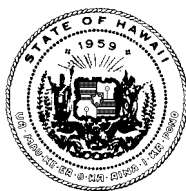


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 11, 2023

TO: The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 1023 – RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING ACCREDITATION.**

HEARING: Wednesday, February 15, 2023, 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this bill, provides comments, and suggests amendments. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation in this measure not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the executive budget.

PURPOSE: The bill proposes to establish a child care accreditation program to support licensed or registered child care providers to obtain accreditation from a national early learning accrediting organization, extends the deadlines for unaccredited providers to start and obtain accreditation for the Preschool Open Doors (POD) program, and appropriates funds.

DHS currently supports family choice and offers higher child care subsidy payment rates to families that choose child care providers accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, National Early Childhood Program Accreditation, and National Association for Family Child Care Accreditation. Higher subsidies are available for the state-funded POD and the federally-funded Child Care Connection Hawaii (CCCH) programs.

DHS respectfully recommends the following amendments:

- Section 1, page 1, at lines 12-14, “indicator that a child care program is providing [~~exceptional~~] a level of care that meets [~~the~~] high-quality standards set by these organizations.”

DHS recommends deleting “exceptional” to describe the level of care since it is very subjective. National early learning accreditation organizations focus on providing children with quality experiences through their standards and criteria.

- Part 1, Section 2 (a), at lines 8-12, “There is established within the department of human services’ child care [~~assistance program~~] subsidy program office, a child care accreditation program to support child care providers in obtaining accreditation from a national early learning accrediting organization or an accrediting organization approved by the director.”
- Part 1, Section 2 (b), lines 12-17, “The program shall award upfront grant funding to an eligible child care provider who has committed to obtaining accreditation from a national early learning accrediting organization, which shall be used to pay for the expenses necessary for the child care provider to obtain the accreditation, including:...”
- Part 1, Section 2 (f), lines 9-14: “For the purpose of this Act: An “eligible child care provider” is a child care facility that is not part of or owned or operated by or as a private educational institution. An organization or individual that owns or operates both a private educational institution and a child care facility may apply only if they can provide evidence that the operations and finances of the private educational institution are completely separate from the operations and finances of the child care facility so that it is clear a child care grant would not support or benefit the private educational institution in violation of article X, section 1 of the Hawaii State Constitution.”

Regarding Part II, given the continuing economic impacts of COVID-19 on child care facilities’ ability to maintain sufficient staff levels, DHS suggests the Legislature consider

amending section 346-184(a), HRS, to change the accreditation requirement to be voluntary until the child care workforce is more stabilized or subsidized.

Alternatively, DHS agrees with the extended time frames in Section 3. Extending the time to become accredited will give new child care workforce initiatives time to increase capacity and give eligible facilities ready to access accreditation resources more time to do so in a less pressured time frame.

As the measure progresses through the session, DHS will provide cost estimates to contract an entity to establish, implement, and administer the child care accreditation program, including funding for one full-time equivalent position. In addition, once the Legislature appropriates funds, DHS will need time to develop and implement administrative rules and make system modifications.

The department also recommends that the sums appropriated to award grants to eligible private child care providers participating in the child care accreditation program include the costs for child care providers who have annual accreditation fees.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.

Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: Senator San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Aquino, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Re: SB239, relating to early learning accreditation
1:00 p.m., Feb. 15, 2023

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and members of the committee:

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to **testify in STRONG SUPPORT of Senate Bill 239, relating to early learning accreditation.**

Early learning programs often use accreditation as one tool to mark quality. Accreditation represents numerous measures that indicate that a program is developmentally appropriate and uses best practices in nurturing and educating our youngest learners. During the accreditation and re-accreditation processes, early learning programs display the ways their curriculum, teacher qualifications, environments and other components meet rigorous standards.

Unfortunately, **accreditation is expensive, intensive and time-consuming** for providers who have not been accredited previously. For example, fees to begin and complete accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) begin at \$1,825 and increase with the size of the preschool. Many preschools and child care providers also seek technical assistance to identify areas needing improvement, complete necessary paperwork, collect documentation and other tasks to ensure the process goes as smoothly as possible. During preparations for accreditation, it is not uncommon for preschools and child care providers to identify upgrades that need to be made to buildings, classrooms, furniture or play equipment. These too cost money. Once a preschool or child care provider successfully achieves accreditation, they then must pay annual fees to maintain it. **All these reasons compound to make it extremely burdensome for many child care providers, especially small centers and family child care homes, to pursue accreditation.**

H.R.S. §346-184 currently requires existing Preschool Open Doors providers to begin the accreditation process by July 1, 2024 and obtain accreditation by July 1, 2029. New providers must have or obtain accreditation within seven calendar years of first receiving funds. **This means that unaccredited providers who are already serving Preschool Open Doors families must begin this expensive and intensive process within the next 18 months.**



Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

This requirement places a heavy burden on an already taxed early childhood care and education sector in a very short amount of time. **They cannot afford to carry more costs on their own; they need assistance.** Preschools and regulated child care providers typically already operate on razor-thin margins to keep their doors open, pay their staff and serve young children and families. These are the very same providers that have faced numerous challenges over the last three years of the pandemic. Most did not close their doors for essential workers even when everything else did. They continued to serve families at great cost—financial and otherwise—to ensure young keiki could continue to grow and learn with them.

The proposed accreditation program is an important step forward for the state of early childhood care and education, for the Preschool Open Doors program and for providers across Hawai'i.

SB239 will help providers shoulder the cost of achieving accreditation. The bill, as it is currently written, allows the Department of Human Services to support providers with funding that can cover myriad expenses associated with the accreditation process. **It is important that the Department has this flexibility to support providers in the various ways necessary.**

Please support SB239. This program will ensure providers of all sizes meet the quality markers our young children and their families deserve while preserving the current stock of available providers participating in Preschool Open Doors.

Mahalo,

Ke'ōpū Reelitz
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy



Date: February 13, 2023

To: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Support for SB239, Relating to Early Learning Accreditation

Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) is a statewide cross-sector collaborative designed to improve the system of care for Hawai'i's youngest children and their families. ECAS partners work to align priorities for children prenatal to age eight, streamline services, maximize resources, and improve programs to support our youngest keiki.

ECAS strongly supports passage of SB239, which would establish a program to support child care providers in obtaining quality accreditation from a national organization and extend the deadline by which Preschool Open Doors providers must achieve accreditation.

With the passage of Act 46 in 2020, early care and learning programs wishing to serve or continue serving children via the state's Preschool Open Doors subsidy program must initiate the process of national quality accreditation by 2024, and achieve accreditation no later than 2029.

Accreditation is a well-known measure of quality for early care and learning programs, and involves an arduous cycle of self- and external assessment to meet a battery of standards related to curriculum, staff and administrative qualifications, training and development, physical environment and more. Accreditation, however, is an expensive, intensive, and time-consuming endeavor for both programs new to the process, as well as those seeking to renew their time-limited accreditation. Basic fees to undergo the process with an accrediting body typically run into the thousands (e.g., \$1,825 for the National Association for the Education of Young Children/NAEYC) and providers must often make significant financial investments to upgrade their facilities, classroom environments, equipment and materials. Additionally, many programs need the support of coaching and technical assistance from content and process experts who can advise on areas needing improvement to meet standards, as well as the documentation and paperwork processes of the accrediting body.

Without a support program for our preschool and child care programs, the accreditation requirement of Act 46 creates a significant barrier and/or burden for these programs in serving Preschool Open Doors families and will significantly impact efforts to expand access to publicly-supported preschool opportunities for children. The creation of the accreditation program proposed by **SB239**, which would provide technical and financial assistance to regulated preschools and child care providers, is critical to helping programs achieve important markers of quality and to preserving and expanding the number of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families.

Additionally, we agree with agency concerns regarding the tenuous state of child care programs and support recommendations to either change Preschool Open Doors accreditation requirements to be voluntary, until workforce conditions are more stable, or extending the timeframes by which programs must become accredited, as proposed by this bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony **in support of SB239**.



STATE OF HAWAII
Executive Office on Early Learning
2759 South King Street
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

February 13, 2023

TO: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Measure: S.B. No. 239 – RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING ACCREDITATION
Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 15, 2023
Time: 1:00 pm
Location: Conference Room 225

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support the Intent

EOEL supports the intent of S.B. No. 239 and defers to the Department of Human Services regarding implementation and suggested amendments.

This bill would establish a child care accreditation program to support licensed or registered child care providers to obtain accreditation from a national early learning accrediting organization and by paying for fees, technical assistance, and incidental costs.

Accreditation is one well-known measure of quality in early childhood education programming. However, obtaining accreditation can be costly and time-consuming for providers, many who are still recovering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Establishing this program with adequate appropriations would help support more providers in achieving and maintaining accreditation.

We appreciate DHS's recommendation for the legislature to consider amending section 346-184(a), HRS, to change the accreditation requirement to be voluntary until the child care workforce is more stabilized or subsidized. Alternately, extending the time to become accredited and establishing an accreditation program will allow the child care workforce to access accreditation resources with more time to do so.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Legislature to support high-quality early learning programs and services in the State. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



To: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday February 15, 2023 1PM
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 225
Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 239

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and the Members of Committee,

Members of AAUW of Hawaii thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 239 which would establish a child care accreditation program and appropriate funds required for the department of human services to provide operational and financial support to the early childhood care and education service providers to obtain accreditation.

Accreditations are often seen as a marker of quality which then drives enrollment. Although many providers would like to be accredited, the lengthy process and costs are barriers for them to achieve accreditation, especially for the small child care centers and homes. AAUW of Hawaii supports this measure because it would lower these barriers.

Please pass this measure and mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Younghee Overly
Public Policy Committee, AAUW of Hawaii
publicpolicy-hi@aauw.net

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Hawaii is an all volunteer, statewide chapter of a national organization and is made up of six branches: Hilo, Honolulu, Kaua'i, Kona, Maui, and Windward Oahu. UH Hilo, UH Manoa, UH Maui College, and Windward Community College are also AAUW partners. AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity for equal opportunities in education, at workplace and for economic security, and in leadership.

Aloha Chair and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists supports SB239 which will support preschools and regulated child care providers achieve accreditation and preserve the amount of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families. Accreditation is among the most well-known measures of quality in early childhood education. However, **accreditation is expensive, intensive and time-consuming for providers who have not been accredited previously**. As the law is currently written, programs wishing to serve or continue serving Preschool Open Doors families must start this expensive and intensive process by 2024 and complete it by 2029. This requirement creates a significant burden for preschools and child care providers who currently serve Preschool Open Doors families but are unaccredited as well as hinders efforts to increase the number of programs available.

The creation of an accreditation program is an important step to provide technical assistance and financial assistance to regulated preschools and child care providers in achieving important markers of quality and preserve and expand the number of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families.

Respectfully Submitted:

Alec Marentic, NCSP

HASP President

TO: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Robert G. Peters, Chair
Early Learning Board

SUBJECT: Measure: S.B. No. 239 – RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING ACCREDITATION

Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 15, 2023

Time: 1:00 pm

Location: Conference Room 225

EARLY LEARNING BOARD POSITION: Support the Intent

The Early Learning Board (ELB) supports the intent of S.B. No. 239 and defers to the Department of Human Services regarding the particulars of the bill and its implementation.

This bill would establish a child care accreditation program to support licensed or registered child care providers to obtain accreditation from a national early learning accrediting organization and by paying for fees, technical assistance, and incidental costs.

Accreditation is a rigorous process in support of quality early learning and care, which can be costly and time-consuming. Both are especially challenging post-COVID. Establishing this program with adequate supports, both financial and technical, will allow more providers to pursue accreditation and those already accredited to maintain that status.

The Early Learning Board appreciates DHS's recommendation for the legislature to consider amending section 346-184(a), HRS, to change the accreditation requirement to be voluntary until the child care workforce is more stabilized or subsidized. Alternately, extending the time to become accredited and establishing an accreditation program will allow the child care workforce to access accreditation resources with more time to do so.

We thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of the intent of S.B. No. 239.

Feb. 14, 2023

To: Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry Aquino, Vice-Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Subject: **Measure** – SB 239 RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING ACCREDITATION
Hearing Date – Feb. 15, 2023
Time - 1:00 PM
Location - Room 225

This testimony is in support of SB 239.

My name is Dr. Terry Lock. I am with the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) College of Education (COE) and serve as the director of the Hawai'i Early Childhood Educator Excellence and Equity (ECE³) Project.

I am in support of SB 239, which will support licensed preschools and regulated child care providers achieve program accreditation and preserve the number of quality preschools and child care programs available for Preschool Open Doors families.

Research shows a direct correlation between high-quality early learning and children's positive long-term outcomes in life, including increased educational attainment, healthier lifestyles, and more successful careers.

For many years, I assisted DHS licensed preschools through an accreditation process. I found one of the important benefits of accreditation is how teachers and other staff of early learning programs develop a shared understanding and commitment to quality. The accreditation process leads to increased staff morale, greater staff retention, and a more positive, energetic work atmosphere overall.

As the law is currently written, programs wishing to serve or continue serving Preschool Open Doors families must start the accreditation process by 2027 and complete it by 2032. This requirement creates a significant burden for both preschools and child care providers who currently serve and want to serve Preschool Open Doors families.

In addition, some of the challenges for those programs, especially for smaller sized preschools and family child care homes, to successfully go through the accreditation self-study and improvement process, is that it is expensive, intensive, and time-consuming. These programs are already operating on razor-thin budgets and have limited time as they manage the complexities for serving children and families. Additional costs might be in upgrading equipment, increasing professional learning

opportunities for staff and paying for outside assistance to help with this process. Therefore, it will be of tremendous help if these programs have technical support, mentoring, and funding to complete and obtain accreditation.

Therefore, the establishment of an accreditation support program in the Department of Human Services (DHS) is an important step to providing technical assistance and financial assistance to regulated preschools and child care providers in achieving important markers of quality and preserve and expand the number of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-239

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 8:33:32 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Justina Acevedo-Cross	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Auino and committee members,

Please support SB239 which will support preschools and licensed and regulated child care providers achieve accreditation. In turn, this will help preserve the amount of centers and family child care homes are available to Preschool Open Doors families.

Accreditation is among the most well-known measures of quality in early childhood education. Accreditation is worthwhile. However, accreditation is also expensive, intensive and time-consuming for providers who have not been accredited previously. As the law is currently written, programs wishing to serve or continue serving Preschool Open Doors families must start this expensive and intensive process by 2024 and complete it by 2029. This requirement creates a burden for preschools and child care providers who currently serve Preschool Open Doors families but are unaccredited as well as hinders efforts to increase the number of programs available.

The creation of an accreditation technical and financial assistance program is an important step. The bill will go a long way to support achieving markers of quality and maintain the number of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families.

Please support this measure.

SB-239

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 9:54:52 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erica Yamauchi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Auino, and Committee Members,

I am writing today in strong support of HB261, which will support preschools and regulated childcare providers, achieve accreditation and preserve the existing programming available to Preschool Open Doors families. Accreditation is among the most well-known measures of quality in early childhood education. However, accreditation is expensive, intensive, and time-consuming for providers who have not been accredited previously.

As the law is currently written, programs wishing to serve or continue serving Preschool Open Doors families must start this expensive and intensive process by 2024 and complete it by 2029. This requirement creates a significant burden for preschools and childcare providers who currently serve Preschool Open Doors families, but are unaccredited as well as hinders efforts to increase the number of programs available.

The creation of an accreditation program is an important step in providing technical assistance and financial assistance to regulated preschools and childcare providers in achieving important markers of quality, and preserve and expand the number of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families.

Please support this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Erica Yamauchi, Kaimukī/Wilhelmina Rise

Elaine Yamashita
105 Kamehameiki Rd.
Kula, HI 96790-8451
808-281-1216
elainey208@gmail.com

February 13, 2023

Aloha to Chair Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Aquino and committee members:

I am in support of SB 239. I'm an advocate for early care and education, longtime Hawai'i Association for the Education of Young Children (HiAEYC, an affiliate of NAEYC) member, and professor emerita of UH Maui College.

Programs are wanting to pursue accreditation, and need financial and technical support in order to successfully bring the program up to accreditation standards. High quality programs provide a strong foundation for our keiki and their 'ohana. The key to high quality is their quality staff, and this measure would provide support to staff and the program.

Your support of this measure is much appreciated.

Mahalo,
Elaine Yamashita

TO: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

SUBJECT: SB 239 - RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING ACCREDITATION

POSITION: IN SUPPORT

Aloha, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning Senate Bill (SB) 239, relating to early learning accreditation, which will support preschools and regulated child care providers achieve accreditation and preserve the amount of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families. As a member of the community, I strongly support SB 239 as I believe that having a stable early learning framework is critical to the economic and social health of our state.

Accreditation is among the most well-known measures of quality in early childhood education. Currently, accreditation is expensive, intensive and time-consuming for providers. The creation of an accreditation program strengthens the early learning system in Hawaii as it is a critical step in providing technical and financial assistance to regulated preschools and child care providers in achieving important markers of quality. It also preserves and expands the number of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families.

As a community member, I strongly believe we should have measures in place that support a healthy, robust early learning system, because it is the foundation on which the workforce relies so that they can work. Strong, accredited early learning systems are a springboard for the economy. I appreciate the opportunity to provide the Committee with my testimony in support of SB 239.

Thank you,

Moevanu Jameson
moevanu@yahoo.com

SB-239

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 8:45:53 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tiffany Hirota	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Auino and committee members,

Please support HB261 which will support preschools and regulated child care providers achieve accreditation and preserve the amount of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families. Accreditation is among the most well-known measures of quality in early childhood education. However, accreditation is expensive, intensive and time-consuming for providers who have not been accredited previously. As the law is currently written, programs wishing to serve or continue serving Preschool Open Doors families must start this expensive and intensive process by 2024 and complete it by 2029. This requirement creates a significant burden for preschools and child care providers who currently serve Preschool Open Doors families but are unaccredited as well as hinders efforts to increase the number of programs available.

The creation of an accreditation program is an important step to provide technical assistance and financial assistance to regulated preschools and child care providers in achieving important markers of quality and preserve and expand the number of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families.

Please support this measure.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Hirota

SB-239

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 7:41:30 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leilani Au	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and committee members,

Please support SB239 which will support preschools and regulated child care providers achieve accreditation and preserve the amount of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families. Accreditation is among the most well-known measures of quality in early childhood education. However, accreditation can be expensive, intensive and time-consuming for providers who have not been accredited previously. Without access to necessary resources, the requirement of accreditation will create a significant burden for preschools and child care providers who currently serve Preschool Open Doors families but are unaccredited as well as hinders efforts to increase the number of programs available to families at a time when child care access has declined.

The creation of an accreditation program is an important step to provide technical assistance and financial assistance to regulated preschools and child care providers in achieving important markers of quality and preserve and expand the number of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families.

As an administrator at a NAEYC accredited child care center and a former employee of the Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children, I have been volunteering at HiAEYC to provide technical assistance to child care centers seeking NAEYC accreditation. I am also knowledgeable about NAFCC, NECPA accreditations and other ECE/Elementary accreditation systems which might be deemed acceptable by the Director of DHS as meeting the intentions of this bill.

Our Early Childhood Community has used the time since the creation of Acts 46 and 210 to become prepared and I believe we are ready to improve quality for children, families, staff and early childhood programs should you provide the necessary funding for this to happen.

Please support this measure.

Leilani Au

Assistant Director

UH Manoa Children's Center

SB-239

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:24:48 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raya Esteban	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and committee members,

Please support SB 239, which will help preschools and regulated child care providers achieve accreditation and safeguard the amount of programs available to Preschool Open Doors (POD) families. Accreditation is one of the most recognized measures of quality in early childhood care and education. However, accreditation is costly, rigorous, and time-consuming for providers who have not been accredited previously and for those who have to repeat the accreditation process. The bottomline is that many preschools and child care providers are tapped out of money and energy to begin and complete the accreditation that will soon be required to continue serving POD families. Additionally, without the support and guidance of an accreditation program, this requirement stalls efforts to increase the number of programs available. The creation of an accreditation program is an essential step to provide technical assistance and financial assistance to regulated preschools and child care providers in achieving important markers of quality and preserve and expand the number of programs available to POD families. As a young, middle-class woman hoping to start a family soon in Honolulu, it is my sincere hope that affordable, high-quality childcare programs will be available to my future children. Ensuring that programs serving POD families get the support they need to gain accreditation is a huge step in the right direction. Please support this measure—for the present and future families who seek the quality child care that their keiki deserve.

Sincerely,

Raya Esteban

SB-239

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 12:48:22 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Arvin Jeremy Tan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and committee members,

Please support SB 239, which will support preschools and regulated childcare providers to achieve accreditation and preserve the number of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families. Accreditation is among the most well-known measures of quality in early childhood education. However, accreditation is expensive, intensive, and time-consuming for providers who have not been accredited. This requirement creates a significant burden for preschools and childcare providers who currently serve Preschool Open Doors families but are unaccredited and hinders efforts to increase the number of available programs.

The creation of an accreditation program is a crucial step to providing technical assistance and financial assistance to regulated preschools and childcare providers in achieving important markers of quality and preserving and expanding the number of programs available to Preschool Open Doors families.

Please support this measure.

Mahalo,

Arvin Jeremy N. Tan, M.D.

SB-239

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 1:00:38 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/15/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Tsuchiya	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony

Malia Tsuchiya

Hawaii State Legislature

Committee on Health and Human Services

Honolulu, Hawaii

Feb. 14, 2023

Committee On Health and Human Services

1:00 Pm

Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

SB 312

IN FAVOR

SB 312

RELATING TO CHILD CARE WORKERS.

Requires the Department of Human Services to establish and administer a two-year Infant and Toddler Child Care Worker Subsidy Pilot Program. Requires annual reports on the pilot program's development and administration to the Legislature. Appropriates funds.

Aloha e Chair Buenaventura and respected committee members,

Thank you for your time and for allowing me to submit testimony **IN FAVOR of SB 312**. My name is Malia Tsuchiya. I am a mother of five children, ranging in ages 17-2. I am also a preschool teacher and family childcare provider by trade and have spent many years helping organizations and individuals to meet state and national requirements for childcare accreditation and licensing. I humbly request for the committee to please vote **IN FAVOR of SB 312** for the following reasons:

SB 312 will help to stabilize an already scarce workforce by potentially increasing the retention rate for Infant Toddler caregivers and incentivizing new caregivers to enter the field. SB 312 will help to decrease the gap between pay and living wages and assist in providing the much needed funding that will allow caregivers to provide for their most basic needs. Through this legislation Hawai'i has the opportunity to increase the quality of care by ensuring that our caregivers' basic needs are met and in turn, the care they provide is not overshadowed by their own economic disparities.

Infant toddler care is an act of love. It takes a very kind, special and dedicated person to engage in infant toddler childcare for a living. Children at this age are ever demanding and require a caregiver for every need. The task can be daunting and requires constant attentiveness. The job is ongoing, and a child's life literally depends on the quality of care that is provided. Unlike other fields, the demands of infant toddler care often require caregivers to work ten-hour days, forfeit time off and work extended hours or holidays in order to provide full time childcare for the families they serve. With long hours, constant attentiveness and poor pay it is no wonder that an estimated 30% of the workforce has left just in the last two years (Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2021). If Hawai'i as a state is going to have any capability of maintaining any type of infant toddler childcare services it is essential that SB 312 be passed. Increasing the wage for infant toddler caregivers is integral to stabilizing a workforce on which lives literally depend.

Hawaii's infant toddler caregivers are among the lowest paid in the nation (RAND study 2022). This fact creates alarm when we consider the duality of our high cost of living. At present, Hawaii's ECE3 project estimates an average childcare worker pay of \$13-\$17 per hour. With infant toddler caregivers by average being paid the least. By [HUD income limits](#) this would put the majority of infant childcare workers at the 'very low income' range. Hawaii's families depend on childcare and deserve quality childcare. In a state where words like 'Kuleana' 'Mālama' and 'Ohana' seem to be our hallmarks the state of our current childcare worker wages presents a much different picture. If we are to align our outward actions as a state with our internal value systems it essential that HB 547 be passed so that our families, children and the childcare providers that serve are able to rest assured that their needs are met in a way that benefits all stakeholders.

Hawaii families and child care centers cannot bear the cost of increasing wages. For this reason, it is necessary for the state provide funds support for the cost of raising wages. Without raising wages, we will continue to lose this essential workforce. We will impede on family's abilities to work and make a living. We will decrease the number of new childcare workers to the field and will continue to see the spread of 'childcare deserts' throughout the state. Hawaii's young families in particular, are moving away at disheartening rates. The cost and challenge of childcare is often said as a reason for this. We have to make quality childcare accessible and affordable to families. To do this we must stabilize and increase our workforce. Infant toddler wages are good place to start and though this is a small population to start with, a small start is better than no start at all.

Please vote **IN FAVOR OF SB 312.**

Thank you dearly to all committee members, and bill sponsors for this opportunity. Be well. Aloha kekahi I kekahi.

With Respect,

Malia Tsuchiya

