

SB 2861



CHILDCARE BUSINESS COALITION

Committed to Quality Education

To: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

From: Christina Cox, Liaison
Childcare Business Coalition of Hawaii
808-941-9414 ext. 25 ccox@kcaapreschools.org

The Cole Academy

KCAA Preschools
of Hawaii

Kama'aina Kids

Rainbow Schools

Seagull Schools

Waiānae Coast Early
Childhood Services

Waikiki Community
Center

Date: 2/8/10

RE: SB 2861 Relating to Child Care
Hearing Date: 2/9/10
Time: 4:30 p.m.
Place: Conference Room 016

The Childcare Business Coalition of Hawaii serves more than 4,000 children, ages 6 weeks-5 years, in more than 40 preschools on three islands. Approximately 25% of our students are participants in the federally funded Childcare Connection program or the State-funded Preschool Open Doors program. As a group, we account for almost 50% of the 2,300 students enrolled in private preschools statewide, who participate in the subsidy programs. As a group, we are committed to providing quality early education and care that is accessible to all children. We have worked side-by-side with DHS over the years to help ensure that Hawaii's most at-risk children have equal access to quality preschools. We are currently working closely with the Department and designated community agencies to secure emergency short-term funding for families impacted by the recent subsidy reductions.

We support the intent of SB 2861. We recommend that in addition to the current cap of \$500 per month per child, two new rates be established as follows:

- \$700 per month per child maximum for infant/toddler care
- Additional \$50 per child per month for child enrolling in nationally accredited program (there are currently two recognized accrediting bodies in the rules: NAEYC and NECPA)

Liaison:
Christina Cox
(808) 941-9414

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

156C Hamakua Drive Kailua, Hawaii 96734



Hearing date:
Tuesday,
February 9,
2010, 4:30 p.m.
Senate Human
Services
Committee
Room 016

To: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

From: Elisabeth Chun, Executive Director
Good Beginnings Alliance

Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2010, 4:30 p.m.
Conference Room 016

Subject: **SB2861:** Imposes a maximum child care subsidy of \$500 per month per child and authorizes the department of human services to amend its guidelines for determining eligibility for child care subsidies.

The Good Beginnings Alliance is a nonprofit policy and advocacy organization focused on Hawaii's youngest children and their families. We strive to ensure a nurturing, safe and healthy development for all children from pre-birth to age eight. We believe all children deserve safe and supportive environments that meet their needs as they grow and develop.

We support the intent of this bill to allow for broader utilization of child care subsidy monies. However, we are concerned that the proposed \$500 cap will in effect drive parents towards lower-quality programs because very few licensed early childhood programs have monthly fees of \$500 or less. A parent currently unable to pay for child care from their own resources would still find it unaffordable at \$500 unless underground or unlicensed care is selected.

Research has shown the great benefits derived from high-quality early childhood programs, especially for those children considered most at risk due to low socio-economic status or other circumstances affecting the child such as the mother's educational level. The dilemma is that programs must invest resources in order to achieve quality. Staff with the necessary degrees in early childhood education deserves pay commensurate with their educational levels; this results in higher costs for the program and resultant higher tuition for the parent.

We recommend the committee work closely with selected providers to craft a bill that will better serve the early childhood community and maintain fiscal balance.

Mahalo for your support. For more information contact: Good Beginnings Alliance; phone: 531-5502; lchun@goodbeginnings.org.