

early childhood ACTION STRATEGY

TAKING ACTION FOR HAWAII'S CHILDREN

2013 - 2016



*All children will be valued, safe, healthy,
and ready to succeed*

The Early Learning Advisory Board acknowledges the importance of the strategies outlined in Taking Action for Hawai'i's Children. We commit to work together with The Executive Office on Early Learning to implement the activities outlined in this report.

Approved Motion - January 10, 2013

Action Strategy details and implementation progress can be found at our website:

earlylearning.hawaii.gov

January 2013

Special Message from Governor Abercrombie
Presented in Recognition of
**Early Childhood Action Strategy,
Taking Action for Hawai'i's Children**

January, 2013



On behalf of the people of the State of Hawai'i, thank you for your thoughtful work and participation in creating our State's Early Childhood Action Strategy, ***Taking Action for Hawai'i's Children***. This provides Hawai'i with a roadmap for a comprehensive system to support our vision that all Hawai'i's children are valued, safe, healthy, and ready to succeed.

I have tasked The Executive Office on Early Learning to coordinate a collaborative effort to ensure that every child in Hawai'i has access to high-quality early childhood development and learning opportunities. Taking Action for Hawai'i's Children work plan identifies points of focus and the partnerships needed to achieve our shared goals.

Last January in my State of the State report, I said, "Early childhood development and education lays the foundation for a lifetime of learning and results in productive citizens who will someday manage our businesses, build our homes and offices, welcome our visitors, care for the sick, make new discoveries in science, and lead us into the future." I extend to all those who made this my highest commendation and gratitude for helping with the first steps to realize that vision and for your ongoing service to your community and State.

Best wishes to each of you as we move forward and take action for Hawai'i's young children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neil Abercrombie". The signature is written in a cursive style.

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Governor, State of Hawai'i

Introduction

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL), created by Act 178 in July 2012, is charged with coordinating efforts on behalf of young children, prenatal to age eight, by creating partnerships and alignment of policies and programs to achieve improved outcomes in health, safety, school readiness and success. Accompanying this Legislation was the creation of the Early Learning Advisory Board (ELAB), composed of individuals from the public and private sectors. The ELAB replaces the Early Learning Council and will advise the EOEL on implementation of the strategies in this report.

The first step in this work was to engage key partners across the state to define the desired outcomes for children and families and the critical strategies that will need to be our collective priorities over the next three to five years. This initiative, launched in Summer 2012, is the Hawai'i Early Childhood Action Strategy - *Taking Action for Hawai'i's Children*.

The Hawai'i Early Childhood Action Strategy is intentionally outcomes driven, incorporating indicators, data and research to inform strategies and actions and monitor progress over time. An outcomes approach promotes a focus on the optimal well-being of Hawai'i's young children and families, an understanding of what conditions currently look like, and finally, the identification of strategies and plans designed to improve those conditions. This document summarizes outcomes and strategies. The full work plan with indicators and benchmarks is found at earlylearning.hawaii.gov. A collaborative process was adopted and designed to:

1. Create shared clarity about what needs to occur to significantly transform Hawai'i's early childhood system;
2. Embed an outcomes approach; and

3. Build the relationships and partnerships needed across public and private stakeholders to ensure success over time.

Hawai'i is in alignment with recommendations from the National Governors Association (NGA) that governors and their administrations take strong leadership in reform efforts to improve learning outcomes through the alignment of early learning and K-12 and to expand access to quality early learning programs. Built on the Hawai'i Early Learning Council's (ELC) Framework for a Comprehensive Early Childhood System, the Action Strategy expands ELC's prenatal to five focus to include children prenatal through third grade, as recommended by NGA. This builds critical links to the kindergarten through third grade early education system. Hawai'i's Early Childhood Action Strategy takes inspiration from a national, research-based framework, "Pathways to Children Ready for School and Succeeding at Third Grade," developed by Lisbeth B. Schorr and Vicky Marchand (The Pathways Mapping Initiative, June 2007). The goals of the Action Strategy are informed by the Pathways framework.

Goal 1: Healthy and welcomed starts

Goal 2: Health and development that is on track

Goal 3: A family centered system where all families are supported and supportive

Goal 4: Access to high-quality child care and education

Goal 5: Continuity in early childhood experiences

Goal 6: Effective teaching and learning in kindergarten to third grade (K-3) classrooms

Need for a Comprehensive, Coherent Prenatal to Age 8 System

Many dedicated people have worked for decades to foster successful outcomes for our youngest children. Hawai'i has been a national leader in ensuring access to quality health care, family support and community based models that improve the lives of young children. However, we face many challenges including our geography, a set of unique island separated by large distances, our structure, with services for children distributed across numerous departments and funding streams, and our data systems, lacking community level data essential for planning and tracking of outcomes. All of this combines to make coordination both challenging and expensive.

Through the years, Hawai'i has tried different ways to better coordinate these efforts to improve early childhood development and learning policy. During the 2011 Hawai'i legislative session, key legislators introduced a bill to establish an Executive Office on Early Learning as a governance structure with stronger authority and responsibility to make fiscal, policy and program decisions for early childhood in Hawai'i. As mentioned above, the bill, signed by Governor Neil Abercrombie, became Act 178 on July 1, 2012. The major responsibilities of the EOEL are to improve outcomes for our youngest children through the creation and support of a comprehensive system. To accomplish this, the EOEL collaborates with public agencies (such as the departments of Health, Human Services and Education) and the private sector on policy development, planning and decisions regarding resource allocation, outcomes to be achieved and metrics for the measurement of those outcomes.

Hawai'i's Early Childhood Action Strategy prioritizes and sequences strategies and action steps. It provides the EOEL a roadmap for implementing critical strategies, monitoring progress towards benchmarks and goals, and creating a coherent, coordinated early childhood development and learning system that benefits Hawai'i's children and their families.

Guiding Principles for A Coordinated Early Childhood System

Our Overarching Outcomes

Our guiding star is the well-being of the children of Hawai'i. Through successful implementation of the strategies outlined in this document we hope to achieve three overarching outcomes:

1. Children's health (physical, mental and oral) and development is on track;
2. Children are ready for school when they enter kindergarten; and
3. Children are proficient learners by third grade.

Our Values

Children develop and learn best in the context of a family and community where they are safe and valued, their physical needs are met, and they feel psychologically secure and intellectually challenged.

Our Guiding Principles

- Ensure equity by addressing disparities in access to services for all families with young children:
 - Improve access, affordability and quality.
 - Increase community-oriented solutions.
- Create reciprocal and responsive relationships with families of young children.

- Respond to diverse family composition.
- Support a prevention focus.
- Promote collaborative solutions for effective and efficient system and program design and accountability:
 - Collaborate on longitudinal, unified and interactive data systems.
 - Invest in research and data driven solutions.
- Build the capacity and competency of professional staff as an essential element of system and program design.
- Ensure continuity of effective practices, services and support across ages and program settings.

The Action Strategy is grounded in national and state level best practice and research on early childhood development. Decades of research under the leadership of the National Scientific Council, based at the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, provide clear guidance on the science behind the development of the young child. This work in neurobiology, developmental psychology, and the economics of human capital formation has led to the following core concepts of development:

- Child development is a foundation for community development and economic development as capable children become the foundation of a prosperous and sustainable society.
- Brains are built over time. Brain architecture is built over a succession of "sensitive periods" each which is associated with the formation of specific circuits that are associated with specific abilities. Through this process, early experiences create a foundation for lifelong learning, behavior, and both physical and mental health.
- The interactive influences of genes and experience literally shape the architecture of the developing brain, and the active ingredient is the "serve and return" nature of children's engagement in relationships with their parents and other caregivers in their family or community.

- Both brain architecture and developing abilities are built “from the bottom up,” with simple circuits and skills providing the scaffolding for more advanced circuits and skills over time.
- Toxic stress in early childhood is associated with persistent effects on the nervous system and stress hormone systems that can damage developing brain architecture, leading to lifelong problems in learning, behavior, and both physical and mental health.
- Creating the right conditions for early childhood development is likely to be more effective and less costly than addressing problems at a later age. ¹

An additional underpinning of the strategies is our commitment to using the Strengthening Families Protective Factor model to promote healthy outcomes for children and families. These five protective factors are parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need and social and emotional competence of children.

¹ The Science of Early Childhood Development, National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2007

Goal 1: Healthy and Welcomed Starts



Goal 1 Outcomes

- Women and their families have access to quality health care across their lifespan – with a special emphasis on vulnerable populations.
- Teenagers defer pregnancy and child bearing until they graduate from high school.
- There are successful birth outcomes
 - There is access to high quality family planning services.
 - There is a reduction in unintended pregnancies.
 - There is access to high quality prenatal/perinatal care (pre conception, birth, postpartum).
- Nurturing, bonding, and attachment are ensured.

Context

There are approximately 18,000 births annually in Hawai'i with 80% of children being born on the island of Oahu. There are a relatively few "birthing" hospitals in the state, fewer than 12, providing the perfect opportunity for a strong coordinated approach to achieving the goal of healthy and welcomed starts. The Department of Health (DOH), Family Health Services Division has been a national leader in supporting community-based programs that foster secure bonding and attachment. The DOH and will take the lead on many of the proposed actions.

Although, as a state, we have high rates of access to health insurance, we continue to be challenged by pockets of disparity and access. As a result, outcomes are inconsistent across communities, ethnicities and cultural groups.



The team working on Goal 1, Healthy and Welcomed Starts, went into their work with a deep commitment to equity and improving access for all populations. Central to this was their commitment to quality health care across the life span, recognizing that healthy birth outcomes start with preconception health and that many grandparents in Hawai'i are the primary caretakers for infants and young children. Hawai'i should maintain its leadership in ensuring access to health insurance and health care, while addressing inequitable distribution of services and targeting strategies to address the unique needs of vulnerable populations. Policies and practices that highlight opportunities to improve birth outcomes are essential.

Goal 1: Healthy and Welcomed Starts

Additionally, proactive outreach that provides resources and access to community-based services to parents of newborns is essential to let them know they are not alone; there are supports and resources available to assist them.

Finally, the data is clear that births to teen parents or parents who have not completed high school is a compounding risk factor for child health and development as young parents are still growing up and maturing themselves and often don't have the necessary resources available to fully care for a child. Teenagers need supportive approaches and education that highlight the opportunities ahead of them (trade school, higher education, job training, employment) and the importance of making healthy life choices, including pregnancy deferral. Although the number of births to teen parents in Hawai'i falls statistically in the middle of the national pack, there are numerous pockets, both geographic and ethnic, where the rate is double the national rate. Outreach and programming is particularly needed in these communities.



Goal 1: Healthy and Welcomed Starts

Strategywhat it means, includes
<p>1a. Improve birth outcomes.</p>	<p>Promote healthy birth and delivery by addressing policies that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) improve access to continuity of care between pregnancies, 2) reduce elective induction of labor and delivery prior to 39 weeks, 3) reinstate programs that minimize prenatal exposure to tobacco, drugs and alcohol, and 4) address inequity in access to prenatal care for underserved communities.
<p>1b. Optimize early health and bonding through breastfeeding.</p>	<p>Develop and promote a public education campaign; improve maternity care practices such as Baby Friendly Hospital designation and welcome baby baskets with information and resources; educate employers on worksite related breastfeeding policies.</p>
<p>1c. Support teen pregnancy deferral.</p>	<p>Include teen pregnancy deferral in a comprehensive review of Department of Health and Department of Education curricula that promotes adolescent healthy life choices. Look at both content and timing of curricula in light of shifting age of maturation.</p>

First Steps

Based on opportunity and impact, we have identified the following actions as our initial focus:

Reinstate perinatal substance abuse prevention and home visitation programs to improve birth and early attachment outcomes.

Goal 2: Health and Development on Track



Goal 2 Outcomes

- There is high quality accessible child health care; children have a family centered medical and dental home.
- There is early detection and follow up for developmental concerns or delays.
- There is prevention of and protection from abuse and neglect.
- Children have opportunities for physical activity and good nutrition.

Context

Early childhood health and wellness is much more than the absence of disease. It is about building a strong foundation of lifelong physical, oral and mental health, which in turn supports readiness for school. Additionally, it's about minimizing adversity and stresses early in life. A key value in our approach is to strengthen relationships and incorporate the science of child development and protective factors that reduce risks for poor health and child abuse and neglect. Targeted strategies that provide outreach to vulnerable families are essential, especially with the genuine goal of ensuring families are connected, as early as possible, to supports and services that mitigate risks for the child and family.

Hawai'i has been a leader in ensuring young children have access to health insurance and in the development of statewide programs designed to mitigate early adverse experiences: 0-3 home visiting, early intervention, preschool developmental screening and perinatal substance abuse prevention. The Department of Health, Family Health Services Division and the American Academy of Pediatrics provide leadership in the achievement of health outcomes for young children. In the last few years, Hawai'i lost many of its prevention programs during the economic recession. The strategies developed by the Goal 2 Team, Health and Development on Track, seek to reestablish and enhance those program models by applying research based practices and training with clearly defined outcomes and metrics. As a State, we have tended to remain in silos based on targeted groups of children. The work you see reflected here is our effort to connect the fields of health, family support and early childhood care and education together with shared outcomes,

Goal 2: Health and Development on Track

metrics and practitioner training. There is much to be done to advocate for the reinstatement of preventive programs and supports for young children and families and to better link public health and medical supports within the broader early childhood system.

Strategy	...what it means, includes
<p>2a. Ensure children prenatal-8 have a family-centered medical and dental home.</p>	<p>Maintain Hawai'i's leadership in ensuring children have access to health insurance. Use the Affordable Care Act as a vehicle to support access to quality medical and dental homes. Develop common best practices, data systems and protocols for medical and dental homes; develop relevant work plans.</p>
<p>2b. Ensure comprehensive developmental screening and follow-through to appropriate services.</p>	<p>Determine effective components of a comprehensive screening, assessment and intervention system; develop collaborative agreements, common forms, data systems and protocols. Support and build upon existing collaborative work (e.g. Hui Kupa'a Early Childhood Work Group, Healthy Child Care Hawai'i).</p>
<p>2c. Design and implement a tracking and monitoring system with the capacity to measure child health and development from prenatal-8.</p>	<p>Develop an interagency advisory team to work with a technical assistance consultant to design, develop and implement a child development tracking and monitoring system.</p>

Goal 2: Health and Development on Track

Strategywhat it means, includes
<p>2d. Develop early childhood health and wellness guidelines.</p>	<p>Develop health and wellness guidelines for the state-funded early learning program (see strategy 4b.), linking to the obesity prevention task force efforts. Identify processes and procedures to embed the guidelines into other early childhood settings.</p>
<p>2e. Embed health and wellness guidelines and practices in early childhood professional development systems.</p>	<p>Provide education and training on children's health and wellness to providers, practitioners and parents. Develop the infrastructure (e.g. Health Training Academy, Home Visiting Network) to build partnerships and expand the reach of training topics on child development, child abuse and neglect, oral health, breastfeeding, physical activity, nutrition, etc.</p>
<p>2f. Provide a continuum of support for families with young children to prevent child abuse and neglect.</p>	<p>Establish a system of outreach and support to vulnerable families to ensure their connection to community-based resources and services including family support, home visiting, health, mental health, domestic violence intervention, and substance abuse treatment. Embed the Strengthening Families Protective Factors framework in early learning program guidelines, professional development, training and technical assistance. Strengthen collaborative planning and design efforts across departments.</p>

Goal 2: Health and Development on Track

First Steps

Based on opportunity and impact, we have identified the following actions as our initial focus:

Develop health and wellness guidelines for all early childhood development and learning programs. Improve access, screening and assessment and data systems for comprehensive child development.



Goal 3 Outcomes

- Children and families live in safe, stable and supportive homes.
 - Neighborhoods are supportive, safe and stable.
 - Family well-being and resiliency is strengthened.
 - Parenting skills are strengthened.
 - Families' capacity to support their children's learning is strengthened.
- Practitioners' competency in partnering with families is enhanced.
- Early childhood practitioners have reciprocal and responsive relationships with families.

Context

Hawai'i can be a challenging home for families with young children. Yes, families can go to the beach almost every day of the year, but very few do. Family members are busy working two, sometimes three, jobs to pay the high cost of housing, food and other necessities. Families with young children are our most economically challenged. Our urban environments, which are home to most of Hawai'i's families with young children, are not particularly child and family friendly; sidewalks and bike paths are few and parks fewer. Families often sit in urban traffic for two hours a day taking children with them to childcare near their work places. In the other extreme, Hawai'i's rural communities are isolated, without good public transportation and often hours away from services that families need. The strategies recommended seek to build interconnected webs of supports for families, reaching families where they are, through hospitals at the time of birth, community health centers, family centers, schools or mobile services for many of our rural communities.

The Native Hawaiian cultural insight and value, that families and communities are the primary caregivers and most influential to support the healthy development and learning of young children, is the essence of Goal 3. Research underscores the pivotal role families play in shaping their child's healthy development and lifelong learning. Yet systems and programs are not always designed, nor practitioners trained, in a manner consistent with this value.

True, authentic and respectful relationships between families, practitioners and programs are critical to ensure a partnership in which all are working together to improve outcomes for young children. Hawai'i envisions a system that truly

Goal 3: A Family-Centered System Where All Families are Supported & Supportive

values the wisdom, strength and role of parents as partners. And we know it all starts with relationships: relationships between parents and children, between families and practitioners, and between programs and communities. Systems and programs that understand and embrace the value of reciprocal relationships and provide ongoing opportunities to cultivate and support relationship-building will have longer lasting, positive and holistic approaches to improving outcomes for children and families. Families who are supported and acknowledged for their time and efforts are more likely to actively participate alongside practitioners, who benefit from training on relationship-based partnerships, and programs that build in real opportunities for parent engagement.

Strategywhat it means, includes
<p>3a. Create statewide, community-based places for families, caregivers, and early childhood practitioners to access resources, supports and social connections using existing facilities.</p>	<p>Design and implement a network of community-based sites, either physical or virtual, that integrate outreach, resource connection, access to comprehensive services and supports and social networking. Models could additionally serve as sites where early childhood practitioners can access professional development and quality improvement opportunities.</p>
<p>3b. Provide targeted outreach to vulnerable families.</p>	<p>See Goal 2, Strategy 2f.</p>

Goal 3: A Family-Centered System Where All Families are Supported & Supportive

Strategywhat it means, includes
<p>3c. Improved family resilience and economic stability.</p>	<p>Ensure access to post-secondary education, English language classes, job training and employment opportunities, high quality child care, financial and health literacy skills development and substance abuse, mental health and domestic violence prevention resources.</p>
<p>3d. Strengthen family leadership in program design and evaluation.</p>	<p>Develop family leadership through training, peer-to-peer mentoring and community-based cohorts and processes. Create opportunities for parent involvement in program design and quality improvement efforts. Promote family-friendly policies that streamline processes and facilitate eligibility and enrollment, and ease navigation through the system.</p>
<p>3e. Develop, disseminate and embed family engagement guidelines into the state-funded early learning program and other early childhood programs.</p>	<p>Develop and embed family engagement guidelines into the state-funded early learning program (see Strategy 4b.) and other early childhood programs and services. Integrate guidelines into professional development systems. Provide resources, tools, training and technical assistance to support the use of the guidelines.</p>
<p>3f. Promote early childhood practitioner competency in partnering with families.</p>	<p>Advocate for required coursework in working effectively with families. Develop Family Partnership Core Competencies for professionals. Design and disseminate a toolkit and training for practitioners and programs to enhance communication and meaningful engagement with families.</p>

Goal 3: A Family-Centered System Where All Families are Supported & Supportive

First Steps

Based on opportunity and impact, we have identified the following actions as our initial focus:

- Develop family engagement guidelines for all 0-8 programs and services.
- Design and begin implementation of a network of community-based sites that integrate outreach, resource connection, access to comprehensive supports and social networking.

Goal 4: High Quality Child Care and Early Education



Goal 4 Outcomes

- High quality childcare and early education is available, accessible and affordable.
- There is a choice for families of high quality childcare and early education programs: home visitation, family child interaction learning, family childcare and center-based programs.
- High quality childcare and early education environments emphasize developmentally appropriate practices to build the physical, social/emotional, language, literacy, math and science skills of young children.
- High quality childcare and early education is linked to health, mental health, substance abuse prevention and developmental services.

Context

Today, more than 40 percent of Hawai'i's children start kindergarten without having participated in a preschool program (Good Beginnings Alliance, 2012). Hawai'i is on the brink of changing that metric with the proposal to the 2013 State Legislature of a new, State-supported early learning program for four-year-old children in the year prior to Kindergarten.



This provides an opportunity to move several strategies that support and enhance the quality of public and private early care and education programs. Starting with the new program, important components like quality program standards, workforce development strategies, professional development supports, and enhanced financing mechanisms will be developed and built out.

Hawai'i values family choice in selecting the childcare and early education settings and approaches that best meet the needs of the child and family. The four settings long embraced include: home visitation, family child interaction learning, family childcare and center based programs. As important as our ability to provide a quality early learning program is, most of our young children are not in preschool. With Hawai'i's high rate of parental employment, quality childcare options are critical for families of younger children. Childcare programs are unaffordable and are not an option chosen by many families. Those families often turn to an informal network of family, friend and neighbor care.

Goal 4: High Quality Child Care and Early Education

The strategies developed by the Goal 4 Team, High Quality Childcare and Early Education, hope to provide support for these providers of care as well as our more formal networks. This continuum of settings is important for both family choice as well as to meet the developmental needs of young children as they move from infancy and toddlerhood into preschool ages. Therefore, it is important to also target strategies that support the unique needs of infants and toddlers, an age group that is often overlooked. The Department of Human Services is a critical partner with the EOEL in this effort.



Finally, early literacy has emerged as a national focus area and priority to ensure that by the time children turn 8, they have the literacy skills needed to fully benefit from and participate in school. Hawai'i has accomplished much in incorporating early literacy practices and approaches across the early childhood continuum, yet has work to do in early childhood practitioner training, and promoting family and community-based strategies.

Strategywhat it means, includes
<p>4a. Design, implement, and administer Hawai'i's State-funded early learning program.</p>	<p>Ensure passage of 2013 enabling legislation and funding for the EOEL early learning program. Finalize program standards. Design program components and administrative processes. Initiate the early learning program in Fall 2014.</p>

Goal 4: High Quality Child Care and Early Education

Strategy	...what it means, includes
<p>4b. Develop a comprehensive set of guidelines that incorporate health, wellness and family engagement for early childhood programs and a system to ensure quality across the early childhood continuum.</p>	<p>Develop family engagement (see Strategy 3e.), health and wellness guidelines (see Strategy 2d.) under the auspices of EOEL.</p>
<p>4c. Build professional competence and quality for infant and toddler services and programs.</p>	<p>Establish and support Infant Toddler Core Competencies within the professional development system. Support a network of specialists to provide coaching and mentoring focused on infants and toddlers. Ensure health and safety standards are part of licensing for programs that serve infants and toddlers. Explore childcare block grant quality set-asides to expand services and support for infants and toddlers.</p>
<p>4d. Promote early literacy and language development across the prenatal to 8 continuum.</p>	<p>Strengthen and embed early literacy in professional development and training, including required language and literacy coursework. Ensure program standards have language and literacy components (see 4a). Develop and sponsor a comprehensive public awareness campaign that promotes daily reading and literacy.</p>
<p>4e. Recruit and develop a qualified workforce.</p>	<p>Conduct an analysis of the existing workforce (qualifications, location). Determine needed workforce capacity for the State-funded early learning program. Analyze the gap between existing and needed workforce and develop strategies and benchmarks for meeting the gap, including unique community solutions.</p>

Goal 4: High Quality Child Care and Early Education

Strategywhat it means, includes
<p>4f. Implement a comprehensive professional development and retention system to maintain a qualified early care and education workforce.</p>	<p>Work from the same core body of knowledge across childcare and early education including administrators, programs, and practitioners. Determine model(s) and approaches to best support the professional growth and retention of the workforce. Effectively use technology and cohort models in professional development. Design and implement improved professional development data systems.</p>
<p>4g. Develop financing strategies that support family choice, ease of access and continuity of care.</p>	<p>Coordinate application process and childcare financing between the EOEL, early learning program and the Department of Human Services, Child Care Program.</p>

First Steps

Based on opportunity and impact, we have identified the following actions as our initial focus:

Design and initiate implementation of the early learning program. Implement workforce recruitment strategies and improve the Registry capacity.



Goal 5 Outcomes

- Children and families experience continuous, smooth transitions throughout the birth to age 8 continuum and between different programs and settings.
- Curricula and expectations are aligned among providers of early education and schooling.
- Providers of childcare, early and elementary education and social and health services are connected with each other and with families.

Context

There are numerous transitions that occur throughout the birth to age 8 continuum: from birth hospital to home, from home visiting programs to center-based programs, from child care to early education, from infant/toddler programs to preschool programs, from small community-based programs to larger school-based programs, from one provider to another.... and the list goes on. Additionally, families choose different program approaches and locations that best meet the needs of their child and family. Research tells us that when there is continuity and meaningful transition processes across and between the programs and settings young children experience, their development is better supported and their families are able to help the child better navigate the changes in environments.

Parents of children with special needs may be anxious about changing programs as they know how individualized their child's needs are. It can be daunting to move to a new environment with new teachers who are not familiar with their child's individual strengths and special needs. Warm, inviting offices, staff and classrooms that welcome both children and families are essential, as well as the time needed to get to know the unique gifts of both. Programs that succeed in smooth transitions between one another are those that provide a consistent time and space for programs to gather, assess what is working and not working, complete joint training and plan together to ensure continuity for families in the community. Community and school leaders that prioritize continuity as an important function have improved practices.

Goal 5: Continuity in Early Childhood Experiences Birth through 3rd Grade

Strategy	...what it means, includes
<p>5a. Ensure effective transition processes and procedures are in place for young children.</p>	<p>Provide community based outreach to school administrators and their families who will be affected by the change in kindergarten entry age thereby creating a smooth transition process for children entering the early learning program in the fall of 2014. Help to ensure smooth transitions for children exiting Part C, Early Intervention Program.</p>
<p>5b. Understand and address issues related to chronic absences in the early learning program and K-3 settings.</p>	<p>Develop agreed upon definition and understanding of the impact of chronic absence, the capacity to track and analyze data including the influence of health and behavioral issues, and strategies and plans to address the issue.</p>
<p>5c. Integrate the use of the Hawai'i Early Learning and Development Standards (HELDS).</p>	<p>Develop guidelines that describe the purpose and intended use of the HELDS. Develop inter-agency agreements among EOEL, DHS, DOE, and DOH to embed the HELDS in programs and contracts. Develop supplementary materials and supports, including training modules. Develop and implement a contracting process that allows monitoring the use of the HELDS.</p>
<p>5d. Identify and support practitioners across programs and settings to ensure children's social and emotional development.</p>	<p>Convene a team of partners to assess current data and practices across systems and programs and to make a recommendation to the EOEL of necessary action steps.</p>

Goal 5: Continuity in Early Childhood Experiences Birth through 3rd Grade

Strategy	...what it means, includes
<p>5e. Ensure effective teaching across settings, birth to grade 3</p>	<p>Develop a coordinated bachelors degree with ECE endorsement for practitioners across birth to second grade.</p>
<p>5f. Ensure comprehensive developmental screening, recommended assessment, and follow-through to intervention services across the prenatal to 8 continuum</p>	<p>See Goal 2, Strategy 2b.</p>
<p>5g. Sustain effective P-3 strategies and approaches statewide.</p>	<p>Identify and disseminate lessons, sustain successes and address challenges learned through the five P-3 demonstration sites.</p>

First Steps

Based on opportunity and impact, we have identified the following actions as our initial focus:

Ensure effective transition processes and procedures are in place for children affected by the change in the age of kindergarten entry. Provide training and support for effective transition planning. Support a working group to analyze and recommend actions to decrease chronic absenteeism.

Goal 6: Effective Teaching and Learning in K-3 Classrooms



Goal 6 Outcomes

- Produce and maintain excellent teaching and learning.
- Develop trusting relationship within schools and between communities and schools.
- Support children's social emotional development and learning.
- Assess and monitor children's developmental progress.

Context

In order to reach the outcomes we hope to achieve for young children in Hawai'i, the Executive Office on Early Learning extended its reach to the early elementary school arena, Kindergarten through 3rd grade. The strategies recommended here build on the Department of Education (DOE) Strategic Plan 2011-2018 and the efforts of P-20. Efforts are underway to link DOE's Common Core Standards with our Hawai'i Early Learning and Development Standards, support teachers in their work with our youngest children and enhance parent/school/community partnerships. Hawai'i's P-20 Partnerships for Education has embraced the mission to strengthen the educational pipeline so that all students achieve career and college success. Under this larger umbrella, Hawai'i's P-3 Initiative has promoted the development of a cohesive continuum of early learning experiences through 3rd grade. Five community-based P-3 demonstration sites have piloted policies that support and enhance child-teacher interaction, data-sharing, early literacy, extended learning opportunities and sharing of ideas across early learning and elementary school teachers and leadership.

Taking those demonstration lessons to scale, Hawai'i recognizes the need for and value of ongoing, one-on-one support and professional development for K-3 teachers to enhance classroom instruction and teacher/student interaction, building from what research and practice tell us about early child development and learning. Providing K-3 teachers with fully-trained and available mentors and coaches is an effective strategy that leads to improved and sustainable classroom practices. Mentor/coaches develop a relationship with teachers, built on trust and respect, and through observation, reflection and feedback, support ongoing practice enhancement and professional development.

Goal 6: Effective Teaching and Learning in K-3 Classrooms

Strategy	...what it means, includes
6a. Ensure effective teaching and learning strategies in K-3 classrooms through a system of mentors and coaches.	Provide fully trained and available mentor-coaches to elementary schools and complex coordination to support effective K-3 classroom teaching and learning strategies. Expand upon current practice to include all K-3 teachers.
6b. Promote and support student/teacher classroom interactions.	Select, provide and implement a valid and reliable observation tool. Provide professional development and mentor-coaches to support teachers to improve and monitor effective student/teacher classroom interactions.
6c. Develop a professional learning community.	Increase supported and coordinated annual leadership training opportunities for DOE Complex/Complex Areas, in partnership with early learning leadership.
6d. Implement common formative child assessment to inform classroom instruction.	Provide DOE K-2 teachers coordinated trainings to implement common formative child assessments to inform classroom instruction, as requested.
6e. Expand and maintain Early Childhood Education (ECE) professional development.	Provide and maintain ECE professional development course work for DOE K-3 teachers.

Goal 6: Effective Teaching and Learning in K-3 Classrooms

Strategy	...what it means, includes
<p>6f. Offer an ECE endorsement for DOE Kindergarten teachers.</p>	<p>Offer DOE Kindergarten teachers opportunities to obtain an ECE endorsement.</p>
<p>6g. Support school-community partnerships that are tailored to and appropriate per school and community.</p>	<p>See Goal 3, Strategy 3a.</p>

First Steps

Based on opportunity and impact, we have identified the following actions as our initial focus:

Articulate P-3 lessons learned and sustain efficacy. Implement a fully trained and available mentor coach program in K-3 classrooms.

Background and Planning Process

The Early Childhood Indicator Project

In January of 2012, the Executive Office on Early Learning, in partnership with the Department of Health, entered into contract with consultants to conduct an analysis of current data capacity, develop a child well being indicator framework and craft recommendations for implementation. The analysis will be used by the Governor's Office, State departmental leads and other policy makers to improve utilization and access to adequate data for the purposes of improving health, safety and school readiness outcomes for our youngest children. The analysis of the "current state" and clarification of the key data points needed to track child outcomes and plan effective programs will enable policy makers to have much needed information that will improve our overall state early childhood system. Coordinated state health, human services and early care and education (ECE) data systems will further enable state policy makers to effectively close the school readiness gap and prepare all young students to succeed in school and in life. The project was conducted in the following phases:

Phase 1:

January - March 2012 – Development and vetting of indicator framework and assessment of current capacity to track key indicators.

Phase 2:

April-June 2012 – Baseline data inventory on indicators in the framework and assessment of data systems. Recommendations and development of priorities for data capacity development agenda.

Phase 3:

July - September 2012 – Partnership development and commitment to improve priority data systems. Development of strategies to move the indicators.

The set of **indicators** were selected based on several criteria:

- A direct causative relationship between the indicator and school readiness based on research. A change in one or more of the indicators will influence children's school readiness. The significance of the indicator document can be found on the EOEL website under reports (earlylearning.hawaii.gov).
- The indicator reflects conditions that can be altered through state policy actions. The indicator helps to better understand the impact of investments and policy choices.
- The indicator can be accurately tracked to enable the state to assess gaps and target services with special attention to vulnerable populations.
- Each of the core indicators is measurable using state and local data that either exists now or for which a data development agenda is planned and underway. Emerging indicators have been listed for their qualitative and educational impact.

The EOEL will track and report annually on the specific indicators as they relate to the goals set out in the Action Strategy. These indicators will be referenced in the appropriate section of the detailed work plan document. Detailed sets of indicators and measurements can be found on the EOEL website under reports.

Action Strategy Development Process

The Action Strategy is a two-phase process with the first phase of the project completed in December 2012. The second phase will include the staged implementation, oversight and continuous refinement of the Action Strategy.

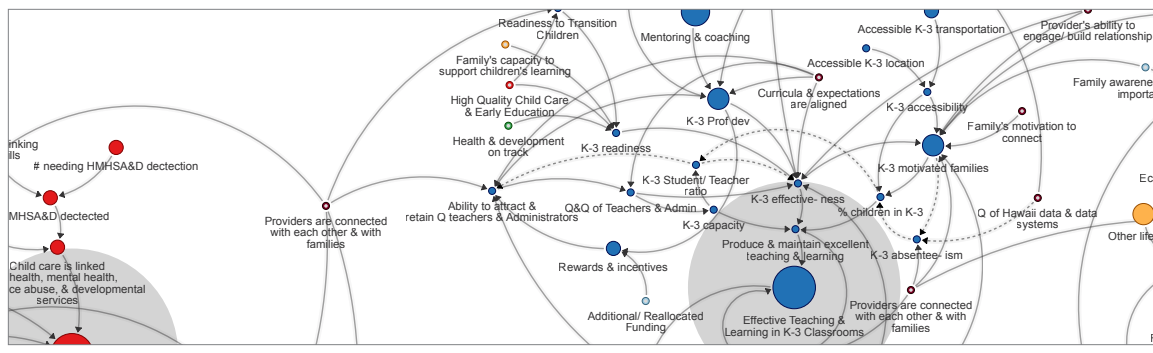
The first phase was sequenced in four parts:

1. Planning and Project Design - June 2012

2. Engagement and Context Mapping - Summer of 2012

- i. Engagement of Team Leaders for each goal and their recruitment of members.
- ii. Context mapping

Scott Spann of Innate Solutions was engaged as a consultant to work with the teams and interviewed more than a dozen key stakeholders to help us “see” the critical strategic efforts needed to move the identified indicators and create a virtual early childhood system.



The outcomes achieved through the context mapping effort included:

- Identification of the interdependencies between and among each of the goals and the key forces affecting them
- Creation of a common frame and language that “holds” the early childhood conversation over time
- Development of a platform for the exploration and analysis guiding the overall action strategy effort
- Analysis of the leverage points with the power to transform the quality of early childhood outcomes
- Input on sequencing of the various actions across the network to effectively coordinate action over time for greatest impact

The completed map can be accessed through

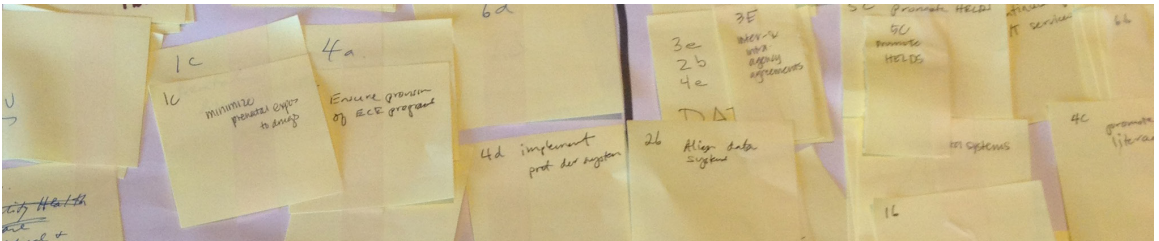
<http://sn.im/contextmap>

3. Development of Strategies and Prioritized Actions to Implement Those Strategies - September – November 2012

This work was done in and across teams in the early fall. JoAnn Farnsworth, Executive Office of Early Learning, Melodie Vega, Hawaii Careers with Young Children, and Jodi Hardin, who led the development of the Early Childhood State Plan for Colorado, coordinated this effort with the teams. Each team was charged with identification of key strategies and action steps that would address the indicators in their given goal area, providing a strong platform for the EOEL to build upon overtime. These initial strategies will support the early learning program that is under development as part of Goal 4 to create a high quality model for access to statewide preschool.

The Executive Office on Early Learning recruited co-leaders, representing public and private sectors, for each of the six goal areas, who were then asked to recruit members for their teams based on the individual's passion for and knowledge of the goal. To date, over 100 individuals have been involved in the development of the Action Strategy. The EOEL is deeply grateful for the leadership of the team leaders noted below.

Goal 1: Healthy and Welcomed Starts	Mona Maehara, Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies and Terri Byers, Maternal and Child Health Branch, Department of Health
Goal 2: Health and Development on Track	Marty Oliphant, Hawai'i Chapter National Association of Social Workers and Keiko Nitta, Family Health Services Division, Department of Health
Goal 3: A Family Centered System in which All Families are Supported and Supportive	Haaheo Mansfield, Parents and Children Together and Chris Jackson, Head Start State Collaboration Office
Goal 4: High Quality Child Care and Early Education	Angela Thomas, Good Beginnings Alliance and Ben Naki, Parents and Children Together Head Start/ Early Head Start
Goal 5: Continuity in Early Childhood Experiences	Michael Fahey, Good Beginnings Alliance and Phyllis Ida, Department of Education
Goal 6: Effective Teaching and Learning in K-3 Classrooms	GG Weisenfeld, P-3 University of Hawai'i and Diane Young, Department of Education

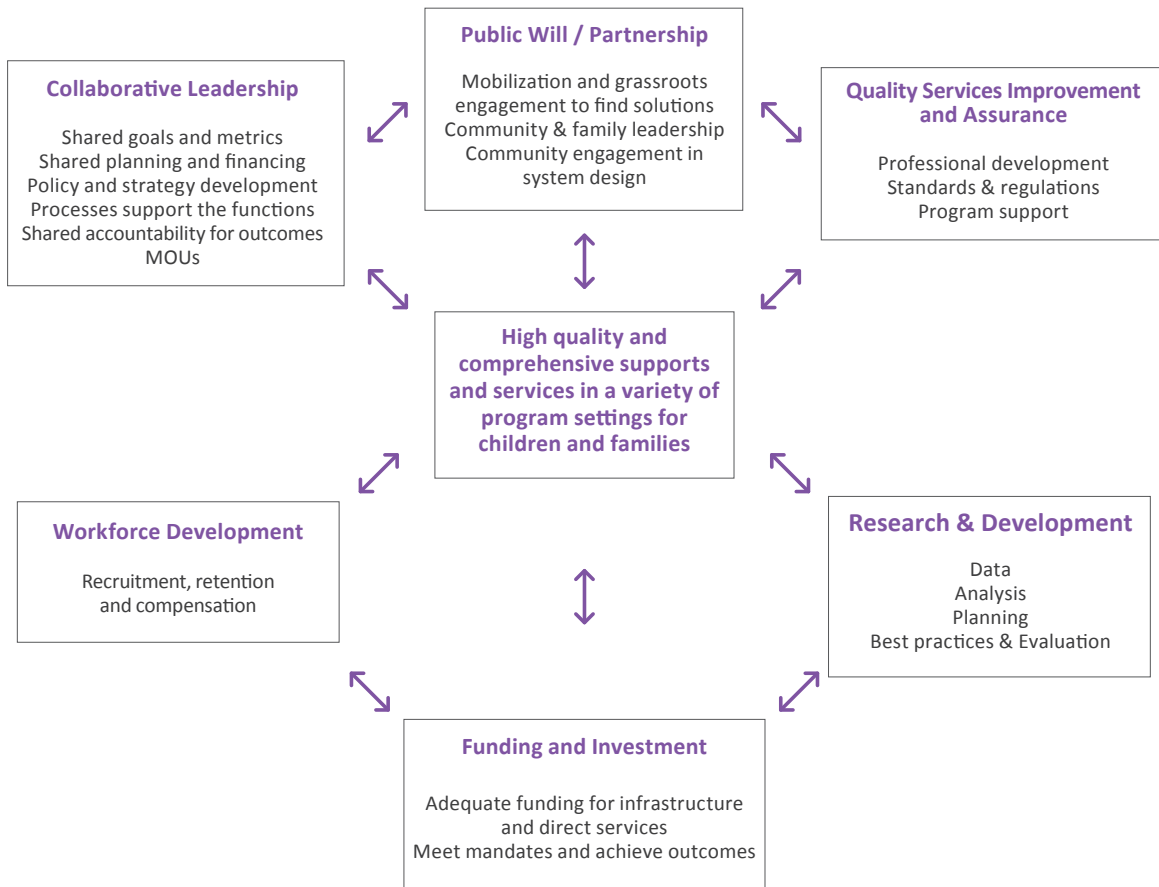


4. Development of System Elements Required for Implementation and Monitoring - November – December 2012

In this phase of the Action Strategy process the teams identified not only the strategies needed for Hawai'i to develop a comprehensive early childhood system, but the elements of an effective coordinated system that would support the implementation and monitoring of the strategies. These system elements are noted in the chart below. Strategies for their improvement will take place in the Spring of 2013 and will be part of the Executive Office on Early Learning's 2013 annual report.

We have included a schematic of the major system elements that will need to be addressed as part of our comprehensive improvement efforts. Many of these were identified by the work of the Early Learning Council and again in Hawai'i's Race to the Top, Early Learning Challenge grant application and reinforced in the Action Strategy work. Improvement to cross-departmental data systems for tracking child outcomes as well as program planning and professional development top the list of efforts needing immediate attention.

Early Childhood System Elements



Next Steps: Implementation Approach

The goal of the Executive Office on Early Learning Action Strategy work was to provide public and private partners with a prioritized and sequenced set of strategies that can be built out over a number of years. A major outcome of the context mapping process was the recognition that a list of 50 strategies would neither be useful nor successfully implementable. To that end, our Core Leadership Team provided recommendations for sequencing the strategies you find listed in this document (details of which will be in the work plan, including timelines and benchmarks). Sequencing was determined by:

Feasibility	Impact
Can we do it now?	Is it evidence based?
Is there opportunity?	Can you identify outcomes?
Is there leadership?	Was it identified in the context map as a “lever”, has the ability to move other strategies?

First Steps

Initial strategies are identified in each goal areas as First Steps. The following first step cuts across all goals:

Initiate a “great by eight” public awareness campaign through the Executive Office on Early Learning, modeled after the campaigns in California with the goal of enhancing breastfeeding, early literacy development, the importance of a medical and dental home, parent involvement and universal preschool.

Mahalo

It is important for us to recognize a few of the many partners we are blessed to have as assets in our work:

A supportive Governor and Executive Cabinet
Good Beginnings Alliance
Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children
Hawaii Careers with Young Children
Hawaii Head Start Collaboration Office
University of Hawai'i; Hawai'i P-20 Partnerships for Education
Early Learning Advisory Board and the former Early Learning Council
Collaborative Leaders Network
The Omidyar Ohana Fund, Hawai'i Community Foundation
Action Strategy Team
JoAnn Farnsworth, Executive Office on Early Learning
Melodie Vega, Executive Office on Early Learning
Jodi Hardin, The Civic Canopy
Jeff Mohr, The Omidyar Group

We will engage the Early Learning Advisory Board as leaders in this effort, as well as State department directors and their lead staff. To be able to effectively implement our strategies over time, we will continue to need the support of a large community of partners. We invite you to participate by contacting the Executive Office on Early Learning.



early childhood
ACTION STRATEGY
TAKING ACTION FOR HAWAII'S CHILDREN

Mahalo to INPEACE, Makaha Studios, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the Ka'u-Kea'au-Pahoa Complex for their generous contribution of photographs for use in this report.

