
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO INCORPORATE SIGN LANGUAGE
AND OTHER COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES DURING INSTRUCTION TO
ENHANCE THE LEARNING OF CHILDREN WITH COGNITIVE AND OTHER
DISABILITIES.

1 WHEREAS, the Department of Education has a departmental
2 duty under section 302A-436, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to provide
3 exceptional children, which includes students with disabilities,
4 residing in the State with instruction, special facilities, and
5 special services for education, therapy, and training to enable
6 them to live normal competitive lives; and

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8 WHEREAS, the Department of Education has studied and made
9 recommendations in the past on ways to improve the development
10 and learning of children with disabilities; and

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12 WHEREAS, the Department of Education submitted a report to
13 the Legislature in 2007 entitled "Educational Implications of
14 the Special Needs of Preschool Age Children with Developmental
15 Disabilities: Report to the 24th Legislature, 2007" that
16 provides the following recommendations:

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18 (1) The development of a child's communication skills
19 should be an ongoing process that is incorporated into
20 all activities by professionals and by the child's
21 family during the course of the intervention and
22 during all daily activities;
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24 (2) A total communication program (sign language, oral
25 communication, and visual cues) should be used to
26 facilitate the development of expressive language;
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28 (3) When using a total communication approach, it is
29 important that the sign language system be one that
30 can be used simultaneously with spoken English (or
31 other language spoken in the home) and that the child



1 receives speech or language therapy to support and
2 enhance speech production and oral communication;

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4 (4) It is important for parents and professionals to
5 recognize that the use of sign language should not
6 interfere with oral language development; and

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8 (5) When sign language is included as a communication
9 strategy, it is important that the families,
10 caregivers, and those working with a child learn the
11 same signs and are encouraged to use the signs and
12 that the signs and oral vocabulary being taught have
13 practical, functional, and cultural value to the
14 family; and

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16 WHEREAS, numerous research studies indicate that the use of
17 signs with speech (simultaneous communication) facilitates
18 language development in children with Down's Syndrome and other
19 cognitive disabilities, and the recommendations in the
20 Department of Education's 2007 report outlined above also cite
21 the success of using simultaneous communication; and

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23 WHEREAS, according to the findings and recommendations in
24 the Department's 2007 report, students who are disabled (aside
25 from those who are deaf or hard of hearing) can benefit from
26 learning sign language and having their instruction delivered in
27 sign language or simultaneous communication as part of a total
28 communication program; and

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30 WHEREAS, allowing qualified educational paraprofessionals
31 in the Department of Education who can communicate in sign
32 language to work with children who are disabled and apply the
33 appropriate communication method with these children provides
34 the children with a greater opportunity for learning and
35 language development; and

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37 WHEREAS, educational paraprofessionals can receive
38 instruction from institutions such as Kapiolani Community
39 College, which offers courses in American Sign Language and
40 preparation to work in K-12 settings with children who are deaf,
41 hard of hearing, or disabled; now, therefore,

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43 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fifth
44 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2010, the



1 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of
2 Education is urged to establish an appropriate level of sign
3 language proficiency for individuals in the Department who
4 provide instruction to children with disabilities that will
5 enable those individuals to incorporate sign language and other
6 communication strategies during instruction to enhance their
7 students' learning; and
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9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Education is
10 also urged to facilitate the professional development, training,
11 and preparation of educational personnel, service providers, and
12 other individuals involved with the instruction of children with
13 disabilities, through continuing education or other means, to
14 use the total communication method, simultaneous communication,
15 or sign language during instruction as determined by the child's
16 Individualized Education Plan; and
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18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
19 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the
20 Board of Education, the Superintendent of Education, the Special
21 Education Advisory Council, and the Hawaii Speech-Language-
22 Hearing Association.

