



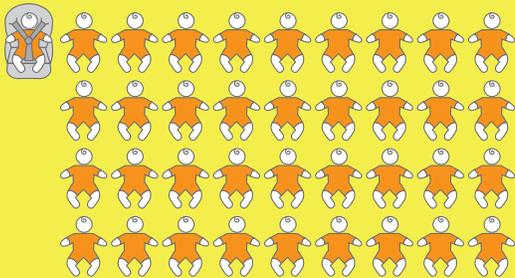
HAWAII EARLY HEAD START State Policy Agenda

(Abbreviated Version)



Infant and Toddler Care in Hawaii is far too limited to meet the needs of our families.

One licensed seat for every 37 infants and toddlers, statewide ¹



Lack of access to infant and toddler care leaves thousands of families without childcare options



- Majority of parents looking for childcare are looking for infant/toddler care ²
- Only 11% of income-eligible families, nationwide, can access EHS due to limited funding



Impacts to the community



- Lack of childcare limits employment and educational opportunities for parents
- Hawaii's youngest and most vulnerable are without the supports needed to thrive

The Issues

- **Workforce Shortage**
 - o State childcare licensing requirements for the infant/toddler workforce (including EHS) are challenging to meet
 - o Inadequate infant/toddler staff compensation and access to professional development prevents Hawaii from attracting and sustaining a stable and qualified workforce
- **Limited Access to Care**
 - o Limited State investments in early learning for the birth to five population
 - o Limited Federal Office of Head Start (OHS) funding for EHS and EHS-child care partnerships limits Hawaii's ability to serve more vulnerable infants and toddlers
- **Quality and Affordability of Care**
 - o Childcare is a family's 2nd highest expense, next to housing, and recent increases to childcare tuition subsidy funding have not kept pace with the ever-increasing need for funding support for families.
 - o Securing facilities and funding is necessary to enhance environments to meet health, safety and quality standards associated with infant and toddler care
 - o Accessing infant/early childhood mental health (IECMH) is foundational to child and family success

FACTS & FIGURES



Number of Classrooms **18**

Serving approximately 144 children; all other children served through a home-visiting model.

681

Early Head Start Slots



Number of Home Visits

25,454

Individual home visits provided weekly; group activities (socials) provided twice a month

¹ CITATION: UH Center on the Family 2017 Needs Assessment

² CITATION: PATCH data

Policy Changes Needed for a Strong Statewide Prenatal-Five System



Increase investment for and access to infant and toddler care, including Early Head Start (EHS) services

- Use federal recovery funding to support the creation of new EHS classrooms through DHS contracts to existing HS and EHS providers.
- Use additional federal funding opportunities (e.g., components from original Build Back Better Act, EHS Expansion grants) to increase access to infant/toddler care in general, and EHS as well, through a mixed delivery system of services for children, birth to five.
- Expand on existing EHS-child care partnerships, marrying the best of childcare and EHS services. Such partnerships between EHS and center-based and/or family childcare providers have proven to be cost effective, raise quality, improve access, and provide longer hours of care for working families.
- Prioritize grants to HS/EHS providers with proven demand (e.g., those with waitlists), those in childcare deserts, and to support targeted vulnerable populations, such as teen parents or those experiencing homelessness, all of whom EHS serves.

Increase childcare subsidy funding for families to assist with affordability

- Conduct cost estimation study to inform reimbursement rates for “true cost of care”
- Extend family eligibility waivers implemented during the pandemic

Increase supports for the infant-toddler/early childhood workforce

- Modify staff licensing qualifications related to work experience to either align with the federal EHS standards or allow additional flexibility in meeting the work experience requirement.
- Support and finance recommendations that come out of the Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity (ECE3) Compensation Study being conducted by the University of Hawaii at Manoa College of Education
- Support wage, bonus, stipend and supplemental initiatives that target funds to the Infant-toddler workforce.
- Support funding for the Early Educator Stipend Fund to support access to ongoing professional learning opportunities; create a set-aside within this fund, specifically for the infant-toddler workforce, to ensure equitable access to these funds.

Increase Quality of Infant and Toddler Care

- Create a special fund or grants program specifically focused on enhancements that support high-quality infant and toddler care (i.e., materials, facilities improvements, health and safety supports).

Address infant/early childhood mental health

- Support implementation of the Integrated Infant and Early Childhood Behavioral Health (IECBH) Plan (2021)
- Support opportunities for ongoing professional development related to social-emotional development, early childhood trauma, and trauma-informed care and response practices.



The Head Start Association of Hawaii (HSAH) is an all-volunteer organization representing the six non-profit agencies that operate Head Start and Early Head Start sites across our islands. Together we serve approximately 3,000 children and their families annually. The HSAH has provided critical family strengthening and child development services for vulnerable children in Hawaii since 1965.

Contact information:
Ben Naki, HSAH President | bnaki@pacthawaii.org

HSAH MISSION STATEMENT:

“We are a unified voice for Head Start in Hawaii, advancing high-quality, comprehensive services that ensure children (prenatal to five) and their families grow and thrive in an ever-changing world.”

This EHS Policy Agenda was developed in collaboration between the HSAH and the Hawaii Head Start State Collaboration Office in March 2022.