



**PATCH**

Supporting Hawaii's Child Care Needs

**LATE**

To: COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES  
Chair: Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland  
Vice Chair: Senator Les Ihara, Jr.

From: Katy Chen, Executive Director  
PATCH – People Attentive to Children

Date: Thursday, February 10, 2011  
1:15pm; Conference Room 016

**Subject: SB 926- RELATING TO CHILDREN**

**PATCH supports SB 926 as it funds critical programs necessary to the successful development of Hawaii's most vulnerable young keiki.**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding SB926. I am Katy Chen, Executive Director of PATCH – People Attentive to Children. PATCH is Hawaii's only statewide child care resource and referral agency and a member of the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral agencies. We receive more nearly 15,000 enquiries a year from parents and guardians looking for referrals for affordable, quality child care – mostly for their very young children. PATCH also trains people in the field of early childhood education and care.

PATCH supports SB926 as it will fund programs critical to the successful development of our most vulnerable young children. All of the programs cited in the bill have proven successful in helping children in the earliest stages of their development and helping them prepare for school readiness. Studies show that 85% of human being's development occurs within the first five years of a child's life. At-risk children need access to the many early developmental and school readiness programs outlined in SB926. A Hawaii state study showed that for every \$1 spent now on early childhood education and care will save the State \$4 later in costs for programs designed to address poverty and crime prevention, abuse, mental health etc.

The preschool and child care subsidy programs in SB926 are particularly critical. The State Department of Human Services currently does not have enough money to meet the needs of low-income families for these subsidy programs. As the contract vendor for Preschool Open Doors (POD), PATCH has seen 1,200+ families each year applying for the 500 available spots in this program. Demand for this program is twice than what is currently available in funding. The program is in jeopardy of cancellation. POD is the only State program of its kind which is to focus on giving low-income children the opportunity to have access to quality pre-Kindergarten experiences to ensure their school readiness. The program must continue and ideally, be expanded to accommodate the demand for the services. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

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