build on its strengths and resources, diminish weaknesses, identify goals and be given decision making in regards its most precious gift, the keiki.

Mahalo!



To: Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair  
Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC HOUSING

From: Nalani Galariada, CDBG Program Specialist  
Good Beginnings Alliance

Date of Hearing: January 28, 2008  
Time: 1:15 PM

**LATE**

Title: SB 2878

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In conclusion, I strongly support the intent of this bill to establish a quality early learning program for all of Hawaii's keiki. **KEIKI FIRST!**

Contact: Nalani Galariada, CDBG Program Specialist