

*Every child is born ready to learn,  
with minds shaped significantly by experiences and  
environments in the first five years of life.*



# KEIKI FIRST

A STATEWIDE EARLY LEARNING SYSTEM FOR HAWAI‘I

Hawai‘i Early Learning Educational Task Force

**Act 259**

# Why Keiki First?

# Our future

Research has shown that 85% of a child's intellect, personality and social skills are developed by age 5, and more quality early learning experiences help maximize the brain's development for lifelong learning. In addition, studies also show that a large gap exists between the literacy skills of middle- and low-income children by age 8.<sup>1</sup>



The 2007 Hawai'i State School Readiness Assessment (HSSRA) shows many of Hawai'i's young children enter kindergarten lacking the skills needed to succeed. The HSSRA revealed that, in more than 80% of Hawai'i's kindergarten

classrooms, most of the students were unable to demonstrate the math and literacy skills to succeed in kindergarten. Additionally, this assessment found that, in many of those classrooms, 40% of the children were living in poverty. This statistic is significant as research shows that as poverty rates increase, fewer children start out with the critical skills needed for kindergarten and the grade levels that follow.<sup>2</sup>

However, research has shown repeatedly that positive experiences in quality early learning programs can help to improve literacy and comprehension skills required for school success no matter the income level. More importantly, increasing the availability of quality early learning programs has the following benefits that reach beyond the young child and strengthen families, and the community in general:

- Reduced need for special education intervention
- Lower rates of grade repetition
- Lower crime rates
- Greater workforce productivity
- Savings in public spending on health and welfare

National longitudinal studies estimate that for every \$1 invested in high quality early learning programs for disadvantaged children, as much as \$8 in potential remedial education, welfare and criminal justice costs can be saved.

Already, 40 states in the nation have designed and implemented an early learning program, and now is the time for Hawai'i to implement a quality early learning program that best meets the needs of Hawai'i's families with young children. The design and implementation of such a system will ensure our keiki, families and community thrive, assuring a strong future for Hawai'i.

<sup>1</sup> Snow, C. "From Literacy to Learning." Harvard Education Letter. Boston: Harvard University Graduate School of Education, July/August 2005

<sup>2</sup> Brandt, M. *Entering Kindergarteners and Schools They Enter: Making a Difference*. Policy Brief. Good Beginnings Alliance, 2007.



**Keiki First Phase I  
Four-Year-Olds**

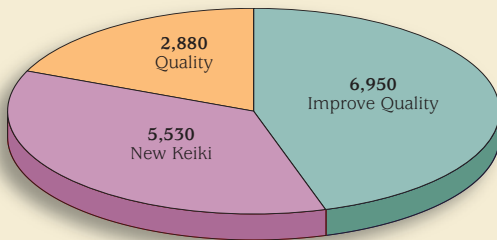
# quality

## Elements of Quality

The Hawai'i Early Learning Educational Task Force proposes that the state implement a voluntary, comprehensive early learning system, *Keiki First*, which would provide a spectrum of early learning opportunities for children of Hawai'i, from birth to age 5. The plan focuses first on 4-year-olds. The quality elements of the program would:

- Provide a voluntary, affordable program for four-year-olds setting the foundation for a comprehensive birth to five early learning system
- Build capacity to serve 80% of 4-Year-Olds (See Chart "80% 4-Year-Olds Served in Quality Programs by 2018") by increasing and improving existing private and public programs
- Serve at-risk, low-income, rural, and gap-group families first
- Provide financial aid for families in need
- Ensure accountability to standards and outcomes
- Ensure programs are sensitive to our island cultural diversity
- Provide family choice in three settings: center based (CB), family child interaction learning (FCIL) and family child care (FCC)
- Provide support for parent and family strengthening and involvement
- Require small student-teacher staff ratios
- Provide standardized program hours
- Ensure high-quality teachers and staff through education requirements, incentives, training, support and professional development
- Ensure new dollars build on current early childhood funding with long-term goal of maximizing integration opportunities

**80% 4-Year-Olds Served in Quality Programs by 2018**  
(Goal: 15,360)

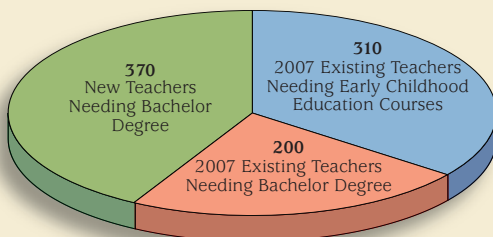


Universe: 19,200 4-Year-Olds (2018)

*Young children are ready to have successful learning experiences in school when there is a positive interaction among the child's developmental characteristics, school practices, and family and community support.*

—A definition of school readiness  
2001 Hawai'i Legislature

**Teachers Needing Higher Education by 2018\***



\*Estimated based on available 2007 data



# keiki

## A Wise Investment

### Infrastructure Components

- Workforce Development  
(See chart “Teachers Needing Higher Education by 2018”)
  - Increase Higher Ed Courses and Delivery Methods
  - Scholarships
  - Teacher Training and Support Centers
- Community-Based Hubs
- Technical Assistance
- Quality Assurance
- Consumer Resources and Referral
- Evaluation and Assessment
- Financial Aid
- Communications and Public Engagement
- Governance and Management
  - Authority to Design Policy and Regulate
  - Accountability for High-Quality Results
  - Administrative Efficiency and Expertise

### Capital

- New Classrooms
- Upgrade Existing Classrooms
- Equipment



All of our children should have every opportunity to reach their full potential that quality early education would help ensure. As future contributing members of our society, the investment in building a sound foundation is clearly a wise investment in Hawai'i's future.

The Task Force has provided a detailed 10-year implementation model for 4-year-olds that includes an increase in access to early education. The estimated cost for this comprehensive, high-quality early childhood education system is based on:

- Direct Services (delivering quality programs and services to families)
- Infrastructure (with emphasis on developing and expanding the professional workforce and program development)
- Capital (improving and adding appropriate facilities and equipment)

During the initial implementation period, approximately 80 percent of funds will go directly to expanding access to early education and improving the quality of existing programs for 4-year-olds, with the remainder allocated to infrastructure and capital components.

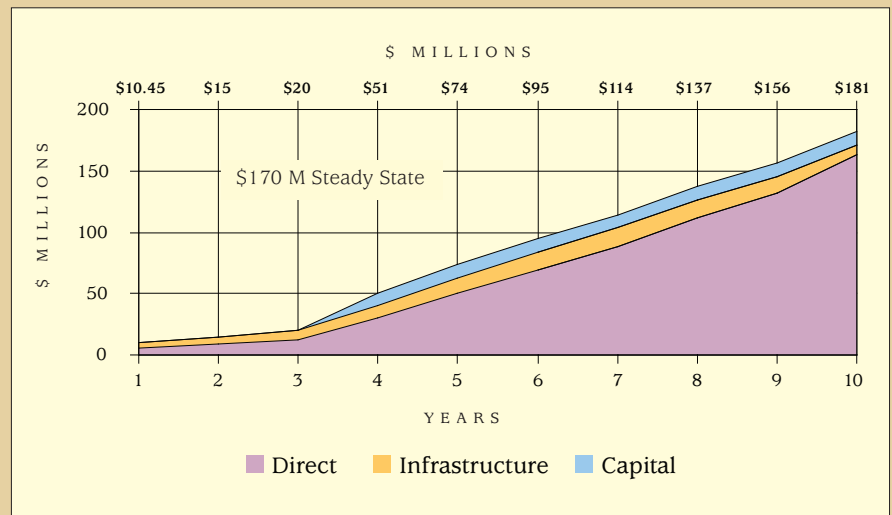


*“When we invest wisely in children and families, the next generation will pay that back through a lifetime of productivity and responsible citizenship. When we fail to provide children with what they need to build strong foundations for healthy and productive lives, we put our future prosperity and security at risk.”*

—Dr. Jack Shonkoff  
National Scientific Council on the Developing Child

### 10 Year Cost Summary

Full Year/Full Day



# Our vision

## The Call to Action

*Our vision is to establish an early learning system with supportive linkages to comprehensive services for children and families that enable all of Hawai'i's children to be loved, safe, healthy and ready to succeed.*



Pursuant to other states who have funded the major portion of implementing an early learning

system, the Early Learning Educational Task Force proposes that the 2008 Hawai'i Legislature establish an Early Learning Program for 4-year-olds and appropriate funds for operation in Fiscal Year 2008-2009.

At minimum, the Task Force is requesting \$10.45 million to implement the first year recommendations outlined in the *Keiki First* Act 259 Report to the 2008 State Legislature.

Funds allocation is recommended as follows:

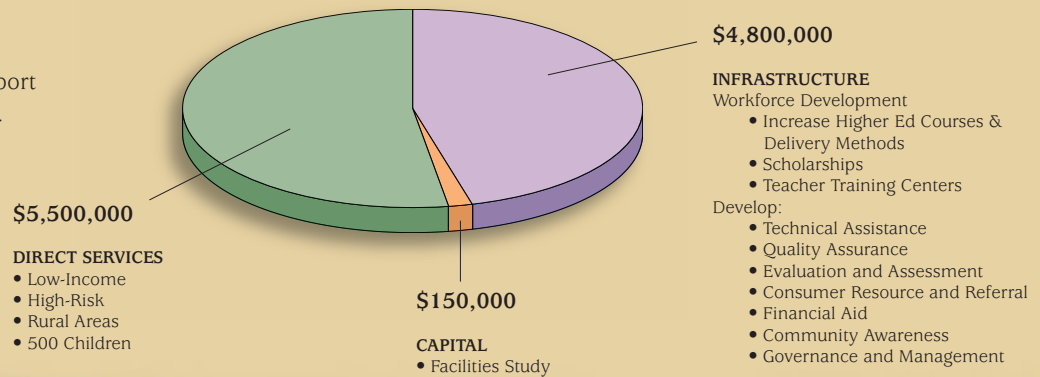
- \$5.5 million for Direct Services of Quality Programs
- \$4.8 million to set up Systems Infrastructure Components
- \$150,000 for Facilities Planning

### We Can Make a Difference

A child's experiences in the first five years of life make a world of difference in how children do in school and later in life. These experiences set the foundation that forms behavioral, emotional, social and decision-making skills, values, self-esteem and lifelong learning ability. When we provide our keiki with a better start, we give them a greater chance for success in school and in life. The future of Hawai'i rests with our children. Investing in our keiki is an investment in our future—with the greatest returns realized for both the individual child and our community.

### Support Keiki First!

Keiki First  
Funding Request – Year 1



## Early Learning Educational Task Force

Our mission is to develop an early learning system that provides quality early learning experiences, parental choice, access, affordability, sustainability and a foundation for school success.

In 2006, the Hawai'i Legislature recognized the importance of not only providing Hawai'i's young children with quality early learning experiences, but also what it would mean to our society as a whole. The Legislature passed Act 259, establishing the Early



Learning Educational Task Force to develop a plan for a comprehensive and sustainable early learning system, providing a spectrum of early learning opportunities for the children of Hawai'i, from birth to age five.

The Task Force is comprised of 22 members who represent a wide variety of interests and sectors of our community, all concerned about the keiki in our islands.

The Task Force studied other early education systems and models from around the country; sought input from local and national experts; and consulted with teachers, parents and educators. The process was transparent, utilizing public open meetings and a website where opinions could be gathered. The recommendations were derived using an inclusive consensus approach.



As a result, the Task Force designed a comprehensive plan for a voluntary early learning system, starting with 4-year-olds, with quality standards to ensure quality outcomes. A model for the estimated cost of this comprehensive, high-quality early education system was also created. The Task Force will continue to develop the *Keiki First* plan for 0 – 3-year-olds and build upon the foundation and resources of the 4-year-old program.



## Members and Designees Organization Represented

**Robert Peters**  
(Co-Chair of Task Force)  
Hawai'i Association for Independent Schools

**Kathy Murphy**  
(Co-Chair of Task Force)  
Hawai'i Association for the Education of Young Children

**Elaine Yamashita**  
(Co-Chair of Programs & Workforce Development Subcommittee)  
University of Hawai'i Community Colleges

**Christina Cox**  
(Co-Chair of Programs & Workforce Development Subcommittee)  
Childcare Business Coalition

**Dee Jay Mailer/Chris Pating**  
(Co-Chairs of Interdepartmental Resources Subcommittee)  
Kamehameha Schools

**Denise Matsumoto**  
Board of Education

**David Jelinek/Elizabeth Park**  
Chaminade University

**Ernie Martin**  
City & County of Honolulu Department of Community Services

**Patricia Hamamoto/Steve Shiraki**  
Department of Education

**Chiyome Fukino/Loretta Fuddy**  
Department of Health

**Lillian Kohler/Julie Morita**  
Department of Human Services

**Darwin Ching/Sam Aiona**  
Department of Labor & Industrial Relations

**Liz Chun**  
Good Beginnings Alliance

**Kevin Roberts**  
Hawai'i Business Roundtable

**Angela Thomas**  
Hawai'i County Department of Parks and Recreation

**Ellen O'Kelley/Frank Ranger**  
Head Start Association

**Chris Jackson**  
Head Start Collaboration Office

**June Renaud/Anna Peters**  
Kauai Office of Community Assistance

**Ka'ina Bonacorsi**  
Maui County Department of Housing and Human Concerns

**Kanoë Nāone**  
Native Hawaiian Community-Based Programs for  
Early Childhood Education

**Katy Chen**  
PATCH

**Christine Sorensen/Donald Young**  
University of Hawaii at Manoa, College of Education

The *Keiki First* plan is outlined here and detailed in Act 259 Report to the 2008 State Legislature and is available for public review online at: <http://www.act259.net>

For more information  
please contact the Task Force liaison:

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