

ACT 153

S.B. NO. 3116

A Bill for an Act Relating to the Preschool Open Doors Program.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the preschool open doors program serves certain three- and four-year old children with priority extended to certain categories of children. There is currently no priority application period established for each state fiscal year. A priority application period would ensure that the preschool open doors program maximizes the funding appropriated to the program to serve the greatest number of three- and four-year-old children in a more timely fashion.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to explicitly establish that the priority of selection for preschool open doors program participation applies only during the priority application period between February 1 and the start of each state fiscal year.

SECTION 2. Section 346-181, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

“(b) Subject to the availability of funds, the program shall serve three- and four-year-old children who are in the two years prior to kindergarten entry pursuant to section 302A-411, with priority extended in the following order ~~[to:]~~ during a priority application period established for each upcoming state fiscal year:

- (1) Children who are not eligible to attend public school kindergarten in the calendar year in which they turn five years of age because their birth date occurs after the kindergarten eligibility date pursuant to section 302A-411;
- (2) Underserved or at-risk four-year-old children who were previously served as [a] three-year-old ~~[child, as defined by rules adopted by the department;]~~ children;
- (3) Four-year-old children who were previously served as [a] three-year-old ~~[child;]~~ children;
- (4) Four-year-old children;
- (5) Underserved or at-risk three-year-old children~~[, as defined by rules adopted by the department];~~ and
- (6) Three-year-old children~~[,];~~

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provided that the department shall adopt rules, pursuant to chapter 91, to determine a child's underserved or at-risk status, if not duplicative of the rules already adopted under chapter 17-799, Hawaii Administrative Rules; and applications received after the end of the priority application period and through January 31 of each year shall be processed on a first-come, first-served basis for the remainder of the state fiscal year."

SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

(Approved July 1, 2024.)