
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.

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

1 SECTION 1. The purpose of this Act is to implement, upon
2 its ratification, an amendment to article X, section 1, of the
3 Hawaii State Constitution, permitting the appropriation of
4 public funds for private early childhood education programs by
5 establishing a statewide early childhood education program
6 consisting of providers of high-quality early childhood
7 education to assist families in establishing a solid foundation
8 for success in school so that children graduate from high school
9 prepared for college and a career.

10 Significant research affirms the positive effects of high-
11 quality early childhood education programs on the physical,
12 cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional outcomes of young
13 children.

14 For example, early childhood education is one way to reduce
15 high school dropout rates. A report released by the Annie E.
16 Casey Foundation in 2011 found that students who do not read
17 proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to drop
18 out of school without a diploma, when compared to proficient



1 readers. The number increases when those students come from
2 low-income families. After third grade, students are using
3 their reading skills to learn other subjects, and if they do not
4 have the skills by then, they will be faced with enormous
5 challenges.

6 If provided an early childhood education, children are more
7 likely to succeed in kindergarten and beyond, and more likely to
8 grow into healthy, capable, and contributing adults. Research
9 emphasizes that high-quality programs are necessary to produce
10 positive outcomes for children, both in the near- and long-term.
11 Studies have proven that high-quality early childhood education
12 programs are especially effective for at-risk children,
13 including low-income and otherwise disadvantaged children, with
14 the great potential to alter their lifetime trajectories for
15 success.

16 Well-executed and well-targeted early childhood education
17 programs have immediate and long-term benefits not only for the
18 children participating in the programs, but also for the
19 societies in which they live, as determined by seminal studies
20 such as those conducted of the HighScope and Chicago Parent-
21 Child Centers programs. Societies that invest in such programs
22 boast of higher levels of educational attainment; reduced



1 homelessness, crime, and substance abuse; improved health; and
2 better overall social and economic well-being. A 2008 study
3 commissioned by the Good Beginnings Alliance found that every \$1
4 invested today in high-quality early childhood education for
5 Hawaii generates more than \$4 in future savings and increased
6 earnings through state, federal, and social benefits.

7 SECTION 2. Chapter 302L, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
8 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
9 and to read as follows:

10 "§302L- Early childhood education program. (a) There
11 is established within the early learning system an early
12 childhood education program to be administered by the executive
13 office on early learning. The program shall:

14 (1) Prepare children for school; and
15 (2) Provide access to high-quality early childhood
16 education that addresses children's physical,
17 cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional
18 development.

19 (b) The program shall serve three- and four-year-old
20 children, with priority for:

21 (1) Four-year-old children; and
22 (2) Underserved or at-risk children.



1 Families may enroll their children in the program on a
2 voluntary basis.

3 Families shall share in the costs of the program through a
4 copayment according to a sliding fee scale that is based on need
5 and through fulfillment of family participation requirements,
6 pursuant to rules adopted by the office.

7 The program shall not serve children who are enrolled in or
8 eligible for public elementary education.

9 (c) The office may contract with eligible providers of
10 early childhood education to increase the capacity of the
11 program to provide high-quality early childhood education to
12 children across the State. Eligible providers shall meet, or
13 develop plans to meet, the standards established under the
14 program pursuant to rules adopted by the office. The office may
15 provide support to providers to meet these standards.

16 Contract payments shall be made to the providers.

17 (d) The program standards shall:

18 (1) Include research-based, developmentally appropriate
19 practices that are associated with better educational
20 outcomes for children, such as one teacher with a
21 bachelor's degree with twelve credits in early
22 childhood education or child development, curriculum



1 aligned with the Hawaii early learning and development
2 standards, and individual assessments of children
3 based on all areas of childhood development and
4 learning including cognitive, linguistic, social-
5 emotional approaches to learning, health, and physical
6 development; and

7 (2) Align with the state content and performance standards
8 for grades kindergarten to twelve to facilitate a
9 seamless and high-quality educational experience for
10 children.

11 (e) The office shall coordinate with other agencies and
12 programs to facilitate comprehensive services for early
13 childhood education.

14 (f) The office shall collect data to evaluate services
15 provided, inform sound policy, and improve the provision of
16 early childhood education through the program.

17 (g) The office may adopt rules necessary to carry out the
18 purposes of this section."

19 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

20 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon ratification of
21 a constitutional amendment permitting the appropriation of
22 public funds for private early childhood education programs.



Report Title:

Early Childhood Education Program

Description:

Establishes the early childhood education program within the early learning system. (SD1)

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