
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 abuse
16 prevention project in July 1985, and was expanded to a statewide
17 program in 2001. Healthy Families America, a national program
18 model designed to help expectant and new parents provide a



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

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

11 PART II

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



1 employment resources, as well as parenting support from social
2 workers and child development specialists. The loss of support
3 that the healthy start program offers high-risk families in such
4 critical times can lead to increased child abuse, social and
5 health problems, and loss of future human capital and
6 productivity.

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

13 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
14 of human services for the purposes of sections 1 and 2 of this
15 Act.

16 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of temporary
17 assistance for needy families funds the sum of \$ or so much
18 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2009-2010 and the
19 sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
20 year 2010-2011 to maintain the current support services provided
21 by the healthy start program.



1 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
2 of human services for the purposes of sections 1 and 2 of this
3 Act.

4 PART III

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

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

16 (1) Increased prenatal intake as a means of increasing
17 engagement, retention, and effectiveness;

18 (2) A focus on risk factors identified on the family
19 stress checklist at assessment;

20 (3) Improved ratios of child development specialists and
21 clinical specialists to the number of families served;

22 and



1 (4) Training development to keep providers abreast of
2 state-of-the art interventions.

3 Implementing these recommended program changes in
4 conjunction with the continuation of the healthy start program
5 will give Hawaii's children their best opportunity to thrive and
6 grow into well-adjusted, successful adults.

7 SECTION 6. There is appropriated from temporary assistance
8 for needy families funds the sum of \$ or so much thereof as
9 may be necessary for fiscal year 2009-2010 and the same sum or
10 so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2010-2011 to
11 the department of human services for the healthy start program,
12 including enhanced healthy start, to hire a child development
13 specialist or clinical specialist, and to train healthy start
14 and enhanced healthy start providers to continue delivering
15 currently provided services.

16 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
17 of human services for the purposes of section 5 of this Act.

18 PART IV

19 SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2020.



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 HD2)

