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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the demand for  
2 quality early care and education far exceeds the amount of  
3 available and qualified early childhood educators. Given the  
4 critical need to expand access to and the availability of high-  
5 quality early care and education programs for the benefit of the  
6 State's children and their families, which will ultimately  
7 benefit the entire society, the legislature recognizes that  
8 there must also be enough qualified educators to staff the  
9 programs and that these educators must have the research-based  
10 knowledge and competencies to work with young children and their  
11 families. Researchers have repeatedly demonstrated that  
12 children, particularly those who come from disadvantaged  
13 backgrounds, will benefit from early childhood education;  
14 however, it is emphasized that the education must be of high  
15 quality. A stipend program will support those individuals  
16 seeking to become high-quality early childhood educators.



1 Without qualified teaching staff, providers across the  
2 system will be unable to expand the inventory of early care and  
3 education opportunities and where providers do develop programs,  
4 they run the risk of implementing programs that may be  
5 detrimental to children, many of whom are living in poverty and  
6 who have experienced trauma, and possibly excluding children  
7 through suspension and expulsion practices.

8 The purpose of this Act is to make stipends available  
9 through an early childhood educator stipend program, to be  
10 administered by the executive office on early learning and  
11 funded by the legislature, to encourage individuals, especially  
12 those already working in the early childhood field, to pursue a  
13 certificate, degree, or license in early childhood education and  
14 fill the critical need for qualified educators across the early  
15 learning system in programs delivered in either of Hawaii's two  
16 official languages. This program shall be based on the strong  
17 foundations laid by the existing Grow Our Own teacher stipend  
18 program for kindergarten through grade twelve teachers, and  
19 structured similarly to the stipend program funded through the  
20 federal preschool development grant that ended in 2019.



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

4 "§302L- Hawaii early childhood educator stipend  
5 program. (a) There is established the Hawaii early childhood  
6 educator stipend program to be administered by the office to  
7 address the shortfall of early childhood educators who have  
8 coursework in early childhood education.

9 (b) An individual shall be eligible for stipend  
10 consideration if the individual:

11 (1) Is enrolled at a University of Hawaii campus or in a  
12 University of Hawaii program and qualifies for Hawaii  
13 resident tuition; and

14 (2) Is enrolled in a certificate, degree, or license  
15 program in early childhood education, including those  
16 in the Hawaiian language medium, which includes  
17 courses required for the respective program of study,  
18 within the University of Hawaii system.

19 (c) Immediately following completion of a certificate,  
20 degree, or license program pursuant to subsection (b), stipend  
21 recipients shall provide early care and education services



1 directly to children from birth through five years of age for  
2 two to four consecutive years in one of the early learning  
3 settings described in section 302L-2, including Hawaiian  
4 language medium and Hawaiian immersion settings and early  
5 learning settings at charter schools.

6 (d) If the recipient fails to complete a certificate,  
7 degree, or license program pursuant to subsection (b), or to  
8 satisfy the work requirements of subsection (c), stipend funds  
9 shall be repaid as follows:

10 (1) For each year less than the designated number of years  
11 that a stipend recipient does not meet the work  
12 requirements of subsection (c), the recipient shall  
13 repay a proportionate percentage of the total stipend  
14 funds received; and

15 (2) The repayment shall be subject to the terms and  
16 conditions set by the office for stipend repayment,  
17 including circumstances under which recipients may be  
18 eligible for deferment or forgiveness due to hardship  
19 or inability to secure employment, as well as  
20 potential for fees for the collection of delinquent  
21 repayment.



1       (e) In accordance with chapter 103D, the office may enter  
2 into written contracts with collection agencies to collect  
3 delinquent repayment of stipends owed to the office pursuant to  
4 subsection (d). A collection agency that enters into a written  
5 contract with the office to collect delinquent stipend  
6 repayments pursuant to this section may collect a fee from the  
7 debtor in accordance with the terms of, and up to the amounts  
8 authorized in, the written contract.

9       (f) The office may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91 to  
10 implement and administer the stipend program, including the  
11 terms of repayment pursuant to subsection (c)."

12       SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
13 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$                    or so  
14 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 for  
15 the establishment and implementation of the Hawaii early  
16 childhood educator stipend program.

17       The sum appropriated shall be expended by the executive  
18 office on early learning for the purposes of this Act.

19       SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

20       SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



**Report Title:**

Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program; Executive Office on  
Early Learning; Appropriation

**Description:**

Establishes an early childhood educator stipend program to be  
administered by the executive office on early learning to  
address the shortage of qualified early childhood educators in  
Hawaii. Appropriates funds. Takes effect on 7/1/2050. (HD1)

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not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

