
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO CHILDREN.

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

1 PART I

2 SECTION 1. Research confirms the positive impact that an
3 abuse-free, stable, and nurturing environment has on a child's
4 physical and psychological development. Trauma, abuse, and
5 stress can negatively affect the development of children's
6 brains, which are approximately ninety per cent developed by age
7 three, and to a great extent their earliest experiences define
8 their adult functional capacities. Statistics show a strong
9 correlation between childhood abuse and school failure,
10 delinquency, mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse, crime, and
11 homelessness.

12 The legislature finds that Hawaii's healthy start program
13 is designed to prevent child abuse and neglect and promotes
14 child development among high-risk infants and toddlers. The
15 healthy start program began as a demonstration child prevention
16 project in July 1985 and was expanded to a statewide program in
17 2001. Healthy Families America, a national program model
18 designed to help expectant and new parents provide a healthy



1 start for their children, drew largely from the research,
2 knowledge, and experience of Hawaii's healthy start program.

3 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds from the
4 general revenues of the State of Hawaii and temporary assistance
5 for needy families to the department of human services and the
6 department of health for the healthy start and enhanced healthy
7 start programs to hire a child development or clinical
8 specialist and fund provider training, to address budgetary
9 shortfalls, and to implement recommended improvements.

10 PART II

11 SECTION 2. Support programs such as healthy start are
12 especially important during times of economic distress. The
13 Center for Law and Social Policy notes studies showing that
14 incidents of child abuse and neglect increase during financial
15 downturns. Healthy start is an important resource for
16 overburdened families to assist them with safe and successful
17 parenting. Parents unable to form bonds with their infants or
18 suffering with substance abuse issues, domestic violence,
19 depression, or financial difficulty, are invited to the program.
20 Once enrolled, parents are offered practical support in the form
21 of food, clothing, and housing and employment resources, as well
22 as parenting support from social workers and child development



1 specialists. Loss of the support to high-risk families offered
2 by the healthy start program in such critical times can lead to
3 increased child abuse, social and health problems, and loss of
4 future human capital and productivity.

5 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
6 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$4,700,000 or so much
7 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2009-2010 and the
8 sum of \$4,700,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for
9 fiscal year 2010-2011 to maintain the current support services
10 provided by the healthy start program.

11 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
12 of human services for the purposes of this Act.

13 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of temporary
14 assistance for needy families funds the sum of \$4,700,000 or so
15 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2009-2010 and
16 the sum of \$4,700,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for
17 fiscal year 2010-2011 to include federal funding to maintain the
18 current support services provided by the healthy start program.

19 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
20 of human services for the purposes of this Act.



1 PART III

2 SECTION 5. Due to concerns that some families facing
3 substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental-health issues
4 were not being effectively enrolled in the healthy start
5 program, a multi-disciplinary team was established. This multi-
6 disciplinary team approach became known as enhanced healthy
7 start, to serve families at higher levels of risk, as well as
8 infants and toddlers confirmed as being subject to abuse or
9 neglect.

10 To improve the program and assist more families, the
11 following additional program changes have been recommended by
12 healthy start proponents to improve services and service
13 delivery:

- 14 (1) Increased prenatal intake as a means of increasing
15 engagement, retention, and effectiveness;
- 16 (2) Focus on risk factors identified on the family stress
17 checklist at assessment;
- 18 (3) Improve the ratio of child development specialists and
19 clinical specialists to the number of families served;
20 and
- 21 (4) Develop training to keep providers abreast of state-
22 of-the art interventions.



Report Title:

Keiki Caucus; Healthy Start; Enhanced Healthy Start;
Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates temporary assistance for needy families funds and general revenue funds for the healthy start and enhanced healthy start programs, to maintain current services, to hire additional staff and for provider training. (HB1354 HD1)

