



# HEAD START ASSOCIATION OF HAWAI'I

## Strategic Plan - May 2020

Head Start has provided critical family strengthening and child development services for vulnerable children across the nation since its launch in 1965. The Head Start Association of Hawaii (HSAH) is an all-volunteer organization representing the agencies who operate Head Start and Early Head Start sites across our islands. Together we serve approximately 3,000 children and their families annually. Our collaborative spirit and history of supporting each other has built strong relationships across our agencies to ensure a strong future for the children and families of Head Start in Hawaii.



### OUR MISSION

We are a unified voice for Head Start across Hawai'i, advancing high quality, comprehensive services that ensure children (prenatal to age five) and families grow and thrive in an ever-changing world.

### Guiding Principles

We carry out our mission through the following actions.

- Facilitating the **sharing of information, skills and strategies** among HSAH members
- Identifying and **acting upon issues** of common concern
- **Advocating** on behalf of member programs, and for children and families in Hawai'i
- **Promoting linkages** with other organizations and individuals concerned with the welfare of young children and families
- **Promoting** comprehensive child development and family **services** for families in Hawai'i

### Our Head Start Family

We hold ourselves accountable for representing the voices of many groups.

- **Head Start children and families** - we have years of respectful and responsive relationships with families who are working toward better futures for themselves and their children
- **Head Start staff** - we advocate for meaningful jobs, professional career paths and living wages
- **Head Start programs** - we bring our individual voices to the HSAH table, and work to build consensus and advocate for the collective good; we know we are stronger together
- **Hawai'i, within Region 9 and nationally** - we attend local, regional and national gatherings to share the gifts of our unique cultures, communities, and talents of our respective programs in these venues.



### Our Values

These core principles drive our organization's actions and decisions.

- **Collaboration** - We work as a team. We commit to transparency. We support each other. We seek meaningful partnerships and we advocate for the common good.
- **Family** - We operate our Association as a caring family. We recognize that we are part of a respected national family of programs. Our commitment to children and their families is always at the center of our work.
- **Voice** - We listen to and respect all voices. We honor the perspective of all of our member agencies. We lift up the voices of children and families. We engage communities in our work.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES - SUMMARY

The following strategic priorities for 2020 – 2022 will enable the HSAH to serve as an advocate and a voice for critical family strengthening and early childhood services across Hawai'i.

### **Raise visibility and amplify the voice of Hawaii Head Start and Early Head Start.**

Despite its long history, Head Start is still not well understood in the broader community. Raising the community profile of Head Start is a way to affirm our value and service to the community; it will help Head Start be more effective in the long term.



### **Support a healthy workforce and create a meaningful career pipeline that attracts and retains dedicated personnel in this essential field.**

Recruiting and retaining staff is a common challenge across Head Start programs and requires stronger responsive actions, including staff wellness programs, partnerships to strengthen recruitment efforts, and enhancing collaboration to leverage resources that result in improved compensation and working conditions for staff.

### **Build the capacity of the HSAH to carry out our mission and priorities.**

Ensuring that institutional knowledge is shared in practice and that we strategically reflect and recalibrate our HSAH activities will keep us focused, realistic and responsive.



**A Note on COVID-19:** This plan was largely developed in early 2020, before the coronavirus outbreak of March dramatically changed our day-to-day operations. In the short term, our work has shifted to support Head Start families under the current constraints of physical distancing. Over the long-term, the changing climate and new economic reality will greatly affect Head Start families and our work will be as important as ever. This time shines a light on the critical infrastructure of caring for our children as essential to our social fabric and economic structure, and the power of family support and engagement for all families – especially those who are most vulnerable.

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