



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

March 18, 2011

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: The Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
House Committee on Health  
  
The Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair  
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Director

SUBJECT: **S.B. 926, S.D. 1 - RELATING TO CHILDREN**

Hearing: Friday, March 18, 2011; 11:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of S.B. 926, S.D. 1, is to appropriate funds for various early childhood and school readiness programs.

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of this bill to provide funding for the child care subsidy and Preschool Open Doors programs, however, we are concerned about the cost implications generated by this proposal.

DHS supports the priorities as indicated in the Executive Biennium Budget which includes the funding for the child care subsidy and Preschool Open Doors programs. Also, the Governor has requested for the fiscal biennium, \$3.2 million in general funds to be added to the Department's budget for the Preschool Open Doors program for which we request legislative approval.

DHS is not clear as to which keiki care project Section 10 of this bill is referring to. If it is keiki care for medical assistance, given the current generous medical assistance eligibility for children, the low number of medical assistance recipient children from higher income households, and the findings that Keiki Care primarily served children who were previously insured and whose families switched them to free coverage under the Keiki Care program (funded by HMSA and the State), providing a general fund appropriation for Keiki Care would be expected to have a far less impact on health status than preserving medical assistance benefits to those currently eligible, which also brings matching federal funds into the State.

DHS defers to the Department of Health on the other sections of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.

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Alliance for Children  
and Families

Hawaii Island

United Way

Main United Way

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**Testimony on SB 926, RELATING TO CHILDREN**  
Joint House Committees on Health and Human Services

Health Chair: Rep. Ryan Yamane

Health Vice-Chair: Rep. Dee Morikawa

Human Services Chair: Rep. John Mizuno

Human Services Vice-Chair: Rep. Jo Jordan

Friday, March 18, 2011, 11:00 a.m.

Conference Room 329, State Capitol

Testimony submitted by: Howard S. Garval,  
President & CEO, Child & Family Service

Good morning, Chairs Yamane and Mizuno and Vice-Chairs Morikawa and Jordan and Committee members. I am Howard S. Garval, President & CEO of Child & Family Service, Hawaii's oldest and most comprehensive human service nonprofit organization with services on every island and touching the lives of 40,000 Hawaii residents from keiki to kupuna each year. I am testifying in support of SB 926.

All of the research on brain and child development now substantiates through science what we always knew to be true: An investment in early childhood is critical to ensuring that our keiki grow on a positive trajectory towards health, safety and ultimate success as adults. Furthermore there is now solid and reliable data that every \$1 invested in early childhood returns \$4.20 in economic benefit.

Unfortunately in the last two years, the state has moved further away from what makes any sense because a number of severe cuts were made to early childhood programs such as: Healthy Start, Baby Safe, Preschool Open Doors, and Early Intervention Services. While many states have responded in this fiscal crisis by cutting prevention programs, this is the opposite of what all of the research indicates is the way to go. Hawaii sadly has gone from a national leader in early childhood services to decimating the very programs that other states have praised Hawaii for creating. It is time to reverse this pennywise and pound foolish approach by restoring, even if gradually, early childhood services that ensure that children are safe, healthy and ready to learn when they start school.

SB 926 supports Healthy Start, Developmental Screening for children 0-3 and pre-school, Preschool Open Doors, Early Intervention Services, and Baby Safe. It also helps to fund the Early Learning Council (ELC) at a funding level of \$250,000 so that the ELC has operational funding to develop an early childhood system of care.

Let's begin to build back early childhood services and programs that restore Hawaii to its rightful place as a national leader in early childhood. Our keiki deserve no less than quality early childhood services that ensure that they are safe, healthy, and ready to learn.

I urge your support of SB 926.

Mahalo for providing the opportunity to submit testimony.

*Our Mission: Strengthening Families and Fostering the Healthy Development of Children*



Hearing date:  
**Friday, March  
18, 2011  
11:00 a.m.**  
House  
Committees on  
Health and  
Human Services  
Conference Room  
329

To: Representative Ryan Yamane, Chair  
Representative John Mizuno, Chair

From: Elisabeth Chun, Executive Director  
Good Beginnings Alliance

Date: Friday, March 18, 2011, 11:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 329

Subject: **SB 926 SD1: Appropriates funds for various early childhood and school readiness programs. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD1)**

The Good Beginnings Alliance is a policy and advocacy organization focused on Hawaii's youngest children and their families. We strive to ensure a nurturing, safe and healthy development for all children from pre-birth to age eight. We believe all children deserve safe and supportive environments that meet their needs as they grow and develop. Good Beginnings is also a member of One Voice for Hawaii's Children ([www.onevoiceforchildren.net](http://www.onevoiceforchildren.net)), an alliance of organizations and individuals committed to the development of an effective and equitably funded early childhood system that gives all young children the opportunity to arrive at kindergarten safe, healthy and ready to succeed. The following information is provided to help you in your decision-making process.

Addressing the needs of our at-risk young children and families in the early years is foundational to our early learning system. The programs named in this bill are part of the safety net for our keiki and foundational to school readiness when they start kindergarten.

We are seeing the results of the significant cuts to our state's comprehensive early childhood system in the Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services over the last two years-- including the Healthy Start Program, child care subsidies, and Preschool Open Doors (POD).

The Healthy Start Program was pioneered in Hawaii and championed by leaders such as Governor Abercrombie when he served in the Legislature. Since then, this vital program has been improved upon considerably and addresses the needs of our most at-risk babies and families at the very beginning years. This is foundational to our early learning system as it addresses child abuse prevention, focusing on parental engagement and training. However, it was cut by \$9 million and sorely needs more funding to provide services statewide.

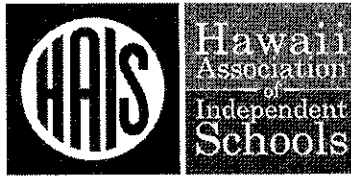
The cuts in child care subsidies and Preschool Open Doors (POD) have resulted in large decreases in preschool enrollments. The POD program was established in 1993 to contribute to the school readiness of children four years old, and three years old with special needs. Unfortunately, budget cuts to POD have resulted in a drop from 1300+ in School Year 2008-2009 to 465 at the present time.

Good Beginnings Testimony – SB926 SD1 (page 2)

It is little wonder that we have also seen a decrease in the number of public school kindergarten students who previously attended preschool: 61 percent in School Year 2008-2009, 60 percent in School Year 2009-2010, and 59 percent in SY 2010-2011. We believe this number will drop even more when we obtain the results of the Hawaii State School Readiness Assessment for the next public school kindergarten cohort in School Year 2011-2012.

This drop in preschool attendance is a matter of concern. Numerous longitudinal studies have shown the huge benefits derived from children participating in quality early learning programs. Conversely, when we fail to invest in quality early learning, our keiki suffer and are not ready to succeed when they start school. According to the Hawaii State School Readiness Assessment for this school year, less than 1 out of 4 public school kindergarten classes had most of their students consistently exhibiting the necessary pre-literacy and pre-math skills in the first month of school. When our children start school at a disadvantage, it becomes much harder for them to succeed. Our keiki truly need our help so they can start school safe, healthy, and ready to succeed.

Mahalo for your consideration. For more information contact: Good Beginnings Alliance;  
phone: 531-5502; [lcun@goodbeginnings.org](mailto:lcun@goodbeginnings.org)



March 18, 2011  
11:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 329

TESTIMONY TO  
THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

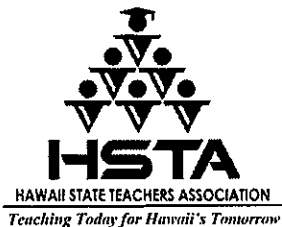
RE: SB 926, SD 1 – Relating to Children

Dear Chairs Yamane and Mizuno, Vice Chairs Morikawa and Jordan, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Robert Witt, executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools, which represents approximately 100 member schools and educates over 30,000 elementary and secondary school students statewide.

We support Senate Bill 926, which appropriates funds for programs in the State that address early childhood development and school readiness. SB 926 is in line with the mission of the Early Learning Council to ensure quality learning opportunities for our young children from birth through kindergarten. This bill will aid in establishing programs that will positively impact the children of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**RE: SB 926, SD1 -- RELATING TO CHILDREN**

**March 18, 2011**

**WIL OKABE, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

**Chair Yamane, Chair Mizuno and Members of the Committees:**

The Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA) supports the intent of SB 926, SD1, which appropriates funds for programs in the State that address early childhood development and school readiness.

HSTA advocates that early education programs should be provided through the public school system, including child development and special education. These programs should be aimed at equipping the preschooler for a successful kindergarten experience. The Association believes federal and state legislation should be enacted to fund and organize the implementation of such programs. The Association also believes that early childhood programs must be staffed by personnel trained and licensed in early childhood education. It supports training programs that will lead to credentials consistent with the educational standards of Hawaii. The Association further believes that early education programs through the public schools should be focused on four-year old children from at-risk population groups and culminates in mandatory kindergarten for students reaching five years of age.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify

## Testimony on SB 926 SD1, Relating to Children

**Representative Ryan Yamane, Chair House Health Committee  
Rep Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair House Health Committee**

**March 18, 2011 @ 1:15 pm**

**Conference Room 329**

**From: Gail Breakey, Executive Director  
Hawaii Family Support Institute**

Good morning Committee chairs and members. . I am Gail Breakey, Executive Director of the Hawaii Family Support institute testifying of behalf of One Voice for Hawaii's Children in support of SB 926, SD 1. This bill addresses a range of issues related to school readiness. I apologize for not being here in person due to a schedule conflict.

It has been estimated that as high as 50% of Hawaii's young children are not ready to perform and succeed in school when they reach kindergarten. A major issue and priority for most people in Hawaii is to reform our school system performance, which is low compared with many states.

Nobel laureate Economist James Heckman states in a 2008 New York Times article "The Biggest issue", **that school readiness is a major issue related to improving school performance. In Hawaii, only 24% of schools reported that the majority of their kindergarten children had adequate pre-literacy skills, a major key to school readiness.** We know that children need to be able to read by third grade, as after that they need to be able to read in order to learn. There should be little doubt that lack of school readiness is a major barrier to school performance. In Hawaii and elsewhere, the investment made in school age children far outweighs the investment made in pre-school age children. A concerted paradigm shift is needed.

There are a number of barriers to school readiness. These include **poor birth outcomes due to little pre-natal care and substance abuse, child abuse and neglect which has long lasting impact on child development and life-long capacities, impact of poverty on developing children, little or no exposure to early learning opportunities.** This bill is to support programs in our communities which previously began to address these issues and which have been significantly cut or eliminated over the past few years. These services are a crucial first step to developing a system of services which can ensure that children are ready to learn and succeed in school.



Hawaii Family Support Institute  
SB 926 Testimony 3-18-11

It is worth noting that while we spend approximately \$12,000/ year on education for older children, and \$24,000/ year for those needing special education, **we spend way less, under \$1,000 /year for children in the formative early years when the capacity for school success is being established.** We must invest in the normal growth and development of vulnerable young children in order to achieve our goals in education and to have a more productive economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation and for your favorable consideration of this bill.