

Maximizing Family Knowledge and Engagement in Child Development: Strategic Implementation Plan, 2020-2023

Background

In 2018, the Early Learning Board (ELB) and Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) completed a multi-stakeholder planning process that generated the **Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan, 2019-2024**. The State Plan set out a vision, five-year goals, key strategies, and priorities to create a stronger future for our keiki, their families, and the entire state. The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Office of Child Care, through the Hawai'i Department of Human Services (DHS), awarded EOEL a Preschool Development Grant, Birth through Five (PDG B-5) to develop in-depth, actionable strategic plans that are rooted in the State Plan. EOEL used the PDG B-5 Grant to convene work groups and develop seven Strategic Implementation Plans; each one serves as a "living" document meant to change over time as opportunities emerge, lessons are learned, and challenges are met with innovation.

The Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan 2019-2024, full Strategic Implementation Plans, Needs Assessments, and background information can be found at: <https://earlylearning.hawaii.gov/resources/hawaii-state-early-childhood-strategic-implementation-plans/>

Maximizing Family Knowledge and Engagement in Child Development: Rationale

Parents and families are the central actors in their child's development, and the science of child development points to the critical period from conception through birth through early childhood as foundational for every human being's physical, emotional, and intellectual wellbeing. Maximizing families' knowledge of child development and engaging them in basic activities that reflect best practices in nurturing optimal child development is fundamental to ensuring children have a great start in life.

Needs Assessment Summary

	2015-2017	2020	Recommendations
Family Knowledge about Child Development	No assessment or baseline study in Hawai'i	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families typically acquire developmental information from the child's physician 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in a baseline study on family knowledge and engagement in child development
Family Knowledge about Quality Child Care	No assessment or baseline study in Hawai'i	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicators of quality used by families: caliber of staff, program philosophy, teacher passion, defined learning plans, welcoming atmosphere, and focus on school readiness both academically and social-emotional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in a baseline study on family knowledge about quality child care
Family Knowledge about Available Support Services	Small 2016 study (426 respondents) indicates parents are aware of support services and want more information on activities, development, managing behavior, play groups, public services, and accessing healthy food	No additional information	
Family Engagement in Provider-delivered Information on Child Development	Engagement practices by settings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Center-Based: parent/teacher conferences, newsletters, daily journal, social events, invitations to volunteer, referrals if needed Licensed Family Child Care: similar to centers, but lower rates of engagement from families Family Child Interaction Learning: similar to centers, plus family-as-teacher practices, engaging families in continuous quality improvement, adapting curricula to cultures and languages of participating families, and providing direct support services such as counseling, home visits, and job training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home visiting professionals report difficulty engaging families who are not interested Special education and preschool teachers report families are receptive to information 	

Key Priorities for Collective Action:

Provide families with opportunities to develop leadership and advocacy skills to support their children's development. (BB2, ii, drawn from the Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan, 2019-2024)*

* The work group chose to focus on 1) families experiencing unstable housing and 2) younger, lower income families with infants and toddlers (Birth-3). While these are the primary foci, the intention is that the implementation plan be valuable to other efforts focused on families as well.

Promote early childhood evidence-based and developmental best practices and materials from the science of early childhood development in all early childhood care and education settings ... (BB3, vi, partial, drawn from the Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan, 2019-2024)

Objective 1: Family-Focused. Develop and implement learning opportunities for families utilizing best practice materials and models that build their capacity to be engaged in their child's development.	
Actions	Indicators of Success
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and/or distribute materials for use with and by families in multiple ways and for all types of settings, drawing on recognized best practices (e.g., Alberta Family Wellness Initiative, Centers for Disease Control, Family Hui Hawai'i, Head Start, Little Minds Matter, Parents as Teachers, Partners in Development – Ka Pa'alana, VROOM). 2. Housing, shelter and outreach partners, in collaboration with the Child Homelessness Action Team (CHAT), make early childhood development information and early learning opportunities available for families experiencing homelessness or unstable housing. 3. Develop and implement community-based learning opportunities for families that support child wellbeing and growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families demonstrate increased knowledge and awareness of child development and available resources. • 5-10 homeless programs are making early childhood development resources available to families. • Play spaces promoting parent-child interaction are created and utilized in shelters, transitional, and public housing. • 3-5 new sites in prioritized geographic and cultural communities have trained community-based leaders and are working with families. • Long-term. Children birth to five whose families are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing are connected with early care and education programs and/or services.
Objective 2: Provider-Focused. Develop and implement learning opportunities for providers of all types utilizing best practice materials and models.	
Actions	Indicators of Success
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Educate early care and education providers of all types and in all settings on early childhood development and on working with vulnerable families, with attention to encouraging their own self-awareness and respect for individual and community cultures (e.g., brain development, poverty simulation, and trauma-informed strategies). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of trainings delivered has increased. • Number of providers trained has increased. • Providers indicate feeling better prepared to respond to the needs of the vulnerable families they are serving. • Long-Term. There are trauma-informed, mixed delivery system early care and education providers of all types and from all settings serving prioritized geographic and cultural communities.
Objective 3: Community-Focused. Generate increased community understanding and support for family engagement and child development.	
Actions	Indicators of Success
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design, implement, and expand public education initiatives and campaigns around early childhood topics. 2. Advocate for large employers taking action in support of families and promoting child development (e.g., HECO/UHA model, UHA Employer Wellness Group program). 3. Establish a work group to examine emerging models for family engagement and application in Hawai'i (e.g., Alberta Family Wellness Initiative, Detroit Model). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 business partners are engaged in an education campaign. • At least one Hawai'i employer is piloting family wellness practices with their employees. • Long-term: Several large Hawai'i employers are implementing best practices supporting families and child development, and exemplar businesses are sharing their experiences and knowledge with other employers.
Objective 4: Ensure the community can prioritize early care and education programs and services based on geographic distribution of priority populations.	
Actions	Indicators of Success
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Secure MOUs with local continuum of care lead organizations (e.g., Partners in Care, Bridging the Gap) to share certain data on families experiencing unstable housing or homelessness, drawing on the HMIS databases. 2. Develop and report anonymized data by geographic location and ages of family members. 3. Convene a work group to discuss prioritization of services based on geographically informed data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOUs are in place. • Geographic distribution of children birth to five who are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing is available. • Data is being used to set service priorities.

This is a summary of the Maximizing Family Knowledge and Engagement in Child Development: Strategic Implementation Plan, 2020-2023.