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www.waikikicomunitycenter.org

December 22, 2009

To: Rep. John Mizuno, Chair, House Committee on Human Services
Rep. Tom Brower, Vice Chair, House Committee on Human Services

Members of the House Committees on Human Services

From: Joan Naguwa, Executive Director

RE: **Informational Briefing on Possible Reduction to Services in the Preschool and Licensed Family Care areas, pursuant to Proposed Rule Changes to Dept. of Human Services Child Care Subsidy Program, Hawaii Administrative Rules, Sections 17-798.2-12 and 17.798.2-14**

Hearing Date: Monday, December 28, 2009

Time: 10:00 am

Place: Conference Room 329

Dear Chair Mizuno and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding the possible reduction of services in the preschool and licensed family care areas pursuant to the Proposed Rule Changes to the Dept. of Human Services Child Care Subsidy Program, Hawaii Administrative Rules, Sections 17-1798.2-12 and 17.798.2.14.

My name is Joan Naguwa and I am the Executive Director of the Waikiki Community Center (WCC). The Waikiki Community Center has operated a single site licensed group infant toddler center and a licensed group child care center for the past 31 years. WCC's program is the only licensed group child care center in Waikiki for families who are Waikiki residents or employees of Waikiki's visitor industry. WCC is also one of the few infant/toddler centers on Oahu.

Currently, over 50% of our enrolled children receive tuition subsidies through Child Care Connections and Preschool Open Doors. Of these families, 82% are working, single parents with one or more children to support on one income. Many of these families do not have family support systems or affordable alternatives available to assist them.

Following the legislative informational hearing held on December 4, 2009, WCC met with the families who will be impacted by the proposed rule changes. Clearly, families are very, very concerned about how they will be able to continue their employment and have quality care for their children. While they are awaiting official written correspondence from DHS to learn what their exact tuition co-payment amount will be, they have indicated that they likely will not be able to continue



Caring for the people of Waikiki through quality programs and services since 1978

-2-

enrollment in our program. We have researched alternative resources of financial assistance (ARRA funding) and learned that many of our families will need to be in arrears in their rent or other payments in order to qualify. In some cases, they are not eligible for SNAP, or food stamps, because their income is just barely above eligibility requirements. For them, the new sliding scale pushes them "over the edge" in their ability to maintain employment and afford basic needs while ensuring care for their children.

Consequently, we have made plans to close 2 out of 3 classrooms and reduce available spaces for 30 children in March 2010. If we are not able to increase enrollment with non-subsidized children, we are prepared to close our program in July 2010.

We appreciate the difficult fiscal situation faced by the Dept. of Human Services. However, the proposed rule changes will have **significant** impact on young children, working families struggling to make ends meet, child care providers, and the great work that the Hawaii State Legislature and the community has made in strengthening the quality and availability of quality early childhood education in Hawaii over the past several years. We ask the Governor and the Dept. of Human Services to consider the following to minimize this severe impact on our families:

- Revise the proposed rate changes to more reasonable levels to minimize the drastic changes for currently enrolled students through the end of FY2009 and enable families more time to find alternate care.
- At the same time, delay acceptance of new students in the Child Care Connections and Preschool Open Doors programs until the beginning of FY2010.
- Work with the Hawaii State Legislature and community stakeholders immediately, including child care providers, to develop a new sliding scale that can be ready for FY2010.

Clearly, the proposed rule changes have already caused tremendous concerns among preschool providers and their families. We ask that the Dept. of Human Services, Office of the Governor, Hawaii State Legislature, and community all work together to minimize the impact that the proposed rule changes will have on Hawaii's children and their families.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on this issue.

To: HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE
INTERIM OF 2009

From: Amy Bautista

Phone: (808) 721-3827
E-Mail: bautistae008@hawaii.rr.com

Date: December 27, 2009

Subject: Hearing HUS 3-30-09 Info 2 -- Testimony regarding substantial reduction in child-care subsidies for families with preschoolers

Aloha State Representatives. My name is Amy Bautista, and I am a parent of two school age children and a preschool age child.

I am opposed to substantial reduction in child-care subsidies for families with preschoolers

Please know that both my husband and I work full time and have done so all of our adult lives. My husband does construction work and I am a Legal Assistant. We have never collected welfare and have always paid our taxes. Aside from child care assistance, we have only very briefly received WIC benefits and Quest coverage and we only qualify for child care assistance now because of my husbands drastic reduction in work hours. My point is that we have not relied upon the State for assistance for any sustained period of time.

Our family sits in a financial black hole in that we make too much to receive most State assistances (i.e. welfare, WIC, Quest, etc.) but when monthly expenses are totaled we basically only make enough to survive each month – if even that! It is amazing to me how our society is progressing to a point in which a family – with two full time working parents – can not make ends meet because we are so heavily charged (for State services), taxed and furloughed.

We DO NOT expect assistance from the State, however, we do need it!! With school hours being cut -- forcing added child care costs, school lunch and bus fees being increased, and now this new proposed reduction in child care assistance, we may reach the point where one of us might have to stop working because we will not be able to afford to work outside of the home!!!

I am personally frustrated that working families are the ones being targeted – what is being done about all of the people staying home all day and collecting a free check each month? Maybe a reduction in their benefits would encourage them to get up and do something!! Or maybe we can re-evaluate our government structure to see if cuts could be made there? With no offense to any representative, I have to ask – could some positions be eliminated to free up more money for areas that need it? These are all tough questions with no easy answers.

Having said all that, I end by saying that I can appreciate these most difficult financial times and understand that government can not continue to provide and sustain assistance for all, however, I ask that you consider that while we can survive bumpier roads, less convenient State services, or less State

officials, we can not survive if basic living costs continue to increase beyond what middle class WORKING families are able to earn!!

People receiving child care assistance are doing so because they are out doing something which will in some way contribute back to our society, our State and its people. If our State is unable to help those who are working very hard to help themselves – then we stand to loose much more than monthly monetary assistance – we may loose those who have the motivation and ability to grow, expand, and develop as productive community contributors.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration of my testimony.

I have provided my contact information above and would be happy to provide you more information to facilitate your decision-making.

Sincerely,

Amy Bautista

Arlene Woo

I have a suggestion that might help the child care situation for low income families who require subsidies. Why not set aside areas in the affordable housing units for child care for the residents of those apartments and train some of the mothers to be teachers aides? Their work could be considered compensation that could be applied to their housing rents. This way the women would be not only looking after their children but they will have learned valuable skills that could earn them money in the future.

Licensed child care providers could contract with the State to set up and operate the schools, using the women from the residences as aides. Of course, there would need to be background checks, finger printing and psychological evaluations to insure the safety of the children. Training could be done by the University of Hawaii or by other qualified personnel.

I hope this idea has merit for discussion.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

From: Farrah Canionero [sariah69@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, December 09, 2009 9:35 AM
To: HUSTestimony
Subject: Reduction in tuition assistance

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to oppose to the child care reduction in tuition assistance. The reason for this is, if my childcare assistance is taken away from my child then my child would have to stay home with a family member. She will be loosing her early hood education and people skills.

I feel this is not fair for those who are struggling and are single parent's who wants the best for their children. I am a full time working single parent, who also works for the state of Hawaii and is a HGEA member. I mention HGEA because, I am one of those 50,000 state workers who has furlough Fridays and is paying a difference of \$200.00 to my child's education. There fore there was a decrease in my paycheck and for me to pay more to my child's school would be even harder for me to make a living. Lastly, please think about all the families who are getting assistance from this program.

Sincerely,

Farrah Canionero

~~Confidential~~


From: Jas Rae Nesmith [visit_brianna@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2009 7:06 PM
To: HUS testimony
Subject: Re: Reduction in tuition assistance

To Whom it may concern,

My name is Jas Rae A. Nesmith, client id #981212 with Oahu Arbor Leeward. I am a full-time, 24 year old working single mother of a three year old daughter who attends Alphetland Preschool (Pearl City). I received a letter from her school dated 12/03/09 regarding the proposal to reduce and even possibly eliminate the financial assistance to those who participate in the state's child care tuition assistance program. As a recipient of tuition assistance, I have done all that was required to earn the financial assistance for my daughter so that she may attend preschool. I've completed the First to Work program, I work a minimum of 30 hours per week, I meet the income requirements, and lastly, Alphetland Preschool is a certified child care facility recognized by the state of Hawaii. I have done everything to fulfill my obligations to earn assistance and I have not been receiving the full child care benefits as promised by the First to Work program had said and implied. I am grateful for any assistance but the help that I was told I was going to receive and expected has been variable because it continues to decrease and to now be informed that it might be discontinued I feel as though I've been taken advantage of my time and effort. With all due respect, I have done everything necessary to meet the requirements that the program and my worker (G. Dela Cruz) had asked of me to earn assistance for my daughter. I personally would be present at the hearing to formally make my appeal but I unfortunately can't get off from work. I did however, find this matter and my daughter's education important enough to take the time to write this testimony. I hope that you in turn will consider the importance of the program and how much it affects those children involved. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Jas Rae A. Nesmith

Windows Live Hotmail gives you a free, exclusive gift. [Click here to download.](#)



From: Jennifer Davies [jldavies@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Sunday, December 27, 2009 1:08 PM
To: HUS testimony
Subject: Cuts in Childcare

Dear: Rep. John Mizuno,

My name is Jennifer Davies and I have been a Licensed Childcare Provider for ten years. I work over 10 1/2 hours a day and much longer on the weekends to run my daycare. It costs me 2 1/2 children a month to operate my business. I already make less than \$2.00 an hour. As Childcare Providers we don't make much. If you cut services to my parents, I may lose five of my six children. This will put my family's and myself in great financial hardship.

I take great pride when the children who leave my care know how to read, know their ABC's, know their colors and just have a basic foundation before going off to preschool. When I voted for my Governor, she ran on protecting the children. As a voter (who voted for her) I feel lied to! In my personal opinion our children in Hawaii can't compete with the Mainland children. By cutting more services our children will have NO future.

As far as I know you are the only Representative that is trying to help us. You give me hope. I would like to take this time to THANK YOU for trying to help us in providing a better future for OUR children in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Davies
HCR 2 Box 62221
Keaau, HI 96749
(808) 982-6383

~~Cynthia Torres~~

From: patju@hawaii.rr.com
Sent: Thursday, December 24, 2009 9:40 PM
To: patju@hawaii.rr.com; HUS testimony
Cc: Rep. John Mizuno
Subject: Re: Testimony in Support of STOP PROPOSED CUTS TO CHILDCARE SUBSIDIES

----- patju@hawaii.rr.com wrote:

> TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

>

> (1) Stop DHS Proposed Reductions to Childcare Subsidies for Poor Children Ages 3 to 5 years old thereby preventing Early Education Provided by Community Preschools; (2) FIND OTHER SOLUTIONS FOR DHS BUDGET DEFICIT.

>

> FROM PRIVATE CITIZEN: Patricia Urieff, MSW, ACSW, Licensed Social Worker, Certified Montessori Preschool Teacher, Parent, Grandparent, currently employed by a Hawaiian Child Welfare Agency with title of "Systems Facilitator".

>

> TO: Committee on Human Services & Housing: Representative John Mizuno, Chairman; Representative Della Au Belatti; Representative Joe Bertram III; Representative mele Carroll; Representative Scott Nishimoto; Representative Maile Shimabukuro; Representative Yamane Ward.

>

> FOR Hearing on Monday, December 28, 2009, 10:00 AM, at State Capitol Building on Beretania Street, Room 329.

>

> At this time in American society, intelligent folks follow scientific evidence about steps to prevent cancer and diabetes, how to prepare for a coming hurricane or tsunami, and how to prevent pedestrian and traffic fatal accidents.

>

> We have scientific evidence about early brain development during the first six years of life; about critical developmental needs including Early Education by 3 years old to support readiness to learn in school beginning with Kindergarten; and that without Early Education children fall behind at school, experience school difficulties, escape by truancy and dropping out of school. Survival becomes very difficult.

>

> Currently, the Department of Education has not yet implemented education for 4 year olds. Community preschools provide Early Education for young children.

>

> The legislature is to be congratulated for supporting that state government and the Department of Human Services look deeper at other solutions for a budget deficits rather than reducing childcare subsidies for poor families.

>

> In the process of life it self there is time for everything. It is time to support Early Education, especially for young children 3 to 5 years old from struggling families.

>

> Look at getting federal money to pay for medical needs of folks who migrated from areas that supposed to be covered in a Federal Compact Agreement. Look deeper at decreasing expenditures related to extend life supports for frail elderly with diagnosis of no possible cure. Look at making state administration shift money from other departments to DHS for childcare subsidies. For example, many proposed studies to be financed by taxpayers can wait until after the budget crisis deficit; prisoners can wait; pay increases for state workers and legislators can wait. Look at the nice things that the state does that can wait until the budget crisis is gone.

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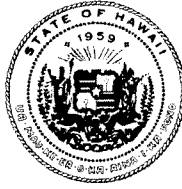
> The developmental needs of young children 3 to 5 years old can not wait for Early Education Preschools meet the critical need for early education.

>

> The proposal to cut childcare subsidies is to ignore all of the scientific evidence (1)regarding needed supports for school successes and becoming productive citizens; and (2)for preventing the negatives with tremendous cost to government via taxpayers.

>

>



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

LATE
Testimony

December 28, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable John Mizuno, Chair
House Human Services Committee

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Human Services Director

SUBJECT: Rule changes to child care subsidy program for needy families

Informational Briefing: December 28, 2009, 10 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

NEW SLIDING SCALE FOR CHILD CARE SUBSIDY PAYMENTS

For several important reasons, the State Department of Human Services (DHS) must restructure its child care subsidy payments for needy families, effective February 1, 2010.

To be clear, DHS is not tightening eligibility for subsidies nor cutting the budget. In fact, DHS requested – and the 2009 State Legislature approved – an \$8.5 million increase in this year’s budget, thus bringing the total to nearly \$66 million.

The problem is, that \$66 million is being spent much faster than anticipated due to a sharp hike in families seeking assistance and higher rates charged by child care providers.

Unless DHS takes decisive action now, no funding will be available for subsidies from March through the end of the State Fiscal Year on June 30, 2010.

Rather than eliminate aid entirely for four months, DHS is implementing a ten-step sliding scale that replaces the current three-step scale. When this new system goes into effect on February 1, the neediest families will continue receiving 100 percent of the maximum subsidy rate allowed by DHS, while other families will receive subsidies ranging from 90 percent to 10 percent of the maximum rate as their incomes rise.

To help families adjust to the new sliding scale, DHS has identified sources of federal aid that pay for child care, rent, utilities or other necessities. DHS and licensed child care providers are

New Sliding Scale for Child Care Subsidy Payments

December 23, 2009

Page 2

working together to inform families about this valuable assistance and help them submit applications through nonprofit social service agencies statewide.

Parents who take advantage of this federal aid should be able to continue their employment or education and keep their keiki in current child care settings.

This federal aid will also help licensed child care providers maintain their staffing and avoid facility closures.

Another important reason DHS developed the new sliding scale is to eliminate an unwanted “cliff effect” that traps many parents in lower-paying jobs.

Under the current sliding scale, families lose an 80 percent subsidy when their wages exceed the income limit by even one dollar. With the new sliding scale, parents only lose a 10 percent subsidy when they exceed the income limit. This means parents are encouraged – not discouraged – from advancing in their careers and leaving government assistance.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify regarding the restructured child care subsidy program.

LATE Testimony



Hearing date:
Monday,
December 28,
2009, 10:00 a.m.
House Human
Services
Committee, Room
329

To: Representative John Mizuno, Chair
SENATE & HOUSE COMMITTEES ON HUMAN SERVICES

From: Elisabeth Chun, Executive Director
Good Beginnings Alliance

Date: Monday, December 28, 2009, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329

Subject: **Proposed Amendments to Chapters 17-798. (Benefit, Employment Support Services Division)**

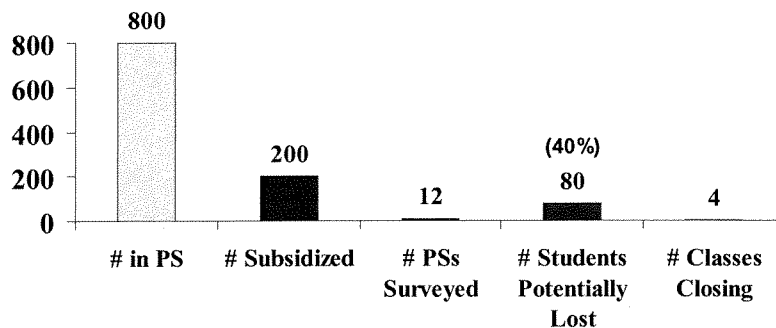
Chair Mizuno,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the proposed amendments to Chapters 17-798. Our coordinators have surveyed a number of preschool directors, and the following are the impacts per county.

For the island of Kauai, there are 200 subsidized preschool (PS) students, and approximately 40% may have to leave PS because of the increases in parent co-pays. Additionally, this could result in 4 PS classes closing.

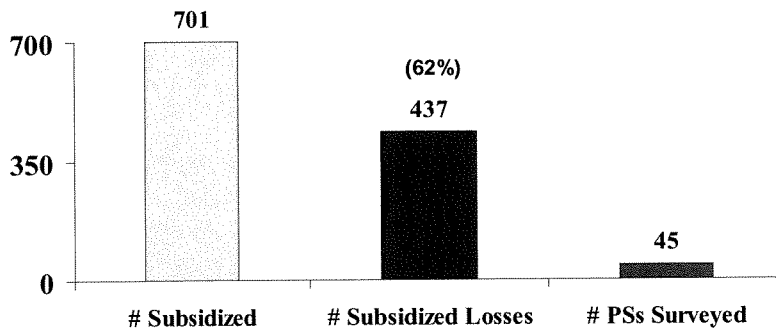


Kauai PS Impact



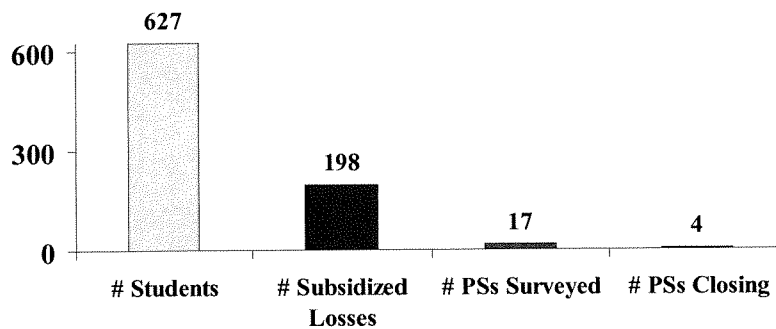
For Oahu, approximately 62% of the 701 subsidized students may have to be taken out of PS from the total of 45 PSs surveyed.

O`ahu FCC Impact



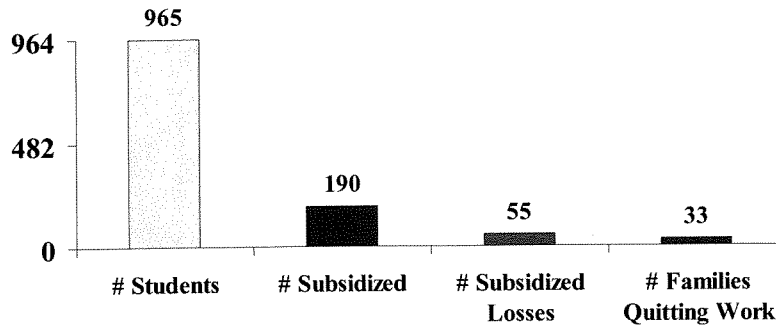
For the Big Island of Hawaii, 31% of the total number of students at the 17 surveyed PSs may leave due to the increases in parent co-pay, and 4 of the PSs may have to close.

Hawai`i County PS Impact



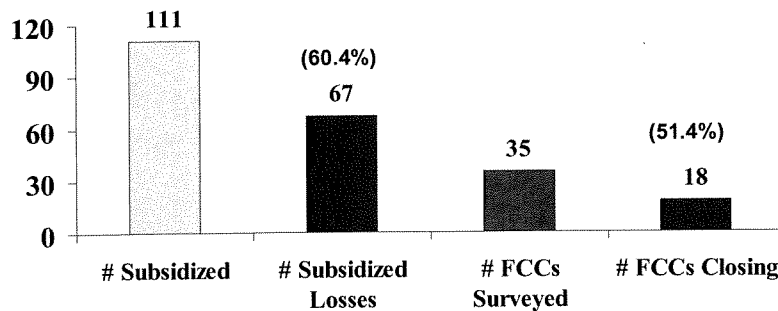
Finally for Maui County, approximately 29% of the subsidized children may have to leave their preschool or family child care provider. Additionally, 33 families may have to quit work to take care of their children.

Maui County PS Impact

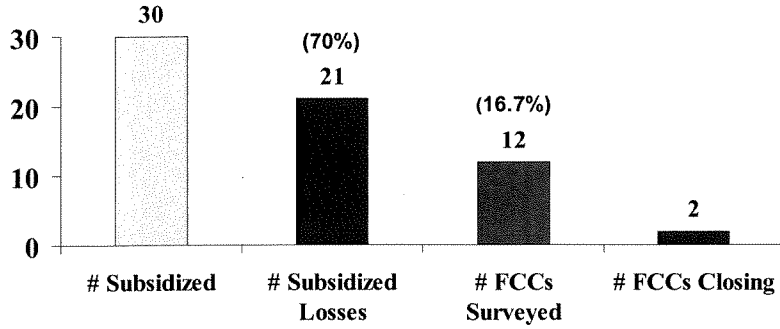


We also received preliminary data from PATCH as to the potential effect on the licensed family child care providers. This data shown in the below charts show that approximately 55.5% of subsidized children may have to be taken out of their family child care provider's care, and approximately 31.5% of family child care providers statewide may have to shut down.

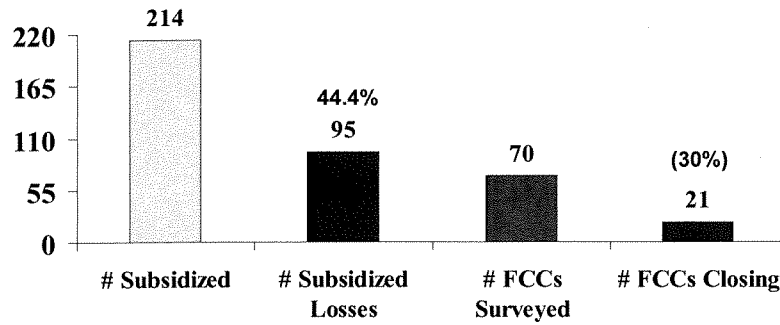
Hawai'i FCC Impact



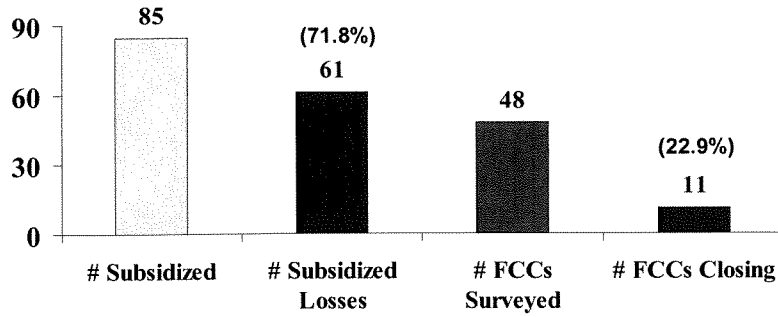
Kaua'i FCC Impact



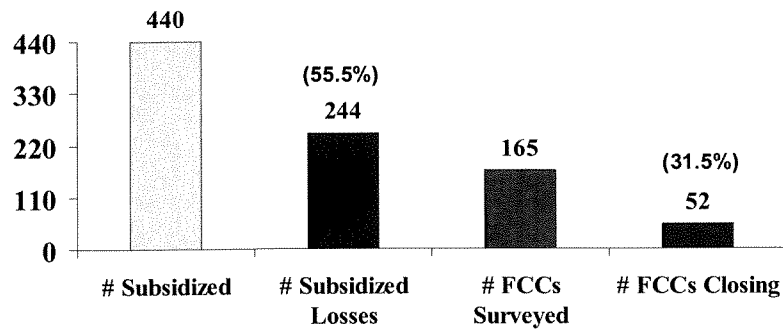
O'ahu FCC Impact



Maui FCC Impact

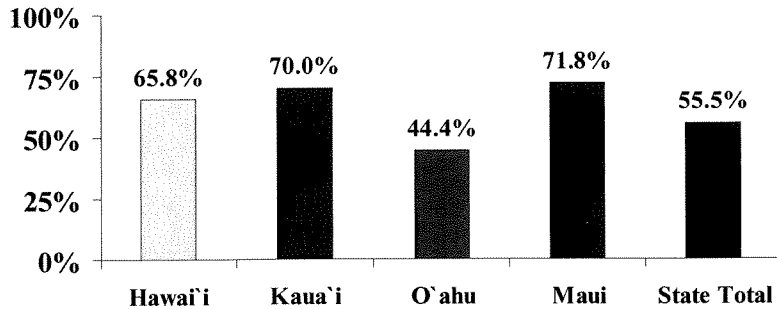


State FCC Impact



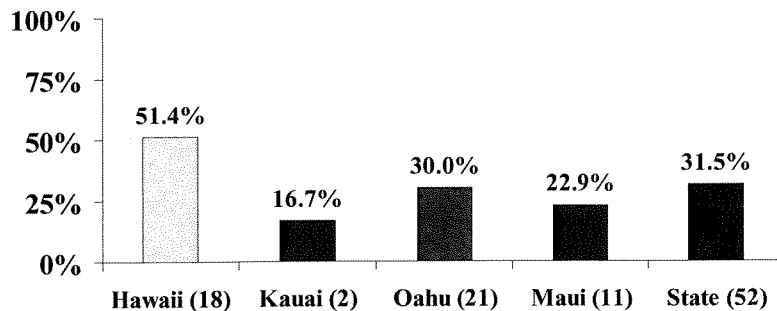
% of FCC Subsidized Children Losses

Projected FCC Subsidized Children Losses



% of Potential FCCs Closing

(# = FCC Closings)



Over the past two weeks, Good Beginnings Alliance, PATCH, and representatives of the Child Care Business Coalition met with Lillian Koller and the Department of Human Services staff. Also included in these meetings was Sandy Miyoshi with the state homeless program. The department is developing financing possibilities through the state homeless contracts for the families potentially affected by these changes in parent co-pay.

Until the programs are operational we will not know the actual effect these changes will have on programs and on families. Good Beginnings will continue to gather data as the changes are implemented.

TERESA VAST

Early Care & Education Planning • Policy Research • Program & System Development

December 28, 2009

Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair
Committee on Human Services
House of Representatives
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

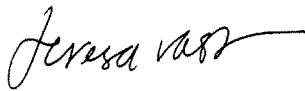
Dear Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Brower, and Committee Members:

Please accept my attached testimony for the Informational Briefing to be held Monday, December 28, 2009, 10:00 AM on the possible reduction of services in licensed preschools and family child care homes, pursuant to proposed rule changes to the Department of Human Services (DHS) child Care Subsidy Program.

I offer my views and suggestions as an independent early childhood policy consultant and a concerned citizen. I have particular expertise in the area of early childhood system planning and financing and I also specialize in financial aid issues for early childhood programs and systems. I have researched and developed co-payment schedules and sliding scales based on the cost of living and families' ability to pay for early childhood services and have also done extensive research on regulation of early childhood services. My background includes work in Hawaii state government as well as consulting, both locally and nationally, for government agencies and nonprofit organizations.

I apologize for submitting this testimony late. I just learned of the hearing late on Sunday, December 27. I hope you will consider my recommendations in addressing the challenges posed by DHS' proposed rule changes.

Sincerely,



Teresa Vast

TERESA VAST

Early Care & Education Planning • Policy Research • Program & System Development

December 28, 2009

Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair
Representative Tom Brower, Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services
House of Representatives

Testimony for
Informational Briefing

December 28, 2009, 10:00 AM

Subject: Possible Reduction of Services in Licensed Preschools and Family Child Care Homes, Pursuant to Proposed Changes to the DHS Child Care Subsidy Program

Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Brower, and Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to offer recommendations for solutions to avert preschool closures that will likely result if the Governor approves the Department of Human Services (DHS) proposed changes to the administrative rules of the child care services program.

I recommend several inter-related steps to prevent closures of early education & child care programs:

1. **DHS should withdraw its proposed rule change.** It would be a disaster not only now in dealing with the current crisis, but also would create havoc over the long-term if the proposed sliding scale is included in the administrative rules.

A long-term change in the sliding fee scale is not needed now in order to deal with this current crisis. DHS already has authority to revise its child care payments in the face of a shortage of funds and does not need to rely on the proposed amendment to justify reducing or terminating subsidies. (See §17-798.2-21.) In fact, the current rules spell out in some detail how to proceed when there are insufficient funds.

2. **TANF reserve funds should be tapped for use in meeting current TANF obligations in order to address the shortage of child care funds with current TANF funding.** If sufficient funding is available, no immediate changes to the sliding scale and co-payments should be made. However, looking ahead, there is every reason to carefully consider alternatives in creating a new sliding scale that is based on sound methodology that could be implemented in the new fiscal year. The process should be a transparent one that involves stakeholders and experts, research, and careful analyses.
3. **If additional TANF funding is insufficient, adjustments to subsidy amounts (as authorized in the current rules, §17-798.2-21), should include an approach that abandons the current disincentives for licensed programs.** Currently, the DHS co-payment method requires families to pay a percentage of the rate charged by the program, up to the maximum rates DHS allows. Since licensed programs generally charge more than

relatives or unlicensed programs, it takes a larger chunk of a family's limited income when they choose a licensed early learning program.

If the co-payment method were changed to require families to pay a percentage of their income instead (the method used in most states), the disincentive for choosing a licensed program would be removed. This would allow and encourage those families who retain child care subsidies through June to keep their children in licensed programs rather than placing them in less expensive unlicensed arrangements – if the co-payment amount is reasonably related to their income and ability to pay, e.g. approximately from one to ten percent of income.

Some of the important purposes of the federal Child Care and Development Fund (the source of the depleted DHS funds) is to “provide low-income families with the financial resources to find and afford quality child care for their children” as well as to “promote parental choice” among various child care options. The DHS co-payment approach limits choice with its financial disincentive to choose licensed programs. It also exceeds widely accepted measures and standards of affordability by requiring families to pay a percentage of the rate for each child in care, rather than limiting the co-payment to a reasonable percentage of income. Co-payments that exceed ten percent of income are not reasonable – and the proposed sliding scale would impose co-payments that are as much as 20 to 50 percent of families' gross income.

4. **If, in spite of overwhelming testimony in opposition, DHS does not withdraw its proposed rule change and the Governor approves the amendment, the Legislature should consider enacting emergency legislation to prevent the harmful effects of the new rules.** This could include a measure that requires DHS to remove disincentives for choosing licensed programs – one concrete step to help children stay in their early learning programs. This would underscore the Legislature's commitment to young children and its recognition of the importance of high-quality early learning experiences to children's success and Hawaii's future.

The Legislature could also establish a maximum percentage of income that would be required as a co-payment of low-income families receiving DHS child care assistance. This would help Hawaii maximize use of federal funds to expand access to high-quality early learning programs for children in low-income families.

Thank you for considering these recommendations. I would be glad to provide you and/or DHS with additional background information and details about my suggestions.



To: The Honorable Legislative Committee Members for Human Services

From: Jessica Luning, Executive Director of Ewa Plains Enrichment Programs llc, mother of eight children.

Date: December 28, 2009

Re: Closure of preschools

LATE
Testimony

Dear Committee Members,

In past testimony, I stated that my preschool had only one child that received funding for childcare from the state, choosing not to focus on our problems. I would like to clearly state again, that our school will lose two employees, or 1/3 of our staff, if childcare funding is cut for their children. Our enrollment is at record lows.

We have a capacity for 41 students and have 21 students currently attending. Last year, we were at our maximum and had a wait list of ten families right at the start of the year. We have already let go half of our staff and I have recently started teaching in addition to completing administrative duties. No banks will give small business (ARC – Obama) loans, and our credit cards are at all time highs of 29% as we feel the credit crunch. We have canceled all field trips (in house special events), cut our lunch vendor and shorten our school hours to 3pm daily.

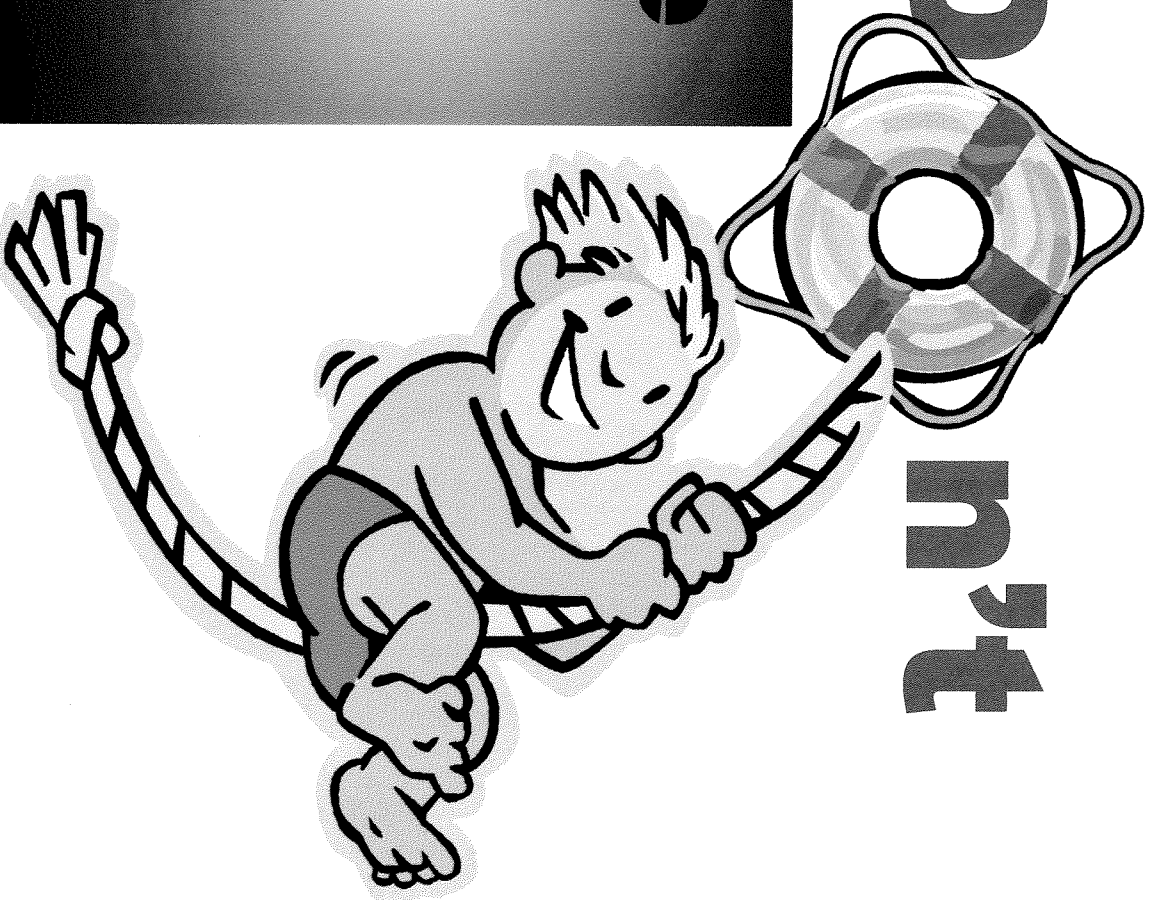
As the ripple affect of schools closing and funding sources are cut, it is more than 50% probable that we will close in July of 2010. The Kamehameha Schools also cut their funding for total number of scholarships for preschools this year. Thank God, Kamehameha Schools did not lessen the amount awarded to families. Also note, Kamehameha scholarships for preschools are one of the largest programs that are subsidies by the trust. If the Hawaiian trust were to limit scholarships to our school we would 100% close in July. As funding sources are cut, and the rope get thinner, schools will close. Again we are already at fifty percent full and have let go half of our teaching staff in comparison to 2008. I really hate crying about our situation, and would much rather focus on the INJUSTICE to the working families who are poor. What will families do? How will people get to work? Where will the children go? What about the safety net for children that keeps them safe from sexual predators? What will be the long-term cost for other social services as families are stressed?

We as a society will be judged by how we treat the poor and the children. We must do what is right and just, keep our children safe, people employed and our economy moving.

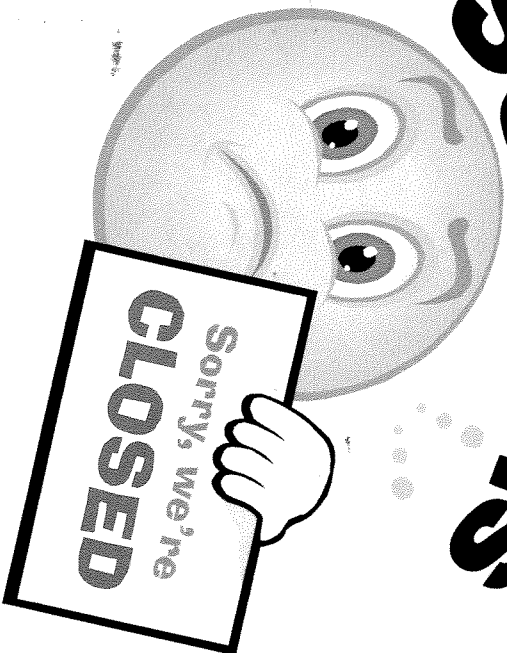
Teachers are Life

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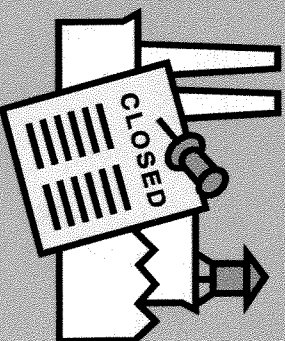
Schools



=



**Schools closed equals
NO WORKERS.**



STOP

stepping

On OUR
Children

&



Families!

Star Bulletin

Vol. 13, Issue 42 - Monday, February 11, 2008



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Reader Poll

Who should be the starting quarterback for the UH football team?

Back Issues

(1996-Present)

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Preschool touted as vital for poor kids

Education for students as young as 4 could help fix societal ills, a new study contends

STORY SUMMARY »

Expanding high-quality preschool programs in Hawaii would help students land good jobs and ultimately prevent social problems like homelessness and crime, according to a new study.

The report, "School Readiness in Hawaii," prepared by Aloha United Way and the University of Hawaii, is being released this week.

It says preschool teachers need to be paid more and that families,

Inside | Feb. 11

Hawaii News

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- » State asked to maintain 'Jaws' access ramp
- » Truck rails crush Kailua man to death
- » Park repairs see delays
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- » Transit bill would link funds with deadlines
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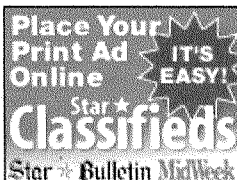
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especially poor families, should be informed about the importance of early learning programs for their children.

Research has shown that children who participate in preschool are less likely to drop out of high school, become teenage parents or turn into criminals, according to the study, and supporters say the state could save about \$7 for every \$1 spent in early learning programs.

The recommendations are in line with those included in a legislative proposal calling for affordable, quality preschool for all children in Hawaii through an early learning program that would start with 4-year-olds.

STAR-BULLETIN

FULL STORY »

By **Alexandre Da Silva**
adasilva@starbulletin.com

The state should invest in high-quality preschools to get parents involved in their child's education early on and ensure all students succeed, especially those from poor families who are more likely to fall behind and get stuck with low-paying jobs, according to a new study.

Aloha United Way President Susan Doyle, whose nonprofit organization conducted the study with the University of Hawaii's Center on the Family, said early education is a crucial tool to prevent social and economic problems.

"If the child has the right kind of early learning experience,

Statistics class

A study analyzing whether Hawaii youngsters are ready to learn found that 40 percent of public school students lack preschool experience when they enter kindergarten. Other findings:

Features

- » Ho and his hui garner another Grammy
- » Fitzgerald documents an untouched Hawaii
- » Da Kine
- » Digital Slob
- » Cel Shaded

Sports

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- » Vikings rookie piles up 129 rushing yards
- » Peterson caps great season
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- » Cromartie picks up where he left off
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they are going to be more successful in school and successful in life," she said. "It's good for the whole society to have these kids ready for school."

The findings and recommendations of the report, "School Readiness in Hawaii," mirror those listed in a legislative proposal calling for affordable, quality preschool for all children in Hawaii through an early learning program that would start with 4-year-olds. The Keiki First plan is seeking \$10.5 million in its first year to train and recruit teachers and expand services.

Four in every 10 children in Hawaii enter the public school system without attending preschool, causing them to immediately fall behind and require extra help, advocates for the bill say. They also say that only 26 percent of fourth-graders in the state currently read at their grade level.

Low pay for preschool teachers -- \$26,300 on average -- is among the key barriers to recruit and retain qualified workers needed to serve more children, the study found. That is below the wages of elementary teachers -- who make \$43,260 -- telemarketers, school bus drivers and secretaries, it said.

» Twenty percent of kindergarten teachers in public schools took extra college courses on early education.

» Sixty-two percent of kindergarten classes met Department of Education benchmarks for appropriate instructional practices.

» About 1 in every 120 children has been abused or neglected.

» Eleven percent of children live in poverty.

» Seven percent of children have no parent in the work force.

» Children up to age 5 make up 15 percent of sheltered homeless and 13 percent of those receiving homeless outreach services.

Source: School Readiness in Hawaii

Columns | Feb. 11

Corky's Hawaii

Corky Trinidad

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"I was shocked at that," said Sylvia Yuen, director of UH's Center on the Family. "because you think, 'Well they are teachers, they are getting paid teachers' pay.' But they are not."

Many university students are reluctant to become preschool teachers because of low benefits and poor working conditions, creating a work-force shortage, said Linda Buck, coordinator of Early Childhood Programs at Honolulu Community College. Each year, the school graduates about 30 teachers with an associate's degree in early childhood education.

"At this time we cannot turn out enough graduates to meet the demand," Buck said, saying that as a whole, UH graduates about 100 preschool teachers yearly. "It's a real struggle. For people to commit to this profession as a career is really difficult."

Buck said state support will be critical for Hawaii to add 370 lead preschool teachers and 470 associate teachers in 10 years, as outlined under the Keiki First plan. Nationally, staff turnover in the field ranges from 25 percent to 40 percent annually, according to the report.

Lawmakers have said they need to weigh the measure -- whose cost would balloon to \$170.4 million in a decade -- against needs such as fixing aging public infrastructure and providing more affordable housing to ease the state's homelessness crisis.

Research has shown that children who participate in preschool are less likely to drop out of high school, become teenage parents or turn into criminals, according to the study, and supporters say the state could save about \$7 for every \$1 spent in early learning programs.

"If you take care of the kids on this end, eventually down the road we won't have the homeless," said Kathy Murphy, executive director of the Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children. "It is about the families, and that's who we are trying to help."