



Keiki Focus

News

December 17, 2009

It's For the Keiki

Gandhi's words "Action expresses priorities" are particularly meaningful in today's economy. Who are the people in our communities who are taking action to assure all keiki are safe, healthy and ready to succeed?

By identifying these true champions for children, we create a very real measure for all those who talk the talk. Take a moment to make a mental list of the leaders in business, community, education, healthcare, and government who walk the walk.

About GBA

Good Beginnings Alliance (GBA) is Hawai'i's leading independent voice dedicated to ensuring young children are safe, healthy and ready to succeed.

Every day, we strive to ensure a safety net exists so all children have the support and opportunity to grow into thriving, successful adults.

To this end, GBA remains in a heightened state of awareness to call attention to the needs of our children; we use data to support and bring that awareness to business, community, education,

Our Voice for Young Children

Over the past six weeks, a plan by the State Department of Human Services (DHS) to implement a new sliding scale for childcare subsidy payments to needy parents has been a hot topic.

Your testimonies on this issue were heard loud and clear at the DHS public hearing on November 23 and the combined State Senate and House Human Services Committees' hearing on December 4. The proposed new sliding scale will create hardships for many of our families as well as for childcare programs and preschools.

DHS said that they are running out of childcare subsidy funds and must implement the new 10-step sliding scale on February 1, 2010. DHS increased its childcare subsidy budget by \$8.5 million over the previous year - bringing the total to nearly \$66 million - but said that money is being spent much faster than expected due to a sharp increase in families applying for assistance and higher childcare rates.

DHS stated at the legislative hearing that they have identified other sources of federal funding for families who will be impacted by the subsidy decreases. DHS said they will notify parents in the near future about the new sliding scale as well as these other federal aid programs.

In these challenging economic times, it seems like young children are being handed the short straw. Those who work in the early childhood care and education field are well aware of the need for early education to improve a child's ability to learn later in life; to introduce children to healthy socialization; and to prepare children to be thriving successful adults. We also know early education benefits everyone!

These are very trying times for the families who are doing their best to make a go of it. As a community, how can our voices best be heard by those who make decisions that affect young children?



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healthcare, and government; and we develop recommendations and comprehensive solutions so those in power can make decisions that ensure the safety, health and readiness of all Hawai'i's children.

GBA is a member of [Voices for America's Children](#)

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!

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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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