



EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING
HONOLULU

GG Weisenfeld, Ed.D.
DIRECTOR

December 2013

Aloha,

When I became Director of the Executive Office on Early Learning this past July, my first task was to identify programs to help prepare children for kindergarten and ways the State could support this effort. The evidence is clear, children who attend high-quality programs prior to kindergarten do better as seen at critical points: 3rd grade reading scores, 9th grade student's GPA, the likelihood of a student dropping out of high school; and college attendance rate. However, not all children have equal access to these programs. It is estimated that approximately only 56% of 4-year-olds in Hawaii attend a program which will prepare them to get ready for kindergarten and beyond.

In order to start to solve this social injustice and later cost to our State, we are proposing in the Supplemental Budget request to expand the School Readiness Program through the creation of a new program which will establish prekindergarten classes on DOE campuses and the funding of family-child interaction learning programs to provide family engagement for four-year-olds. The DOE-EOEL proposal will cost \$4.7 million and mainly fund staff, HSTA and HGEA members, who will implement a quality 4-year-old program with support from my office. The \$1 million for the family engagement program will support providers in reaching families who do not choose to send their children to a program but still need supports in preparing children for the demands of kindergarten.

We have also worked with DHS to identify how much is needed, \$2.5 million, to increase the state portion of the co-payments for Preschool Open Doors for a family of four earning less than \$67,725. Our budget request is modest so that we can build a solid infrastructure to support high-quality programs that we can support our 4-year-olds so that they and Hawaii can a brighter future.

Sincerely,

GG Weisenfeld, Ed.D.

Director