

JAN 21 2011

S.B. NO. 925

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO CHILDREN.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. Hawaii has long been a leader in early
2 childhood services, reflecting an understanding of the
3 importance of early childhood development. This has resulted in
4 proactive legislation to ensure the safety and well-being of
5 infants, toddlers, and pre-schoolers. Unfortunately, many of
6 these services have been eliminated or drastically cut over the
7 past two years. Hawaii's healthy start program is one of the
8 services that has been affected.

9 The healthy start program was designed to prevent child
10 abuse and neglect and promote child development among high-risk
11 infants and toddlers. Although healthy start was deployed
12 statewide in 2001, cuts to the program have resulted in
13 elimination of assessment capacity and home visiting services
14 for most of the State. Restoration of these critical services
15 is the first step towards establishment of an effective,
16 coordinated continuum of early childhood services.

17 Research has shown that a combination of factors, such as
18 abuse of the parent in childhood, social isolation, lack of



1 social supports and life skills, substance abuse, domestic
2 violence, and mental health problems place parents at risk for
3 abuse and neglect of their children. Poverty and unemployment
4 can also be major contributing factors. The healthy start
5 approach uses research-based interview procedures to reach out
6 to parents who may be at risk. Intensive home visits, which
7 seek to strengthen protective factors and reduce risk, promote
8 child and family development, and avert abuse and neglect, are
9 also provided. Restoration of universal screening and home
10 visitation services is a vital step in offering culturally
11 responsive, evidence-based services to address different levels
12 of family needs and risks.

13 A recent renaissance in research and national-level policy
14 on early childhood underscores the foresight of the legislature
15 in focusing on early childhood issues. For example, the
16 National Scientific Council on the Developing Child published
17 *The Science of Early Childhood Development: Closing the Gap*
18 *Between What We Know and What We Do* (Harvard University, 2007).
19 Composed of leading neuroscientists, pediatricians,
20 developmental psychologists, and economists, the National
21 Scientific Council on the Developing Child reviewed all current
22 research and literature on early childhood development. Based



1 on this research, the publication presents the following core
2 concepts of development and considers their implications for
3 policy and practice:

4 (1) Brain architecture is built from the bottom up, with
5 simple circuits and skills providing the scaffolding
6 for more advanced circuits and skill over time;

7 (2) Toxic stress in early childhood is associated with
8 persistent effects on the nervous system and stress
9 hormonal systems that can damage developing brain
10 architecture and lead to lifelong problems in

11 learning, behavior, and mental and physical health;

12 (3) Policy initiatives that promote safe, supportive
13 relationships and rich learning opportunities for
14 children create a strong foundation for later
15 learning, followed by greater productivity in the
16 workplace, and solid citizenship in the community;

17 (4) Substantial progress in proper child development can
18 be achieved through growth-promoting experiences,
19 provided by a range of parent education, family
20 support, early intervention services, and early
21 childhood education;



1 (5) Later remediation for highly vulnerable children will
2 produce less favorable outcomes and cost more than
3 appropriate early intervention, beginning in the
4 earliest year of life;

5 (6) Responsible investment is needed to produce results;
6 it is not profitable to utilize interventions that may
7 be less costly but fail to produce needed results; and

8 (7) Child development is the foundation for community and
9 economic development; capable children become the
10 foundation for a prosperous, sustainable society.

11 Given the foregoing realities, the legislature finds it
12 prudent to reinstate hospital-based assessments and intensive
13 home visiting for families at highest risk, along with referrals
14 of other families to existing home visiting services.

15 The purpose of this Act is to reinstate hospital-based
16 assessments and to target improved intensive home visiting
17 services to the highest risk families of newborns in communities
18 across the State of Hawaii, while offering other families a
19 range of evidence-based home visiting services based on their
20 identified needs.



1 SECTION 2. Chapter 321, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
2 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
3 and to read as follows:

4 "§321- Assessment and home visitation program;
5 established. (a) There is established within the department of
6 health, a hospital-based screening and assessment and intensive
7 home visitation program. This program shall follow the
8 guidelines of the improved healthy start and Healthy Families
9 America programs.

10 (b) Hospital-based screening and assessment pursuant to
11 this section shall:

12 (1) Include proactive universal screening and assessment
13 to enroll families prenatally or at birth, before any
14 child welfare reports are made;

15 (2) Make intensive home visits available on a voluntary
16 basis for families assessed to be at the highest risk,
17 with the highest priority given to those with scores
18 of forty and above on the family stress checklist or
19 parent survey; and

20 (3) Make referrals for families with lower or no-risk
21 scores, based on the needs of the family, to a range
22 of evidence-based home visiting services.



1 (c) Intensive home visiting services, based on guidelines
2 of the healthy start program, shall:

3 (1) Maintain critical elements developed by the Healthy
4 Families America program, especially related to
5 caseloads, staff ratios, and training;

6 (2) Utilize a relationship-based approach with families,
7 mother-infant dyads, and supervisor and family support
8 worker relationships;

9 (3) Focus strongly on caregiver and infant attachment and
10 social and emotional development, following principles
11 of infant mental health;

12 (4) Utilize the clinical specialist approaches of enhanced
13 healthy start in working with very high-risk families;

14 (5) Conduct interventions to strengthen protective factors
15 and reduce risk;

16 (6) Integrate emerging evidence-based practice, as
17 feasible and appropriate;

18 (7) Ensure continuous quality improvement by engaging
19 program staff;

20 (8) Evaluate outcomes related to risk reduction, child
21 development, family resilience, and confirmed cases of
22 abuse and neglect; and



1 (9) Continue to evaluate the impact of intensive home
2 visitation services and make program improvements as
3 needed.

4 Services shall continue until the child reaches three years of
5 age, or until the child reaches five years of age if the child
6 has a younger sibling."

7 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the Hawaii tobacco
8 settlement special fund, established pursuant to section 328L-2,
9 Hawaii Revised Statutes, the sum of \$3,000,000 or so much
10 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2011-2012 and the
11 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
12 2012-2013 for hospital-based assessment and screening and
13 intensive home visiting services.

14 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
15 of health for the purposes of this Act.

16 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the temporary
17 assistance for needy families fund the sum of \$3,000,000 or so
18 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2011-2012 and
19 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
20 year 2012-2013 for intensive home visiting services.

21 The sums appropriated shall be transferred by the
22 department of human services by interdepartmental transfer (U



1 fund), to the department of health, to be expended by the
2 department of health for the purposes of this Act.

3 SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.

4 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2011.

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INTRODUCED BY: Shzanne Chun Oakland

Michelle L. Lani Carol Fukushima
David Y. Lo
Diana W. L. L.
Johai L. L.
Mark L.



Report Title:

Healthy Start; Home Visitation; Department of Health;
Appropriation

Description:

Establishes a hospital-based screening and assessment and intensive home visitation program under the department of health; appropriates funds from the tobacco settlement special fund and the temporary assistance to needy families fund.

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