



## Keiki Focus

News

September 16, 2009

### Good Beginnings Alliance

Good Beginnings Alliance (GBA) is Hawai'i's leading champion for children.

On behalf of young children, GBA works across the state so that communities are involved; efforts are connected; and decision-makers are empowered to ensure all Hawai'i's keiki are safe, healthy and ready to succeed.

GBA is a member of Voices for America's Children

[Visit our website for more information.](#)

### Get Involved

Your support is appreciated in whatever form it takes: contacting your legislator, passing news on to family and friends, or rolling up your sleeves and volunteering.

If you wish to support GBA financially in its efforts at policy advocacy or data collection, please visit our [Donation Page](#) today.

### Mahalo!

### State Economy Demands Everyone's Help

We hear the news nearly everyday about our state's declining economy-decreased tax revenues, state budget deficit, layoffs ... the list goes on. Hawaii's fiscal woes are now impacting our most vulnerable population - our young children and their families. Recently, two highly acclaimed early childhood programs, Healthy Start and Preschool Open Doors, received significant reductions in funding. [Healthy Start's budget](#) was reduced significantly from almost \$10 million in 2008-2009 to \$1.3 million in 2009-2010. [Preschool Open Doors](#), a program that provides preschool tuition subsidies for needy families, suffered a cut from nearly \$8.3 million in 2008-2009 to \$3.2 million in 2009-2010, resulting in nearly 700 low-income children being denied support to attend preschool. That is more than half of those that applied. In the private sector, the Samuel N. and Mary Castle Foundation has provided a pilot grant to PATCH to help some of these families that were denied support. We hope that other private funds can also join the Samuel N. and Mary Castle Foundation in supporting this worthwhile program by contacting [PATCH](#) at [Patch@PatchHawaii.org](mailto:Patch@PatchHawaii.org) or phone at Oahu: 587-5254 or Neighbor Islands: 1-800-746-5620. While private funds can be a big help, it should never replace public funds and commitment for our young children.

With the current fiscal and program cuts, we need to take another approach to our budget woes-and "salami slice cuts" are not the answer. Andrew Aoki wrote an excellent commentary about our state's budget crisis earlier this year for Kanu Hawaii titled, "[Rough Take! - our approach to the economic crisis.](#)" In it, he says, "If most of us could come together around our common values, a common vision, and some guiding principles-while we still wouldn't be happy with every decision-at least we might make more rational decisions, develop a better sense of unity, and be more at peace with the results. So where is that common vision?"

We at Good Beginnings Alliance want to do our part in shaping a common vision for the benefit of our young children-who will be our communities', state's and nation's leaders of tomorrow. We will be working with the Interdepartmental Council, Department of Human Services, and Early Learning Council to craft an application for a \$500,000 federal grant to better link Hawaii's early learning and public schools systems to help vulnerable children 0-8 years. We are also sponsoring two invitation-only

[economic events on early childhood investments](#) featuring four notable speakers: Rob Dugger, Managing Partner of Hanover Investment Group and Chair of Partnership for America's Economic Success; Rob Grunewald, Associate Economist, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis; Bill Bentley, President and CEO of Voices for America's Children; and Dr. Denise Konan, Chair of the University of Hawaii Department of Economics. Attendees will hear from these experts about early childhood education as a sound economic investment that is vital to Hawaii's future sustainability. And more importantly, we invite you to join the discussion to shape a common vision to benefit our young children and our own future.

While we cannot generate more money nor fix Hawaii's economic problems by ourselves, we can join the Samuel N. and Mary Castle Foundation to be part of the solution and do our part to develop "that common vision." After all, it is our kuleana. Can you help too?

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*Good Beginnings Alliance is a nonprofit organization working in partnership with families, communities, policy makers, early childhood providers and advocates to shape community will and public policy, mobilize action and maximize resources for Hawai'i's children. Good Beginnings Alliance is a member of [Voices for America's Children](#)*

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