



Hawaii
Children's Action Network
Building a unified voice for Hawaii's children

February 4, 2016

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Address

850 Richards Street
Suite 201
Honolulu, HI
96813

P: (808) 531-5502

To: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
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Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health

From: Deborah Zysman, Executive Director
Hawaii Children's Action Network

Re: **SB2872 – Relating to Requirements for Childcare Providers - Support
Hawaii State Capitol, Room016 – February 4, 2016 – 1:15 PM**

On behalf of Hawaii Children's Action Network (HCAN), formerly Good Beginnings Alliance, we are writing in support of SB2872, Relating to Requirements for Childcare Providers.

HCAN is committed to improving lives and being a strong voice advocating for Hawai'i's children. Last fall, HCAN convened input in person and online from more than 50 organizations and individuals that came forward to support or express interest for a number of issues affecting children and families in our state that resulted in the compilation of 2016 Hawai'i Children's Policy Agenda, which can be accessed at <http://www.hawaii-can.org/2016policyagenda>.

HCAN supports SB2872, which would bring Hawaii into alignment with the federal update of the Child Care Development Block Grant Act (Public Law 113-186). This program provides nearly \$21 million in federal block grant funds toward childcare that help more than 21,000 children in 16,000 local families in Hawaii.

Passage of this bill will mark a very critical step toward the state's compliance with required under the Act, which covers:

- Training for and conducting health and safety monitoring inspections of unlicensed childcare providers for children receiving Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) also known as Child Care Connection (CCC);

- Background checks on childcare providers, employees and individuals who have unsupervised access to children (including national and state sex offender registries and state child abuse and neglect registries where an individual resided within the past five years);
- Establishing policy prohibiting individuals with convictions or non-compliance with completion of background check from becoming a provider;
- Making records of monitoring inspections and substantiated complaints publicly available online.

While HCAN is supportive of this legislation, we urge the state to pursue the goal of exceeding minimum qualifications toward compliance with federal changes under this act to help Hawaii's most at risk families to gain economic stability and prosper in our communities. Federal and state childcare programs like CCDF/CCC and Preschool Open Doors give parents the support they need to search for employment or higher education or job training and be productive workers and students. These programs also provide children the opportunity to develop skills they need to succeed in school and in life. Some of the changes in CCDF/CCC that would raise the bar for our local families could include:

- Increasing the number of days for eligibility for childcare assistance from 30 days to 60 days to allow parents time to gain employment or attend school;
- Reinstating a deduction of the countable income limit for families (this was 20 percent in 2001 as published by the National Women's Law Center's: *Building Blocks, State Child Care Assurances Policies 2015*), so that other subsidies received do not count toward their overall income limit; and
- Maintaining a waiting list for childcare assistance.

Even if families are eligible for childcare assistance, they may not necessarily receive it according to the National Women's Law Center's report on childcare assistance policies, as states my freeze intake (turn families away without adding their names to a waiting list) causing parents/guardians to wait months to wait for assistance or some to never receive it.

HCAN is grateful for all the work that has been done by the state and particularly by the Hawaii Department of Human Services toward enabling the state to be in compliance with the Child Care Development Block Grant Act and looks forward to building strong partnerships with community leaders and organizations that help families and keiki in our state build a pathway toward greater economic stability and a healthier thriving community.

For these reasons, HCAN respectfully requests that the committee vote to pass this bill.