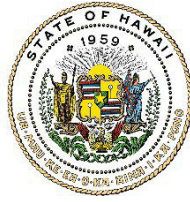


**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



**DEPT. COMM. NO. 501**

**RYAN I. YAMANE**  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

**JOSEPH CAMPOS II**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

**TRISTA SPEER**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

August 21, 2024

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi, President  
and Members of the Senate  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 409  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Scott K. Saiki, Speaker  
and Members of the House of Representatives  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 431  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Saiki, and Members of the Legislature:

In accordance with Section 26-61, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the joint report of the Department of Human Services and the Executive Office on Early Learning on the progress of implementing the early care and education sector programs per Acts 46, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2020, as amended by Act 210, SLH 2021, is enclosed.

Per section 93-16, HRS, the report is available to review electronically at the Department's website, <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/reports/legislative-reports/>, and the Executive Office on Early Learning's website, <https://earlylearning.hawaii.gov/about-us/early-learning-board/reports/>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ryan I. Yamane".

Ryan I. Yamane  
Director  
Department of Human Services



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Yuuko Arikawa-Cross".

Yuuko Arikawa-Cross  
Executive Director  
Executive Office on Early Learning



Enclosure

- c: Governor's Office
  - Lieutenant Governor's Office
  - Department of Budget & Finance
  - Legislative Auditor
  - Legislative Reference Bureau Library (one hard copy)
  - Hawaii State Public Library, System State Publications Distribution Center (two hard copies, one electronic copy)
  - Hamilton Library, Serials Department, University of Hawaii (one hard copy)

**REPORT TO THE THIRTY-SECOND HAWAII STATE  
LEGISLATURE 2024**

**IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 26-  
61(a), HAWAI'I REVISED STATUTES, ON THE PROGRESS  
TOWARD ACHIEVING THE ENROLLMENT BENCHMARKS  
FOR CHILDREN IN A PRESCHOOL PROGRAM.**

**Executive Office on Early Learning  
and the  
Department of Human Services,  
Benefit, Employment & Support Services Division,  
Child Care Programs Office**

**August 2024**

## **Background**

It is well established that investment in early childhood programs and services has long-term positive impacts on a child's education, health, employment, and well-being. With community and cross-sector support, over several sessions, the Hawaii State Legislature passed major legislation<sup>1</sup> and made significant appropriations to increase access, affordability, availability, and quality of child care and early learning opportunities.

Effective July 1, 2024, the Legislature established early learning benchmarks codified in section [26-61](#), Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS), that provides:

**§26-61 Benchmarks; duties.** (a) The department of human services and the executive office on early learning shall ensure access to learning through preschool programs that meet or exceed the following benchmarks:

- (1) Fifty per cent of all otherwise unserved children who are three to four years of age, or will not be at least five years of age on or before July 31 of the current school year, shall have access to enrollment in a preschool program by December 31, 2027; and
- (2) One hundred per cent of all children who are three to four years of age, or will not be at least five years of age on or before July 31 of the current school year, shall have access to enrollment in a preschool program by December 31, 2032.

The department of human services and the executive office on early learning shall submit an annual report to the legislature, no later than August 31 of each year, on the progress toward achieving the benchmarks until all children who are three to four years of age, or will not be at least five years of age on or before July 31 of the current school year, are enrolled in a preschool program.

(b) The department of human services and the executive office on early learning shall collaborate to identify the need for child care and early learning in geographic regions of the State and consider using public facilities including schools, libraries, and the University of Hawaii system as locations for child care and early learning programs.

(c) The department of human services shall work jointly with the executive office on early learning to monitor the progress of implementing the early care and education sector programs. No later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular sessions of 2025, 2026, and 2027, the department of human services and the executive office on early learning shall submit to the legislature a joint report on the progress of implementing the early care and education sector programs.

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<sup>1</sup> Amongst other Acts, see, [Act 276](#) (2019), [Act 46](#) (2020), [Act 210](#) (2021), [Act 128](#) (2022), [Act 257](#) (2022), [Act 169](#) (2023), [Act 175](#) (2023), [Act 146](#) (2024), [Act 152](#) (2024), and [Act 153](#) (2024).

(d) The department of human services shall facilitate and support data sharing among public and private entities to the extent not otherwise prohibited by law or rule.

Through collaboration and partnerships, the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) works to establish a system that ensures a solid foundation of early childhood development and learning for Hawai‘i’s young children (prenatal to age five), meaningful engagement and support for their families, and stable, competent and supported early childhood workforce.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is the State's implementing and regulatory agency for federal and state child care funds. DHS administers two child care subsidy programs: the federally-funded Child Care Connections Hawaii and the state-funded Preschool Open Doors programs. DHS also regulates child care providers.

EOEL and DHS collaborated with our partner organizations to co-create this report. It is the first report to the Legislature pursuant to section 26-61(a), HRS, for School Year (SY) 2023-2024.

A note regarding births in the State of Hawaii: according to the Department of Health (DOH) vital statistics for 2023, there were 14,846 recorded births statewide. The 2023 number of recorded births continues what appears to be a declining birth rate in the State compared to the previous decade.

Table 1. Comparison of the number of statewide births to births of the previous decade.

Calendar Year	Births	Calendar Year	Births
2009	18,891	2019	16,835
2010	18,948	2020	15,807
2011	18,971	2021	15,637
2012	18,985	2022	15,570
2013	18,979	2023	14,846*

The children born in 2023\* will begin turning 3 in 2026 and will turn 4 in 2027. The number of births for 2024 and additional analysis will be required to make the best estimate of the 50% target listed in section 26-61(a)(1), HRS.<sup>2</sup> The 50% target requires birth data from 08/01/2022 to 07/31/2024. Official data for 2024 is not yet available.

## 1. Benchmarks.

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<sup>2</sup> For longitudinal birth data, see <https://hhdw.org/data-sources/birth-data/>

Child care, early learning programs, and preschool programs are currently provided in a “mixed delivery system” aimed to provide child care options for families in a variety of settings. In Hawaii, child care and preschool settings include public, private, not-for-profit, and faith-based settings. Preschool seats are available among Executive Office on Early Learning (“EOEL”) Public Prekindergarten Program Classrooms, Hawai‘i State Public Charter School Commission (“HSPCSC” or “Commission”) Preschool Programs, Hawai‘i State Department of Education (“HIDOE”) Special Education Preschool Settings (“HIDOE Special Education”), and Department of Human Services (“DHS”) Licensed and/or Registered Group Child Care Centers (including Head Start programs).<sup>3</sup>

Table 2. EOEL\*

School Year	Number of Classrooms	Number of Seats Available
2022-2023	37	707
2023-2024	49	947
2024-2025	92	1767

\*The EOEL classroom schedule is based on the HIDOE academic year schedule and aligns with the kindergarten full-day schedule. Typically, most school days start at 8:00 a.m. and end at around 2:00 p.m. A child must be three or four years of age on or before July 31 of the current school year to be eligible to participate in the EOEL Public Prekindergarten Program. The maximum number of students enrolled in each class is determined by the square footage of classroom space consistent with DHS Group Child Care Center Administrative Rules. However, each classroom is limited to no more than 20 students at any time. (Class sizes may change to address the health and safety needs of children and staff that arise from unexpected circumstances from time to time.) The numbers reflect all EOEL Public Prekindergarten classrooms and seats for the identified school years.

Table 3. HSPCSC Charter School Early Learning Programs (Number of Seats Available)\*

School Year	Number of Classrooms	Number of Seats Available
2022-2023	18	327
2023-2024	18	327

<sup>3</sup> This report does not include child care regulated by the US Department of Defense.

School Year	Number of Classrooms	Number of Seats Available
2024-2025	18	327

\*Aligned with EOEL. The charter school classroom schedule is based on the K-12 academic year schedule and aligns with the kindergarten full-day schedule. Typically, most school days start at 8:00 a.m. and end at around 2:00 p.m. A child must be three or four years old on or before July 31 of the current school year to be eligible to participate in an HSPCSC charter school early learning program. The square footage of classroom space determines the maximum number of students enrolled in each class and is limited to no more than 20 students at any given time. The numbers reflect all State Public Charter School Early Learning public prekindergarten classrooms and seats.

Table 4. HIDEOE Migrant Education Program (MEP) (Number of Seats Available)

School Year	Number of Classrooms	Number of Students Served
2022-2023	2	14
2023-2024	3	21
2024-2025	4	TBD

\*The MEP classroom schedule is based on the HIDEOE’s academic year schedule, aligning with the kindergarten full-day schedule. Most school days start at 8:00 a.m. and end around 2:00 p.m. Students are eligible for the program from ages 3 to 5. Preference is given to children who will be entering kindergarten the following school year. Each classroom is currently limited to 10-12 students to establish a low teacher-to-student ratio. The data reflects the total number of school sites and students served.

Table 5. HIDEOE Special Education Preschool (3-5) (Number of Seats Available)

School Year	Number of SPED Preschool Classrooms	Number of SPED Eligible Students
2022-2023	259	2,146
2023-2024	259	2,255
2024-2025	259	*1,638

The reported number of Special Education Preschool (SPED)-eligible students includes data from all but one charter school that does not use Infinite Campus,<sup>4</sup> which captures official enrollment counts. If eligible, special education services<sup>5</sup> begin by the child’s third birthday. Services are provided based on the individual needs of the child. The amount of time a child receives services is determined by the specialized interventions a child needs to participate in preschool-age activities with typically developing peers. Placement in preschool programs should be reflective of a variety of educational environments available to preschool-age children. These may include but are not limited to settings such as private or public preschool, daycare, home, to settings for children with disabilities. Placement decisions always consider inclusive natural environments that recognize the developmental and educational benefits of learning alongside typically developing peers.

\*This is point-in-time data (August 1, 2024) and not comprehensive 2024-2025 enrollment data.

Table 6a. DHS Number of Seats Available

Calendar Year	Licensed and Registered Providers	Number of Seats Available
2022	815	31,558
2023	806	31,304
2024	785	30,623

DHS licensed and registered providers include group child care centers (preschools), group child care homes, infant and toddler centers, before- and after-school programs, and family child care homes. The number of seats available is based on each provider’s maximum license capacity.

Table 6b. DHS Licensed & Registered Providers Serving 3- & 4-Year-Old Children

Calendar Year	Licensed and Registered Providers Serving 3- & 4-Year-Old	Number of Seats Available
2022	716	23,653*
2023	705	27,834*
2024	685	22,587*

<sup>4</sup> Infinite Campus is a student information system (SIS) and learning management system (LMS) that allows students and parents to access information about a student's school life.

<sup>5</sup> HIDOE Special Education Preschool services are pursuant to Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).



DHS licensed and registered providers who serve 3 & 4-year-old children include group child care centers (preschools), group child care homes, infant and toddler centers, and family child care homes.

\*The number of seats available is based on each provider’s maximum license capacity, and the count may include children younger or older than 3 and 4 years of age.

Table 6c. Subsidized Child Care – (Federally funded) Child Care and Development Fund

Program Year*	Age	Licensed and Registered Providers	Exempt Providers	Total
2022	3	1131	201	1332
	4	1351	150	1501
	Total	2482	351	2833
2023	3	552	129	681
	4	602	124	726
	Total	1154	253	1407
2024	3	574	127	701
	4	631	105	736
	Total	1205	232	1437

Licensed providers include group child care centers (preschools), group homes, and registered family child care homes. Exempt providers include relatives and non-relatives who provide care in accordance with section 346-152, HRS.

\*The program year is the state fiscal year.

Table 6d. Subsidized Child Care – (State funded) Preschool Open Doors Program

Program Year	Accredited Providers	Non-Accredited Providers
2022	27	42

Program Year	Accredited Providers	Non-Accredited Providers
2023	46	57
2024	68	120

\*Acts 46 (SLH 2020), 210 (SLH 2021), and 169 (SLH 2023) established that all licensed providers that accept enrollment of a child eligible for Preschool Open Doors (POD) must be accredited within seven (7) years and provides that existing licensed providers must start the accreditation process by July 1, 2029, and be accredited by July 1, 2034. Note that accreditation is a way to assess quality; however, accreditation standards can be higher than the state's requirements.

As of June 2024, there are 379 licensed group child care centers and homes statewide. 120 providers for the 2023 – 2024 program are not accredited and accept POD families.

Table 6e. Family Child Interaction Learning (FCIL) programs

School Year	Number of Sites	Number of Seats Available
2022-2023	48	-
2023-2024	48	-
2024-2025	56	-

\*FCIL programs employ a multi-generational, culturally responsive approach and provide services at various locations in communities. These programs usually consist of two hours a day, twice or three times a week. FCIL programs are mixed-age and do not have specific allocations for three- and four-year-olds. The program capacity is not restricted by the adult-child ratio as an adult accompanies the child. The capacity may be restricted by the room capacity when the program is held indoors. The number of sites are those that have been identified.

**2. Progress Of Implementing the Early Care and Education Sector Programs**

To meet the needs of early childhood care and education, EOEL and DHS have collaborated with HIDEOE, HSPCSC, and other entities to improve access to early childhood education. This report discusses the system-wide progress made to increase the early childhood education system capacity. The report focuses on preschool seats or capacity, accessibility/affordability, workforce development, and data collection/analysis.

**a. Seats and Capacity**

## Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL)

The Executive Office on Early Learning has increased its preschool program capacity by adding eleven EOEL classrooms in SY 2023-2024 and forty-four classrooms in SY 2024-2025, which added 240 seats in SY 2023-2024 and additional 848 seats in SY 2024-2025, totaling to 1,795 seats. In SY 2023-2024, Kamehameha School funded the first HODOE public Hawaiian Language PreK classroom at Pope Elementary School. Beginning in SY 2024-2025, Pope Elementary and Lāna‘i Elementary Schools will be the first EOEL Hawaiian Language PreK sites and Kamehameha will seed fund a Hawaiian Language PreK program at Hāna Elementary School. EOEL, Kamehameha, and the Office of Hawaiian Education (OHE) have been working collaboratively to design the necessary support for students and staff.

Further, the 2024 State Legislature passed EOEL’s administration measure, SB No. 3087 SD1 HD1 CD1 Relating to Early Learning (enacted as [Act 152](#)). This new law will allow the EOEL to utilize public buildings to expand access to early learning programs and to increase the State’s preschool program capacity. The EOEL plans to continuously work with Lieutenant Governor Luke’s Ready Keiki Initiative and DHS to determine the underserved areas and populations and develop early learning programs to build the State’s capacity to meet the community’s needs.

## Hawai‘i State Public Charter School Commission (HSPCSC or Commission)

Through the [Ready Keiki Initiative](#), together with community partners, the Hawai‘i State Public Charter School Commission (Commission) embraced the shared goal for the state of Hawai‘i aligned with Act 46 (SLH 2020) as amended by Act 210 (SLH 2021): 1) To meet fifty percent of unserved three- and four-year-old keiki by 2027; 2) To meet one hundred percent of unserved three- and four-year-old keiki by 2032; 3) To honor the two educational pathways – in ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i (Hawaiian language) and English; 4) To commit to working collaboratively as partners to address the challenges; and 5) To maximize the use of Act 257, (SLH 2022) – which invests \$200 million to expand early learning facilities.

To effectuate this plan, the Commission envisioned implementing the following: 1) Create a new pathway to increase access to pre-K programs in charter schools; 2) Maximize the use of Act 257, SLH 2022, to expand early learning facilities in charter schools; 3) Consider amending the charter application to expand pre-K-only charter schools; and 4) Communicate unified support for high-quality pre-K for all of Hawai‘i’s keiki.

On May 25, 2023, the Hawai‘i State Public Charter School Commission approved the recommendation to open the charter application and process seeking the first-ever, pre-K-only charter school under the authority of section [302D-39](#), HRS. On September 15, 2023, Parents And Children Together (PACT) at Parkway Villages of Kapolei was the sole applicant.

After a thorough review of the application, on January 11, 2024, the Commission unanimously voted to approve PACT's application. PACT is completing its pre-opening assurances to become a state entity and charter school with the goal of opening by January 2025.

#### Department of Human Services (DHS)

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law No. 117-2) appropriated child care stabilization funds to the State as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic underscored the child care needs of workers and the importance of maintaining access to child care. The additional fiscal support to the nation's child care providers was necessary for child care providers to revamp their business practices to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on their staff and families they served. The DHS Child Care Stabilization Grant program disbursed nearly \$72,000,000 directly to 616 licensed and registered family child care homes, group child care centers, group child care homes, infant and toddler centers, before and after school facilities, and exempt center-based providers providing afterschool A+ services. There were three (3) rounds of funding between December 2021 and September 2023.

DHS is currently administering a Supplemental Grant program and, beginning in May 2024, disbursed over \$20,000,000 to 617 licensed and registered family child care homes, group child care centers, infant and toddler centers, before- and after-school facilities, and exempt center-based providers providing afterschool A+ services. DHS aims to disburse the remaining \$24,000,000 by September 30, 2024.

DHS designed the Stabilization Grant program to assist providers experiencing financial hardship and child care market instability due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Grant funds were intended to cover the financial obligations of continuing operations, preventing permanent closures, and enabling programs to re-open safely. Providers used grant funds to cover rent or payment towards mortgage obligations, utilities, facility maintenance or improvements, insurance, and tuition relief. Other allowable uses of the grant included personnel costs, including payroll and salaries or similar compensation for employees, benefits, staff training and professional development, mental health support for children and employees, reimbursement of expenditures for goods or services procured to respond to the mitigation of COVID-19 in adherence to relevant protocols, and goods and services necessary to maintain or resume child care services. A separate staff retention award of \$2,500 was provided to each employee of the child care provider and a mental health and wellness award of \$1,000 was provided to each caregiving employee.

Unfortunately, from 2022 to 2023, 9 licensed and registered providers permanently closed their doors. However, without the stabilization grant funding, a larger number of providers may have closed their doors.

Additionally, to meet the accreditation requirement required by Act 46, as amended by Act 210 (SLH 2021), DHS is currently working to execute a contract with the Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children (HAEYC) to provide technical assistance to twenty (20) group child care centers who are interested in obtaining national accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC accreditation will meet the POD program requirement that a licensed group child care center must be accredited and must start the accreditation process by July 1, 2029, and be accredited by July 1, 2034. As the DHS provides technical assistance for accreditation, if necessary, discussion on extending the accreditation deadline or providing additional funding to meet and maintain accreditation requirements may be necessary.

#### **b. Accessibility and Affordability**

##### EOEL

The EOEL increased its preschool program accessibility and affordability in 2023 and 2024 (up to the submission of this report). For the SY 2024-2025 application, the EOEL added an online application system to the existing paper-based application. This addition will increase accessibility to EOEL preschool programs among families who may not have printers at home or may not have time to pick up an application form from the school. Further, the paper-based application is translated into twelve languages to increase accessibility to EOEL preschools among families who have limited English proficiency. Moreover, the EOEL expanded the age requirements to include three-year-olds starting SY 2023-2024. Relating to EOEL preschool program affordability, the income limits under the priority group are set to 300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG). This is aligned with the SPCSC and the DHS Preschool Open Door (POD) program, which have the same gross income limit for preschool priority eligibility and POD program eligibility.

##### DHS

[Act 171](#), SLH 2023, amended the Preschool Open Door (POD) program statutes, expanding POD to include eligible 3-year-old children starting in the 2024-2025 program year. Act 171 was the result of the strong advocacy and support of Lieutenant Governor Luke, the Legislature, cross-sector agencies, and community organizations and advocates. The key amendments of Act 171 are: 1) Inclusion of 3-year-olds: families can now enroll eligible 3-year-olds in the POD program, allowing up to two (2) years of preschool before their child enters kindergarten; 2) Increased income eligibility limits: more families are now eligible for POD due to higher income limits. Families that were previously over the income threshold may now qualify if they have eligible 3- or 4-year-old children and need help with preschool tuition; 3) Lowered family copayments: family copayments have been reduced to 0-7% of the family's gross income. This change ensures that families pay less out of pocket for child care; and 4) Higher monthly child care subsidy: The program now provides an increased monthly subsidy amount to cover the costs of providing high-

quality child care. These amendments aim to support low- and moderate-income families in accessing quality preschool education.

Notably, in September 2023, DHS launched its child care portal to promote access with an online application for families (see [ChildCareSubsidy.dhs.hawaii.gov](https://ChildCareSubsidy.dhs.hawaii.gov)). Since going live, families have overwhelmingly selected the online application over the hard copy application when applying for child care subsidies.

### **c. Workforce Development**

#### EOEL

EOEL collaborated with the University of Hawai‘i (UH) to develop the Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program, established by Act 210 (SLH 2021), utilizing funds from the Samuel N. and Mary Castle Foundation. In 2023, the Legislature approved an additional \$660,000 for the Early Childhood Educator Stipend Program, making it the first publicly funded tuition stipend program for current and future early childhood educators in both the Hawaiian and English mediums. In the Fall 2023 semester, 53 students received the stipend, an increase from 10 stipend recipients in Summer 2023. In Spring 2024, there were an additional 48 new stipend recipients, bringing the total number of recipients to 103 early childhood educators. Across all early childhood programs in the UH System, participation in the stipend program increased from 3% of early childhood students in Summer 2023 to 17% in Fall 2023 to 29.1% in Spring 2024. Among the Spring 2024 recipients, 42% were in community-based programs, 32% worked in public ECE settings, and 24% were not yet employed in an ECE setting. As of the Spring 2024 term, there have been a total of 12 students to complete the program.

EOEL has supported efforts to expand apprenticeships, addressing the need for ECE workforce members to work and earn additional credentials to move up a career ladder. In the summer of 2023, the Hawai‘i Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) approved the state’s first registered apprenticeship program in early care and education. The program was designed by the nonprofit organization Keiki O Ka ‘ Āina in partnership with the Honolulu Community College (HCC). The program was initiated as an effort to develop apprenticeship pathways serving the ECE workforce development pipeline.

In addition, the EOEL helped facilitate the successful passage of Act 126 (SLH 2024) (HB 2074 HD2 SD1 CD1, Relating to Kaiapuni (Hawaiian Language) Education) and Act 127, (SLH 2024) (SB 2937 SD1 HD2 CD1, Relating to Access to Learning), which revised Act 46, to make permanent the exemption from standards, assessments, performance ratings, staff qualifications, and staff training requirements established by Act 46 for the laboratory school programs of Ka

Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawaii – Hilo (Ke Kulanui o Hawai‘i ma Hilo).

DHS

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021<sup>6</sup> appropriated funding to Hawaii DHS. DHS’ Child Care Stabilization Grant disbursed almost \$72,000,000 directly to 616 licensed and registered family child care homes, group child care centers, group child care homes, infant and toddler centers, before and after school facilities and exempt center-based providers providing afterschool A+ services over three (3) rounds of funding between December 2021 – September 2023. DHS is currently administering its Supplemental Grant program and disbursed over \$20,000,000 beginning in May 2024 to 617 licensed and registered family child care homes, group child care centers, group child care homes, infant and toddler centers, before and after school facilities and exempt center-based providers providing afterschool A+ services. DHS aims to disburse the remaining \$24,000,000 by September 30, 2024.

The DHS Stabilization Grant program was designed to assist providers experiencing financial hardship and child care market instability due to COVID-19. Grant funds were intended to cover the financial obligations of continuing operations, preventing permanent closures, and enabling programs to re-open safely. Providers, in turn, used grant funds to cover rent or payment towards mortgage obligations, utilities, facility maintenance or improvements, insurance, and tuition relief. Other allowable uses of the grant included personnel costs, including payroll and salaries or similar compensation for employees, benefits, staff training and professional development, mental health support for children and employees, reimbursement of expenditures for goods or services procured to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency, and goods and services necessary to maintain or resume child care services. A separate staff retention award of \$2,500 was provided to each employee of the child care provider and a mental health and wellness award of \$1,000 was provided to each caregiving employee. The chart below is a breakdown by county and how providers used the stabilization funds.

Table 7a. Utilization of DHS Stabilization Grant program awards by County.

Expense Category (Island)	Staff Retention Award	Employee Count for Staff Retention Award	Mental Health and Wellness	*Personnel Costs	*Total Staff Resigned
Hawaii	\$881,500.00	379	\$172,160.80	\$4,326,013.43	0

<sup>6</sup> Note that the America Rescue Plan Act of 2021 appropriated funds for child care through three different sections, each with different requirements.

Expense Category (Island)	Staff Retention Award	Employee Count for Staff Retention Award	Mental Health and Wellness	*Personnel Costs	*Total Staff Resigned
Kauai	\$337,500.00	135	\$134,323.40	\$3,074,157.94	0
Maui	\$925,550.00	393	\$208,729.22	\$3,072,551.98	14
Oahu	\$5,428,400.00	2,208	\$1,532,680.27	\$20,670,227.00	11
Statewide totals	\$7,572,950.00	3,115	\$2,047,893.69	\$31,142,950.35	25

\*Personnel costs and the number of total staff resigned are self-reported by the child care provider.

The chart below illustrates Round 1 of DHS’ Supplemental Grant Program awards as of 6/26/24.

Table 7b. DHS Supplemental Grant Program award amounts as of 6/26/24.

Operating Expenses Award	Staff Retention Award	Total
\$15,167,979.00	\$5,041,000.00	<b>\$20,208,979.00</b>

Eligible providers received an operating expense award which was based on their license capacity. Licensed infant and toddler centers, licensed group child care homes, and registered family child care homes received a higher operating expense award base amount. There were two (2) tiers of staff retention awards; tier 1 provided a one-time payment of \$3,500 for directors, teachers, assistant teachers, lead caregivers, and caregivers, and tier 2 provided a one-time payment of \$2,000 for aides, substitutes, staff in before and after school facilities, and family child care providers.

DHS will continue to monitor and propose additional strategies to address child care stabilization in efforts to support a mixed delivery system and to address the costs of care. DHS is concerned about the impacts on child care providers as the additional investment of ARPA funds comes to an end.

**d. Data Collection and Analysis**

EOEL

The EOEL has been working with multiple agencies to collect and analyze data on the State’s children’s early learning experiences and needs to determine the geographical and community



needs and to build the capacity to meet those needs. In 2023, the EOEL analyzed the HIDOE Supplemental Kindergarten Enrollment Form to assess the HIDOE and charter school's Kindergarten students' preschool experience. The analysis showed the need for data collection improvement, and the EOEL has been working with HIDOE and the University of Hawai'i (UH), Hawai'i P-20 Partnerships for Education (Hawai'i P-20) to improve data collection and reporting on HIDOE Kindergarten students' preschool experience data. Further, to assess the early learning workforce training and retention needs, the EOEL, HIDOE, and P-20 have been working to retrieve data on teacher qualification and retention.

The EOEL and the advocacy organization Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) are pursuing work with the [Children's Funding Project located in Washington, D.C.](#), to develop a fiscal map and fiscal map reporting dashboard to identify how resources supporting children and families are aligned within the State's existing budget. A fiscal map analyzes funding that supports programs and services connected to a certain subject matter identified for further study – such as children and family programs in the State of Hawai'i, for example – and the fiscal map attempts to answer which agencies or stakeholders invest resources in children and families in this state, and at what levels and in which programs, to quantify the amount of resources that are directed to children and families in Hawai'i at this time.

Work on the fiscal map with the Children's Funding Project continues in 2024, and it is anticipated that the map will be ready for use by interested people in the community during the first quarter of 2025. With the information provided, it is hoped that policymakers will have a better understanding of what resources are devoted to children and families and in what magnitude, and this information can better support funding choices for the State moving forward.

## HIDOE

To assess the needs of the underserved groups and areas identified in the 2020 Hawaii Early Childhood Comprehensive Needs Assessment, the EOEL, HSPCSC, DHS, Department of Health (DOH), and the Hawai'i P-20 are working with a contractor to gather data through social service provider interviews and community group interviews under the Hawai'i Preschool Development Grant, Birth through Five (PDG B-5) grant. Through this federal grant, states have the opportunity to address objectives that the data, research, or needs assessment have indicated are needed within the state to help break down barriers and improve access to higher-quality early childhood services. The data collection is in progress and is expected to be completed later in 2024. The information and data collected through this 2024 needs assessment will be used, along with other data sources, to develop the 2025 PDG B-5 State Plan.

The Department of Education (HIDOE) has implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) in its English medium classrooms as of School Year (SY) 2023-2024. HIDOE adopted the *Ready*

*for Kindergarten* assessment from Johns Hopkins University. The assessment addresses all specified domains of early childhood development and provides tiered indicators of child readiness for kindergarten - Demonstrating Readiness, Approaching Readiness, and Emerging Readiness. In the SY 2023-2024 assessment, 29% of students were Demonstrating Readiness, suggesting a widespread need for addressing children’s developmental readiness at kindergarten entry. HIDOE is using the KEA data to inform focal areas for professional development and intervention support, with an emphasis on local capacity-building regarding quality kindergarten services.

HIDOE is developing a Kaiapuni KEA in ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i for the Hawaiian immersion kindergarten classrooms. The assessment is being developed in partnership with the UH at Mānoa and the kumu Kaiapuni. A draft of Kaiapuni KEA will be field tested in this SY 2024-2025, allowing UH Mānoa to conduct item analysis, cognitive interviews, and item standardization. There will not be externally reported data from this field test. A report will be generated for internal use. This will be followed by an operational field test in SY 2025-2026. Outcomes from the SY 2025-2026 operational field test will be reported.

## DHS

Act 46 as amended by Act 210 (SLH 2021), appropriated \$5,000,000 of federal Child Care and Development Funds to modify the DHS child care data system and create a child care registry. These Act 46 funds were encumbered through a contract, with a contract period from 1/1/22 – 12/31/26. Work on the registry is pending broader stakeholder decision-making in terms of what data points would be most beneficial for DHS to include in its system modifications to support a child care registry. Additional resources, including legal assistance, will be required to assist with registry governance, data sharing, and data access.

## Conclusion

The EOEL and DHS appreciate the community's and Legislature’s continuing commitment and attention to Hawaii’s keiki and their families. This report describes the initiatives currently underway that address the necessary resources required to support an effective early childhood and early learning system: human resources, physical infrastructure, curriculum and accreditation, family and community support, funding, the policy framework, and technology and data needs.

To achieve section 26-61(a), HRS, benchmarks, the responsible agencies will continue to work together to address the resource needs and propose additional policy changes to move Hawaii towards an accessible, affordable, and quality early childhood and early learning system.