
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE HAWAII ZERO TO THREE COURT.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the Hawai'i zero to
2 three court is a specialty court in the first circuit court,
3 family court, established in 2009 with initial funding from the
4 national Zero to Three program. Zero to three courts are rooted
5 in developmental science and aim to improve outcomes for
6 maltreated infants and toddlers, reduce the reoccurrence of
7 substantiated abuse and neglect of infants and toddlers in the
8 court's jurisdiction, and change the courts' culture to focus on
9 the needs of infants and toddlers.

10 Specifically, the Hawai'i program trains professionals,
11 secures effective service resources, encourages collaboration
12 among existing community service providers, and increases
13 parent-child contact. Key features of this specialized court
14 include monthly case conferences for each family, monthly court
15 hearings, and a court team composed of a lead family court
16 judge, designated guardian ad litem, parents' counsel, deputy
17 attorneys general, and social workers from the department of



1 human services. The court hearings provide intensive judicial
2 oversight and accountability for all parties while keeping the
3 team focused on timely permanency. Parent activities are held
4 the same day as the monthly court hearing to enhance parenting
5 skills and build a support system with the other families in the
6 program in a safe, judgment-free environment. Infants and
7 toddlers in the program receive a comprehensive developmental
8 assessment which results in appropriate referrals to services,
9 and zero to three court families also participate in parent-
10 child interaction therapy or child-parent psychotherapy to
11 promote healthy family functioning.

12 The legislature further finds that there are sixteen
13 families in the Hawai'i zero to three court and the program is
14 seeking to expand its capacity to twenty families.
15 Participation in the Hawai'i zero to three court is voluntary for
16 parents who meet the criteria of having been adjudicated in the
17 family court and having at least one child between the ages of
18 zero to three. National funding ceased in 2012 and the
19 judiciary has continued to support the program by transferring
20 the program for administrative purposes to the first circuit
21 family drug court.



1 Additionally, the University of Hawaii center on disability
2 studies conducted an evaluation of Hawai'i zero to three court
3 activities from August 2013 to July 2016. The study concluded
4 that the Hawai'i zero to three court is successfully meeting the
5 objectives of reducing parental alcohol or drug use, improving
6 reunification outcomes for families, decreasing the number of
7 placements and the length of stay in foster care, increasing
8 visitation frequency, ensuring timeliness of service
9 availability, and increasing access to services. The
10 legislature therefore concludes that stable funding is
11 critically needed to continue and enhance services and resources
12 and to further develop the capacity of the Hawai'i zero to three
13 court team.

14 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to support
15 the Hawai'i zero to three court. It is not the legislature's
16 intent that the appropriated funds supplant the judiciary's
17 existing funding or budget requests.

18 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
19 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$257,430 or so much
20 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2019-2020 and the
21 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year



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1 2020-2021 for the Hawaii zero to three court to be distributed
2 as follows:

- 3 (1) \$80,930 for a program manager position;
- 4 (2) \$77,000 for a case manager position;
- 5 (3) \$7,000 for visitation transportation cost for parents;
- 6 (4) \$35,000 for housing assistance;
- 7 (5) \$3,500 for a parent incentive program similar to the
8 model used in family drug court;
- 9 (6) \$18,000 for training and professional development of
10 court team members and community partners; and
- 11 (7) \$36,000 for service contracts for visitation and
12 parent coaching.

13 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the judiciary
14 for the purposes of this Act.

15 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2019.

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Report Title:

Keiki Caucus; Hawaii Zero to Three Court; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds for the Hawaii Zero to Three Court.

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