

## Dear Friend:

As a business leader, you have many fathers and mothers working for your company. Many of them are parents who face challenges with selecting and affording quality childcare for their young children. Many of them are worried about the healthy development and early education of their keiki while at work.

As a progressive executive, you may have already begun to examine personnel policies and programs that address work and family issues. By strengthening the family, you know that you strengthen the quality of those who work for you, now and in the future.

I was in a similar position with 250 employees at American Trust Company of Hawaii. Concern for my employees and their young children led to my involvement in early childhood education and care, and to becoming the President of the Board of Directors of Good Beginnings Alliance.

Good Beginnings offers this Executive Guide to Work and Family Solutions to employers who want to take a leadership role in innovative work and family partnerships. Together with the Hawai'i Community Foundation's BIZ KIDS program, Good Beginnings encourages employers like you to appreciate the needs many working parents have in providing quality early care and education of their young children. Work and family programs can lead to increased recruitment, retention, productivity and lower absenteeism. Employers, at the national, local and branch levels, are finding out that it's good business to invest in work and family solutions.

I hope you find this Guide useful in combination with the HCF's BIZ KIDS information. They are excellent resources for selecting the most appropriate option for the financial health of your company and the welfare of your workforce to ensure that Hawaii's keiki are safe, healthy, and successful. To learn more about work and family solutions, visit our web site at [www.goodbeginnings.org](http://www.goodbeginnings.org).

Mahalo nui loa,

<digital signature>

Robert R. Midkiff  
President, Board of Directors  
Good Beginnings Alliance



### Good Beginnings Alliance

33 South King Street  
808-531-5502

Neighbor Islands:  
1-866-531-5502

Email:  
[gba@goodbeginnings.org](mailto:gba@goodbeginnings.org)

Website:  
[www.goodbeginnings.org](http://www.goodbeginnings.org)

Good Beginnings Alliance is a non-profit organization that promotes policies and programs that place a priority on a child's first five years and supports the healthy growth and development of young children throughout Hawai'i.



## An Executive Guide to Work and Family Solutions

Focusing on early care and education for young children

## Who can afford to pay for early care and education?<sup>1</sup>

About two-thirds of the jobs in Hawaii do not pay enough to meet the minimum level of income needed to support the family. Families with young children struggle to balance family and work while providing their children with quality early care.

Family Type	Annual Income Needed in Hawaii
Adult with an infant	\$33,350
Adult with an infant and preschool child	\$43,300
Two adults with an infant and preschool child	\$47,800
Two adults with a preschool child and school age child	\$44,000

Almost half of the children under age 5 in Hawaii live in low-income families, meaning 185% of the federal poverty level which would be \$30,100 for a family of three and \$36,600 for a family of four.

### Cost of Early Care and Education in Hawaii (for children birth to age 5)

Average Monthly Fees	\$400-\$600
Range of Annual Fees	\$4,000 - \$10,000



# What Work and Family Solutions Mean

It means acknowledging the importance of balancing work and home life and providing a supportive environment for employees to maintain peak productivity and job performance.

Families have changed. In most two parent families, both parents are in the workforce. More than 10 million are single parents. In the United States over two million workers are single fathers, one in every six single parents is a dad.<sup>2</sup> Women with young children are one of the fastest growing groups in the workforce. In addition, Hawaii has the highest percentage, 67 percent, of working mothers in the nation.<sup>3</sup> These working parents must find childcare that will provide a safe and nurturing environment for their children during working hours.

## Bottom-Line Benefits

### Boosting recruitment

- Eighty-five percent of employers report that implementing work and family policies including flex-time and parent-specific leave policies improved employee recruitment.<sup>4</sup>
- About one in three working parents is willing to change employers or trade salary and benefits for work-family programs that fit their needs.

### Damping Turnover

- Depending of the type of work and family program offered, businesses reduced turnover by 37 percent to 60 percent.
- 71 percent of Johnson & Johnson employees who participated in work and family programs cited those programs as a key factor in their decision to stay with the company.

### Lowering absenteeism

- In 1998, The Wall Street Journal wrote that family issues were cited as the number one cause of a 25 percent increase in unscheduled workplace absences.
- According to the American Management Association, adopting flexible work arrangements can reduce absenteeism by as much as 50 percent.

### Increasing productivity

- A University of Chicago study found that the more employees used work and family benefits, the more they exhibited initiatives, teamwork, and flexibility.
- Forty-nine percent of employers report that work and family services had helped boost employee productivity.<sup>5</sup>

## Work and Family Solutions are Good Investments

Each policy described in this guide involves some costs, either time or money, but many of the costs are minimal and depend on the company's policy and size. Many family-friendly programs and policies become significant cost saving measures over time.

The 1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce by the Families and Work Institute found that:

- Two-thirds of employers report that benefits of work and family programs exceed costs or that the programs are cost-neutral.
- Three-quarters of employers who offer flexible work schedules find that benefits exceed costs or that the programs are cost-neutral.

# STRENGTHENING YOUR BUSINESS IMAGE WITH INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS: HOW TO GET STARTED

## STEP 1: Become Informed

*Know your employees' children's healthy early development needs.*

*Keep informed about the status and cost of early care and education in Hawaii.*

*Be aware of available community services to support your employees.*

*Make information available about health insurance for young children.*



<sup>1</sup> *Barely Making It on Your Own in Hawaii*, American Friends Service Committee-Hawaii Area Program, July 2000.

<sup>2</sup> *Household and Family Characteristics from the March 1998 Current Population Survey*, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Children's Defense Fund 2000

<sup>4</sup> Survey conducted by the National Employer-Supported Child Care project, 1984.

<sup>5</sup> Survey conducted by the National Employer-Supported Child Care project, 1984.

## STEP 2: Develop An Action Plan

### OPTION 1 — Implementing Supportive Practices and Providing Information

- Provide supportive workplace practices, which encourage positive feedback, two-way communication, respect and consistency.
- Simple information on where to seek licensed early care and education can be important to employees as they navigate the stages of child rearing.
- Information conveyed through established Employee Assistance Programs are the most common means to offer information and support.
- Log on to the Hawaii Community Foundation Website for their BIZKIDS guide – [www.hcf-hawaii.org](http://www.hcf-hawaii.org).
- Log on to the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau for current national laws, trends and information – [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov)
- Contact Good Beginnings for a free parent's guide on quality early learning and care
- Or log on at [www.goodbeginnings.org](http://www.goodbeginnings.org).
- Contact People Attentive to Children (PATCH) for child care resource and referral information at Oahu 839-1988, Kauai 246-0622, Kona 329-7101, Hilo 961-3169, Maui 242-9232. Or log on at [www.patch-hi.org](http://www.patch-hi.org).

### OPTION 2 — Offering Flextime and Time-off policies

- Offer flexible work arrangements for parents such as flextime, compressed work-week, job sharing, part-time opportunities, telecommuting and floating holidays.
- Allow employed parents to openly use their sick leave to care for ill children.
- Offer two days paid community leave a year to allow employees to visit their child's early care and education facility, or to participate in the activities of their young child's life.

### OPTION 3 — Providing Financial Assistance for Child Care

- Offer flexible benefits plans such as Dependent Care Assistance Plan (DCAP), which allows employees to spend pre-tax dollars on early care and education.
- Provide financial assistance through early care and education vouchers.
- Provide cafeteria-style benefits, which allow the use of employer paid benefit dollars for early care and education.

### OPTION 4 — Creating Services

- Offer on-site or near-site care, which allows a designed high-quality program that conforms to work demands.
- Offer back-up, sick child, or odd-hour care, which handle breakdowns in early care and education arrangements.

## STEP 3: Evaluate

*Conduct research to determine if business and employee's needs are being met.*

- Form focus groups.
- Administer surveys and/or questionnaires to follow up on the status of the existing action plan.
- Analyze findings to continually seek ways to improve current policies and programs.