

LATE

CHRIS CHANG

I'm the Site Coordinator for the Benjamin Parker Families for REAL program, and would like to provide some background information. I hope you will see the uniqueness of our program as it helps families and young children prepare for school.

This program provides learning experiences for families and their children, from birth-5 years, with the goal of promoting education and making each child's first experience in the classroom a positive one. We are the link between families with young children and the school environment by bringing parents onto school campuses and providing them with the opportunity to become involved with their child's education at the earliest age possible. We have seen a direct correlation between parents who have attended our program and the level of their involvement once their children enter school.

Data from last year showed approximately 270 families and their children ~~from all over the island~~ attended our program. There was also a diverse range of families that we serviced. For example, 11% were grandparents, 13%-dads, 13%-military, 23% had an income under \$38,000, 22% of the children were receiving other services and 33% of the children were part Hawaiian. At the end of last school year, we had approximately 360 families on our wait list. This data represents only the Windward site.

CHRIS CHANG

Emphasis should be placed on Early Childhood Education, the formative years, yet this program lost its DOE funding. We need to invest our time and money to ensure all young children have the opportunity to learn and succeed.

By being proactive we can provide parents with information and resources about child development and school readiness. We also provide their children with experiences that will enhance their development and learning. If we can offer this to families, more children will enter kindergarten developmentally ready to learn. This will lead to long-term school & life success.

The only way for Families for R.E.A.L to continue serving parents and their children, as we have done for the past 19 years, is for the legislature to pass SB289.

Please, we ask you to consider our request and think about the future of our children. *& THE FUTURE OF HAWAII*

Those parents who could not attend this meeting have submitted written testimony for you to consider, asking you to fund Families for R.E.A.L.

February 11, 2011

Re: SB 289 (Families for R.E.A.L.)

Dear Senate Education Committee Members

Chair Tokuda, Vice-Chair Kidani, Oakland, Nishihara, Taniguchi, Slom:

My name is Laura McHugh and I am the site coordinator and parent educator for the DOE Leeward Families for R.E.A.L. (Resources and Early Access to Learning) program at Pearl City Highlands Elementary School. I am here to ask for your support of SB 289, a bill that would provide biennial funding for Families for R.E.A.L. (FFR).

FFR has been operating since 1988 and its mission is to support parents in their role as their child's first teacher. Although the majority of our participants are typical parents and *there are no restrictions to attend*, FFR also serves families who are referrals from agencies such as 0-3 (DOH Early Intervention Section), Easter Seals, Family Court, and CPS. There are currently two FFR sites (down from 5 sites just 3 years ago), Leeward and Windward, and each site serves approximately 300 families every school year with at least that many more families on a waitlist.

Research shows that 90% of brain development occurs within the first 5 years of life. FFR is a very important parent-child interaction program that provides practical and useful information necessary to build healthy families. Our goal is to get parents to be more involved in their child's education by giving them the tools they need such as information on child development, and share ideas for activities and other ways they can help their child in the critical early years of development.

FFR is a vital program that provides school-based curriculum for parents and their children birth to 5 years of age. The Department of Education (DOE) believes that FFR does not "directly service" the children of Hawaii; therefore, it has cut funding for this very important curriculum-based program. This decision jeopardizes the opportunities that will provide for the healthy development of Hawaii's keiki and help them be "school ready" when they enter kindergarten. For that reason, I humbly ask for your support to continue funding FFR.

Sincerely,

*Laura McHugh*

Laura McHugh

Leeward Families for R.E.A.L. Site Coordinator, Parent Educator

February 11, 2011

Support for S.B. No. 289.

Good Afternoon. I'm Emerald-Dee Ramos, Master's of Social Work student and Family Drug Court intern and I am in support of S.B. No. 289.

The Families for R.E.A.L program provides information and resources in family values, stress management, social and emotional development, guidance, limit, language development, and school readiness within an interactive and fun parent-child learning setting for parents and their children.

The Family Drug Court has successfully referred families to the Leeward Families for R.E.A.L. program with great results. I feel that the parent-child interactions during events and activities combine for a stronger learning experience. This hands-on learning benefits both the parent and child in strengthening a nurturing relationship and education on the appropriateness of their interactions within their specific family roles.

Families for R.E.A.L provides our clients with parenting information and with answers to questions that they may have about dealing with their children. As one of our referral sources, Families for R.E.A.L is one that we could depend on to foster substantial interactive experiences for our clients. They provide families with ideas and methods of interacting with their children in a classroom setting, along with other parents and their children. After taking classes with Families for R.E.A.L, our clients (and other parents) are given a chance to be able to utilize these skills within their own environment.

Many children's early developmental and educational needs go unmet, and even more so today due to tough economic times. Families for R.E.A.L fills this gap for our children and families of Hawaii who otherwise may not have had this opportunity. Therefore, I am in support of S.B. No. 289, in hopes of developing a plan for alternative funding and appropriating money for this program for the current biennium so that they can continue to instill a positive learning experience for the families of our community.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

46-165 Keoe Place  
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744  
February 1, 2011

Honorable Senator Jill Tokuda  
State Capitol Room 218  
415 S. Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Tokuda:

I live in your district and I am writing this letter to urge support for Families for R.E.A. L. and help get SB 289 passed for future funding. It is a great program and I need to tell you why.

On February 12, 2008, I was blessed for the first time with the most beautiful grandchild in the world. Anthony arrived early and he seemed perfectly fine but as he grew older, it became apparent that he was developmentally delayed. Imagine the frustration all around when he could not talk and be understood.

With Easter Seals support, Anthony has made great gains. He has been tutored daily and will be attending DOE Special Ed preschool when he turns three.

Easter Seals has been terrific and connected Anthony with Families For R.E.A.L. This provided Anthony with a social setting with other children to learn and play with. As a retired first grade teacher, I know this will greatly help with his transition to preschool.

This program is not only for the kids, but also for the entire family. There are opportunities for focused discussions with other parents/grandparents to discuss commonalities, frustrations and other experiences in a safe atmosphere. The staff is well trained and enduring.

As a mother, I know first hand what it feels like to have a child that you suspect needs help and have no where to turn to. When I sought parenting classes on my own, I found myself attending classes that were inappropriate for me.

Families For R.E.A.L supports families by providing tons of information and just letting you know "what is out there." This makes for less stressed and happier parents. Happy parents become better parents, who in turn make happier and better kids.

Kids are our future! Doesn't it make sense to support them?

Again, please fund the Families For R.E.A.L program.

Sincerely,



Sonia Ayson  
Grandmother of Anthony

February 7, 2011

To Jill Tokuda,

My name is Randall and I have a wife name Corine and a 4 year old boy name Zack in Kaneohe. We have been attending the Family Night Session II from November 15 - February 7, 2011. We support SB 289 for Families for R.E.A.L. because the program set a precedence to starting a regular school year through a well structured classroom setting.

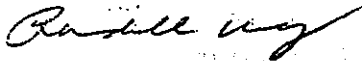
The classroom is situated where there are different stations for play, reading, art, music and discussions. These station provide the children to interact with each other, explore and discover through playing with toys, develop their fine motor skills by cutting, drawing and even threading beads. Their gross motor skills are also developed through their obstacle course activities and play time.

The children learn through the routines that simulates a regular classroom. They learn from the ringing of a bell that it is time to start and clean up. They provide a cubby hole for each child/parent to put their things in and a rack for their footwear before they enter the classroom.

The parents are separated from the children and we are being taught as well. Our class contained topics such as Ages and Stages of Young Children, Child's Temperament and Gender Differences. They provides us with valuable information and tips to deal with our children.

Why is SB 289 is needed? The Families for R.E.A.L program provides the extra help for those children who are in need of this support. It gives the 1st time, inexperience and confused parents help and hopefully it will decrease family violence from the information they have gathered and understanding their child behaviors.

Thank You,



Randall Wong  
cc to Sen. Jill Tokuda

Dear Senator Jill Tokuda,

Aloha! I am writing on behalf of Families for R.E.A.L. I am a member of your district and in support of SB 289. Both of my children attended this program and I cannot stress how much of an impact it has made.

My oldest son is now in second grade and Families for R.E.A.L. has really helped my son transition from staying at home to moving on to Kindergarten. He hasn't attended preschool and he didn't have any social skills, Families for R.E.A.L. has really helped him. Along with my oldest son, my youngest hasn't attended preschool and this program has helped him become more independent, more social and ready for Kindergarten.

The staff at Families for R.E.A.L. is really good with the kids. They are really patient and nurturing. I love how they let the parents interact with the kids and how they help us on any problem we have with raising our children. If I do have any more kids, I would certainly bring them back to this program. I also recommend this program to family and friends of mine, as well as other parents who are looking for a GOOD and affordable program for their kids.

Thank you for your time and I do hope to see Families for R.E.A.L. around in the future.

Sincerely,



Darci O'Toole

Cc: Senator Jill Tokuda

Senator Jill Roberts

I am writing to you on behalf of the families for RISE program and to thank you for your support. We have been so fortunate to have our daughter, Ava, in the program. We have been able to come to this program for her education and I have been able to interact with the staff. According to her, she has learned a lot from this program and she has been able to make friends with everyone. We are so grateful for this program and we hope that this program will continue for our daughter so that we can continue to support her as well.

Sincerely,

  
 Kristina Velez  
 Parent of Ava Velez



February 5, 2011

Ms. Jill N. Tokuda  
Hawaii State Senate, District 24  
415 S. Beretania St.  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Ms. Tokuda:

My name is Joanne Palua and I live in District 24 in Kaneohe. I am writing to you to ask for your support in helping get SB 289 passed. I have had the privilege to participate in the Families for R.E.A.L. program for the past 14 years starting with my two sons at age 3 and who are now in college and my three grandchildren, one who is 3 and is currently attending this session.

Although one session is for just ten weeks, I can attest to the remarkable impact it has made on each child that has attended. For each one, the session has been his/her first introduction to social interaction with other children in an educational away-from-home setting and it has had such a positive, exciting effect in setting the pattern for a very eager, happy-to-learn outlook for many future years in school. My sons have done excellent work all the way through high school and my two grandsons have been doing very well in elementary school.

I know funds are sorely needed for all phases of our public school system but truly believe that beginning the initial steps to learning has its greatest impact from as young as infancy. We know for a fact that developmental learning experiences in children are critically important, way before they reach the age of 5 and infants, toddlers and preschoolers as well as PARENTS could use the knowledge and tools that Families for R.E.A.L. has been so effective in providing all these years. This program keeps getting better every year and I sincerely hope this program will continue to have far reaching effects on many more children in the future years of school in Hawaii.

Yours truly,

Joanne Palua

47-652 Alameda Street  
Kaneohe, HI 96749  
February 10, 2011

Senator Jill N. Tokuda  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 218  
415 S. Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SB 289

Dear Senator Tokuda:

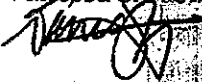
Thank you for introducing SB 289 to appropriate funding for the Families for R.E.A.L. program. I have had the great fortune to benefit from this program with both of my children. Families for R.E.A.L. was the first school experience for my now 5-year old son, Noa. The staff provided such a warm and nurturing environment, not just for our son, but also for my husband and I. Being new parents, the thought of sending your kid off to school was a bit scary. Families for R.E.A.L. provided a great transition for our family and my son has fond memories of his experience.

We are finishing up our time with Families for R.E.A.L. with our 2-year old, Moani. Like her brother, she has thoroughly enjoyed her experience. She so looks forward to going to school and can't wait to see her friends.

The growth that I've seen in both of my kids through their experiences with Families for R.E.A.L. cannot be measured. As a parent, you just know. You always want the best for your children and Families for R.E.A.L. is right up there.

Thank you again for introducing this bill and for your tremendous service to our Windward community.

Respectfully,  
Vanessa S. Wong




February 10, 2011

Aloha Senator Jill Takeda,

My name is Erin Holmberg and I am writing in support of SB289. As a resident of Kaneohe, I am excited to be a part of the Families for R.E.A.L. program. As a first time mother of an 11 month old, this program has provided a positive learning experience not only for him but myself as well. Although it will be some time before he enters grade school, I believe this program gives us both an opportunity to start off on the "right-foot". Families for R.E.A.L. has allowed me to have an outlet and as a stay at home mom I am thankful for it. Families for R.E.A.L. is truly an unbiased program that doesn't "teach" any one single parenting style, technique or philosophy. Rather it gives us parents the appropriate tools to encourage and create a great and safe learning environment for our children.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

  
Erin Holmberg

CC: Senator Jill Takeda

Aloha, my name is Cherese Carlson. Two years ago I gave birth to my daughter Pili'alo'ha. Due to the high cost of living and childcare, my husband and I worked out our work schedules so that he could care for our daughter during the day and I would care for her at night. My husband being a father for the first time, was interested in learning how to be the best father, teacher and caretaker for our daughter. Due to the fact that my daughter was an only child and has no family around her age living in Hawaii, we wanted to give her a chance to socialize with children her age. So we started looking for any kind of programs that would give my husband and daughter a chance to interact with other parents and kids. When we started our search we found that there just wasn't much out there. Most of the programs were for children entering preschool. We didn't give up and finally found Families for Real. My husband was a little hesitant at first to attend because he knew he would probably be the only father in class full of stay at home mothers, though much to his surprise in our class was another stay at home dad and the class was so welcoming and encouraging to him being stay at home father that he felt at home right away. As each class passed by, my husband showed more and more excitement about his new found family and friends. I would come home from work and he would tell me all about their day at class, the kids, other parents and what they did that day. Then he would hand me all sorts of handouts and books he borrowed from the class on how to teach things to our daughter or how to deal with the stage of life she was going through or resources in the community. My husband who wanted to be here himself to talk, but could not due to his new job loves the Families for Real Program. He and my daughter have attended two different stages of classes and gained so much from both. Not only did it provide a structured educational opportunity for our family, but it gave my husband a comfortable, safe environment to talk about fatherhood and life as a stay at home dad in which he felt supported by other parents. Families for Real is a program that needs to be in place for families like mine. Please support this bill that will keep funding in place for Families for Real so my family as well as others can have a place to go and learn with our children. Thank you!

February 10, 2010

To: Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair  
Committee on Education,

~~Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair~~  
Committee on Education

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From: Ann Tanigawa  
98-1662 Hoomaike St.  
Pearl City, HI 96782

**RE: SB 289 Relating to Education**

I would like to thank Senator Jill Tokuda, and the Members of the Committee for allowing me to testify in support of Senate Bill 289, which would appropriate funds for the Families for REAL program.

I am a proud Mother of 2 young children, 3 year old Akemi and 4 month old Cal. My husband and I love our children so very dearly and want what's best for them, as any parent would. I am writing this letter to explain my support for Families for Real and how our entire family benefits from this wonderful program.

Our daughter, Akemi, had a difficult start in life. She was born with a dislocated left knee, dislocated hips, and a club foot. She was delayed in walking and later delayed in speaking. At the age of 2, Akemi was not at the level her peers were physically or verbally and she became a very timid child. We thought Families for Real could be a program that could help Akemi be exposed to children her age and get a preview to preschool.

When starting Families for REAL we immediately saw how much she enjoyed the program and how much we all benefited from it. Families for Real allowed Akemi to come out of her shell and become more self-confident. In being in such a safe environment she was able to play, sing, create, learn, and exercise each and every day she attended class. This safe environment helped Akemi to explore her curiosity and play in the yard with the other kids and run. She also began to build in her vocabulary to try and communicate with the other children and teachers. I am proud to say she is now at the level of her peers and excels in preschool.

Families for REAL is a program for the child and their Parent or Grandparent. Akemi went to Families for Real with her Father and her Grandmother. Families for Real assisted my husband in interacting with Akemi. My husband and Akemi will still talk about and look at the art work they created together at Families for Real. They also sit together and sing the songs they learned from Families for Real one year later.

Families for REAL was such a beneficial program for our daughter. We decided we wanted our son, Cal to benefit from the same program. At the age of 3 months old, Cal started the infant class with Families for Real. Cal and I attend class every week. We are able to meet with other

Mothers and babies. We learn how to interact with our babies and learn bonding activities we can do together. Most importantly, in our infant class I am able to get and share advice about parenting concerns, my worries, and my fears in raising two children. The two knowledgeable teachers, Ms. Lyn and Ms. Laura, help facilitate our conversations and teach us. I truly believe that Families for REAL has aided my Husband and I in being better parents. I would like to stress my support in favor of Families for REAL and hope that all parents are able to experience such a wonderful program.

I hope many other families and children get to benefit from Families for REAL. Please support this wonderful program. I strongly urge you to pass SB 289.

*Ann Tanigawa*


7 February 2011

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing this letter in support of the Families for R.E.A.L. Program and **SB 289**. As participants of this program, my wife, Karen, and I have seen the benefits that it has provided for not only our son, Dante, but for the two of us as well. It has provided a nurturing, classroom environment that has allowed our son to interact with other children, of his age group, and experience first hand a school like atmosphere complete with rules, structure, activities and great teachers who are patient and influential. While the children are in their classroom environment, the parents attending the program gather in another room with one of the teachers, in a parent group class. This is where the parents share thoughts, concerns, techniques and questions regarding every day life with their children. We also receive handouts (informational materials) to help the parents deal with stress, expressing and managing feelings, discipline vs. punishment, guidance resources, setting limitations, as well as providing us with our child's growth milestones. These materials are helpful for the parents to guide their children in the right direction as well as helping the parents have a sense of being in control of life and what life throws at them, with a sense of humor. It is because of this program that we feel confident at being good parents for our children. We learn that other parents are going through the same situations as we are, and we have the support of other parents and the teachers, if for any reason we need them.

We are hoping that the Families for R.E.A.L. Program will continue and expand, and that this letter will help get **SB 289** passed for future funding. It would be very unfortunate that more families of Hawaii would not be able to participate in this valuable program as we feel it is one that is very beneficial for the families, both children and parents.

Sincerely,



Roger and Karen Mina  
3130 Ala Ilima Street  
Apartment #10-d  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96818

February 10, 2011

Senator Michelle Kidani  
State Senate  
Hawaii State Legislature

**Re: Support Families for R.E.A.L. – SB289**

Dear Senator Kidani,

I grew up and went to school in Mililani, and my husband and I have chosen to continue to make our home in the Mililani area and raise our family. I am writing to ask for your support of SB289 which would allow funding for the Families for R.E.A.L. (FFR) program.

My youngest daughter, Leila and I have had the privilege of attending the FFR once-a-week Preschool program together for the last three sessions (approximately 10 weeks each), and in a nutshell, this invaluable program continues to help me to be a better parent and better teacher for both my children. Both Leila and I benefit – she is able to socialize with her peers, learn in a classroom setting, and “practice” being left with the teachers. As a parent am supported emotionally and encouraged, and am so thankful to have met other parents in my same shoes - just trying to do a better job raising our children.

I first heard about the FFR program from several public school teachers about 5 years ago. With the birth of our second child and our family’s decision for me to stay home with our children, sending Leila to preschool as we did with our oldest daughter was not financially an option. The FFR program has been our opportunity to do “school” together. It is a unique program in that the participants do not have to meet any income or ethnic qualifications, or be referred by the Family Court, and there are programs available to children of various ages – as young as 3 months to 5 years old.

I believe investing in our children’s youngest developmental years is crucial to building a solid emotional and intellectual foundation. Programs like FFR meet that need with very qualified, competent and compassionate educators. Please support the Families for R.E.A.L. program and the good work they are doing! Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sharon Leano



Feb. 1, 2011

To Whom it may concern,

please support this program (Families For Real) to help our Keiki of Hawaii be prepared for preschool. My son attended this program when he was 2 1/2 years old, he is now 14 years old. My daughter is now 2 1/2 years old and is currently attending this program.

I strongly believe that my son was more prepared for preschool because in this program he was able to interact with his own peers, learn how to share the toys that they played with and learn how to take turns. Doing art activities, listening to story time, evening having a snack with his peers is a huge deal. It may not seem like a big deal but it is very important that children be exposed to these tasks before entering preschool. My son was a passive child with learning disabilities before entering this program. he still struggles with learning disabilities but he has grown in this area after completing this program. My daughter looks forward to going to Families For Real and make friends because of this. I am a stay at home mom who tries my best to teach her the basics of learning how to share, singing songs and playing. We don't have any children that she can play with on a daily basis so going to this program helped her in so many ways. It is very expensive to send her to private classes so I was excited to send her here. Children need something to do that's positive before entering preschool. Preschool costs are rising every year, some parents

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cannot afford to send their child to preschool, therefore programs like these are a must for our Keikis.

There should be more Families For Real throughout these islands and accept more enrollment. so more kids can be better preschool prepared.

All the resources that this program provides are very helpful to aid us on parenting issues.

I honestly hope that any testimonials from parents, children, and educators will make a difference to keep this program alive!!!

Sincerely a concerned parent,  
Kellie Takemoto

Kellie Takemoto  
1618 Puananala St.  
Pearl City, HI 96782

A / B



"miko1"  
<miko1@hawaii.rr.com>

02/07/11 06:54 PM

To <sendelacruz@capitol.hawaii.gov>  
cc <sentokuda@Capitol.hawaii.gov>  
bcc Lynette Kinoshita/PCHES/HIDOE  
Subject S.B. 289

Cheryl Mikolajczyk Sanico  
95-1244 Wika\*o Street, Mililani, HI 96789  
(808) 623-4573

February 7, 2011

The Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz  
Hawai\*i Senate  
Hawai\*i State Capitol, Room 202  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawai\*i 96813

Re: S.B. 289

Dear Senator Dela Cruz:

I am a parent of two children in District 22. I am currently on extended leave from my Department of Education duties (former Iliahi Elementary School Technology Coordinator, Ka\*ala Elementary School Curriculum Coordinator, and most recently, as a School Librarian at Sunset Beach Elementary School) to "raise" my babies until they are of school age. My girls are 2 \* and almost 4 years old.

I am writing to encourage you to support funding for the Families for R.E.A.L. program as described in S.B. 289.

Having 20 years of teaching experience, and now, being a mom – I am sharing my concern as both parent and Department of Education employee. Research has proven the importance of "parents as their child's first teacher" and yet, so many parents are ill-equipped to "teach" these little ones. Even with my teaching background, I found myself floundering and wanting help. There are so many programs available for selected groups of people. Unfortunately, my family does not fall into any of these categories. Low income families have opportunities to apply for early education programs and financial assistance. Hawaiian children have programs and designated schools. Children with special needs have "some place" to go. My children almost had no where to go – until we were able to attend Families for R.E.A.L. This

program is not limited by economic, ethnic, or specific-need criteria.

As described in S.B. 289, Families for R.E.A.L. is a parent-participation program. Two components run simultaneously. The child is in a stimulating learning environment, engaged in activities that directly tie into building blocks and foundations for meeting Hawaii Content Standards: literacy, problem solving and reasoning, math, science, art, and music, etc. The parent participates with the child for circle time (routines, singing, and reading time) and an art activity, and then is involved in the adult learning time: parenting topics/resources.

Hawaii has already lost all but one site, due to lack of funding. S.B. 289 will enable Families for R.E.A.L. to continue to impact future generations. If you have time in your busy schedule, I urge you to stop by to see the amazing learning taking place at Families for R.E.A.L. on the Pearl City Highlands Elementary School campus. If you have any questions or need more details, please feel free to contact me.

The future of Families for R.E.A.L. is in the hands of the Hawaii Senate and Legislature. As a member of the Hawaii Senate, I urge you to support S.B. 289.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Mikolajczyk Sanico

Cc: Senator Jill Tokuda

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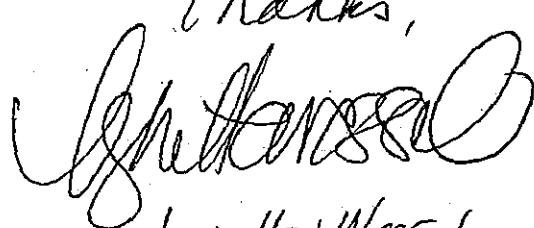
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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you to inform you about this wonderful program, Families For R.E.A.L., and to ask you to please keep supporting them.

I feel this program has helped my family be aware of the programs around us, and the parent handouts really educated me on how to help, understand, and talk to my child.

I fully support this program, and I feel lucky to have attended each session.

Thanks,  


Lynette Wessel

95009 Waikarani D #42  
Mililani, HI 96789

To support the families for need program.  
This program has helped both my kids,  
& myself. Because of this program  
my children are a little ~~basy~~ about  
being away from, and also they are  
able to interact with other children  
their age.

For me, I've learned how to speak  
to your child, and understand why  
they act the way they do and how  
to handle the situation.

Because of this program I feel a lot  
more comfortable about my kids attending  
Full time pre school, and separating  
from me so I am able to go back  
to work. Thank you to everyone  
in Families for need

Mattalo,

Paulette-Jane Benife  
98-1269 Hooliki Pl. 7  
P.O. Box 11. 91.70.

**Melyn Yanagi**

98-1452A Koahehe St.  
Pearl City, HI 96782

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**Families for R.E.A.L.**

To whom it may concern:

When my mother-in-law first suggested that we sign up to participate in Families for R.E.A.L.'s Ohana Night, I was a bit hesitant. She had participated in the Families for R.E.A.L. program a year or so with our nephew and thought we would benefit from it. I on the other hand was not so optimistic that we would benefit from this program. I was proven wrong the very first night.

Miss Laura, Miss Lyn and Miss Carolyn made this entire experience enjoyable, educational & memorable. From the inviting singing during the start of class, to story time, to projects for our children/parents, to topic discussions w/Miss Laura and finally ending our time with a goodbye song. Our daughter looked forward to going to "school" (is what she called Ohana night) and being able to see her "friends". I honestly believe she looked forward to playing with the wonderful toys, painting and of course spending time with her "friends". I appreciate & value the various topic discussions. Although our daughter is only 2 ½ years old, we are still learning how to be good parents and want to rear our daughter the best way possible. We welcome any/all suggestions that can help us achieve those goals.

Thank you Families for R.E.A.L., we love and appreciate all that you do.

Sincerely,



---

**Melyn Yanagi**

---

I first heard about Families for R.E.A.L. from a grandparent at my daughter's gymnastics class. She had a great experience and encouraged me to inquire. I was looking for a parent/child class and this program sounded interesting. I'm so glad that I had the opportunity to participate. My goals were to meet other stay-at-home-moms and have my toddler socialize with other children her age.

The Toddler 1 program we participated in was very organized and fun! My daughter looked forward to singing and playing with her new friends at "school school" every week. We often sang "Aloha" and "Good Morning" many times at home. And I looked forward to chatting with the other moms and listening to Laura McHugh's insightful discussions about parenting issues. The topics the class covered were very relevant, especially the one about stress. There were also many useful tips in all of the handouts.

Many thanks to Laura, Lyn Kinoshita and Carolyn Kobayashi for their patience and effort in putting together a wonderful class. We are already looking forward to the next class!

Sincerely,



Stefanie Hirayama  
95-1019 Ahea Street  
Mililani, Hawaii 96789



January 26, 2010

I am a grandparent who brought her granddaughter to Families for R.E.A.L. The well-organized classes have been very helpful in up-dating me on bringing up children in today's world. The handouts which were given and discussed were particularly helpful as they dealt with a wide range of topics such as discipline, TV habits, activities for toddlers, safety issues, toilet training, choosing a preschool, and other relevant issues. I also learned from the other adults in class.

The key to this successful program was the team of teachers (Lyn Kinoshita, Carolyn Kobayashi, and Laura McHugh). These talented and hard-working teachers were always well-prepared and provided a vast array of activities. They encouraged the children to be independent and each week I can see my granddaughter grow in this area. I know that these classes are among the most valuable I've ever attended (and I have been to many!).

Marcella Simon

MARCELLA SIMON  
98-1666 Piki St.  
Aiea, HI 96701

January 23, 2010

LETTER OF SUPPORT - FAMILIES FOR R.E.A.L.

I am writing this letter to express what a valuable experience Families for R.E.A.L. has been for my three year old daughter and myself. Every week we look forward to attending our session, not only for the fun playtime and crafts, but also for the interesting information provided in terms of parenting techniques.

In Hawaii most educational programs for young children can be quite costly, thankfully Families for R.E.A.L. makes it possible for families to be able to benefit from an educational playgroup.

I hold Families for R.E.A.L. in high regard and hope this program continues so other families can become further educated and help their children grow.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this letter of support.

Thank you

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KB', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Karen Barg

Address: 98-1092 Kaonohi Street  
Aiea, HI 96701  
Phone: 808-744-6073

1-28-10

TO: FAMILIES FOR R.I.E.A.L.,

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN YOUR WONDERFUL PROGRAM. YOUR PROGRAM IS AN EXCELLENT BLEND OF PARENT/CHILD LEARNING EXPERIENCES THAT HELPED NOT ONLY MY GRANDDAUGHTER BUT ALSO MYSELF. THE MULTITUDE OF INFORMATIONAL HANDOUTS GAVE ME A WEALTH OF PERTINENT INFORMATION REGARDING CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND NEEDS AS WELL AS IDEAS, RESOURCES & REFERENCES AVAILABLE TO US. THE MANY HANDS-ON EXPERIENCES & EXPOSURE TO SCHOOL READINESS ACTIVITIES & ROUTINES SEEMS TO REALLY HAVE HELPED MY GRANDDAUGHTER TO BE PREPARED TO START HER FORMAL SCHOOL EXPERIENCE (THIS WAS ONE OF MY MAJOR OBJECTIVES FOR ENROLLING HER IN YOUR PROGRAM!)

I APPRECIATE THE PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE OF YOUR THREE EXCELLENT TEACHERS. THEIR EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION OF THE PROGRAM'S SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES PROVIDED US WITH AN INTERESTING & FUN LEARNING TIME JUST FILLED WITH SO MANY VARIED LEARNING EXPERIENCES. MUCH KUDO'S TO MS. LAURA McHUGH, MS. LYN KINOSHITA & MS. CAROLYN KOBAYASHI! THEIR PERSONAL WARMTH, OPENNESS & HELPFULNESS MADE OUR EXPERIENCES SO COMFORTABLE THAT CLASSES BECAME SUCH A JOY TO BE AT & ALWAYS LEFT US WITH ANTICIPATION FOR THE NEXT CLASS. I WOULD HIGHLY RECOMMEND THIS PROGRAM TO ANYONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO PROVIDE A VERY VALUABLE LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR THEIR CHILD.

Mrs. Carol A. Murphy  
CAROL A. MURPHY  
94-412 UKALIALII PL.  
MILILANI, HI 96789

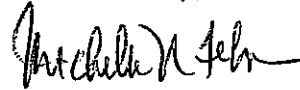
To Whom It May Concern:

The Families for R.E.A.L. program at Pearl City Highlands Elementary is wonderful. Laura McHugh, Lyn Kinoshita and Carolyn Kobayashi, are dedicated and loving toward all who enter their classroom. This program was a blessing for our family since we were not able to send our 4 year old to preschool. It was a great opportunity for her to experience a classroom setting. She has enjoyed every minute of this program and did very well interacting with the other children.

All the parenting advice, suggestions and handouts were very helpful to our family. I especially liked listening to the other parents share some of the struggles and successes they have with their children. It's always good to know you are not alone. I thank the ladies for the work they do, not only, for the children but the parents too. I had a great time working on the crafts with my daughter and learned a few new craft techniques to share with my family and friends.

I have already talked to some friends about this program and they are hoping they can participate in the program too. I will continue to encourage other parents I know to sign up for Families for R.E.A.L. Thank you Laura, Lyn and Carolyn!

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle Fehr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michelle Fehr and Morgan  
Preschool 2009-2010  
94-557 Alapoi St. #155  
Mililani, HI 96789

# Letter of Support for Families for R.E.A.L

Jan. 26, 2010

I am so happy I was accepted into this program. I wanted to attend the class to prepare my 2 year old for preschool next year. My expectations were exceeded by far. Melia, my daughter, was shy at first and didn't want to attend. Every week she was so excited to sing songs, do arts and crafts, read books and play. She now is looking forward to attending preschool.

I have truly enjoyed learning during the parenting classes. I think it has helped me to understand Melia's development. It has also been terrific to talk & learn from the other parents and grandparents. I have finally ~~be~~ trained my 2 and 4 year old to put themselves to sleep at night because of this class!

Thank you,

Jadyn Wogawa  
94-1043 Halepili Street  
Waipahu HI 96797

Jan. 26, 2010

Dear Families for R.E.A.L.,

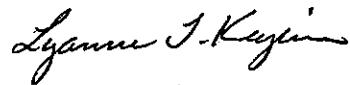
Thank you so much for this incredible program! I learned so much about parenting and playing with my daughter. Shayla LOVES coming to class, seeing all the other kids, doing the activities, and playing with all of the toys (that we don't have at home). She learns so much and has grown/developed over the time that we've attended class. I've implemented many of the tips learned in class and have seen such an improvement at home. I am so grateful for this program, am looking forward to the preschool class, and will recommend this program to all the families I know. A friend told me about this opportunity because they had such a good time and so did we. I know the economy is tough and the budget cuts are all around us, I hope this program sticks around. Early education is so important because it affects the future of our children who are the future leaders of Hawaii. I support this program 100%. Thank You!

Sincerely,  
Michelle <sup>and</sup> Shayla Ramos  
mzramos@gmail.com  
(808) 216-6512

February 1, 2010

This was the first time I attended a Family for R.E.A.L. class and I was very impressed by the organized planning the teachers prepared for each activity for the children and the adults in the class.

I have learned a lot from the parent discussions we had in class and found the handouts very informative. By the end of the program, I noticed how much more I could interact with my grandson through the information I received from the teacher and other parents and grandparents sharing their own experiences. I also saw an improvement in my grandson's social skills as he became more interactive in the activities carried out in the classroom as well as with the other children in the class.



Lyanne T. Kiyuna  
98-921 Noelani St., Apt. D  
Pearl City, HI 96782

January 29, 2010

To Whom It May Concern,

My grandson and I are attending the current session of the Families for Real 10-week session for toddlers at Pearl City Highlands Elementary School. I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to the teachers, Mrs. Laura McHugh, Mrs. Lyn Kinoshita, and Mrs. Carolyn Kobayashi, and to the Department of Education for conducting this very valuable program.

Over the past weeks, I have observed my 2-year old grandson develop better socialization, cognitive, and fine and gross motor skills as he participated in the weekly activities. The sessions are well structured with an abundance of interesting, age-appropriate, and fun activities. Parent sessions offer a wealth of information on topics that include play and learning, reading and television, socio-emotional development, choosing a preschool, stress and other topics pertinent to those who are raising little ones.

As a grandparent and former special education/lower elementary school teacher, I've personally acquired new information regarding various aspects of child development and rearing that I'll be able to use in my current role as my grandson's daytime caregiver.

I would highly recommend this program to all parents and grandparents who wish to build a solid foundation for their child's education, growth and development.

I strongly urge you to continue funding for the Families For Real program so that our future generation of keiki may benefit.

Sincerely,



Maureen S. Abe  
1846 Hoowae Street  
Pearl City, Hawaii 96782



February 17, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to express support for the Leeward Families For REAL Program at Pearl City Highlands Elementary School. My daughter, Erin, was twenty months when we started attending the session, and she really loved the program! She was so interested in the toys that were available and learned a lot about sharing with other children and also about putting toys back on the shelves and in the cubby holes where they belonged. These were valuable skills to learn and practice.

The staff at the program were very welcoming, and we really enjoyed the songs that were taught by the staff. The teachers were knowledgeable and so encouraging toward the children. It really made me happy to see my daughter look forward to going to Families for REAL every week. On program days, I would tell my daughter that we were going to "the classroom," and she would light up and say different words related to the program. For example, she would say, "cow, horses" because she knew there was a basket of toy animals to play with. Or she would say, "Connor" and "Marcus" because those were the friends she had made. She'd also mention "dancing" because she would dance when we had singing circle time.

I really think the Families for REAL program is wonderful for the children because of the socialization and learning it provides for them. Also, the knowledge that is shared with the parents is very valuable. The different activities that the teachers prepare and demonstrate give parents ideas for activities that can be done at home. In addition, the handouts and parent discussion time is helpful for parents to understand our children's development.

It is my hope that the Families for REAL program is able to continue for many years to come and possibly expand to other schools to help more people in the community. The structure, content and execution of the program at the Leeward site was especially terrific! Thank you.

Sincerely,



Kelly Kawamura

Kelly, Wayne and Erin Kawamura  
94-1022 Kukula Street  
Waipahu, HI 96797

February 8, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

My daughter was fortunate to be able to enroll in two Families for R.E.A.L. classes, one at the age of one and the other at age two. Ms. Laura, Ms. Lyn, and Ms. Carolyn together have abundant experience and knowledge to offer many families with young children. During both the young toddler and toddler classes, my daughter and I looked forward to attending the class every week. My daughter went from crying at the snack table for being away from mommy, to being able to sit and enjoy snack time with other kids. We learned inexpensive and creative ways to play with our children and helpful information on community resources. We would be devastated if we could not come back next year for our third Families for R.E.A.L. class. It has made a significant impact on my daughter's toddler years, to be able to experience learning in a safe, comfortable classroom setting at such an early age. We are grateful for the wonderful staff at Families for R.E.A.L., and we sincerely hope that the state will continue to fund this program.

Sincerely,



Yuka Oku  
66-066 Haleiwa Loop  
Haleiwa, HI 96712

25 January 2010.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

My grandson Matthew Shon and I have been attending Families For Real Toddler 1 class since November 18, 2009.

During the first two weeks Matthew would play by himself during class. He is now able to sit on my lap and somewhat participate through most of the opening and closing circle time and has become more aware of the other toddlers.

It's wonderful to see he is able to sit at a table during snack time with other toddlers.

Learning group behaviors such as sharing toys, story-telling and weekly shared activities is a start in preparing him for a rewarding educational experience.

With Thanks,

  
Stephanie Goo.

1-28-10



Families for R.E.A.L. has been a wonderful help for our preschool son. I stay home to care for my kids and do not want a full time preschool. Part week preschool is difficult to find and is still very expensive. The families for R.E.A.L. program is wonderful since it gives my son the opportunity to attend a preschool class at an affordable cost.

The program has been helpful for me too. The parenting topics discussed are a great help and are very relevant to helping with issues I have with my kids. It truly is a wonderful program for children and parents.

Amy Kerkemeyer  
94-1048 Halekama St.  
Waipahu, HI 96797

01/27/10

This is the second session for me to join Families for R.E.A.L.  
I enjoy this program because my child and I can interact with other children, who are same age as mine, and parents.  
I have learned a lot from Families for R.E A.L about various topics including stress management, importance of reading etc.  
My child learned a new thing this time, which is separation from me. I think it was a really good preschool experience for him. He enjoyed it very much.  
The teachers are very nice and resourceful.  
I would love to come back next session.

   
Asami Burich  
5210 Likini St. #1409  
Honolulu, HI 96818

1/26/10

Families for REAL has helped me tremendously  
Even after having a 3rd child, I'm still  
learning a lot. How to be a better parent, etc.  
My son is enjoying himself when he comes  
He looks forward to playing w/ his friend.

Muain Choy

Minako Choy

99-741 Meiala St.

Hick, HI 96701

1/26/10

The Families for REAT program provides such a great foundation for parents and children. We have thoroughly enjoyed all the classes and activities we participated in. I thoroughly recommend this program and support it to continue on! ☺

Please continue to have this program available to parents and children. ☺ I've learned a lot of parenting tip through the discussions we had and my son enjoyed all the crafts and playing with the other children too.

Jenny Bely  
95-205 Paehia Pl.  
Mililani, HI 96709

1/26/10

Families for R.E.A.L IS such a terrific program. My son has learned how to interact & play with other children very well. This program is highly recommended for those who are in the age groups for the different programs. Thank you so much for all the joy and support you've given to me & Logan.

Mahalo

Alicia Taki

and

Logan Sanchez




JAN 26, 2010

~~\*\*\*\*\*~~

PLEASE KEEP THIS FAMILY FOR  
R.E.A.L. PROGRAM. ~~\*\*\*\*\*~~

We found this program very helpful to the parents and the kids in Hawaii. It has a lot of resources and coordination we, as parents, need to raise and develop our childrens for their future and for the future of Hawaii.

Laure, Lyn & Carolyn are very helpful and very nice and very understandable & knowled of what we, parents, and the kids need.

Thank you & please kokeun  
David Chen   
2635 Liliha St  
Honolulu HI 96817

To

1/26/10

## The Staff of Families for Real

This is such an excellent program for not only the children but for the adults (parents, grandparents & guardians). I wanted my granddaughter to enroll in this program to see if she could separate from me, set & follow directions & socialize with other children. Initially, she was clingy but once she was acclimated to her new surroundings she ventured to different play areas & played with the other children. She especially likes the art activity & the parent & child activity. She enjoyed taking her masterpieces home to show her parents what she did. She puts her paintings on the refrigerator & proudly shows everyone her paintings.

We certainly enjoyed the field trips with to Hooahelike. It was fun meeting the other parents & children from the other group. The story & activity was enjoyed by both parent & child & of course we enjoyed feeding the fish & enjoying the duck swimming by.

We are sorry we won't be able to make it to the zoo next week. However, Bodie goes to the zoo every Mondays with her other grandma.

This is a terrific program & I highly recommend it to everyone. My granddaughter enjoyed it so much & she <sup>also</sup> learned a lot in such a short time. She loves to share the activity she did with her older sister. She instructs her sister step by step as to what she should do. What a terrific experience my child had. Now she is yearning for our 'school' learning experience.

Evelyn Ho

Evelyn Ho

1956 A 9th Ave.

Hon. HI, 96816

To whom it may concern,

Please accept my letter of support for the Department of Education's Families for R.E.A.L. Program. I heard about this program through participating family and friends, who all have great things to say about the program. Now that my child and I have also participated in the program, I also believe that this is a great learning opportunity for both the child and the parent.

Families for R.E.A.L. has given my child the opportunity to socialize in a formal, yet inviting setting, with other children of the same age group. I feel that this experience was a safe, nurturing introduction to the upcoming preschool experience.

It would be great if every child and parent was aware of such an opportunity, and could make the time to take part in the Families for R.E.A.L. Program. Thank you for your continued support in Families for R.E.A.L.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle Katano", written in a cursive style.

Michelle Katano

1/26/10

1857 Hoowae Street  
Pearl City, HI 96782  
January 26, 2010

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of the Department of Education's Families for R.E.A.L. Program. I heard about this program through friends who found the experience valuable. My twins and I have just completed the Toddler 2 class and really enjoyed ourselves. The parent education sessions have been very informative and helpful. My children have fun and always look forward to attending the next class.

As for the staff, I cannot say enough nice things about them. They are friendly, helpful and good with the children. Laura McHugh has been wonderful in sharing her experience with us during the parent education sessions.

We were lucky to have had this wonderful opportunity. I hope many other parents and children will be able to participate in the years to come.

Sincerely,



Kristy Oshiro

January 26, 2010

Initially I signed up for Families for REAL because I am a grandparent baby-sitting 2 grandchildren. With the change of times, I needed reassurance that my grandparenting skills were current and helping my grandchildren prepare for school and the new technologies of today.

My granddaughter and I were delighted to be welcomed so warmly by the staff and other parents/children.

My granddaughter and I enjoyed the variety of toys available, the parent-child activities, songs, and snacks.

We hope you keep Families for REAL as I'm sure the discussions on discipline, stress, playtime importance of books has helped not only myself but other parents and grandparents.

Please continue to fund this program so there will be less need for interventions when the children begin school.

Sincerely,  
Diane Hamamoto  
Diane Hamamoto  
95-099 Kawan St.  
Milani, HI 96789

Monday, January 25, 2010

To Whom It May Concern,

Attending the "Families For R.E.A.L." classes gave me an opportunity to become familiar with excellent resources, which currently helps me provide a more stimulating learning environment for my granddaughter. I enjoyed meeting other parents and grandparents and also sharing our experiences, ideas, and suggestions. I especially appreciated the opportunity to borrow books, CDs, and DVDs, which enhanced my granddaughter's love for books and learning.

It was a great opportunity for my granddaughter to play and share with her peers. She looked forward to going to "school" every Wednesday. The sessions were structured during circle time and also allowed the toddlers freedom to explore and learn from their environment.

Meaningful information and handouts were shared and the staff were always open to suggestions and questions. They were also compassionate role models as they engaged everyone in the activities. We were allowed to "practice" our skills in class with our own children in order to allow for questions and improvement.

I will continue to recommend this program to others and look forward to any upcoming sessions, as well as attend classes with my future grandchildren.

Sincerely,

*Susan Koito*

Susan Koito

January 28, 2010

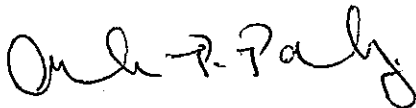
To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter of support regarding your wonderful program called Families for R.E.A.L. This program have given my daughter the opportunity to experience pre school. She was able to do school work, which she was curious about. She was able to socialize and make new friends with her classmates. Families for R.E.A.L was able to fullfil her curiosity and better prepare her in becoming a full time pre school student.

As a parent I was able to learn more on how to deal with a child when he/she shows a certain behavior. Families for R.E.A.L was able to provide the parents solutions and guidance on how to raise a child the proper way and be a better parents at the same time. Lessons that I learned from this program enabled me to share a thing or two regarding the proper way to raise a child with my family and friends.

In conclusion, families for R.E.A.L is a very effective program that benefits both parent and child, it helps a child better prepared for school and make a parent more capable in handling their children.

Sincerely,



Arlen P. Paliyo  
94-636 Kaaholo St.  
Waipahu, HI. 96797

Jan. 26, 2010

Hello!

MY NAME IS ROBIN KAAI — BOTH MY WIFE, RAE, — MYSELF ARE FIRM BELIEVERS OF THE IMMEASURABLE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS, MORE SPECIFICALLY FAMILIES FOR R.E.A.L. BEING FIRST-TIME PARENTS OURSELVES THE JOURNEY OF RAISING A CHILD SEEMED DAUNTING EVEN WITH A LARGE AMOUNT OF SUPPORT — EVIDENCE FROM BOTH OUR FAMILIES. BEING ABLE TO MEET — EXPERIENCE THE HOST OF PARENTING METHODOLOGIES PRESENT AT OUR WEEKLY CLASSES WAS EXTREMELY HELPFUL AS WE DEVELOPED OUR OWN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT OUR FAMILY WOULD STRIVE TO BECOME. THE CLASSES OFFERED TO THE PARENTS, WHILE THE CHILDREN RAN OFF TO DO WHAT CHILDREN DO, IS WHAT PROVIDED US THE MEANS TO REACH THAT GOAL — WE COULDN'T THANK THE STAFF ENOUGH. I FIND MYSELF REASONING WITH MY DAUGHTER INSTEAD OF FEELING OVERWHELMED — RESORTING TO THE AGE-OLD "GET IN THE CORNER!" RESOLUTION. I SEE OUR FAMILY'S URGE TO GET OUT — FIND SOME STIMULATING ACTIVITY RATHER THAN RELENTING TO THE TELEVISION. MOSTLY I FEEL THAT WE ARE A COHESIVE, SUPPORTIVE, — HAPPY FAMILY.

SO, TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, PLEASE CONTINUE THE GROWTH — PROSPERITY OF THE FAMILIES FOR R.E.A.L. PROGRAM AS THEY HAVE NO DOUBT CONTRIBUTED TO THE GROWTH — PROSPERITY OF OUR FAMILY.

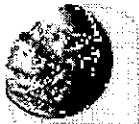
THANKS!

  
ROBIN J. KAAI

  
RAE N. KAAI

2118A KANEALII AVE  
HONOLULU, HI 96813





Jessica Reese  
<jcpreese@gmail.com>

01/24/10 10:12 PM

To laura\_mchugh@notes.k12.hi.us

cc

bcc

Subject Mahalo!

Aloha Laura,

I simply want to take a few minutes to express my warm appreciation to you, Lyn, Carolyn, and the Leeward Families for R.E.A.L. program.

As a single stay at home mom, it is truly a blessing and comfort to have bonded with such a genuinely caring and supportive group. You have encouraged, guided, and equipped me with tools in my role as a parent. Our discussions, exercises, and handouts has given me reassurance and confidence in areas. It is as if I received a pat on the back and a, "great job, mom - keep up the good work." Whew, what a long way that goes! And, there were other instances, where I lovingly learned that I could do things a little differently, as in the case of Connor's needs. We have now incorporated sign language as a means to communicate. Some of the more common signs that Connor expresses is "eat" and "more." But, don't you worry, most of the time, it's healthy stuff...as this topic too has been covered in class amongst many valuable others.

All in all, I am extremely thankful to have been part of the Leeward Families for R.E.A.L. I support it in the highest form and I look forward to both your continued success and our participation in the upcoming sessions.

Much Mahalo,

Jessica and Connor Reese

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January 26, 2010

I am a grandparent who brought her granddaughter to Families for R.E.A.L. The well-organized classes have been very helpful in up-dating me on bringing up children in today's world. The handouts which were given and discussed were particularly helpful as they dealt with a wide range of topics such as discipline, TV habits, activities for toddlers, safety issues, toilet training, choosing a preschool, and other relevant issues. I also learned from the other adults in class.

The key to this successful program was the team of teachers (Lyn Kinoshita, Carolyn Kobayashi, and Laura McHugh). These talented and hard-working teachers were always well-prepared and provided a vast array of activities. They encouraged the children to be independent and each week I can see my granddaughter grow in this area. I know that these classes are among the most valuable I've ever attended (and I have been to many!).

Marcella Simon

MARCELLA SIMON  
98-1666 Piki St.  
AIEA, HI 96701

2/14/09

Dara Ann and I really enjoyed the Families for R.E.A.L. program. It was a great experience for the both of us, and we learned a lot. Taking part in this program has been a positive experience for Dara, and a great transitional step as we prepare her to enter school.

Dara was able to develop her social skills by interacting with other children, and was exposed to the structure of being in school. She enjoyed singing, being read to, and the art projects and movement activities. Dara also liked the play stations and equipment in class and out in the yard.

For myself, attending Families for R.E.A.L. gave me an opportunity to interact with other parents. Our sessions with Miss. Laura were informative and helpful. It provided me with many resources, hand outs and ideas on parenting. It was a great opportunity for me to learn, offering me a new perspective on parenting.

Miss. Laura, Miss. Lyn and Miss. Carolyn were always very caring and nurturing with the children. They were also very friendly and welcoming to the parents, creating an environment that was warm and inviting to all of us.

Jo Ann Kimura  
94-1008 Waiolina St.  
Waipahu, HI. 96797

Erica Sugiyama-Hill  
95-136 Lelewalo Street  
Mililani, HI 96789  
[azatsui@yahoo.com](mailto:azatsui@yahoo.com)

April 5, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the Families For REAL program held at Pearl City Highlands Elementary School. This program provides a safe and nurturing atmosphere that promotes information on parenting, early childhood development, socialization for children and parents, and a place for parents to discuss triumphs and challenges in raising children in Hawaii and our current economy.

The curriculum is very well organized and the staff is knowledgeable in early childhood development. My son Dylan has participated in the Families For REAL program three times at different stages of his growth. I had enrolled in the program when he was 18 months. He was a very active little boy and enjoyed the songs and activities of the program. I have kept in contact with some of the mothers and their children we met from this first class. At two and half years of age, I enrolled Dylan again and my husband and I were able to learn more about parenting techniques and what to expect as Dylan grew both developmentally and physically. Currently, Dylan who is now four years old is fortunate to be enrolled and participating in the program again this year. My husband and I feel that the program promotes information that is relevant to our parenting skills and connects us as a family during our time together in the class. Dylan feels safe and happy when he attends his Families For REAL class.

I support this program for many reasons and some listed in the above paragraph. I highly encourage continued funding of this program as so many parents and children benefit from this program and the experience and knowledge of the staff. To close this program would cause a great loss to this community and to those who look to the program for guidance and assistance with parenting. As a licensed counselor that works with adults and children, I refer many families to this program and will continue to promote the program as it is a safe and healthy place to learn and grow for families.

If you have any questions or need further information, please feel free to contact me at  
(808) 277-5601.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erica Sugiyama-Hill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Erica" being the most prominent.

Erica Sugiyama-Hill, M.C., N.C.C., L.M.H.C.

May 4, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in support of the Families for R.E.A.L. Program. I strongly urge you to continue this excellent family/community education and support program.

My granddaughter and I have just completed the Toddler 2 session and needless to say, I thoroughly enjoyed the classes presented. The information regarding family values, stress management, social/emotional development, guidance, limit setting, and language development were invaluable. Having raised my children four decades ago was very different from today's standards, so attending these classes was a learning and enriching experience for me.

The educators of this program are well informed and excellent teachers. They are also well organized in planning the children's activities. The fun parent-child learning activities, singing songs and moving to music, creating arts and crafts and going on field trips have helped my granddaughter to interact socially with others in work and play. The parent/grandparent group discussions on past and current experiences in child rearing were also helpful and effective in understanding how we can be better caregivers to our children/grandchildren.

When I signed up my granddaughter in this program I had the faintest idea of what to expect. Evidently the program exceeded my expectations and I feel it would be a great loss to the families and the community to lose this invaluable program.

Sincerely,



Barbara J. Umiamaka

91-1003 Puhiplace ST.  
Ewa Beach, HI 96706

May 4, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

Educational, Effective, Necessary. These are the words that accurately describe the State of Hawaii, Department of Education program, Families for R.E.A.L. under the direction of Ms. Laura McHugh and her two classroom aides.

I first learned of Families for R.E.A.L. at Keiki Tuesday which is held at Pearlridge Shopping Center. There were several stations set-up at the hour-and-a half session which included separate tables for: a mini library, puzzles, playdough, and two craft activities. The crafts were useful, fast and easy take-home pieces.

The demand for this program is so great that we were on a wait list for eight months before we were offered the chance to attend.

A typical Families for R.E.A.L. day begins with "circle time", when children and adults sing and dance to welcoming songs and nursery rhymes while accompanied by an ukulele strumming teacher. Then there is a storybook reading. Each week, adults and children do a hands-on project together like bracelet making, preparing a snack, bubble play, child's handprint with poem and making a seashell paperweight. The short ninety minute period is well planned. We will go on three field trips to Hoomaluhia Botanical Gardens, the Zoo, and the Dole Plantation Train Ride. There is also a tentative field trip scheduled to Pearlridge Shopping Center for a day at Keiki Tuesday.

The adults then separate into their own group to share and to receive ideas, suggestions and guidance on topics on child development, child's play, play and learning recipes (make your own playdough, sugar chalk, colored rice and bubbles), regulating television viewing, reading to your child, child independence, social-emotional development, relationship-building skills, methods of effective discipline, childproofing the home, setting limits, expressing feelings, logical consequences, managing and coping with stress, and tips for just enjoying our toddler. We received TONS of resources to look at on our own.

In the meantime, the children are busy with activities like hala seed painting, fruit printing, box car painting, cookie cutter stamping, blow w/a straw painting, flower stamping, fish prints, and just playing with the many interesting toys and play equipment. They even have their own dishwashing area where they actually soap, rinse and dry their own dishes.

Success of the program also relies on supplies gladly donated by parents/grandparents due to the dedication and the sincerity shared with all of us by Ms. McHugh and her staff. Please help us to help our young ones. In addition, expansion of this excellent program to accommodate a greater number of families would do our society a world of good. My view is that we should groom our children as youngsters, rather than taking care of them in prisons. It just makes so much sense to keep Families for R.E.A.L.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Linda J. Ige', with a large, stylized initial 'L'.

Linda J. Ige  
2263 Hoolaulea St.  
Pearl City, Hawaii 96782



FAYE NAKANISHI

FAMILIES FOR REAL CLASS

YOUNG TODDLER

MAY 10, 2010

I'm a grandparent that brought my grandson (1 yr old) to the class. I learned a lot from attending the class.

It's been 24 yrs since my own children were little so I had a lot to brush up on. I only had girls so it was a

huge help to talk to the other parents as well about <sup>boys</sup> sons.

The teachers shared a lot from their own lives + provided

books, videos & other resources for the class. We did such a

variety of activities w/ the children. Made drop toys, little "book

did a collage, handprints, footprints. I learned to make bubbles, <sup>fr sugar</sup>

the children had a wonderful time playing together.

As I thought about this, I feel like it helped to prepare him

for school. He's very shy + by the time class ended, he was exploring

playing w/ the other children, letting other people carry him.

I learned a lot from hearing what the teachers did for their own children + from hearing what the other parents / grandparents

shared. I love that this class is right in the community +

so accessible. I always came out of class wanting to do

so much more w/ my grandson. I was so glad that I could

be there w/ him as he took part in all of the activities.

For me, it spanned generations since I was able to share w/ my daughter what I learned. And the other grandma joined us for the outings.

05-05-20

I didn't know the program existed until I met Ms. Lyn @ Costco. I feel so lucky having to meet her! The class has been awesome in many ways. My family's income is too high to qualify for Head Start program but we can't afford \$90 Gymboree class fee every month either! We attended 1 month @ Gymboree ~~by~~ but Families for R.E.A.L class is so much better in comparison of quality of activities & support from staffs. This program not only provided me w/ nursery rhymes, but also various parent-child activity ideas that I can use @ home. Thanks to this program, I learned to teach baby sign language to my baby, how to teach my child to self-feed, make hand prints, what books to read to my child, the impact of reading to my child's brain, etc, etc. I love this program!

The staffs were very supportive. I didn't find any trace of judging on their part of my parenting skills. ~~I can~~ It is very clear that all staffs genuinely cares about the children & their education. I can tell that the program isn't just a paycheck to them. In these days, it is so difficult to find staffs who genuinely care.

Bora Van Brocklyn  
98885C Kaonohi St  
Aiea, HI 96701



May 5, 2010

Families for R.E.A.L. has been an invaluable resource for me and my two sons. We have attended three sessions and have learned from each one. Both my sons have met new friends, gained confidence, and had lots of fun. The parent sessions have taught me about being a better mother and ~~how~~ I learned about communicating better with my infant and toddler. My parenting confidence has grown tremendously.

Families for R.E.A.L is a program that should be kept available for ALL families to enjoy and learn from. It will help the future children in Hawaii learn to be much better & successful adults.

Jennifer Lala

98-945 Moanalua Rd #1002  
Aiea, HI 96701

May 5, 2010

When first starting Families for REAL, my daughter, Faith, was not comfortable being away from myself or her mother. She also had anxiety about playing with other children. However, now as Faith concludes her first session of Families for REAL, she is much more accepting of strangers and enjoys playing with other children.

Faith has also memorized some of the motions to the songs that we sing in class. At home, she loves to motion to "~~itsy bitsy~~<sup>seesy weesy</sup> spider" and "row, row, row your boat".

Families for REAL has also helped steer me towards better parenting. Through parent discussion time and the handouts received in class, we learned a lot about what to do and what not to do, in different situations.

My family and I are truly grateful for Families for REAL and the positive impact the program has had for us.

Sincerely,  
Allan Matsukado  
Allan Matsukado  
94-614 Luanana St P103  
Waipahu HI 96797

May 5, 2010

To Whom It May Concern,

Families for REAL is a terrific program that helps new parents and grandparents who need a review of the developmental and tips on how we can "embellish" these stages. The group singing, art projects and discussions are geared to help and support us.

Sadie enjoys singing and playing with peers her age. We also learned of new activities that are appropriate to her age which will help in her development.

The understanding and support has helped me tremendously. Thank you Families for REAL!

Diane J. Hamamoto  
Diane F. Hamamoto  
95-099 Kawan St.  
Mililani, HI 96789

May 5, 2010

To whom it may concern,

Families for REAL has helped me make time to learn about my child and his needs. With families for REAL I have the opportunity to relate with other moms, daddys & grandparents. I thoroughly enjoyed my experience & hope to have the opportunity to share this program with other families.



Sally Suemoto

94-1335 Kulena Ln #T

Waipahu, HI 96797

May 5, 2010

This is our first year in Families For Real program. Although my son never sat down during circle time, He was listening because at home he would play and sing songs that he learned in class. I particularly enjoyed parent-child activities that we did. I found all the literature I received from class were full of information and very helpful.

I really am looking forward to Family For Real to continue, so Rylen and I can attend Toddler 2 class.

Karyn Yoneda.

KARYN YASUDA  
98-1637 HOOMAIKE ST.  
P.O. HI. 96782

May 5, 2010

Families for K.E.A.L has been a positive impact on our family. I was fortunate to have all three of my children attend this program. Each session was beneficial not only for my children, but for my husband and I. We enjoyed and looked forward to attending each week. The songs were <sup>very</sup> well enjoyed by my children and they continue to sing them. We enjoyed the parent child activity and the lectures given by Lana. It was nice that the parents were given the opportunity to share their experiences and frustrations with parenting. Just knowing that others go thru the same thing has helped me realize that I'm not the only one.

I would hope that this program can continue and I would definitely recommend this program to anyone.

Shemi Kuminika  
98-2042 B Kaahumanu St  
Pearl City HI 96782



5/5/10

Both Nia and I truly ~~enjoy~~ enjoy coming to the class every wednesday. Not only I have learned a lot about parenting, I have enjoyed interacting other moms who have same interests as ~~me~~ mine. Before joining the class Nia used to be shy around other kids & adults, and now she's ~~be~~ friendly & outgoing. All the resources I've been provided have helped me become a ~~better~~ parent with confidence.



Kelly Yi

92-1110 Olani St #3

Kapolei, HI 96707

May 5, 2010

Dear Families for R.E.A.L.,

Thank you for a wonderful 9 weeks. It has been eight years since we have had a baby in the household so thank you for a refresher course in child rearing.

I am very pleased to see Kole enjoying and participating in the activities. He loves singing nursery rhymes and eating the morning snack. I know attending these sessions have contributed in increasing his vocabulary and he speaks a lot more.

Irene J. Kowabata  
Irene J. Kowabata  
1609 Komo Mae Dr.

5/5/10

To whom it may concern:

please do not shut down Families 4 Real (FFR)

FFR has changed my 18mo old daughter's life forever. The program encouraged me to read to her. I discovered that she loves books & <sup>she</sup> has learned many words. Reading has become a daily activity & will impact her life & help her be successful.

FFR has helped my 3yo son overcome his separation anxiety & prepared him for preschool.

please continue this wonderful program

Sincerely,  
Lae

Lorrid Ann  
98. 1605 Apala Ln  
Aiea HI 96701

May 9, 2010

Week after week, I was happy to connect with other parents/grandparents who share the common interest in how to be better at parenting our little ones. Class discussions made me realize that there are no parents without stress and difficulties in their lives. Everyone shared their experiences, likes and dislikes, laughs and hopes for the future of our children. Ms. Laura, I was eager to hear your educated advises, suggestions and your life experiences as a mother. Also, your extended handouts have been tremendous help to me in finding great books, activities, and low cost educational programs for my toddler.

Ms. Lyn and Ms. Carolyn, your songs and rhymes filled the classroom every Tuesday. Upon hearing the ukulele strumming, Imani happily joined the circle of children singing and clapping. She couldn't wait to show her daddy the art project she made at school that day. They were smart, simple and designed to fit for little fingers. After finishing her art work, Imani played at various play stations and engaged with other children in their play.

Families for R.E.A.L. is truly a great program. It is well organized and well executed by three awesome ladies who are devoted to children and parents alike. Both my daughter and I feel blessed to be part of the FFR community.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Beatrix Babicska".

Beatrix Babicska  
PO Box 330  
Waialua, HI 96791

April 3, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

Families For R.E.A.L. has been an important part of my family and the raising of my three children. I've attended 6 sessions, and each time it has benefited my children as well as my husband and myself.

We've enjoyed circle time, where the children sing songs and learn hand and feet motions and hear a story. The parent/child activities are fun and I really enjoy listening to the lectures. There are many topics that Laura touches upon that have been helpful to me. I also enjoy the fact that she incorporates her own personal experiences into her lecture and asks all the parents to share their own experiences as well. From these lectures I find myself taking ideas back to my own home.

This program has been one of the first programs that my children have attended and allowed them to interact with other children. It was a class that they enjoyed going to weekly.

I've only heard positive responses about Families For R.E.A.L. and I would definitely encourage this program to continue. I hope that many other families are as fortunate as my family and will be able to attend this program today, tomorrow, and in the future.



Sherrie Kunimitsu

Sherrie Kunimitsu

May 6, 2010

Families for Real has encouraged me and my daughter in preparation for preschool. My daughter tends to be quite shy and clingy so the thought of her separating for preschool for several hours is quite daunting.

She was able to successfully separate from me during the shorter "preschool" class which has been an encouragement that she can do it in the fall.

Thank you for Families for Real!



Amy T. Fujii  
94-389 Kaholo St Apt 81  
Mililani, HI 96789

May 06<sup>th</sup>, 2010;

First I would like to give thanks to the Heavenly Father, for giving Raina + I such wonderful teachers to help and to teach Rami to a wonderful child: Raina and I have learn such tremendous information from your program Rami's looks forward to come to school every Tuesday morning and myself. Thank You for such a wonderful teaching environment may god Bless you All.

Thank  
Ana Escala

May 6, 2010

Families for R.E.A.L. is great program to have in our Pearl City Complex. These types of programs should not be cut due to budget cutting or bad economy. This program helps many people from all walks of life. For those who can not afford any type of child care to the ones who is looking for some sort of direction on how to raise their children. Even though we meet once a week maybe in the future it could expand to meeting more than once a week. This program provides classes for the mothers to be, infants, toddlers, preschoolers as well for the whole family. I feel it is a sense of bonding as well as learning new things on how to care for our child as well as for our self and the whole family.

Having to be invited back to the Preschool class was a joy for my daughter. She was very excited to come to class even though it was for such a short time. At this session I got to see her play along with children her age. Especially having siblings older than her. We have seen her interaction with playtime as well as in her art work. We also went on fieldtrips and to see our daughter get all excited brought joy to us. It is so sad to see our session come to an end but we do leave with fond memories. Maybe someday we will be invited back but as we can see our children never stay young they tend to grow up. Until we meet again.....



Chamme & Chante Keawe

84-206 Water Street

Waianae, Hi 96792

(808) 258-8229



May 6, 2010

Families for real has helped me and daughter to learn together and interact with other families. It has really helped my daughter a lot by having friends, wanting to learn more, and being more outgoing.

wish there were more programs for families and children that could accommodate more.

Looking forward to seeing them in the future.

Thanks

Meri Pang

Meri Pang

614 Hooale Street

Pearlcity, Hawaii 96782

Betsy KANEHIRO  
98-1839 Apeleka St.  
AIEA, HAWAII 96701

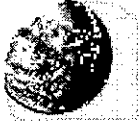
MAY 6, 2000

THE Families In R.E.A.L program IS A  
WELL EDUCATIONAL program for parents +  
child. I have learned a lot from all the  
information & discussion we had in class.

It is a very excellent program for the  
child to learn how to socialize & share  
activities with other children. It also  
prepare the children for Pre-school

A Very Excellent Program  
for Parenting & Children!

Betsy Kanehiro



Viola Sur  
<viocsur@yahoo.com>

05/05/10 06:19 PM

To laura\_mchugh@notes.k12.hi.us

cc Sandra Kaneshiro <mapuna@hawaii.rr.com>

bcc

Subject Families For R.E.A.L

Viola Sur  
2033 Nuuanu Ave., Apt 18A  
Hon., Hi., 96817

May 5, 2010

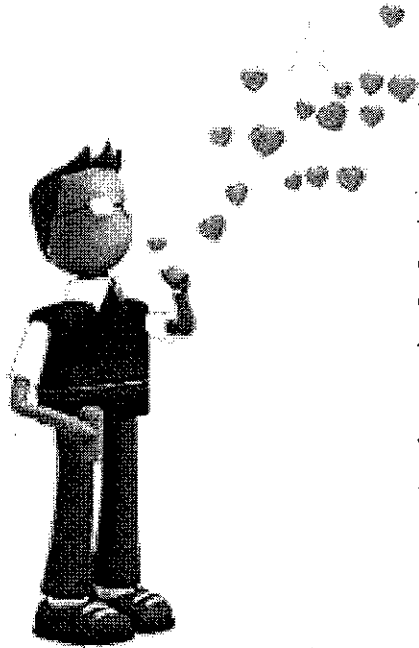
Families For R.E.A.L.  
Hawaii State Department Of Education  
Pearl City Highlands Elementary School

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for a genuinely warm, encouraging, sensitive and quiet environment for Carly Mei and me. This experience was different for me, especially during the parent listening and sharing time together. It gave me, as the primary care giver, the feeling of empathy with the young parents and other grandparents, and a pleasant time to relax.

Lyn Kinoshita, Children's Teacher and Carolyn Kobayashi, Children's teacher (PTT) always have eye contact with each child. Calling them by their names, very encouraging and non judgmental. When parents are involved in reading, music, and craft activities, Miss Lyn and Miss Carolyn put them at ease and patiently assists them when they felt awkward in learning how to work with their child. These teachers are important to this program. Their passion for the children are evident. They interact lovingly with the children. For an hour and forty-five minutes, the planning is impeccable. Never heard a child fighting, crying or needing discipline. The openness of this classroom was priceless.

Laura McHugh, Parent Educator made us feel that we were the most important person in our child's life. She gave us helpful materials to guide us when challenges arose. Sharing, hitting, eating, any aggressive behavior. One of her gentle responses was a guide by Eve Moravcik that I love and follow..."10 Golden Rules Of Child Guidance." Just one of many excellent methods of effective discipline. Laura has a passion for books. She recommended appropriate books for our child. Encouraged us to spend more time reading to our child and less time in front of the television. Amen to this!



The passion and dedication of Families For R.E.A.L. program sponsored by the Hawaii State Department of Education at Pearl City Highland Elementary School's is admirable. This program is an important support to parents, grandparents and care givers for toddlers. It provides discipline guidelines in a gentle way to prevent possible abuse. Also, encouragement to interact lovingly with our toddlers.

Again, I say, within a very short one hour and forty-five minutes, the planning is impeccable. A shame to stop it.

Viola Sur, grandmother and care giver for Carly Mei Kaneshiro, 2 years old

May 1, 2010

Teresa Lee  
57 Kaliko Drive  
Wahiawa, HI 96786

To Whom it May Concern,

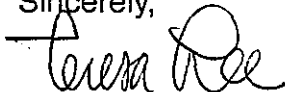
I am writing this letter in support of the Families For R.E.A.L. program. This program has helped me in several ways. Laura Mc Hugh, the parent educator, had many hand-outs and discussions that were relevant to raising a toddler. Her openness to listen to each and every parent made it easier to share my thoughts and concerns. Being able to do this, helped to provide feedback and tips for making mine and my daughter's life more enjoyable.

Lyn Kinoshita and Carolyn Kaobayashi we wonderful with the children. There were both patient and kind to each and every one. It is obvious they love their job and enjoy being around children.

My daughter looked forward to going to "school" every week. I loved to see her eyes light up when she showed me what artwork she had done for the day. For those of us who are struggling and are unable to put our child in pre-school, this was a great pre-school/classroom experience for my daughter.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Families For R.E.A.L. program and my daughter did too. It would be a shame to see this program cut because of lack of funding. If anything, Families For R.E.A.L. should be expanded so that other communities may benefit from this program as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Teresa Lee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and 'L'.

Teresa Lee

To Whom It May Concern:

May 4, 2010

I am writing this letter in support of the Family for REAL Program. Thanks to the program and staff, my daughter has blossomed. She speaks in complete sentences and her vocabulary has expanded thanks to hard work and the supporting information provided by the staff.

I find myself being a confident parent the second time around thanks to this program. I do not have any family members living in the state, so the staff and the parents and grandparents have become my second family. They are my village!

Please continue to provide the parents and grandparents, who are interested in accessing learning and interacting with others in order to better care for their children, the opportunity to participate in this program.

Thank you for your support.

Gracie Prouté  
94-1227 Keahua Loop  
Waipahu, HI 96797 (808) 688-0179

MAY 4, 2010

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

FAMILIES FOR REAL PROGRAM HAS HELPED MY CHILD AREH BY INTERACTING WITH THE OTHER TODDLERS. AREH IS ABLE TO SHARE TOYS WITH THE TODDLERS IN HIS CLASS + ENJOY BEING WITH THEM IN CLASS. AREH ENJOYS SONG CIRCLE, CLOSING CIRCLE, ART ACTIVITIES + HAVING TO BE IN A PRE-SCHOOL SETTING WHICH WILL PREPARE HIM TO GO TO PRESCHOOL. AS A PARENT, IT HELPED ME BE MORE CONFIDENT WHICH FEELS GREAT. IT HELPED ME WITH HAVING TO HAVE PARENT DISCUSSION ON DIFFERENT TOPICS WITH OTHER PARENTS IN CLASS + GET A FEED BACK ON WHAT THEY GO THROUGH WITH THEIR CHILD. I'M VERY FORTUNATE TO BE ABLE TO EXPERIENCE FAMILIES FOR REAL PROGRAM WITH MY SON AREH. I REALLY ENJOYED MYSELF BEING IN THE PROGRAM WHICH I LOOK FORWARD EVERY WEEK TO ATTEND CLASS + I HAD A PERFECT ATTITUDE WITH MY SON AREH.

Sincerely,

Mary Marjorie Ricarte-Rougilid

MARY MARJORIE RICARTE-ROUGILID  
91 223 THIRD PL. DIOY  
WATFORD, HI  
94797

4 May 2010

To: Whom it Concerns,

Subject: Families for REAL - Toddler 2

1. As grand parents, we were 40 years ~~out~~ <sup>touch</sup> of ~~touch~~ with having young children around. It proved to us that it takes younger people to keep up with toddlers. This class was outstanding for our understanding of his needs.

2. Our grandson <sup>under</sup> is our <sup>step</sup> grandchild and is with us 24/7. He has a mother living in Thailand with the older brother. Our son has a job that takes him ~~on~~ around the world by merchant ships and is gone 3-3½ months at a time.

3. Alexander is extremely shy and seldom worked with adults, let alone children. He hung close to me throughout each session. He would participate in artwork only with me. At the last meeting he seemed to be more accepting of others and participated a little.

4. Alexander is now ready to continue to grow socially. He is now 28 mos. old and would indeed profit by another session, before going on to pre-school.

We are very grateful for this experience. We have learned so many important information in training and caring for Alexander.

With warm Affection  
Jurn-Doré Desrosiers



May 4, 2010

Families 4 R.E.A.L has really helped my child and myself grow. They taught us how to socialize as parents, our children socialize together, they now taught us parenting skills and answered questions that I as a parent would have never known.

We learned and made new arts and crafts in the class which is good for both parent and child

This class has done so much for us it has made my son a happier boy because of this program because he has been able to be with these wonderful teachers and friends!!

Chiharu Hosoda

CHIHARU HOSODA  
66-280 WAIALUA BEACH RD.  
HALEIWA HI 96712

May 4, 2010

As a concerned grandparent seeking to optimize my grandchildren's development/learning, I have found Families for REAL to be invaluable to their growth as well as my own.

Families for REAL enables children and parents/grandparents to grow together. It provides an opportunity for children to begin learning in a school setting sooner than they might otherwise be able to.

The program will make a huge difference in the lives of my grandchildren.

Robert K. Muvanaoka

Robert K. Muvanaoka  
94-414 Hokuili St.  
Mililani, HI 96789

May 4th, 2011

To: Whom it May Concern

From: Sanae Kunishima  
98-310 Puuakii St.

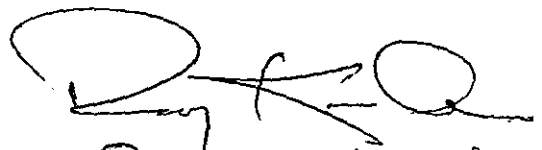
Families For Real is a great program. I was very fortunate to be able to attend the Toddler 2 class with my granddaughter. The staff is very caring and professional. I liked the way the teachers included a variety of activities. The singing activities always included the children's names. I was surprised to see that my 2 year old granddaughter learned the names of all of her classmates.

At the beginning she was a bit shy, but <sup>she</sup> has always looked forward to attending class. All of the children eagerly participate in the activities, and they all look so happy. The <sup>professional</sup> handouts were helpful. I've shared them with my granddaughter's parents and I've noticed them using ~~them~~ the special fine discipline section. I've gotten lots of hints also... where to get good hand books. Thanks for e.  
Sanae Kunishima

July 2010

I think FFR program is beneficial for preschoolers in that they get to be introduced to socialization with their classmates. The growth since beginning of 2008 was worth attending & seeing great improvement in social skills. General shyness was overcome & sharing was learned.

It is good for stay at home parents & B-parents. Too bad they only have 2 programs -



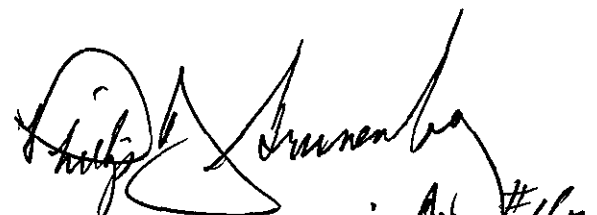
Roy Kovalina  
981310 Puana Ln S1  
Aiea, HI 96701

5-4-10

This program has help me UNDERSTAND my SON BETTER. BEING ABLE TO SEE him INTERACT WITH OTHER CHILDREN AND UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF OTHER ADULTS, HAS HELP ME SEE him IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT.

THE PROFESSIONAL MANNER IN WHICH THESE TEACHERS WORK HAS VERY MUCH IMPRESSED ME. THE RESOURCE MATERIALS HAVE BEEN VALUABLE.

I WISH THE PROGRAM FAMILIES FOR R.E.I.A.L. COULD CONTINUE TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY FOR YEARS TO COME

  
94-161 Kuahelani Ave #163  
M, Lani, HI 96789

May 4, 2010

To Whom It May Concern,

The Families For Real Program has met and exceeded all my expectations. My child has had an excellent opportunity to interact with other children that he would not have otherwise had. He has also had the opportunity to experience time in a classroom.

The Families For Real Program has also provided my family with valuable information on child rearing, lots of alternative methods for dealing with behavior and many great activities for us to do together at home.

I am greatly appreciative of the opportunity to have participated in this program and hope we are able to come back again.

Sincerely,



Juli Oga

95-805 Lanipaa St.  
Mililani, HI 96789

May 4, 2010

Families for R.E.A.L. was a wonderful experience for my two grandchildren. They learned to be with other children and adults and it widened their world. We re-learned how to nurture and enjoy young children again.

Claire Muranaka

Claire Muranaka  
94-414 Hoku'uli St  
Mililani HI 96789

May 2nd 2010

Families for R.E.A.L. has helped my family beyond words. Before coming to this program, my son was fearful of other people. He didn't make eye contact with the teacher's and clung to me throughout the sessions. Now he sings and dances during class. He also loves to interact with new people even outside of class.

Please save this program. ~~The~~ Families like our "that can't afford child tuition and don't qualify for assistance need this wonderful program.

Carol Kumagai  
Chris Kumagai  
+  
Archer Kumagai



May 4, 2010

I highly comm~~end~~ and recommend the Families for Real program. The program was a valuable resource that I learned a tremendous amount from as a first time mom. The handouts and the information presented has allowed me to be more open with my parenting techniques and has provided much more ideas. I truly appreciate this program and would very much like for it to thrive. I would even pay for future classes if it were to continue. This program has indeed reduced my frustration level with certain aspects of disciplining my child which to me is so very important. I thank the staff of Families for Real - Ms. Laura, Ms. Lyn and Ms. Carolyn from the bottom of my heart for all their help and support and look forward to seeing and working and learning from them in the future.

Sincerely,

Melaniz Kushi  
Melaniz Kushi  
98-124 Lania Way  
Aiea HI 96701

May 4, 2010

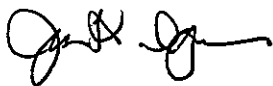
To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing this letter to show our strong support for the Families for R.E.A.L. program. This program is very important for families and for the community. We were fortunate to continue this program in the Toddler 2 class in March 2010 after having attended the Toddler 1 class a year ago. We have once again gained so much from attending this class. This worthwhile program not only taught our child about socializing with peers her age and independent play in a safe environment, but also gave us an opportunity to learn valuable parenting skills.

From the first day, Kaylee remembered the class and teachers from a year ago and was excited to play with the assortment of toys indoors and outdoors, as well as meet the other children. She especially loved doing the art projects and parent-child activities and was very proud of what she did. We believe that it is through these activities that children gain confidence and a sense of accomplishment.

We hope that this program continues to receive the support it deserves. We are grateful to the wonderful teachers who run the program and provide a positive influence on the families. There are many activities out there for our young children, but it is rare to find a worthwhile program that is inexpensive and geared not only to the child, but the parents as well. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Brent and Jean Igawa". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B" and "J".

Brent and Jean Igawa  
2140 Komo Mai Drive  
Pearl City, HI 96782

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

February 5, 2011

Mr. Pono Chong  
House of Representatives District 49  
415 S. Beretania St.  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Mr. Chong,

My name is Joanne Pakia and I live in District 49 in Kaneohe. I am writing to you to ask for your support in helping get SB 289 passed. I have had the privilege to participate in the Families for R.E.A.L. program for the past 19 years starting with my twin sons at age 3 and who are now in college; to my three grandchildren, one who is 3 and is currently attending this session.

Although one session is for just ten weeks, I can attest to the remarkable impact it has made on each child that has attended. For each one, the session has been his/her first introduction to social interaction with other children in an educational away-from-home setting and it has had such a positive, exciting effect in setting the pattern for a very eager, happy-to-learn outlook for many future years in school. My sons have done excellent work all the way through high school and my two grandsons have been doing very well in elementary school.

I know funds are sorely needed for all phases of our public school system but truly believe that beginning the initial steps to learning has its greatest impact from as young as infancy. We know for a fact that developing positive learning experiences in children are critically important, way before they reach the age of 5, and infants, toddlers and preschoolers as well as PARENTS could use the knowledge and tools that Families for R.E.A.L. has been so effective in providing all these years. This program keeps getting better every year and I sincerely hope this program will continue to have far reaching effects on many more children in the future years of school in Hawaii.

Yours truly,

Joanne Pakia

cc Senator Jill Tokuda

SB 289  
2/16/11  
1:15pm

February 1, 2011

45-927 KEAAHALA PLACE  
KANEHOHE, HAWAII 96744

REPRESENTATIVE KEN ITO

STATE CAPITOL

415 S. BERETANIA ST.

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

**SUBJECT: OUR SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES FOR REAL AND SENATE BILL 289**

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE ITO:

This is a note to let you know that my Ojisan (Grandfather), Obaasama (Grandmother), and I (three years old) very much enjoyed and benefited from the "FAMILIES FOR REAL" program in Kaneohe. Therefore, we ask that you support **SENATE BILL 289** which will allow this good program to continue.

The instructors (Aunties Lynda, Julia and Chris) have been very nice to me. They always had interesting and worthwhile programs for us. I am sure those programs are the reason I am very advanced for my age. But I liked the games and toys most of all because I got to make very good friends.

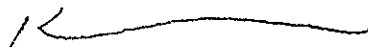
My Obaasama (Grandmother) enjoyed meeting the other parents and grandparents. They spent a lot of time talking about the best ways to help us grow up. They also talked about how not to spoil us.

I think my Ojisan (Grandfather) enjoyed the program too. But he is very old so I am not too sure. Also, he likes to spoil me.

I hope I will be able to continue going to FAMILIES FOR REAL. It is a good program and a big help to all of us. So please support SENATE BILL 289. THANK YOU.

Sincerely:

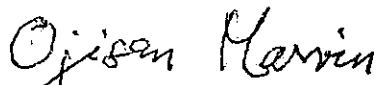
KYLA (KAIKAI) CANESO-BANTOLINA



OBAASAMA MASAKO SAPP



OJISAN MARVIN



CC. SENATOR TOKUDA

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

Debbie Monmaney  
617 Halela Street  
Kailua, HI 96734  
February 8, 2011

Dear Representative Thielan:

I am writing to ask you to support Families for R.E.A.L and help get SB 289 passed. The program's future funding depends on it.

When my son won custody of his two children in January of 2010, we knew we had a big job ahead of us as the children had not been exposed to a stable environment for about a year and a half. The older of the two had been put in kindergarten only to be taken out six weeks later and whisked off to another state. Upon his return to Hawaii, he was able to enter kindergarten in Kailua and continue his education. His sister, who was three, lacked self control so we decided pre-school would provide a nice structure for her.

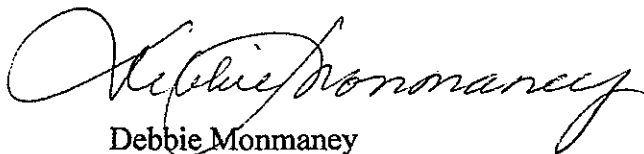
As we researched and interviewed many schools we found the price to be out of my son's range as a single parent. He made a little over what was considered to be eligible for any subsidizing. I found out about Families for R.E.A.L. and gave it a try. This is my granddaughter's, Lehua, second year in the program. Just the two days a week for the six weeks that the program runs has helped her tremendously. She has learned self control because of the routine and structure of the class. She looks forward to each class with an eagerness only a child can have. For Lehua, she finally has something that she can call her own. The self-confidence I have seen her obtain is invaluable and will continue to aid her as she proceeds into the world of knowledge.

Our children are the priority and should be given every opportunity to move up the ladder of success. Families for R.E.A.L. help to strengthen all that is good about the society in which we live. The guidance the children receive from the caring teachers who run the program can only move them closer to the model citizens we as parents and grandparents desire them to be.

I think that this is an important bill. It will benefit the community at large by assisting in the raising of our island keiki. I have seen that it truly does take a whole village to raise a child.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



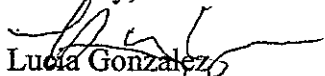
Debbie Monmaney

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

Representative Cynthia Thielen,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Families for R.E.A.L. educational program and to support SB 289. Our family has lived in Kaneohe our entire lives and I wanted my granddaughter, Sakura, to join in a preschool for her age and that's when we decided to come to this program. This is her second year attending this program and she truly enjoys her time at Families for R.E.A.L. She is now 3 and has learned her days of the week and has improved a lot in other areas of her education. We really enjoyed the interactions with everyone and we really enjoyed our time at Families for R.E.A.L. We hope that this program keeps striving for education so that we can continue to participate as well.

Sincerely,



Lucia Gonzalez  
Grandparent of Sakura Santa-Maria

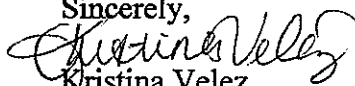
Cc to Jill Tokuda

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

Representative Cynthia Thielen,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Families for R.E.A.L. educational program and to support SB 289. Our family has lived in Kaneohe our entire lives and we wanted our daughter, Ava, to join in a preschool for her age and that's when we decided to come to this program. I absolutely believe in great education and I wanted my daughter to interact with other toddlers her age. I wasn't expecting to learn as a parent at this program, I thought it was mostly about the children. We really enjoyed the interactions with everyone and we really enjoyed our time at Families for R.E.A.L. and we hope that this program keeps striving for education so that we can continue to participate as well.

Sincerely,



Kristina Velez

Parent of Ava Velez

Cc to Senator Jill Tokuda

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15pm

February 9, 2011

Dear Representative Thielen:

My family and I encourage you to fully support the *Families for R.E.A.L* program and SB 289. We live in your district in Kailua.

*Families for R.E.A.L* is a high quality program.

We have been part of the Toddler group that unfortunately has its last class this week. It has been a wonderful experience for my daughter and me. I hope that we are able to join another class.

As a family that is on a tight budget, we have found that most group programs are out of our budget. It has been great for both of us to have classroom experience before preschool/kindergarten. I have particularly enjoyed seeing my daughter be guided and instructed by other adults and believe that that been one of the best experiences for her. The teachers are exceptionally gentle and respectful toward the children. I hope that in any other schooling I feel that my daughter is as emotionally and physically safe as I do at *Families for R.E.A.L*.

The program has been informative and has helped me become a wiser mother. Each week we discuss a relevant topic and are sent home with papers to read (which my husband reads too). I have found that sharing stories with other caregivers has also been helpful.

The social aspect has also been important for both of us. The program has given us the opportunity to interact with other children and moms.

The teachers have also inspired to learn ukulele so I can sing with my daughter!

Sincerely,



Katharine Madjid  
248 Mookua Street  
Kailua, HI 96734

cc. Senator Jill Tokuda



SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

Heather D. Kimura  
45-508 Haamaile Place  
Kaneohe, HI 96744

February 3, 2011

Representative Jessica Wooley  
State Capitol, Rm. 327  
415 S. Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**RE: SB 289**

Dear Representative Wooley:

Please support Families for R.E.A.L. and help get SB 289 passed for future funding. As a resident of the Kaneohe district, Families for R.E.A.L. has helped me, a first-time, single mother and my daughter, Azure who is now 17 months old. Azure has had the opportunity from about 8 months of age, to participate in this wonderful program. It exposed her to other toddlers her age and a wealth of activities that I was not able to provide at home. I also enjoy the fact that the classes are held in the elementary school setting. I believe it is important for her to become comfortable in the school setting in preparation for her school-age years. She is developing into a very active, confident, social, curious child with the help of Families for R.E.A.L.

For a single parent on furlough, this program has assisted me in giving my child an opportunity that I would not be able to afford otherwise. It has been a blessing in this time of economic hardship. I've also been able to connect with other parents and learn better ways of rearing my child. Given that I am a new parent, the opportunity the program gives me in being able to talk to the teachers and discuss issues with the other parents has been invaluable and great resource/outlet for me.

The staff at Families for R.E.A.L. is caring, compassionate, patient, and supportive. They truly care for the kids and provide awesome activities every week. We have been able to paint, sing, play with a parachute, go to the zoo, create safe, simple toys, and overall be amongst other children in a safe, educational, fun environment.

Again, please support Families for R.E.A.L. and SB 289. The positive impact this program has on the children and the community is monumental.

Sincerely,



Heather D. Kimura

cc: Senator Jill Tokuda

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15pm

Gerald M. Kimura  
45-508 Haamaile Place  
Kaneohe, HI 96744

February 3, 2011

Representative Jessica Wooley  
State Capital, Rm. 327  
415 S. Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Representative Wooley:

RE: SB 289

Please continue your efforts to support Families for R.E.A.L.

Families for R.E.A.L., Benjamin Parker, has provided a fantastic support system for my grandchild's social/emotional growth. Also, her gross motor and fine motor coordination continues to improve through the various activities that have been organized for her to participate in. The program has also been helpful in providing me with child rearing techniques and ideas for everyday home living situations.

In order for a program to be effective as Families for R.E.A.L., Benjamin Parker has been, funds need to be provided to keep all of the educators that run and staff the programs.

Once again, as a resident of Kaneohe, I would like you to support SB 289.

With much gratitude for all that you do for the residents of Kaneohe,

Sincerely,



Gerald M. Kimura

cc: Senator Jill Tokuda

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

47-652 Alawiki Street  
Kaneohe, HI 96744  
February 10, 2011

Representative Jessica Wooley  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 327  
415 S. Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SB 289

Dear Representative Wooley,

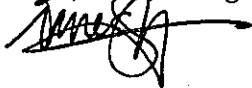
I am writing to request your support for SB 289, introduced by fellow Windward legislator, Senator Jill Tokuda, which provides funding for the Families for R.E.A.L. program. I have had the great fortune to benefit from this program with both of my children. Families for R.E.A.L. was the first school experience for my now 5-year old son, Noa. The staff provided such a warm and nurturing environment, not just for our son, but also for my husband and I. Being new parents, the thought of sending your kid off to school was a bit scary. Families for R.E.A.L. provided a great transition for our family and my son has fond memories of his experience.

We are finishing up our time with Families for R.E.A.L. with our 2-year old, Moani. Like her brother, she has thoroughly enjoyed her experience. She so looks forward to going to school and can't wait to see her friends.

The growth that I've seen in both of my kids through their experiences with Families for R.E.A.L. cannot be measured. As a parent, you just know. You always want the best for your children and Families for R.E.A.L. is right up there.

Thank you again for considering support of this important bill and for your tremendous service to our Windward community.

Respectfully,  
Vanessa S. Wong



SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

February 7, 2011

To Senator Hee and Representative Wooley,

My name is Janelle Jinbo and I live in your district (Temple Valley). I am writing this letter in regards to SB 289, to maintain funding for the Families for Real Program in the Department of Education.

My child has had the opportunity to attend this program in the weekly Family Night class. Both my husband and I work full time during the day, and we have greatly appreciated the ability to spend quality time with our child in an environment that fosters learning, socialization and life skills. This program has prepared my son well for preschool. As we prepare to send him to preschool next year, during classroom observations, teachers have commented on his readiness for the classroom setting. During his observation he was very hesitant and shy, then I reminded him that the situation was similar to Families for Real and his mood changed and he became actively involved in the classroom activities. We attribute this to his involvement in Families for Real.

In addition, the program provides a time for us to interact with other parents and learn more about parenting, which is reassuring for us as parents. The classes that we have attended also represent the great diversity in our communities, and we all learn from and support each other.

However, I would also like to note that I also have a child who attends the Tutu & Me Program in Kahaluu during the day with a grandparent. This has also been a wonderful program, but has just been cut by the Department of Human Services next year. I wish I had been more proactive in supporting the effort to save this and other programs. Please don't let another great program like Tutu & Me be cut because of funding. Please support SB 289.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,



Janelle Jinbo

CC: Jill Tokuda

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

February 8, 2011

Dear Senator Michelle N. Kidani,

I'm writing this letter in support of Families for R.E.A.L. and SB 289. We live in Milliki Mauka and have been taking my child to Families for R.E.A.L. The program was recommended to us by my child's speech therapist so that she may have opportunities for socialization. My child has gained improvement in her speech and noticed her to become more interactive with other children. In addition, the program provides helpful parenting information. The program is much needed in our communities and we hope that SB 289 will continue to be funded.

Thank you,  
Aunty [Signature]

cc Sen. Jill Tokuda

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

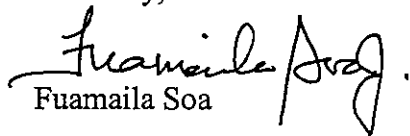
Senator Pohai Ryan  
District 25  
Hawaii Kai, Waimanalo, Keolu Hills, Lanikai, Kailua  
State Capitol  
415 S. Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Madam,

As the grateful parent of a young toddler that has been privileged to receive and greatly benefit from the services of Families for R.E.A.L. I would like to express my whole-hearted support for **SB 289**.

As a resident of Waimanalo, I also strongly urge your support of **SB 289**.

Sincerely,

  
Fuamaila Soa

cc Jill Tokuda

Daphne P. Izu  
1298 Lopaka Place  
Kailua, Hawaii 96734

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 PM

Representative Pono Chong  
State Capitol  
415 S. Beretania Street, #404  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: **SB 289 - Families for R.E.A.L**

Dear Representative Chong:

As a resident of your district, please accept my letter in support of Senate Bill 289, regarding the Families for R.E.A.L. program. My daughter Harley is 3 years old and has been very fortunate to attend the Families for R.E.A.L. program. I highly recommend this program to every mom I meet. I was referred to the program by my sister, who is a DOE teacher, and also Harley's pediatrician, Dr. Lynn Yanagihara, when she was an infant and I am so thankful I was.

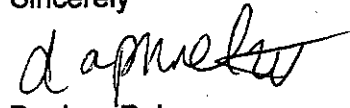
Since I am a stay at home mom, we have chosen not to send Harley to a traditional preschool program. Therefore, it is very important for us to find programs for her that will fill those gaps to prepare her for school and provide her social interaction with other children. The Families for R.E.A.L. program provides that and much, much more. It is our chosen school, Harley's school, and we are so proud to say she attends the program. The program is teaching Harley how to sit quietly and nicely during circle, song and story time, cooperative play, how to listen and follow directions from her teachers, as well as developing respect for her teachers, all the things necessary to prepare Harley for future educational success. The program basically follows the same format every week, with changing curriculum and age appropriate activities so that Harley has learned what to expect, how to listen, and how to behave appropriately in a classroom. I strongly feel that the Families for R.E.A.L. program is providing Harley with the skills needed to be ready when she starts kindergarten, and most importantly, it is teaching her the importance of going to school and learning to love and look forward to going to school and fostering a lifetime love of learning.

The Families for R.E.A.L. educators are wonderful! I could not ask for better first teachers for my daughter. Chris, Linda and Julia provide a classroom environment filled with warmth, compassion, structure, knowledge, and just the right amount of discipline to keep the children all in line. I have learned so much myself in the classes to help guide me to become a better parent by giving me the confidence and knowledge needed to succeed.

As a parent, I have watched my child grow into a learner, and I love it. Whenever we pass Ben Parker Elementary School, Harley gets so excited and says "Mommy, there's my school". Even though she is only 3, she already has school spirit and pride. I hope that she will always have this love for learning and for school that the Families for R.E.A.L. program has fostered in her by being her first educational experience.

I humbly request that you consider SB 289 for Harley, for all the children of Hawaii, and the future children of Hawaii. By providing such a program like Families for R.E.A.L., all the children of Hawaii can only benefit, develop a love for school and become lifelong learners and productive citizens. Thank you very much!

Sincerely

  
Daphne P. Izu

cc: Senator Jill N. Tokuda

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

46-165 Keoe Place  
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744  
February 1, 2011

Honorable Representative Pono Chong  
State Capitol Room 404  
415 S. Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Representative Chong:

I live in your district and I am writing this letter to urge support for Families for R.E.A. L. and help get SB 289 passed for future funding. It is a great program and I need to tell you why.

On February 12, 2008, I was blessed for the first time with the most beautiful grandchild in the world. Anthony arrived early and he seemed perfectly fine but as he grew older, it became apparent that he was developmentally delayed. Imagine the frustration all around when he could not talk and be understood.

With Easter Seals support, Anthony has made great gains. He has been tutored daily and will be attending DOE Special Ed preschool when he turns three.

Easter Seals has been terrific and connected Anthony with Families For R.E.A.L. This provided Anthony with a social setting with other children to learn and play with. As a retired first grade teacher, I know this will greatly help with his transition to preschool.

This program is not only for the kids, but also for the entire family. There are opportunities for focused discussions with other parents/grandparents to discuss commonalities, frustrations and other experiences in a safe atmosphere. The staff is well trained and enduring.

As a mother, I know first hand what it feels like to have a child that you suspect needs help and have no where to turn to. When I sought parenting classes on my own, I found myself attending classes that were inappropriate for me.

Families For R.E.A.L supports families by providing tons of information and just letting you know "what is out there." This makes for less stressed and happier parents. Happy parents become better parents, who in turn make happier and better kids.

Kids are our future! Doesn't it make sense to support them?

Again, please fund the Families For R.E.A.L program.

Sincerely,

*Sonia Ayson*

Sonia Ayson  
Grandmother of Anthony



SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

February 9, 2011

Dear Senator Galuteria:

My family and I enthusiastically support *Families for R.E.A.L* program and SB 289. We live in District 12.

*Families for R.E.A.L* is a high quality program.

We have been part of the Toddler and has been a wonderful experience for my son and me.

The teachers are exceptionally gentle and respectful toward the children.

The program is informative and interesting. The handouts and literature have been very helpful.

The social aspect has also been important for both of us. The program has given us the opportunity to interact with other children and moms.

Sincerely,

Sonja Sironen

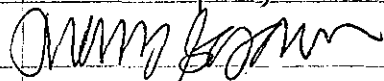


SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

February 8, 2011

Dear Representative Marilyn B. Leo,

I'm writing this letter in support of Families for R.E.A.L. and SB 289. We live in Mililani Mauka and have been taking my child to Families for R.E.A.L. The program was recommended to us by my child's speech therapist so that she may have opportunities for socialization. My child has gained improvement in her speech and noticed her to become more interactive with other children. In addition, the program provides helpful parenting information. The program is much needed in our communities and we hope that SB 289 will continue to be funded.

Thank you,  


cc. Sen. Jill Tokuda

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

February 9, 2011

Dear Representative Brower:

My family and I enthusiastically support *Families for R.E.A.L* program and **SB 289**. We live in District 23.

*Families for R.E.A.L* is a high quality program.

We have been part of the Toddler and has been a wonderful experience for my son and me.

The teachers are exceptionally gentle and respectful toward the children.

The program is informative and interesting. The handouts and literature have been very helpful.

The social aspect has also been important for both of us. The program has given us the opportunity to interact with other children and moms.

Sincerely,

Sonja Sironen



SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

Families for REAL  
-in my opinion

My husband and I (and our daughter) love Families for REAL and the wonderful people who work for the program (especially our Kaneohe location).

This program is a wonderful opportunity for us parents and future parents and children, to learn a lot, as well as socialize with other families. The children get to socialize with other children their age, which is very important and not everyone has access to this for their child.

The fact that they've been offering classes for free is a better opportunity for families that would otherwise not attend any program (with pay) and miss out on very important information that some of us still don't have these days. Some families do not have the resources to join other parent/child classes with cost. This program offers an open door to help and guide parents who otherwise may have no one else to turn to. Also we get information about available community resources, which is really good to have just in case.

FFR, to me, is a parents support group as well as a learning site for children and parents alike. We've been able to raise personal issues, discuss them and see what other parents go through, then get guiding advice from the instructor. We have been impressed with the kind of activities that we've had during our sessions (with provided materials for crafts activities etc. and access to a library of parent/kids' books to check out). It is an important program and really great for any young family.

Seeing my daughter playing with the other kids, interacting and socializing, has been amazing and so great for her. At the same time, we learned about child development and other parenting issues. Just over all a really, really wonderful program and we are very thankful for their existence and hard work, especially the dedication of the instructors.

We hope that this program will continue to thrive and function for as long as possible. In our family's opinion, this program should continue to be funded by the state. We hope to continue to attend sessions with our growing family.

Mrs. Galit Levinson

Feb. 09 2011



SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm



"Betty Poliahu"  
<bettyp@hawaii.rr.com>

02/08/11 08:42 AM

To Chris\_Chang/PARKER/HIDOE<Chris\_Chang/PARKER/  
HIDOE@notes.k12.hi.us>

cc

bcc

Subject Fw: SB289

----- Original Message -----

**From:** Betty Poliahu

**To:** [repito@Capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:repito@Capitol.hawaii.gov)

**Sent:** Tuesday, February 08, 2011 8:35 AM

**Subject:** SB289

Representative Ito,

As a resident of your district, I am writing to ask you to support SB289 which would fund the Families For REAL Program for the next two years. At the time it was located at Kapunahala Elementary School, I worked there as the parent facilitator and saw the positive impact of the program on not only the children but on the parents also. The children who attended the program had an easier transition to kindergarten. These parents and/or grandparents who participated took an active role in their child's education and many became active supporters and volunteers throughout the child's school years. The Families For REAL Program empowers parents in nurturing and teaching their children and helps to strengthen the family.

A few years ago I also had the opportunity of attending the toddler class with my grandson and experienced for myself this wonderful family education and early childhood program. I urge you to support the continued funding for Families For REAL.

Betty Poliahu

45-922 Anoi Road, Kaneohe

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SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 PM

February 7, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

Prior to joining Families for R.E.A.L, our daughter Marley did not have a "great" first experience at preschool (a 2 year old program). Infact, I think she has some bad memories from that particular place. But, we were fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to be apart of the Windward Families for R.E.A.L Ohana night class. Since joining this class, she has found a new appreciation and love for school. Thank goodness! She looks forward to going every Monday nights, and consistently asks us when she'll be going to her, "Families for R.E.A.L school again?"

My husband and I are very grateful for the wonderfully structured classes we attend with Marley. We look forward to the planned activities (every week), singing songs, and the parent discussions (which we have learned from). And the best part, we get to take home something after every class – so Marley can remember her experience there. When our son, Makiah, is of age we would like to attend these classes again with him.

This free program has not only benefitted our daughter, but us as parents as well. After the salary cuts made by the state on Department of Education (DOE) employees (both my husband and I are current DOE employees), it was "nice" to find a free program that our whole family could benefit from – and prepare Marley for her upcoming entrance into a 3 year old program. This program needs to continue. And it's a shame that there aren't more programs like this around. Being a Speech-Language Pathologist for the DOE, I often have parents ask me what free if not affordable programs are there for their children (prior to entering a preschool program). I often mention Families for R.E.A.L, and speak of my personal experience there.

We are writing this letter in hopes that Families for R.E.A.L will continue on for many more years to come.

Sincerely,

*Christie Oraka, M.S., CCC-SLP*

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 PM

October 28, 2010  
A Letter of Support

Toddler sessions at *Families for R.E.A.L.* have provided us with weekly fun time and learning activities for both the parent/caregiver and child to do together. On Oahu, it is difficult to find such a program which provides this need as a very first step to childhood education. In our case we come from Manoa for these sessions at Benjamin Parker Elementary School.

A first time experience has been hand printing and coloring on a T-shirt. My granddaughter approached printing with lots of apprehension and exploration as I helped her by placing her hand on the print pad and pressing it onto the fabric. Through this activity I became aware that hand printing and painting are some things we can begin to do together at home to develop a sensory awareness to the world around her.

Each week a well planned parent and child activity is scheduled from creating a personalized photo place mate, pool fun, a visit to the zoo, five senses awareness are just a few to mention. Along with a parent-child activity the schedule includes singing a variety of songs like a welcome song called *Get on Board*, an old favorite *Eensy Weensy Spider* and ending the time spent with a good-bye song. The songs always provide a routine and good feelings for the children and parents.

Especially helpful for me in caring for my granddaughter is the sharing of professional literature on growth and developing from infant to preschool. I enjoyed when we did a multi-checklist on age appropriate development in the different modalities such as speech, coordination, problem solving and such. It was reassuring for the family to know that our little one is on track in overall development according to the checklist. It also provides what we can look for in future age development. Parent reading materials on eating and the acceptance or rejection of different foods for the child helped me to understand better her eating habits. Each week the parents are given different topics from temperament to discipline to even recognizing stress in adults and what to do for relief. I find these sharing sessions to be most useful in helping me to become a knowledgeable care giver.

page 2 Iwasaki/Imai

I firmly believe that *Families for R.E.A.L* provides, in such a short period, an excellent well-rounded free learning environment for parents and children. It gives ~~many care givers a solid learning to better care for and~~ teach their preschoolers. This is true in our family 's situation where mom and dad both work and care giving is provided by an ohana member. I share all that I learn weekly and suggest follow-up the parents can do at home.

Thank you to Chris and Linda for giving our ohana a fun opportunity for Taylor's beginning of life's long intellectual and social well-being!

The Iwasaki/Imai Families-Fran Imai, grandmother



USB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

To: Whom it may concern.

I'm a single parent and I attend family night. I really enjoy coming to these classes, I've learned so much on how to become a better parent for my son. This is my first child, and being a first time father I was nervous. This class has thought me alot. My son and I attend classes together when we both can make it. I'm thinking of attending another session of family night, I'm open to learning new things on how to become a better parent. The 3 teachers here are very nice, Loving and caring for all children that attend these classes along with there parent. being a single parent I have alot of questions, and over here at family night I'm not afraid to ask them. the teachers here are very open and honest, which is one thing I really like. they do such a good job and I think there should be more places like families for REAL.

Thank You for everything

Joey Cantabero

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 PM

Audrey Kido  
1186 Punua Place  
Kailua, Hawaii 96734  
October 29, 2010

Families For Real  
Benjamin Parker Elementary School  
45-259 Waikalua Road  
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744

Dear Chris Chang and Linda Horita:

On behalf of my daughter and her husband, Kiana and Grant Shiroma, and my granddaughter, Samantha Shiroma, I wanted to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to both of you for the awesome experiences that you have provided our very first Families for Real class.

Our Toddler Class provided Samantha with invaluable interaction time with other children her age. Over the course of the ten-week session, it was fun to watch her mature from an insecure, unsure baby into a much more comfortable, confident toddler. I remember the first week, being unsure of herself in a new environment, Samantha came to me several times during the adult meeting portion of the class, crying and needed assurances that I was nearby. By the second week, though, the visits became fewer and farther between. Finally, by the third class, Sammie didn't come to visit me at all. I remember walking her to the car after that class and telling her, "You didn't come to visit me today, you didn't need me." And I remember crying on the way home, thinking of my own son who would be soon leaving home for college. Because like Sammie, that's what we ultimately want for our children...to become confident, independent people who can get along with all different kinds of people and make wise decisions for themselves.

Besides playing alongside her newfound friends, Sammie's favorite part of class was the group singing portion of class. Linda's adorable handpuppets and paper animals along with Chris' ukulele accompaniment, kept both toddlers and adults interacting and singing. We were delighted to receive our very own CD with our favorite songs recorded by our own class. Now we can listen to them on our car rides and at home too.

Each week, Chris had new, interesting topics of discussion in our adult meetings. I would go home each week, relay the information to

Kiana and Grant and ask them to read the handouts, complete surveys, and fill out questionnaires. Then they'd talk about the similarities, differences, concerns and how they affected their parenting styles and decisions. One of the most timely topics involved our guest speaker who showed us some simple signs to use with Samantha. Just prior to that time, we were seeing an increase in her loud, whining sounds when she was frustrated. We were surprised how quickly Sam picked up the signs, was able to use them to help her communicate with us and as a consequence, the signing helped in alleviating her frustrations. Oftentimes, those same handouts and questionnaires became topics of discussion between my husband and I as we reflected on our parenting styles with our own children and how in our new role, we've changed in our "grandparenting style".

The well-thought out and carefully planned parent-child interaction activities provided fun, hands-on learning activities and experiences that Sammie and I could do together. After each class, we'd share with Kiana and Grant what activities we did together in class. We are especially proud of our "Sammie-&-Grammie-made" t-shirt! Through their caring, nurturing ways, Chris and Linda provided stimulating and varied activities for both adults and children. They created a safe, comfortable environment for parents to share concerns, ask questions and hear from other parents. With their knowledge and expertise, they helped to bridge families with community resources and services available to them.

Although for years, I knew that Families for Real classes were held at Kapunahala School, I never really knew what it was all about and what you did there. As an educator for over thirty years, I can attest to the exemplary benefits of the Families for Real program. Parents are just so busy with the numerous details of raising their families that there isn't time to consider, reflect, and think about the decisions one makes as a parent. ANY, ALL and EVERY parent would benefit from attending Families for Real classes. Equipping parents with the skills, knowledge, and tools to become more effective, loving parents directly impacts their child's welfare, happiness and success in school, and later on, in life. Investing in funding the Families for Real Program is an investment in the future of our children. The long-term effects of the Families for Real Program are invaluable and immeasurable in terms of preparing and nurturing children to grow into productive, considerate and loving adults.

With much mahalo & aloha,

*Audrey Kido*

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 PM

October 19, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my pleasure to write a letter in support of Families for R.E.A.L. Sage, my son 3 years and 3 fingers old, enjoys the program and teachers as well as myself.

Sage learned a lot about socializing, such as to clean up all the toys (either toys he was playing with or not) when he hears the bell rings, to eat snacks at the table with everyone, to sing songs in the beginning and at the end, and to play when I am in the discussion with other parents. He can learn those things at the program better than home. And I think that is exactly what he is expected to do at real school. It is very good start before he goes there.

I, as a parent, also enjoyed this program especially having discussions with other parents was really great. I could have an opportunity to talk to them, hear the opinions, suggestions, and ideas. It was so helpful for me. I have an idea what to expect at different ages and stages. Every parent was so positive and they are so happy to learn about their child. We exchanged many things. And again this could not have done at home, too.

In conclusion, I definitely recommend about families for R.E.A.L. to my friends. It is great opportunity for children to learn many things that they cannot learn too much at home. And we really appreciate our teachers and this program that we had great experience. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Yukiko Tokoro

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 PM

To Whomever it may concern,

October 20, 2010

Family is so important in society. If the family isn't strong, then the society isn't strong. That is why I am grateful for the Families for Real program that offers and encourages families to spend quality time together and to ensure that it is in the home where children should be first taught. I am grateful for the program that is affordable for all-that is very rare nowadays with everything costing so much money. So I'm grateful that it's free and also for all the information that is provided in the program. It's an awesome program and makes a big impact in the community.

Mahalo,

Angela Nikora

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angela Nikora". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'A'.

JB289  
2/11/11  
1:15 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

10/20/10

15 years ago, our mother participated in one of the first groups of Families For Real. She took part with my youngest brother, and they thoroughly enjoyed the program. It impacted their lives so much, that 15 years later, my mother still remembered the songs, the lessons learned, and the joy. She had so many fond memories of the program, that 15 years later, she insisted I enroll myself and my daughter.

We have thoroughly enjoyed the program. It has increased our education about parenting, it has allowed valuable time with my child, and it has strengthened our family.

Thank you for allowing us to be apart of this wonderful program.

Sincerely,



Ruth Kau

JB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 PM

20 October 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

I am so grateful for the opportunity my three year old son and I have had to participate in the Windward Families for REAL program from August 2010 to October 2010. I am so impressed with this program and how it helps the participating families. I believe if each community provided such a family-focused curriculum many problems we face in our society would diminish. Each week my son and I were eager to attend and benefit from the developmentally stimulating activities, helpful parenting resources and tools, and community support.

As a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who was worked with children and adolescents, I have seen first hand the benefits of families who invest in their child's development at an early age as well as the consequences of families who struggle to understand and meet their children's emotional, intellectual, and physical needs. The Families for REAL program models how to have positive interactions with children from birth to preschool, the most formative years. They provide a safe and comfortable environment for children and parents to learn together, communicate together, and interact with peers together. My son and I learned new activities and enjoyed the opportunities for bonding and growth.

Towards the end of each session, the parents meet together and go over different parenting topics, as well as receive handouts and share ideas. The discussion format provides a guide based on empirical parenting information while allowing for cultural, religious, and personal differences in parenting. The information on temperament, discipline, teaching, and family traditions were so helpful in examining my own parenting practices and finding areas for improvement. I noticed other parents who were struggling in certain areas also re-examining and seeking for ways to more appropriately deal with the challenges of parenthood.

I understand that public funding of programs is always limited, but I hope that the Families for REAL program remains a fiscal priority because it provides early intervention and support to families with young children that will prevent many social problems, prepares children and parents to be ready to start school, and helps families achieve their goals of being responsible, contributing citizens.

Mahalo,

*Karen Sandberg Woodson, LCSW*

Karen Sandberg Woodson, Mother and LCSW

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 PM

October 18, 2010

Mrs. Chris Chang  
Families For REAL  
Ben Parker Elementary School  
45-259 Waikalua Road  
Kaneohe, HI 96744

Dear Mrs. Chang

It is my pleasure to write a letter in support of the Families For REAL program. My family is currently participating in the Families For REAL program. We meet Monday nights in the Family Night class. Everyone in our family enjoys the educational activities and the kid friendly forum that Families For REAL provides us with.

Personally I walk away from each class with much more than enjoyment. I have learned so much information and skills in children rearing and in positive family dynamics. The support and guidance from the program facilitators and other parent participants are wonderful. They truly encourage and empower me to be a better parent for my kids and family as a whole.

In conclusion, I fully support the efforts of the Families For REAL program as they seek funding to support a program designed to promote healthy children and families. Any program that can help early childhood education and family development will help people make better decisions and therefore benefit our community at large.

Sincerely,



Erin Ota Alvarez



JB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 PM

October 27, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the Families for R.E.A.L. program. This program is very beneficial for families interested in giving their children an early start in education. I began the program thinking this would be a great opportunity for my son to socialize with other children but got so much more out of it for both him and myself.

Everything from the staff members to the class activities has helped my son in his development. The teachers have the experience and knowledge to guide these youngsters and their parents in these most formidable years. We enjoy circle time with songs and especially love the parent-child activities. My son still walks around the home showing off his "shaker" instrument in which we put little items into an empty water bottle in class. He is so proud of himself!

I appreciate the parent discussion groups. Families for R.E.A.L. has turned me on to various community resources for our family and given me tools to support my son's development. It is also a time to meet other parents and discuss issues we each have with our own children.

Please continue to support this necessary program. It has been a tremendous help to us and would be such a shame if other future parents could not take partake in it. Should you need to contact me for more information, please email me at [briana.stutzmann@gmail.com](mailto:briana.stutzmann@gmail.com).

Sincerely Yours,



Briana Stutzmann


SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 PM

October 18, 2010

To Whom it May Concern:

Please keep the Families for R.E.A.L. program going! It is a wonderful program for parents and children. I feel so fortunate to have been able to participate in the classes with my two sons over the past several years. We are given great information on parenting and child behavior all in a terrific classroom setting. My son looks forward to class every week where he can interact with other children and participate in different activities.

Sincerely,

  
Allyson Abe

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 PM

Aloha Families For Real!

I would like to thank the teachers and members of the Families for Real at Ben Parker Elementary for allowing my daughter, Amelia, and I to join their wonderful program. I feel like my daughter has learned and grown so much more than she would have anywhere else. Her interaction with other children her own age have really brought about another side of Amelia that we have never seen. After being in therapy for her entire life, she is only now picking up on more words and is talking and singing more. Thanks to this sudden burst of words, her younger brother has started talking as well. In addition to her talking, she's seemed to have gotten her anxiety to sounds a bit more under control. She gets excited every Tuesday to go to school and I can only hope that excitement continues on into her later years. All of Amelia's family is very appreciative towards Families for Real for giving her the opportunity that they did and for this chance for her to grow.

Mama!

Amber, James Amelia & Noah Furney

P.S. Sorry for the scribbles, Amelia tried to help write this letter. ☺

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

May 4, 2010

To whom this may concern,

This is my daughter Jillian's 2<sup>nd</sup> time in the Families for REAL program. The last time we were fortunate enough to attend was when she just turned 1 and she was in the Young Toddler class. Our experience in that class has really helped to carry her through her toddler years. She has just turned 3 and was lucky enough to participate in this wonderful program again.

Families for REAL provides my daughter with school readiness skills at no cost to me as a parent. During these difficult economic times, it's such a blessing to have a safe place where your child can go to be with children her own age, learn social skills, learn independence and prepare for school.

Through various well planned activities, my daughter has been able to learn and achieve the following:

- Through art projects my daughter has developed her creativity, has learned what the various art supplies are: i.e. paint, glue, stamps, playdoh, paper, scissors, etc. and how to use them. She has become a lot more confident working on projects by herself at school and at home. She has learned about following directions, listening to instructions, sharing with others and also about cleaning up after herself.
- Through circle time, my daughter has learned how to behave in a class room setting, i.e. crossing her legs, keeping her arms and legs to herself, not talking and listening while the teacher is talking. Not only has this been a learning experience, it was an enjoyable one. My daughter loves the songs she learned during circle time, so much that we often have to download it to our ipod so she can listen to it again and again. As a parent, circle time teaches me about how to speak so my daughter can follow my instructions, and also teaches me little games that I play with her to improve her memory and concentration.
- Being together and coming to class on a regular basis seems to help with my daughter's self esteem. By taking time out of my busy schedule shows her that she is important to me, and that it is important to me that I can help her be successful at school.
- The field trip to the Children's Discovery Center provided my daughter with the opportunity to visit a place that we normally don't go to. She was able to experience the discovery center and learn about the world around her. She really enjoyed herself.
- Family night provided my daughter with an opportunity to bring her daddy to class. This also provided a chance to help raise my daughter's self esteem and show her that even though her dad is busy at work he is VERY interested in going to school with her and supporting her in her activities. What a fun night that was for our whole family.

As a parent, Families for REAL provided me with valuable information and resources for parenting my daughter. They provided wonderful handouts, and organized circle time for parents to discuss various parenting issues. It was always interesting to learn new parenting strategies, and ideas that I can incorporate with my own parenting style. I also appreciated the resource library with a wonderful selection of parenting books,

Families for REAL is undeniably a VERY important program for Hawaii's keiki as well as parents. I truly believe this FREE early education program plays a vital role in preparing our keiki and their parents for success in school and most importantly creates a love for learning in the child at a very young age.

Sincerely,



Mia Takazono  
45-463 Lolii Pl  
Kaneohe, HI 96744

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

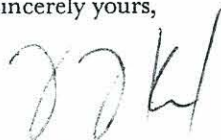
May 5, 2010

To Whom It May Concern;

I am pleased to write this letter of support for Families For Real. I have had the wonderful opportunity to attend Families For Real with my two daughters.

I have always been a strong supporter of Families For Real and speak very highly of the great opportunities they have to offer to anyone who will listen. They have been an influential part of our families lives. The insightful information they have to offer has helped me greatly to understand my children better. Because of Families For Real, I am a better mother to my children.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tanya Flores', written in a cursive style.

Tanya Flores

Proud mother of Kaila and Kaelyn

JB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 PM

Families for REAL  
-in my opinion

My husband and I (and our daughter) love Families for REAL and the wonderful people who work for the program (especially our Kaneohe location).

This program is a wonderful opportunity for us parents and future parents and children, to learn a lot, as well as socialize with other families. The children get to socialize with other children their age, which is very important and not everyone has access to this for their child.

The fact that they've been offering classes for free is a better opportunity for families that would otherwise not attend any program (with pay) and miss out on very important information that some of us still don't have these days. Some families do not have the resources to join other parent/child classes with cost. This program offers an open door to help and guide parents who otherwise may have no one else to turn to. Also we get information about available community resources, which is really good to have just in case.

FFR, to me, is a parents support group as well as a learning site for children and parents alike. We've been able to raise personal issues, discuss them and see what other parents go through, then get guiding advice from the instructor. We have been impressed with the kind of activities that we've had during our sessions (with provided materials for crafts activities etc. and access to a library of parent/kids' books to check out). It is an important program and really great for any young family.

Seeing my daughter playing with the other kids, interacting and socializing, has been amazing and so great for her. At the same time, we learned about child development and other parenting issues. Just over all a really, really wonderful program and we are very thankful for their existence and hard work, especially the dedication of the instructors.

We hope that this program will continue to thrive and function for as long as possible. In our family's opinion, this program should continue to be funded by the state. We hope to continue to attend sessions with our growing family.

Mrs. Galit Levinson

May 03 2010



SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15pm

May 5, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

Families for R.E.A.L. is an invaluable program for preschool children as well as for their parents. The program services infants as young as 8 months and up to pre-kindergarten. While the children are actively engaged in skill building activities appropriate for their ages, the parents or caretakers meet with the lead teacher to discuss behavioral and developmental topics pertinent to their children's ages.

Besides informing parents of the vast family resources available in the community, the program is invaluable in helping parents build their parenting skills. The program provides parents with the tools to become effective parents. When parents understand what to expect at each stage of their child's development, that each child is unique in temperament and personality, that boys are "wired" differently from girls, then, parents are able to make better choices in raising a confident and happy child. Since parents are their child's first teacher, it is important that they be equipped with these necessary skills.

By participating in this program, parents will be better educated to prepare their child for school. When a child is confident and prepared to learn, chances of his success in school will be greatly enhanced.

As a retired elementary school teacher, I see a vital need for Families for R.E.A.L. I strongly urge the Legislature to increase the funding for this program so that it can be expanded into more communities statewide. What we spend for children in these crucial and early formative years will save the state millions in the years to come.



Edith Lee  
Participant, Families for R.E.A.L.

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

Families for R.E.A.L.,  
Benjamin Parker School  
45-259 Waikalua Rd.  
Kaneohe, HI 96744

Dear Families for R.E.A.L.,

From my perspective this service was the best - kept secret even though plenty of flyers were probably at the Kailua Library for anyone to take on their own. Thanks to my son's neighbor I found out about the program and I was delighted to be put on the waiting list for the next session. Perhaps that contributes to more positive participation when the time actually comes to be involved.

If parents or guardians come into the program with lots of questions and concerns, they'll leave empowered with answers and other resources to tap for future questions. If they should come in the door thinking they have it all put together and have come to help others, they're in for a surprise as there is always something new to learn.

Witnessing this particular team of three teachers in action with the adults and the children was amazing. Their planning, preparation, choice of activities and follow through deserve much praise. The rules were clear for everyone. The content was valuable to all families and was presented in bite size logical order. Getting the entire group comfortable with conversation be it small or large groups, feeling a sense of belonging and realizing that if future help was needed, now was a good time to seek it was done is a nice subtle way. Their experience was reinforced with their smiles of reassurance. (Bet that goes a long ways in the infant class.)

These nine weeks have passed all too quickly, but I think the purpose of Families for R.E.A.L. has been met, and we as a state have invested our money wisely in this program. My grand daughter thinks Ben Parker is HER SCHOOL, the classroom is HER CLASSROOM, and the teachers are HER TEACHERS. Little does she know how many other lives will be touched this school year.

Mahalo nui loa,



Cherry Jeong  
623 Akoakoa St.  
Kailua, HI 96734  
(Grand daughter Haley)



SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

To Whom it May Concern:

Please accept this letter in strong support of the Families for Real program at Ben Parker School in Kaneohe, Hawaii, where my daughter Harley, who is 2 ½ attends.

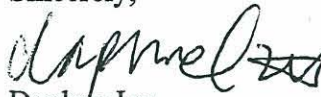
Harley loves to go to school at Families for Real. She is learning so many new and important things to help her grow both physically and developmentally. She is also learning what it is like to be in a school setting, which will help prepare her for a successful educational future. Harley is learning how to sit in circle time, how to follow her teacher's instructions, how to share and interact with other children, and the importance of listening, all of which will help her when it is time for kindergarten.

As a parent, I am learning new and important parenting skills to help guide and direct Harley. The parent discussion segment of our class provides me such valuable information and it allows me to share things about my child that I may have concerns about or am just not sure. It is a completely comfortable and open session, and everyone is at ease to share and discuss.

The teachers our wonderful!! Chris, Linda and Julia are what ever parent wants for their child's first teachers and introduction to school. The classroom is beautiful and welcoming to the children. There are many age appropriate toys, learning centers, and books for the children to play with. And, the teachers always have a terrific organized activity for the children to do, as well as activities before class even starts.

I highly recommend the Families for Real Program to all parents I meet. The program is a major benefit to the future educational success of Hawaii's children. It could only get better by expanding the program and allowing more children to attend at more locations. By doing so, I strongly believe that the children of Hawaii will excel in their future educational endeavors.

Sincerely,

  
Daphne Izu

UB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

## **About Families for R.E.A.L.** *(Windward-side, O'ahu)*

January 2010

I've heard about the Families for R.E.A.L. organization through my friend who's got three kids and she took part with each of them in this program. She was very satisfied so I thought I should try it too. A few years ago, we signed up for a Toddler I. Group with my daughter and, recently, with my son for a Toddler II class. We live in Honolulu and we went to Kaneohe each week to participate in the program.

We had a really wonderful experience with both of my kids and I am very glad that I had a chance to be part of their program. The whole atmosphere is loving and very friendly. The teachers are professional, experienced and very well organized; we enjoyed all the classes a lot. Each time they came up with something interesting for the toddlers and for their parents too (just some examples: painting T-shirts, parachute-play, treasure hunting, swimming, singing, etc.). They also had lots of age-appropriate toys for the tots. And while our children were playing under constant supervision (two teachers were watching them and serving snack), parents were having great conversations with another teacher about everyday issues such as toilet training, eating and sleeping habits, how to discipline a child, children's temperament, dealing with tantrum, etc.) All discussions were helpful and very useful to remember when you seem to have a difficult time with your little one.

I was glad to learn that the program will be continued despite of the difficult economic times. This is great news and I think it should be extended to neighbor islands if possible. This would ensure that more and more parents can experience their great welcoming spirit throughout Hawaii.

I think nobody with little children should miss this fantastic program. I will keep recommending them to all my friends who look for a great opportunity to both spend valuable time with other parents and provide a friendly and loving environment for their little ones.

Wish you the best to keep up the good work in the future,



Renata Prisztoka  
- Mother of two  
Honolulu, HI

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

## Letter of Support

To the Staff of Families for Real,

I want to take some time to thank the staff of Families For Real for offering this program. It has been a very rewarding experience not only for my child but for me as well. The program is very well organized with a variety of things going on. There is a good mixture of activities and a balance between parent child activities and parent and child peer activities.

One of the things I especially enjoyed is the social opportunities. It was a great chance to meet and make new friends. I found the circle time with the other adults to be an excellent opportunity to discuss different parenting challenges and different ways to cope with them. In addition, the handouts were quite informative. My daughter really enjoyed the educational and confidence boosting activities such as picking out her name on the chart. Ringing a clean up bell and sitting on rainbow colors to sing songs kept things organized and on track. My daughter is very shy in the morning but by the end of the day does not want to leave.

Overall, Families For Real is a class we both looked forward to every week and we look forward to taking more classes in the future if possible. I have also told many of my friends with young children what a great experience we had together in being a part of this class.

Sincerely,



Jennie Ryder

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

Dear Chris, Linda and Julie,

Thank you very much for the opportunity for my granddaughter, Sierra, and me to attend the Families for R.E.A.L program. The program was an invaluable experience for both of us.

For Sierra, it met our goal of preparing her for preschool. She thoroughly enjoyed "going to school" and immediately felt comfortable in the small classroom environment. She enjoyed playing with and along side children her age and I observed the beginning of interactive play with some of the other children. After the last class, she and Natasha walked hand in hand to Natasha's car. She demonstrates confidence in being in the classroom and has a very positive attitude towards school. She now says she wants to go to school instead of to the babysitter. I believe this experience has helped her to transition into becoming a "big girl".

For myself the parent education series provided invaluable information and discussion on important on basic early childhood topics such as temperament, disciplines, and stages of development. I liked the format that the topics were presented in because it helped us to think. The discussion by the Public Health Nurse was also very interesting and informative. What we have learned in this class will become incorporated into our actions and attitudes as we interact and handle our children (and grandchildren). Parents all too often have to learn to become parents on their own. There really needs to be this type of classes for all parents!

Sierra's parents, Scott and Cheryl Nishiki, join me in thanking you! Best wishes to all of you! I hope this becomes a permanent program in all elementary schools.

Sincerely,



Marie Kunimura

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

February 4, 2010

Dear Families For Real,

Every week we look forward to attending class. Our almost 20-month-old son gets excited about playing with all the fun toys and seeing the other little kids. I knew he would enjoy the social interaction, but I didn't expect him to thrive in this organized environment where over just a couple of weeks I've seen him adjust to the classroom routines. From singing songs with the ukulele at the circle rug, to "clean up" time after the bell, to the "goodbye" song, he is comfortable and confident in this predictable and nurturing environment.

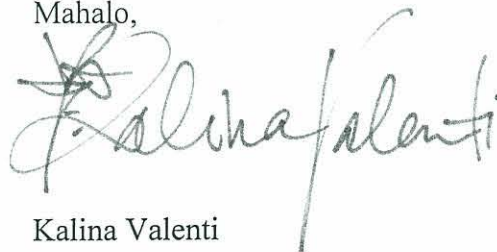
Our teachers, Chris, Linda and Julia are knowledgeable, caring, kind and exceptionally good with children. These traits I can expect from someone within this field, but to watch how naturally they connect with the children while teaching me how to be a better parent is something I will appreciate for the rest of my life.

I am so impressed with the quality of this program; and I am so grateful that it is offered to us for free. Everyone knows Hawaii doesn't exactly have the greatest reputation when it comes to its public school system, but Families For Real is a diamond in the rough. We were very lucky to participate in this program and I tell every parent I know about our positive experience.

When I first signed up for this program I assumed it would be a fun playgroup, but I am pleasantly surprised with the educational experience for both my son and I, the creative curriculum, and the professional teachers.

Thank you very much for Families For Real. It truly is an amazing program!

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kalina Valenti". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Kalina Valenti

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

February 11, 2010

Families for R.E.A.L

Benjamin Parker Elementary School

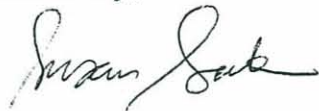
To Whom It May Concern,

My son, Kody Saito, attended the Toddler I class. The social networking and getting to play with other children his age was a very positive experience. He especially enjoyed snack time and felt that he was in a safe and comfortable environment with caring and attentive teachers.

The parent-teacher discussion time was very informative in sharing common and daily situations. Hearing other parents with similar difficulties in raising a child was very reassuring.

Overall, my son and I had a memorable and fun experience! We definitely support this program and hope to attend future classes!

Sincerely,



Susan Saito, RDH

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

2-8-10

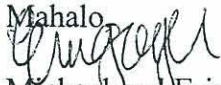
To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the Windward Families For Real Program. We are delighted to say that our children absolutely love the family night classes and have so much wonderful things to say about it. The workers are friendly and gentle, and the other children have been such a blessing for my sons to be around.

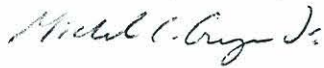
The information that has been given to us have been very useful. We really enjoyed the parent/child activities and we have so much fun talking to other parents. We will freely and willingly recommend this class to anyone who is interested.

We hope to go to many more family nights at Ben Parker Elementary School.  
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mahalo



Michael and Erin Gayer



SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

Cheryl Urasaki  
47-562 Puapoo Place  
Kaneohe, HI 96744

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February 4, 2010

Dear Sirs:

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the Families for R.E.A.L. program.

My son, Tristan, and I attended the Toddler I class from December 2009 – February 2010. This was Tristan's first experience in a classroom environment. Prior to this, he had never had regular exposure to a group of similar-age children.

Both of us greatly enjoyed the class. Tristan became less clingy and more independent each session. He liked exploring the wide variety of toys and items of interest in the clean, well-organized classroom. He also seemed to enjoy observing the other children at play. I found the group discussions both informative and interesting. I liked listening to other parents' viewpoints and experiences, as well as sharing some of my own.

The teachers are simply excellent. Chris, Lynda and Julia are extremely knowledgeable and nurturing. Tristan was very comfortable with them, and we always felt welcomed. They are wonderful with the kids and always came up with fun and educational activities for us to enjoy together.

I really hope that this program will continue. All 3 of my children attended the program, and I will always have very fond memories of our wonderful experiences here.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Urasaki

239-4206

matty96817@yahoo.com



SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15pm

February 4, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the Families for R.E.A.L. program. I strongly urge you to continue funding this program, as it greatly benefits the children and families of Hawaii.

Our 22-month-old twins, Nathan and Maren, recently completed the winter 2009-2010 Tot I session at the windward location. It was wonderful!! The classroom is bright, clean and well stocked with books, toys, climbing equipment and other items for the children to explore and enjoy. The teachers are knowledgeable and approachable. The classroom activities are age appropriate and easy for caregivers to replicate at home.

We hope to participate in future sessions of Families for R.E.A.L. and strongly urge you to continue providing public funds for this precious resource available to the families of Hawaii. Please feel free to contact me if you would like more information.

Sincerely,

*Kathryn Wrieden*  
Kathryn Wrieden  
45.236 Kokokahi Place  
Kaneohe, HI 96744  
808.744.5644  
kfwrieden@yahoo.com

January 30, 2010

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15pm

To Whom It May Concern:

My grandson attends Preschool Class at the Kaneohe Families for R.E.A.L. and we are both so sad to see our session near its end. He eagerly awaits each Tuesday because he knows the next day he will be in school, and although he is very shy and non-participatory in group activity, he has slowly "come out of his shell" with each session. He very happily and excitedly relays to his family the many activities he did in the hour and a half of school every week.

The parents' sessions are full of fresh, new information in helping raise and stimulate learning in your children as well as understanding the dynamics and relationships of family living. I come away from each session learning something new <sup>from</sup> not only the facilitator but parents from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and ages as well.

I in turn share new knowledge I learn from these sessions to my children who are young parents now, shaping their children's lives. With all the belt-tightening and budget cuts in our economy, I am so grateful and appreciative that Families for R.E.A.L. is still active and thriving. This program and especially the classes that these excellent facilitators run each week are definitely critical in prepping children and parents with positive attitudes towards learning and developing essential skills needed to build success in school for many years to come.

Sincerely,  
Joanne Pahia

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

January 17, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you so much for such a wonderful program! Families For R.E.A.L. is a much needed program for both parents and children. I was able to learn quite a bit on how to raise my daughter and was able to have my concerns addressed. My infant had fun socializing and playing with others her age. The age appropriate activities were fun and educational. Please continue to allow families to enjoy the benefits from such a worthy program.

Cordially,

  
Teresa Chow

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

Christen Mitchell  
2812-B Kalihi Street, Honolulu, HI 96819  
[cmitchell17@hotmail.com](mailto:cmitchell17@hotmail.com)

January 26, 2010

Aloha!

I am writing a letter in strong support of the Families For Real program. My 13-month old is currently in the Young Toddler program. He loves coming to "school" every week, while I like that he gets to sing songs, do art, and play with other children his age.

In addition, I find the Families For Real program to be particularly effective in providing useful information on topics currently relevant to my child's development. I joined a Baby Hui earlier this year and while that program provides similar information and parent support, I have found the Families For Real program to be much more useful and enjoyable.

I hope to have the opportunity to join a future Families For Real class – and even though it may prevent me from getting into a future class, I have told every parent I know about this program so that they can benefit as well. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for this wonderful program.

Mahalo,



Christen Mitchell

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

February 2, 2010

To Whom May It Concern,

It is my pleasure to write a letter in support of Families for R.E.A.L. (Resources and Early Access to Learning), which emphasizes parents' role as their child's first and most important teacher, includes parenting topics and activities.

My son Sage, two and a half years old, and I loved to go to school. And we love our great teachers, Chris, Linda, and Julia are very nice and well experienced teachers and I am so comfortable with them being his teachers. Children could learn lots of important things from them.

And also he loves his friends there. It is a great opportunity to be with other children so he could learn how to share, play, be thoughtful and kind, and be a part of a group and not an individual.

We loved the activities that we did in the class, and those ideas were amazing. They were very creative and all children enjoyed participating in them. Going on the field trip was another thing we loved; it was very nice idea of leaning something out side of the classroom.

The most thing I liked and enjoyed about Families for R.E.A.L. was the "circle time". Parents leaned a lot of important things from this. It was nice to share and exchange everyone's experiences, concerns, and wonderings about parenting. Just being there and listening to other parents' thoughts was wonderful and it helped me to be a better mother.

I definitely recommend Families for R.E.A.L. (Resources and Early Access to Learning) to all my friends and we would love to come back to the program again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yukiko Tokoro', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Yukiko Tokoro

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

To Whom It May Concern,

This is a letter in support of the Families for R.E.A.L. program, currently held at Benjamin Parker Elementary School. My son, who is three years old, looks forward to attending his class every week. The class has further prepared him for preschool by allowing him to interact and socialize with children of his own age, follow instructions and get used to a more structured environment. Chris, Julia and Linda have established a very well organized program that I would strongly recommend to other parents.

Sincerely,



Rae Holt

VB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

February 3, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

The Families for R.E.A.L program has proven to be an essential class for my family, consistently providing us with a safe, educational, and fun environment for the entire family. My wife and daughter have been going to the class consistently since the fall of 2009, and plan on continuing with the Toddler I and II classes. Aside from our daughter immensely enjoying each session and learning a number of new motor and cognitive skills, the information and lessons provided for the parents has proved invaluable. Indeed, our knowledge from the wide range of topics covered, ranging from behavior to eating habits, has substantially increased and culminated in us being better parents, and our daughter being a well-adjusted and happy toddler. If it were not for programs such as these many families in need would have no place to turn. We are grateful to Chris, Linda, & Julie, and to those who have made the Families for R.E.A.L program possible.

Sincerely,

Scott, Cindy, and Sofia Sinnett

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

January 26, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:


I am writing this letter to express my support for Families for R.E.A.L. I am extremely fortunate that I have been able to participate in Families for R.E.A.L.'s parent-child program in the past with my daughter (who is now six) and presently with my son, who just turned two.

Participating in the Toddler II program has helped me tremendously. Both of my children are so different from each other. The issues that I faced while raising my daughter, are not the same ones that I face with my son. I have learned a lot from the classes and have received many helpful suggestions from the instructors, as well as from the parent discussion groups. The information that I gained from the classes have helped me to be a better parent to my son, have given me a greater understanding of the personality differences between my two children and how to foster family unity despite these differences.

The staff at Families for R.E.A.L. are exceptional! All the classes/workshops are done in a professional, enjoyable manner that encourages sharing of ideas and helping one another. Chris, Linda and Julia are always so warm and welcoming. By the end of our session, I find there is a strong sense of camaraderie between the participants and staff and I attribute this to Chris, Linda and Julia personally.

The Toddler II program that I am currently enrolled in is the only structured educational program that my son and I participate in. My husband is a state worker who has been furloughed and I am currently unemployed. We are so grateful that Families for R.E.A.L. provides these wonderful parent-child programs at no charge. With the current recession, it is even more important to realize the benefit that programs such as Families for R.E.A.L. provides to a multitude of families and children. I strongly support programs such as these, especially Families for R.E.A.L.

Sincerely,

  
Joy Y.N. Kimura



SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 PM

May 6, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

I first heard about the Families for R.E.A.L program from a friend who has a toddler the same age as my son. She was so enthusiastic about her experience with the program that I immediately called and got John signed up. During the month that passed until my session began, I asked around and realized that many of my friends and acquaintances had attended one or more of the classes. They all had such positive things to say about it that my excitement level was through the roof, and my expectations were *high*.

I am happy to say that I was not disappointed. Not only were my expectations met, but Families for R.E.A.L exceeded every expectation and beyond. Being an educator myself and having taught at the elementary level for 10 years, I understand the importance of early education. When I taught first-grade, children walked into my classroom and could not even handle a book properly. They looked at it backwards, held it up-side-down, and had absolutely no idea that the text meant something. Many did not know their letters and/or sounds, or how to properly grip a pencil. Even more did not know how to get along with others. Sharing and working together and being kind to others were foreign concepts. Others had absolutely no idea how to 'fit' within the structure of a classroom setting, finding it impossible to sit still on the carpet or in a chair, to resist the impulse to interrupt, or to follow simple directions. In summary, many of my students did not have experiences like those that my child is having in Families for R.E.A.L.

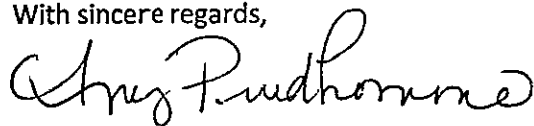
The amount of learning that takes place in a child's first five years of life is enormous. They are learning everything about their world, and are more eager to learn during this time period than they ever will be again. Not only is their *willingness* to learn at an all-time high, but their *ability* to learn is at its peak as well. They truly are sponges, soaking it all up. My son is very shy when around others in a setting outside of our home. He is also very active and has a short attention span, like most toddlers. The first three classes of Families for R.E.A.L were challenging for him. He didn't want to be too far from Mommy, he didn't want to sit in the circle for songs, he hesitantly and reluctantly interacted with the teachers and his peers. But as we attended the classes, he became more at ease and began to truly enjoy himself. He now no longer clings by my side, does not pout or cry when we enter the classroom, excitedly sits on my lap during circle time, and interacts with the teachers and his peers. It has been a learning experience that he would never have had if this program were not available. It is because of this program that my son is now more confident, a gift that this mother is overjoyed to receive.

And John is not the only one learning, growing, and benefiting from the program. As a first-time parent, I often feel insecure too. The practical conversations we parents have with the staff are extremely

helpful, and I always leave each class with a greater 'grasp' on parenting. The topics covered are always of high importance, and the open-ended feeling to our lessons leaves plenty of room for true questions and discussions. I have expressed my concerns and trials on many different occasions, making the group a great place to simply say what is on your mind without fear of judgment. I have also taken away many ideas for fun activities that I can do at home with John, and the literature that is provided is a great resource to have on hand. The time I take to truly *reflect* on my parenting and the life I am giving my son is the most valuable tool I have gained from Families for R.E.A.L. Too often we go about our days, just getting by, not really thinking about the impact everything we do as parents has on our children. This program keeps me in tune with what an awesome responsibility being a parent is, and how not to take it for granted.

I will forever treasure the experiences we have had in the Families for R.E.A.L program. I wish that every one of my students could have the opportunities that John is having in this class. When the love of learning is cultivated at a very young age, it continues into school and throughout life. Those who do not have this chance are at a great disadvantage, and this is perhaps the greatest tragedy we parents and educators must face.

With sincere regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy Prudhomme". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "With sincere regards,".

Amy Prudhomme, mother of John (18 months old)

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

Traci Tomomitsu  
45-841 R Anoi Rd  
Kaneohe, HI 96744  
February 10, 2011

Hawaii State Senate  
Ms. Jill Tokuda

RE: SB 289

Dear Ms. Jill Tokuda:

I am writing to ask you to support SB 289. This bill will come to a vote in the state senate and needs your support to be passed for future funding.

My three year old daughter & I recently participated in the Families for R.E.A.L. program at Benjamin Parker School. Due to the high cost of pre-school, my husband & I cannot afford to place her in a pre-school at this time. This program gave her the experience of pre-school. She enjoyed the activities and play time with the other children in her class. The teachers are very caring and knowledgeable. The program is very well organized. They also provided a parent discussion which gave me a little more insight on my daughter's development and ways I can help her to learn.

I think that this is an important bill. It will benefit the community at large by assisting families to help their children in getting an early start on education. They also provide many resources for adults to help us become better parents or caregivers.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Traci Tomomitsu

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

February 10, 2011

Aloha Senator Jill Tokuda,

My name is Erin Holmberg and I am writing in support of SB289. As a resident of Kaneohe, I am extremely grateful for the 'Families for R.E.A.L.' program. As a first time mother of an 11 month old, this program has provided a positive learning experience not only for him but myself as well. Although it will be some time before he enters grade school, I believe this program gives us both an opportunity to start off on the "right-foot" Families for R.E.A.L. has allowed me to have an outlet and as a stay at home mom I am thankful for it. Families for R.E.A.L is truly an unbiased program that doesn't "teach" any one single parenting style, technique or philosophy. Rather it gives us parents the appropriate tools to encourage and create a great and safe learning environment for our children.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

  
Erin Holmberg

CC: Senator Jill Tokuda

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15pm

February 5, 2011

Ms. Jill N. Tokuda  
Hawaii State Senate District 24  
415 S. Beretania St.  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Ms. Tokuda,

My name is Joanne Pahia and I live in District 24 in Kaneohe. I am writing to you to ask for your support in helping get SB289 passed. I have had the privilege to participate in the Families for R.E.A.L. program for the past 14 years starting with my twin sons at age 3 and who are now in college, to my three grandchildren, one who is 3 and is currently attending this session.

Although one session is for just ten weeks, I can attest to the remarkable impact it has made on each child that has attended. For each one, the session has been his/her first introduction to social interaction with other children in an educational away-from-home setting and it has had such a positive, exciting effect in setting the pattern for a very eager, happy-to-learn outlook for many future years in school. My sons have done excellent work all the way through high school and my two grandsons have been doing very well in elementary school.

I know funds are sorely needed for all phases of our public school system but truly believe that beginning the initial steps to learning has its greatest impact from as young as infancy. We know for a fact that developing positive learning experiences in children are critically important, way before they reach the age of 5, and infants, toddlers and preschoolers as well as PARENTS could use the knowledge and tools that Families for R.E.A.L. has been so effective in providing all these years. This program keeps getting better every year and I sincerely hope this program will continue to have far reaching effects on many more children in the future years of school in Hawaii.

Yours truly,

Joanne Pahia

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

Gerald M. Kimura  
45-508 Haamaile Place  
Kaneohe, HI 96744

February 3, 2011

Senator Jill N. Tokuda  
Hawaii State Senate, Office No. 218  
State Capital  
415 S. Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Tokuda:

RE: SB 289

Please continue your efforts to support Families for R.E.A.L. by voting "YES" for SB 289.

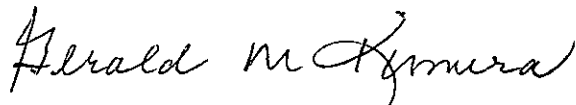
Families for R.E.A.L., Benjamin Parker, has provided a fantastic support system for my grandchild's social/emotional growth. Also, her gross motor and fine motor coordination continues to improve through the various activities that have been organized for her to participate in. The program has also been helpful in providing me with child rearing techniques and ideas for everyday home living situations.

In order for a program to be effective as Families for R.E.A.L., Benjamin Parker has been, funds need to be provided to keep all of the educators that run and staff the programs.

Once again, as a resident of Kaneohe, I would like you to continue your efforts to support Families for R.E.A.L.

With much gratitude for all that you do for the families of Kaneohe,

Sincerely,



Gerald M. Kimura

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

Heather D. Kimura  
45-508 Haamaile Place  
Kaneohe, HI 96744

February 3, 2011

Senator Jill Tokuda  
Hawaii State Senate  
State Capitol  
415 S. Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**RE: SB 289**

Dear Senator Tokuda:

Please support Families for R.E.A.L. and help get SB 289 passed for future funding. As a resident of the Kaneohe district, Families for R.E.A.L. has helped me, a first-time, single mother and my daughter, Azure who is now 17 months old. Azure has had the opportunity from about 8 months of age, to participate in this wonderful program. It exposed her to other toddlers her age and a wealth of activities that I was not able to provide at home. I also enjoy the fact that the classes are held in the elementary school setting. I believe it is important for her to become comfortable in the school setting in preparation for her school-age years. She is developing into a very active, confident, social, curious child with the help of Families for R.E.A.L.

For a single parent on furlough, this program has assisted me in giving my child an opportunity that I would not be able to afford otherwise. It has been a blessing in this time of economic hardship. I've also been able to connect with other parents and learn better ways of rearing my child. Given that I am a new parent, the opportunity the program gives me in being able to talk to the teachers and discuss issues with the other parents has been invaluable and great resource/outlet for me.

The staff at Families for R.E.A.L. is caring, compassionate, patient, and supportive. They truly care for the kids and provide awesome activities every week. We have been able to paint, sing, play with a parachute, go to the zoo, create safe, simple toys, and overall be amongst other children in a safe, educational, fun environment.

Again, please support Families for R.E.A.L. and SB 289. The positive impact this program has on the children and the community is monumental.

Sincerely,



Heather D. Kimura

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

Senator Jill Tokuda,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Families for R.E.A.L. educational program and to support SB 289. Our family has lived in Kaneohe our entire lives and we wanted our daughter, Ava, to join in a preschool for her age and that's when we decided to come to this program. I absolutely believe in great education and I wanted my daughter to interact with other toddlers her age. I wasn't expecting to learn as a parent at this program, I thought it was mostly about the children. We really enjoyed the interactions with everyone and we really enjoyed our time at Families for R.E.A.L. and we hope that this program keeps striving for education so that we can continue to participate as well.

Sincerely,



Kristina Velez

Parent of Ava Velez




SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

Senator Jill Tokuda,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Families for R.E.A.L. educational program and to support SB 289. Our family has lived in Kaneohe our entire lives and I wanted my granddaughter, Sakura, to join in a preschool for her age and that's when we decided to come to this program. This is her second year attending this program and she truly enjoys her time at Families for R.E.A.L. She is now 3 and has learned her days of the week and has improved a lot in other areas of her education. We really enjoyed the interactions with everyone and we really enjoyed our time at Families for R.E.A.L. We hope that this program keeps striving for education so that we can continue to participate as well.

Sincerely,



Lucia Gonzalez

Grandparent of Sakura Santa-Maria

Daphne P. Izu  
1298 Lopaka Place  
Kailua, Hawaii 96734

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

Senator Jill N. Tokuda  
State Capitol  
415 S. Beretania Street, #218  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: **SB 289 - Families for R.E.A.L**

Dear Senator Tokuda:

As a resident of your district, please accept my letter in support of Senate Bill 289, regarding the Families for R.E.A.L. program. My daughter Harley is 3 years old and has been very fortunate to attend the Families for R.E.A.L. program. I highly recommend this program to every mom I meet. I was referred to the program by my sister, who is a DOE teacher, and also Harley's pediatrician, Dr. Lynn Yanagihara, when she was an infant and I am so thankful I was.

Since I am a stay at home mom, we have chosen not to send Harley to a traditional preschool program. Therefore, it is very important for us to find programs for her that will fill those gaps to prepare her for school and provide her social interaction with other children. The Families for R.E.A.L. program provides that and much, much more. It is our chosen school, Harley's school, and we are so proud to say she that attends the program. The program is teaching Harley how to sit quietly and nicely during circle, song and story time, cooperative play, how to listen and follow directions from her teachers, as well as developing respect for her teachers, all the things necessary to prepare Harley for future educational success. The program basically follows the same format every week, with changing curriculum and age appropriate activities so that Harley has learned what to expect, how to listen, and how to behave appropriately in a classroom. I strongly feel that the Families for R.E.A.L. program is providing Harley with the skills needed to be ready when she starts kindergarten, and most importantly, it is teaching her the importance of going to school and learning to love and look forward to going to school and fostering a lifetime love of learning.

The Families for R.E.A.L. educators are wonderful! I could not ask for better first teachers for my daughter. Chris, Linda and Julia provide a classroom environment filled with warmth, compassion, structure, knowledge, and just the right amount of discipline to keep the children all in line. I have learned so much myself in the classes to help guide me to become a better parent by giving me the confidence and knowledge needed to succeed.

As a parent, I have watched my child grow into a learner, and I love it. Whenever we pass Ben Parker Elementary School, Harley gets so excited and say's "Mommy, there's my school". Even though she is only 3, she already has school spirit and pride. I hope that she will always have this love for learning and for school that the Families for R.E.A.L. program has fostered in her by being her first educational experience.

I humbly request that you consider SB 289 for Harley, for all the children of Hawaii, and the future children of Hawaii. By providing such a program like Families for R.E.A.L., all the children of Hawaii can only benefit, develop a love for school and become lifelong learners and productive citizens. Thank you very much!

Sincerely



Daphne P. Izu

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

February 9, 2011

Ms. Jill N. Tokuda,

Hello my name is Carrie Kawainui and I am writing to you in support of bill SB 289. I have lived in Kaneohe all my life and now that I have children I have become very appreciative for our community programs such as Families for R.E.A.L. It has taught me as well as my children many things.

It has helped ease my children into the scholastic environment. It has allowed them to become more social with children their own ages. They have become more proud of the things that they know and willing to try and learn the things that they don't. But most of all and the most important the Families for R.E.A.L. program has giving my children the opportunity to be a part of a positive learning environment. They leave at the end of their school day wanting to go back and learn more things. That is the best thing I can strive to give to my children and this program has helped immensely.

Thank you for your time and I hope with our support that we can keep the Families for R.E.A.L. program within our community and hopefully expand and help many more children in other communities around the island.

Mahalo,

Mrs. Carrie Kawainui

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15pm

February 1, 2011

45-927 KEAAHALA PLACE  
KANEHOE, HAWAII 96744

SENATOR JILL N. TOKUDA

STATE CAPITOL

415 S. BERETANIA ST.

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

**SUBJECT: OUR SUPPORT OF FAMILIES FOR REAL AND SENATE BILL 289**

DEAR SENATOR TOKUADA:

This is a note to let you know that my Ojiisan (Grandfather), Obaasama (Grandmother), and I (three years old) very much enjoyed and benefited from the "FAMILIES FOR REAL" program in Kaneohe. Therefore, we ask that you support **SENATE BILL 289** which will allow this good program to continue.

The instructors (Aunties Lynda, Julia and Chris) have been very nice to me. They always had interesting and worthwhile programs for us. I am sure those programs are the reason I am very advanced for my age. But I liked the games and toys most of all because I got to make very good friends.

My Obaasama (Grandmother) enjoyed meeting the other parents and grandparents. They spent a lot of time talking about the best ways to help us grow up. They also talked about how not to spoil us.

I think my Ojiisan (Grandfather) enjoyed the program too. But he is very old so I am not too sure. Also, he likes to spoil me.

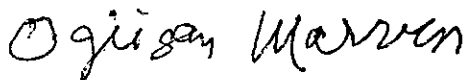
I hope I will be able to continue going to FAMILIES FOR REAL. It is a good program and a big help to all of us. So please support SENATE BILL 289. THANK YOU.

Sincerely:

KYLA (KAIKAI) CANESO-BANTOLINA

  
OBAASAMA MASAKO SAPP

  
OJIISAN MARVIN



SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15pm

Dear Senator Jill Tokuda,

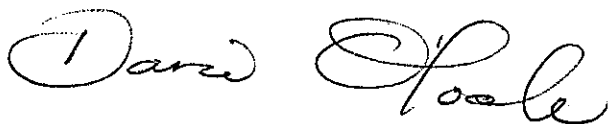
Aloha! I am writing on behalf of Families for R.E.A.L. I am a member of your district and in support of SB 289. Both of my children attended this program and I cannot stress how much of an impact it has made.

My oldest son is now in second grade and Families for R.E.A.L. has really helped my son transition from staying at home to moving on to Kindergarten. He hasn't attended preschool and he didn't have any social skills, Families for R.E.A.L. has really helped him. Along with my oldest son, my youngest hasn't attended preschool and this program has helped him become more independent, more sociable and ready for Kindergarten.

The staff at Families for R.E.A.L. is really good with the kids. They are really patient and nurturing. I love how they let the parents interact with the kids and how they help us on any problem we have with raising our children. If I do have any more kids, I would certainly bring them back to this program. I also recommend this program to family and friends of mine, as well as other parents who are looking for a GOOD and affordable program for their kids.

Thank you for your time and I do hope to see Families for R.E.A.L. around in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Darci O'Toole". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Darci O'Toole

Cc: Senator Jill Tokuda

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

February 7, 2011

To Jill Tokuda,

My name is Randall and I have a wife name Corine and a 4 year old boy name Zack in Kaneohe. We have been attending the Family Night Session II from November 15 - February 7, 2011. We support SB 289 for Families for R.E.A.L. because the program set a precedence to starting a regular school year through a well structured classroom setting.

The classroom is situated where there are different stations for play, reading, art, music and discussions. These station provide the children to interact with each other, explore and discover through playing with toys, develop their fine motor skills by cutting, drawing and even threading beads. Their gross motor skills are also developed through their obstacle course activities and play time.

The children learn through the routines that simulates a regular classroom. They learn from the ringing of a bell that it is time to start and clean up. They provide a cubby hole for each child/parent to put their things in and a rack for their footwear before they enter the classroom.

The parents are separated from the children and we are being taught as well. Our class contained topics such as Ages and Stages of Young Children, Child's Temperament and Gender Differences. They provides us with valuable information and tips to deal with our children.

Why is SB 289 is needed? The Families for R.E.A.L program provides the extra help for those children who are in need of this support. It gives the 1st time, inexperience and confused parents help and hopefully it will decrease family violence from the information they have gathered and understanding their child behaviors.

Thank You,



Randall Wong

cc to Sen. Jill Tokuda

SB 289  
2/11/11  
1:15 pm

46-165 Keoe Place  
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744  
February 1, 2011

Honorable Senator Jill Tokuda  
State Capitol Room 218  
415 S. Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Tokuda:

I live in your district and I am writing this letter to urge support for Families for R.E.A. L. and help get SB 289 passed for future funding. It is a great program and I need to tell you why.

On February 12, 2008, I was blessed for the first time with the most beautiful grandchild in the world. Anthony arrived early and he seemed perfectly fine but as he grew older, it became apparent that he was developmentally delayed. Imagine the frustration all around when he could not talk and be understood.

With Easter Seals support, Anthony has made great gains. He has been tutored daily and will be attending DOE Special Ed preschool when he turns three.

Easter Seals has been terrific and connected Anthony with Families For R.E.A.L. This provided Anthony with a social setting with other children to learn and play with. As a retired first grade teacher, I know this will greatly help with his transition to preschool.

This program is not only for the kids, but also for the entire family. There are opportunities for focused discussions with other parents/grandparents to discuss commonalities, frustrations and other experiences in a safe atmosphere. The staff is well trained and enduring.

As a mother, I know first hand what it feels like to have a child that you suspect needs help and have no where to turn to. When I sought parenting classes on my own, I found myself attending classes that were inappropriate for me.

Families For R.E.A.L supports families by providing tons of information and just letting you know "what is out there." This makes for less stressed and happier parents. Happy parents become better parents, who in turn make happier and better kids.

Kids are our future! Doesn't it make sense to support them?

Again, please fund the Families For R.E.A.L program.

Sincerely,



Sonia Ayson  
Grandmother of Anthony

February 11, 2011

Dear Representative Ken Ito,

**I live in your district 23 and would like you to please support SB 289.**

My daughter Trini has just completed the Families for REAL Young Toddler program. And my older daughter Jillian has also participated in this program as a toddler and a preschooler in 2008 and 2009.

Our experience in the Young Toddler class has really helped me as a parent to create an environment that is enriching, beneficial and safe for my child. I was able to learn better ways of communicating with my child, and ways of teaching her to communicate with me. By teaching parents about temperament, development and communication, Families for REAL gives parents the skills and knowledge necessary to raise happy and healthy children.

Families for REAL provided me with valuable information, resources and wonderful handouts. Organized circle time provided time for parents to discuss various parenting issues. It was always interesting to learn new parenting strategies, and ideas that I can incorporate with my own parenting style. I also appreciated the resource library with a wonderful selection of parenting books and the children's library which provided children's books that we were able to borrow on a weekly basis.

Through various well planned activities, my daughter has been able to learn and achieve the following:

- 1) Socialization with adults and children outside of our home.
- 2) Experience art activities to help develop fine motor skills.
- 3) Experience fun activities that we otherwise would not have an opportunity, i.e. parachute play, keiki music class.
- 4) Learning new songs to develop large and small motor skills and aid in language development.

Families for REAL is undeniably a VERY important program for Hawaii's keiki and parents. I truly believe it is vital to provide Hawaii's families with this FREE early education program.

It plays a vital role in preparing our keiki and their parents for success in school and most importantly creates a love for learning in the child at a very young age.

Sincerely,



Mia Takazono  
45-463 Lolii Pl  
Kaneohe, HI 96744

808-247-6428

808-277-5973

Cc: Senator Jill Tokuda