

SB 791



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MĀNOA

February 10, 2009

Senator David Ige, Chair Senate Health Committee
Senator Chun-Oakland, Senate Human Services Committee
Hawaii State Capitol, Honolulu HI 96813

Re: SB 791, Relating to Children

Dear Senators Ige, Chun-Oakland, Members of the Committees:

I am Gail Breakey, Director of the Hawaii Family Support Institute at the U.H. School of Social Work, testifying in support of SB 791. The mission of the Institute is to promote best practice in prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

Healthy Start is a public health approach to working with families of newborns at risk for adverse childhood experiences, developmental problems and school failure by triaging for and connecting with these families at birth in hospitals across the state and providing a range of family support services to strengthen families and improve outcomes for vulnerable children. The Institute is very concerned that the budget for this program has been completely eliminated and strongly advocates that it be restored.

The Institute of Medicine's Council on the Science of Early Childhood, headed by Pediatrician Jack Shonkoff and comprised of neuroscientists, developmental psychologists, economists and pediatricians, as well as the National Zero to Three organizations have published policy papers on current early childhood research, the importance of the first three years of life to healthy growth and development and the need to close the gap between what we know and what we do. From decades of research on early child development and early intervention services, it is known that parental nurturing is critical to promote healthy development, while excessive stress disrupts the architecture of the developing brain resulting in poor developmental outcomes.

- Neural circuits for dealing with stress are particularly malleable during early childhood.
- Early experiences shape how readily these circuits are activated and how well they can be contained.
- Toxic stress during this early period can affect developing brain circuits and hormonal systems.
- Frequent or sustained activation of brain systems that respond to stress can lead to heightened vulnerability to a range of behavioral and physiological disorders over a lifetime. (depression, anxiety disorders, alcoholism, drug abuse, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, stroke)
- High sustained levels of cortisol, the brain chemical that regulates the hormonal system, results in damage to the hippocampus, which can lead to impairments in learning, memory and the ability to self regulate.
- Findings of the Adverse Childhood Experiences study conducted at Kaiser Permanente in San Diego corroborate these statements, showing that adverse childhood experiences are highly correlated with a range of social and health problems. (Vincent Felitti, MD, Robert Anda, CDC, 2000)

Healthy Start is the only program in Hawaii that intervenes with high risk situations right from the start to stabilize unsafe home situations before abuse or neglect occurs; promote positive parenting and a normal developmental trajectory. Other services respond after problems have started.

- **Healthy Start uses a holistic approach in working with high risk infants and toddlers, recognizing that development in all areas--emotional, physical and cognitive--occur rapidly and are inter-dependent during this period.** It provides a range of interventions including risk reduction and promotion of safety protective factors,

role modeling of positive parenting, a Nurturing curriculum, activities to promote age appropriate development, developmental screening and referrals, and linkage to health services. It assumes that it doesn't make sense to have separate efforts to address health, safety, developmental and protective issues for this age group. **Healthy Start's targeted, comprehensive approach is a major reason why it was quickly adopted across the country as Healthy Families America.**

- With current economic stresses on already overburdened families, **this safety net for our most vulnerable infants and toddlers** is more important than ever. .

There are many reasons why support for Healthy Start should be restored.

1. Healthy Start is effective in averting adverse childhood experiences, stabilizing and strengthening families and child development.

- **Less than 1% of children are reported for abuse and neglect. Among these reports, most** are reported as threatened harm, and Healthy Start or Enhanced Healthy Start continues to work with the families. I will share a few case examples.
- A study of children hospitalized for abuse on Oahu showed that **high risk families that did not receive services were hospitalized 8 times (35 cases) more frequently for abuse than those in Healthy Start (four cases).** (Kapiolani Medical Center, 1991-1994)
- Children are much safer with home visitors in the home; dangerous or unhealthy situations are spotted early before maltreatment occurs or escalates into serious problems.
- Profiles of families served show how Healthy Start is effective in stabilizing chaotic and unsafe home conditions, promoting attachment between parents and infants, teaching positive parenting, addressing health issues, identifying signs of developmental problems and getting children into Zero to Three early intervention services.
- The Healthy Start program has engaged in a continuous quality improvement process over the past ten years, which has included participation in legislatively directed task forces per SCR 13 and 277, resulting in creation of Enhanced Healthy Start, multi-disciplinary teams within Healthy Start, increased pre-natal engagement and incorporation of the Nurturing Program curriculum into home visits. The on-going evaluation/quality improvement partnership with Johns Hopkins continues and has resulted in award of a highly competitive \$2.5 M grant over the next five years.

2. Healthy Start is cost effective; significant costs will result from eliminating the program.

- A study conducted by University of Hawaii Economist David McClain found **nearly a 3 to 1 cost benefit for Healthy Start** over costs of child welfare and other short term services involved in abuse/neglect cases. (Blue Print for Change, 1995)
- The Department of Human Services currently estimates that child welfare related costs for high risk families not served preventively are about \$783,888 per family. Using this data and data from Johns Hopkins studies, if **there had been no Healthy Start services in 2008, short term costs would total \$17.7 M, or nearly twice the annual program budget as of September 2008.**
- **Averting adverse early childhood experiences and promoting positive early childhood development reduces costs of many of social problems including** school failure, substance abuse, mental health services, juvenile and adult crime as well as **chronic health problems** such as smoking, obesity, diabetes, heart, lung and liver disease, cancer and other diseases which escalate costs of health care. (Felitti, 2000). For example, the long term cost of an average child abuse case in the State of Connecticut is estimated at \$6 M, including costs of treatment and corrections as well as lost wages and income tax.

3. Economists studying the science of early childhood conclude that early intervention services like Healthy Start are critically important in assuring that disadvantaged, high risk young children do not have adverse early experiences, that they arrive at school healthy and ready to learn and go on to succeed in life.

- Experiences in the first years of life lay the foundation for future development, for better or worse. Nobel Prize winning economist James Heckman notes that "while many young children are bathed in an atmosphere that

promotes well being and learning, increasing number of children are not.” He states that **we can tell by age five which children will and will not succeed in school and college.** (NYT Op-ed, July 2009)

- Fareed Zacaria in “The Post American World” commenting that our educational system has fallen behind many countries such as Hong Kong, Singapore, states the main problem is that too many young children are not prepared to succeed in school and that we cannot afford to have so many young people unable to compete in a 21st Century economy.

Services like Healthy Start are critical to development of human capital. Early childhood experts and economists agree that children are our greatest resource and must be protected.

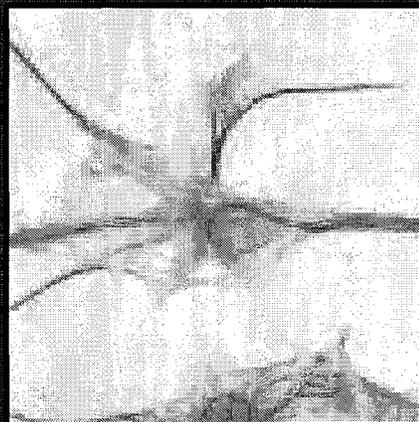
Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify on this bill. We hope that you will seriously consider the importance of Healthy Start both as a safety net and its crucial role in promoting healthy development and well-being of Hawaii’s most vulnerable keiki and ensure continuation of this program.

Sincerely,

Gail Breakey, Executive Director
Hawaii Family Support Institute

The Science of Early Childhood Development

Closing the Gap Between
What We Know and What We Do



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Executive Summary

The future of any society depends on its ability to foster the health and well-being of the next generation. Stated simply, today's children will become tomorrow's citizens, workers, and parents. When we invest wisely in children and families, the next generation will pay that back through a lifetime of productivity and responsible citizenship. When we fail to provide children with what they need to build a strong foundation for healthy and productive lives, we put our future prosperity and security at risk.

Two recent developments have stimulated growing public discussion about the right balance between individual and shared responsibility for that strong foundation. The first is the explosion of research in neurobiology that clarifies the extent to which the interaction between genetics and early experience literally shapes brain architecture. The second is the increasingly recognized need for a highly skilled workforce and healthy adult population to confront the growing challenges of global economic competition and the rising costs of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid for the aging baby boomers.

In an effort to identify those aspects of development that are accepted broadly by the scientific community, the National Scientific Council, based at the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, brought together several of the nation's leading neuroscientists, developmental psychologists, pediatricians, and economists. This document presents their critical review of the existing literatures in their fields and a consensus about what we now know about development in the early childhood years. The objective of the Council is to move beyond the public's fascination with "the latest study" and focus on the cumulative knowledge of decades of research that has been subjected to rigorous and continuous peer review. The goal of this document is to help the public and its policy makers understand the core principles of that body of work that are now sufficiently accepted across the scientific community to warrant public action.

It is our hope and belief that better public understanding of the rapidly growing science of early childhood and early brain development can provide a powerful impetus for the design and implementation of policies and programs that could make a significant difference in the lives of all children. Without that understanding, investments that could generate significant returns for all of society stand the risk of being rejected or undermined. Thus, there is a compelling need for scientists to share with the public and its representatives an objective basis for choosing wisely among competing demands on limited resources.

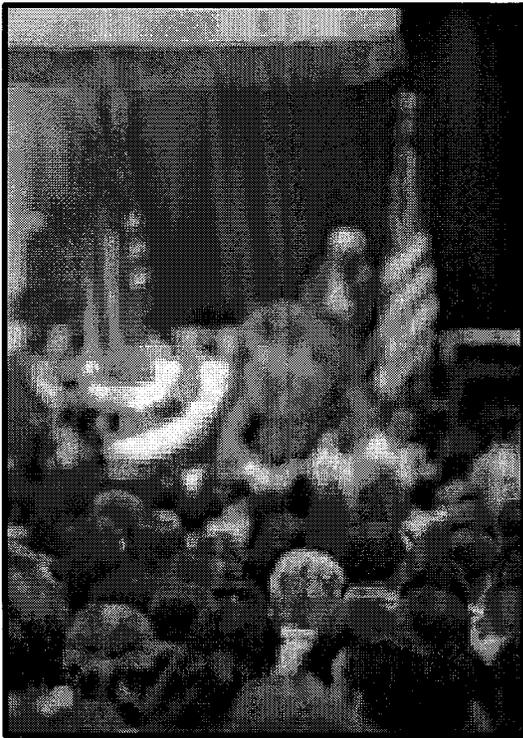
This paper is designed to provide a framework within which this complex challenge can be addressed most effectively. Its goal is to promote an understanding of the basic science of early childhood development, including its underlying neurobiology, to inform both public and private sector investment in young children and their families. To this end, the paper presents a set of core developmental concepts that have emerged from decades of rigorous research in neurobiology, developmental psychology, and the economics of human capital formation, and considers their implications for a range of issues in policy and practice.

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.
- 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 and lead 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.



Implications for Policy and Practice

- Policy initiatives that promote supportive relationships and rich learning opportunities for young children create a strong foundation for higher school achievement followed by greater productivity in the workplace and solid citizenship in the community.
 - Substantial progress toward this goal can be achieved by assuring growth-promoting experiences both at home and in community-based settings, through a range of parent education, family support, early care and education, preschool, and intervention services.
 - When parents, informal community programs, and professionally staffed early childhood services pay attention to young children’s emotional and social needs, as well as to their mastery of literacy and cognitive skills, they have maximum impact on the development of sturdy brain architecture and preparation for success in school.
 - When basic health and early childhood programs monitor the development of all children, problems that require attention can be identified in a timely fashion and intervention can be provided.
 - The basic principles of neuroscience and the technology of human skill formation indicate that later remediation for highly vulnerable children will produce less favorable outcomes and cost more than appropriate intervention at a younger age.
- The essence of quality in early childhood services is embodied in the expertise and skills of the staff and in their capacity to build positive relationships with young children. The striking shortage of well-trained personnel in the field today indicates that substantial investments in training, recruiting, compensating, and retaining a high quality workforce must be a top priority.
 - Responsible investments in services for young children and their families focus on benefits relative to cost. Inexpensive services that do not meet quality standards are a waste of money. Stated simply, sound policies seek maximum value rather than minimal cost.

The need to address significant inequalities in opportunity, beginning in the earliest years of life, is both a fundamental moral responsibility and a critical investment in our nation’s social and economic future. Thus, the time has come to close the gap between what we know (from systematic scientific inquiry across a broad range of disciplines) and what we do (through both public and private sector policies and practices) to promote the healthy development of all young children. The science of early childhood development can provide a powerful framework for informing sound choices among alternative priorities and for building consensus around a shared plan of action. The well-being of our nation’s children and the security of its future would be well-served by such wise choices and concerted commitment.

The Science of Early Childhood Development

The future of any society depends on its ability to foster the health and well-being of the next generation. Stated simply, today's children will become tomorrow's citizens, workers, and parents. When we fail to provide children with what they need to build a strong foundation for healthy and productive lives, we put our future prosperity and security at risk.

Science has a lot to offer about how we as a community can use our collective resources most effectively and efficiently to build that strong foundation. When we invest wisely in children and families, the next generation will pay that back through a lifetime of productivity and responsible citizenship. When we do not make wise investments in the earliest years, we will all pay the considerable costs of greater numbers of school-aged children who need special education and more adults who are under-employable, unemployable, or incarcerated.

Two recent developments have stimulated growing public discussion about the right balance between individual and shared responsibility for child well-being. The first is the explosion of research in neuroscience and other developmental sciences that highlights the extent to which the interaction between genetics and early experience creates either a sturdy or weak foundation for all the learning, behavior, and health that follow. The second is the increasingly recognized need for a highly skilled workforce and healthy adult population to confront the growing challenges of global economic competition and the rising costs of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid for the aging baby boomers.

Most policy makers who face decisions among competing actions lack both the time and means to secure sound scientific advice about which investments offer the greatest potential value and what program elements are critical to their effectiveness. Those same policy makers must explain their decisions to business executives and civic leaders who hold a wide range of beliefs about child-rearing and developmental influences. Without better public understanding of the science of early childhood and brain development, policies and programs that could make a significant difference in the lives of children and all of society stand the risk of being rejected or undermined. Thus, there is a compelling need to educate the public and its representatives about how to choose wisely among competing demands.

For some, the most important decisions focus on the allocation of resources among alternative approaches defined by need (e.g., universal versus targeted investments) or age (e.g., pre-K for four-year-olds versus parent support programs beginning at birth). Others move quickly to questions about the relative merits of different program models. Some are interested primarily in the results of benefit-cost analyses. Others view the reduction of inequalities in opportunity



When we invest wisely in children and families, the next generation will pay that back through a lifetime of productivity and responsible citizenship.



as a moral imperative. All are united in the responsibility to assure that limited resources are invested wisely.

Regardless of the questions, it is essential that the answers be grounded in accurate scientific knowledge where it is available and sound professional judgment when it is needed. This is particularly important in the face of inevitable debates over alternative interpretations of the mountains of program evaluation data generated in a policy environment characterized by ideological differences about the means and ends of raising young children.

In October 2000, the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences released a report entitled *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. The final paragraph of that 588-page report presented a compelling challenge:

The charge to this committee was to blend the knowledge and insights of a broad range of disciplines to generate an

integrated science of early childhood development. The charge to society is to blend the skepticism of a scientist, the passion of an advocate, the pragmatism of a policy maker, the creativity of a practitioner, and the devotion of a parent—and to use existing knowledge to ensure both a decent quality of life for all of our children and a promising future for the nation.

This paper is designed to provide a framework within which this complex charge can be addressed most effectively. Its goal is to promote an understanding of the basic science of early childhood development, including its underlying neurobiology, to inform both public and private sector investment in young children and their families. To this end, the paper presents a set of core developmental concepts that have emerged from decades of rigorous research in neuroscience, developmental psychology, and the economics of human capital formation—and that have survived a rigorous process of debate among the members of the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child about what science can tell us about brain architecture and the foundations of learning, behavior, and health.

Core Concepts of Development

Concept 1: Child development is a foundation for community development and economic development, as capable children become the foundation of a prosperous and sustainable society.

The early development of cognitive skills, emotional well-being, social competence, and sound physical and mental health builds a strong foundation for success well into the adult years. Beyond their short-term importance for positive school achievement, these abilities are critical prerequisites for economic productivity and responsible citizenship throughout life. All aspects of adult human capital, from work force skills to cooperative and lawful behavior, build on capacities that are developed during childhood, beginning at birth.

Implications for Policy and Practice

- Policy initiatives that promote supportive relationships and rich learning opportunities for young children create a strong foundation for higher school achievement followed by greater productivity in the workplace and solid citizenship in the community throughout the adult years. Thus, current calls for greater emphasis on early literacy must not diminish the importance of attention to other essential capacities,

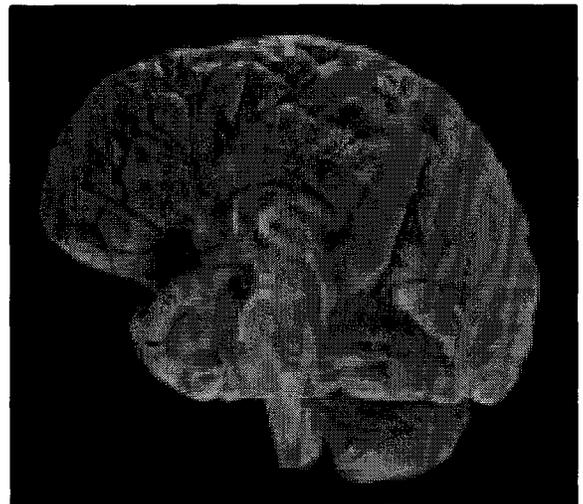
such as initiative, self-confidence, and persistence in learning, as well as the ability to work cooperatively and resolve conflict with peers—all of which are core characteristics of students in a successful school, citizens in a healthy community, and the workforce of a prosperous nation.

- All of society would benefit from a coordinated effort to reduce significant inequalities in the skills of young children at school entry. Substantial progress toward this goal can be achieved by assuring high quality early learning experiences both at home and in community-based settings, through a range of parent education, family support, early care and education, preschool, and intervention services.
- This calls for a long-term investment by all segments of society—including the business community, private philanthropy, both faith-based and secular voluntary organizations, professional associations, and government at all levels—to work together to strengthen families, educate mothers and fathers, and provide professional assistance for those young children and their parents who need help. In fact, the future vitality of the institutions that each these sectors represent will depend on the wisdom of their investment, as today's children either take up society's important work and roles as adults or are ill-prepared and unable to do so.
- Effective early childhood policies and practices will not eliminate all social and economic inequalities. However, when successful interventions are followed by continuing investments throughout the childhood years, they increase the odds that many more children will grow up to be adults who contribute positively to their communities and raise healthy and competent children themselves, while many fewer will end up on public assistance or in jail.

All aspects of adult human capital, from work force skills to cooperative and lawful behavior, build on capacities that are developed during childhood, beginning at birth.

Concept 2: Brains are built over time.

The basic architecture of the brain is constructed through an ongoing process that begins before birth and continues into adulthood. Like the construction of a home, the building process begins with laying the foundation, framing the rooms, and wiring the electrical system in a predictable sequence, and it continues with the incorporation of distinctive features that reflect increasing individuality over time. Brain architecture is built over a succession of “sensitive periods,” each of which is associated with the formation of specific circuits that are associated with specific abilities. The development of increasingly complex skills and their underlying circuits builds on the circuits and skills that were formed earlier. Through this process, early experiences create a foundation for lifelong learning, behavior, and both physical and mental health. A strong foundation in the early years increases the probability of positive outcomes and a weak foundation increases the odds of later difficulties.



Implications for Policy and Practice

- When systems are put in place to monitor the development of all children continuously over time, problems that require attention can be identified early and appropriate responses can be made. This can be accomplished by appropriately trained physicians, nurse practitioners, or developmental specialists within the context of regular health care, as well as through the ongoing observations of skilled providers of early care and education. Fully meeting this goal requires prenatal care for all pregnant women and sustained access to a consistent source of primary health care for all children.



- Environmental protection policies need continuous updating and enforcement if they are to succeed in reducing prenatal and early childhood exposures to substances that have clearly documented toxic effects on the immature brain. These include mercury in fish, lead in soil, and organophosphates in insecticides, among many others.
- The fact that fetal exposure to alcohol is the leading preventable cause of mental retardation in the United States directs our attention to the need for new and creative efforts to reduce alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

Concept 3: 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.

The architecture of the brain is composed of highly integrated sets of neural circuits (i.e., connections among brain cells) that are “wired” under the continuous and mutual influences of both genetics and environment. Genes determine when specific brain circuits are formed and individual experiences then shape how that formation unfolds. This developmental process is fueled by a self-initiated, inborn drive toward competence that is an essential characteristic of human nature. Appropriate sensory input (e.g., through hearing and vision) and stable, responsive relationships build healthy brain architecture that provides a strong foundation for lifelong learning, behavior, and health. The most important relationships begin in the family but often also involve other adults who play important roles in the lives of young children, including providers of early care and education.

What scientists refer to as interaction, mutuality, and reciprocity can be understood as comparable to the process of “serve and return” in games such as tennis and volleyball. In early childhood development, serve and return happens when young children naturally reach out for interaction through babbling, facial expressions, words, gestures, and cries, and adults respond by getting in sync and doing the same kind of vocalizing and gesturing back at them, and the process continues back and forth. Another important aspect of the serve and return notion of interaction is that it works best when it is embedded in an ongoing relationship between a child and an adult who is responsive to the child’s own unique individuality. Decades of research tell us that mutually rewarding interactions are essential prerequisites for the development of healthy brain circuits and increasingly complex skills.

Implications for Policy and Practice

- Healthy communities foster the development of healthy children through the informal support that families provide for each other. When parents are inexperienced in child-rearing or overwhelmed by economic insecurity or threatening community conditions, effective parent education and family support programs can help them sustain the kinds of growth-promoting experiences that build child competence and shape healthy brain architecture. When informal supports and community programs are not sufficient, professional assistance can make an important difference in preventing the formation of faulty brain circuits and the developmental problems that follow. However, professionals with appropriate expertise are relatively limited in number, and their availability will require significant investment in specialized training,

particularly in the domains of maternal and early childhood mental health.

- Business executives, civic leaders, and government officials at all levels should work together to develop better private sector and public policies to provide parents with more viable choices about how to balance their work and parenting responsibilities after the birth of a baby or adoption of a child. During early infancy, when parent-child bonding and emerging attachments are so important, there is a pressing need to strike a better balance between options that support parents to care for their babies at home and those that provide affordable, quality child care for parents who return to work or attend school. This also calls our attention to the need for a more child-oriented perspective on the implications of mandated employment for mothers of very young children who receive welfare support.
- The important influence of positive relationships in shaping the architecture of the developing brain indicates that all of society would benefit from better trained personnel in early child care settings, as well as reduced staff turnover rates which currently undermine the relationships that young children have with the adults who provide much of their daily care. Policy makers should examine the potential impact of alternative strategies for increasing the retention of qualified staff, such as competitive salaries and benefits, opportunities for career advancement linked to additional education, and greater respect for their work as a valued profession. Promising initiatives can be modeled after the successful investments made by the U.S. Department of Defense, which has a very high quality system of early care and education.

Increasingly complex skills build on the more basic, foundational capabilities that precede them.

Concept 4: 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.

Brain circuits that process basic information are wired earlier than those that process more complex information. Higher level circuits build on lower level circuits, and adaptation at higher levels is more difficult if lower level circuits were not wired properly. Parallel to the construction of brain circuits, increasingly complex skills build on the more basic, foundational capabilities that precede them. For example, the ability to understand and then say the names of objects depends upon earlier development of the capacity to differentiate and reproduce the sounds of one’s native language. And the circuits that underlie the ability to put words together to speak in phrases form a foundation for the subsequent mastery of reading a written sentence in a book. Stated in simple terms, circuits build on circuits and skill begets skill.



Implications for Policy and Practice

- Policy makers should consider increasing the availability of parent education and family support programs that have been demonstrated to be effective. These services should begin soon after birth for mothers and fathers with limited education to help them create a home environment that provides the kind of rich language exposure, positive social interactions, and early literacy experiences that increase the probability that their child will enter school with the skills needed to succeed.

Emotional well-being, social competence, and cognitive abilities together are the bricks and mortar that comprise the foundation of human development.

When children are born under significantly adverse circumstances, immediate intervention is warranted, including prenatal support services where feasible. Effective programs can be provided through voluntary associations, community-based organizations, and employer-sponsored initiatives, as well as through government-funded services. Evidence-based supports that are provided earlier rather than later will have the greatest impact, as they help establish healthy brain architecture during the period when lower-level circuits are being constructed (even before birth), thereby creating a strong foundation on which higher-level skills can be built.

- To help children with developmental impairments master the adaptive skills needed to realize their full potential, outreach efforts should be increased to enroll all eligible children in early intervention programs. When positive changes in development are promoted through interventions at a young age, they help build a sturdier foundation for the later achievement of higher level abilities. This underscores the urgent need to identify sensory impairments as soon after birth as possible, so that corrective devices (e.g., hearing aids and eyeglasses) as well as appropriate habilitative services can be provided during the time that basic brain architecture is being established.



Concept 5: Cognitive, emotional, and social capabilities are inextricably intertwined throughout the life course.

The brain is a highly integrated organ and its multiple functions operate in a richly coordinated fashion. Emotional well-being and social competence provide a strong foundation for emerging cognitive abilities, and together they are the bricks and mortar that comprise the foundation of human development. Thus, oral language acquisition depends not only on adequate hearing, the ability to differentiate sounds, and the capacity to link meaning to specific words, but also on the ability to concentrate, pay attention, and engage in meaningful social interaction. Furthermore, the emotional health, social skills, and cognitive-linguistic capacities that emerge in the early years are all important prerequisites for success in school and later in the workplace and community. Brain architecture and the immune system also interact as they mature, which influences all domains of development and health.

Implications for Policy and Practice

- When parents, informal community supports, and professionally staffed early childhood care and education programs all pay attention to young children's emotional and social needs as well as to their mastery of literacy and cognitive skills, they have maximum impact on the development of sturdy brain architecture.

Conversely, preschool policies and programs that place disproportionate emphasis on didactic approaches to academic skills are less likely to prepare young children to succeed in school than experiences that embed the promotion of literacy and numeracy in a rich environment of age-appropriate social interaction. The science of early childhood and early brain development clearly indicates that state and local officials should support the implementation of both child care standards and preschool curricula that promote a balanced and developmentally appropriate approach to the “whole child.”

- Parents, child care providers, and early educators who are seeking help to manage problematic behavior in young children warrant serious attention. With increasing numbers of children being expelled from preschool programs and/or treated with drugs, greater investments are needed to confront the serious shortage of professionals who are qualified to address the behavioral and mental health needs of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Expanded opportunities for professional training, stronger incentives for clinicians to work with young children and their parents, and the promotion of consulting relationships among early childhood mental health experts, child care providers, and preschool teachers would provide important first steps toward closing the gap between what we know and what we do to deal with difficult behavior and prevent more serious mental health problems in the earliest years of life.



Concept 6: Toxic stress in early childhood is associated with persistent effects on the nervous system and stress hormone systems that can damage developing brain architecture and lead to lifelong problems in learning, behavior, and both physical and mental health.

Activation of the body’s stress management systems produces a variety of physiological reactions. These include an increase in heart rate, rise in blood pressure, and elevated levels of stress hormones (e.g., cortisol) and proteins associated with inflammation (e.g., cytokines). Such responses prepare the body to deal with threat (i.e., “fight or flight”) and are essential to survival. Healthy development depends on the capacity of these systems to ramp up rapidly in the face of stress as well as their ability to return to baseline when the threat has been mastered. When these physiological responses remain activated at high levels over a significant period of time, they can have adverse effects. Most prominent among these are the consequences of persistently elevated cortisol levels, which can literally be toxic to developing brain architecture.

The experience of stress in early childhood can be either growth-promoting or seriously damaging, depending on the intensity and duration of the experience, individual differences in children’s physiological responsiveness to stress, and the extent to which a supportive adult is available to provide individualized support to help the child deal with adversity. This can be understood within the context of three different kinds of stress, which lead to different outcomes.

- The first, called **positive stress**, is associated with moderate, short-lived physiological responses, such as brief increases in heart rate and blood pressure or mild elevations in cortisol or cytokine levels. Precipitants include a wide variety of normal early childhood experiences, such as the challenges of meeting new people, dealing with frustration, mastering separation, getting an immunization, and coping with adult limit-setting or discipline. Positive stress is an important and necessary aspect of healthy

development that occurs in the context of stable and supportive relationships, which help to bring levels of cortisol and other stress hormones back within a normal range and assist the child to develop a sense of mastery and self control.



- The second kind of stress experience, called **tolerable stress**, is associated with physiological responses that could disrupt brain architecture, but are relieved by supportive relationships that facilitate adaptive coping and thereby restore heart rate and stress hormone levels to their baseline. Precipitants include significant threats, such as the death or serious illness of a loved one, a frightening injury, parent divorce, a natural disaster (such as Hurricane Katrina), or an act of terrorism (such as 9-11). These kinds of experiences could have long term consequences but they are tolerable when they occur in a time-limited period in which supportive adults protect the child by reducing the stressful experience, thereby giving the brain an opportunity to recover from the potentially damaging effects of an overactive stress management system.

- The third and most threatening kind of stress experience, called **toxic stress**, is associated with strong and prolonged activation of the body's stress management systems in the absence of the buffering protection of adult support. Precipitants include extreme poverty in conjunction with continuous family chaos, recurrent physical or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, severe and enduring maternal depression, persistent parental substance abuse, or repeated exposure to violence in the community or within the family. The essential feature of toxic stress is the absence of consistent, supportive relationships to help the child cope and thereby bring the physiological response to threat back to baseline. In such circumstances, persistent elevations of stress hormones and altered levels of key brain chemicals produce an internal physiological state that disrupts the architecture of the developing brain and can lead to difficulties in learning, memory, and self-regulation. Continuous stimulation of the stress response system also can affect the immune system and other metabolic regulatory mechanisms, leading to a permanently lower threshold for their activation throughout life. As a result, children who experience toxic stress in early

Stress in early childhood can be either growth-promoting or seriously damaging.

childhood may develop a lifetime of greater susceptibility to stress-related physical illnesses (such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and diabetes) as well as mental health problems (such as depression, anxiety disorders, and substance abuse). They also are more likely to exhibit health-damaging behaviors and adult lifestyles that undermine well-being.

Implications for Policy and Practice

- Policy makers who administer early intervention programs should update their eligibility criteria, based on new brain research, and actively enroll infants and toddlers who are experiencing toxic stress for either preventive or therapeutic services, as needed. Two groups of children and families already known to public agencies are prime candidates for assessment. The first (which is currently mandated for referral by new federal legislation) includes all young children referred to the child welfare department for evaluation of suspected abuse or neglect. When circumstances require removal of a child from his or her home, it is especially critical that policies be in place and implemented consistently to make sure that the

establishment of a nurturing relationship with a new primary caregiver is given the highest priority. The second group that warrants closer attention is young children of mothers supported by welfare who have reached their time limits for public assistance and are unable to secure stable employment. Effective developmental intervention for both groups will require expanded access to child and adult mental health services, which are already burdened by demands that far exceed their capacity.

- Greater attention should be directed toward maternal depression, not only because it is a common adult mental health problem but also because it is a threat to the health and well-being of a young child. The prevention of developmental impairments in children of depressed mothers requires prompt diagnosis and specialized treatment of both the mother and the mother-child relationship. These findings direct our attention to the need for early detection of maternal depression in pediatric offices and in all programs that serve very young children, as well as the need for expanded clinical services that focus on the mother and child together.
- When accessible and affordable mental health services are available, they put a preventive system in place that catches children before they fall. Programs that target vulnerable young children within a family-centered model can be particularly effective, but the current gap between the supply and demand for skilled personnel requires a major investment in professional development. The costs of increased training and expanded services in early childhood mental health are substantial, but the money “saved” by not treating emotional problems in early childhood is likely to be modest in comparison to the greater long-term costs of serious adult mental illness and/or criminal behavior.
- Generally speaking, policies that focus on the delivery of evidence-based services for the most vulnerable young children will achieve greater financial return than services for children at lesser risk. To this end, issues of quality and cost must be viewed in the context of what a program is expected to do. Programs for families coping with severe depression, substance abuse, or violence must be staffed by skilled clinicians who require higher compensation and smaller case loads than basic supportive services for inexperienced mothers. When program resources match the needs of the children and families they are set up to serve, they can be very effective. When services are asked to address needs that are beyond their capacity to meet, they are likely to have little impact and are therefore too expensive, despite their low cost.

The essential feature of toxic stress is the absence of consistent, supportive relationships to help the child cope.



Concept 7: Creating the right conditions for early childhood development is likely to be more effective and less costly than addressing problems at a later age.



As the maturing brain becomes more specialized to assume more complex functions, it is less capable of reorganizing and adapting to new or unexpected challenges. Once a circuit is “wired,” it stabilizes with age, making it increasingly difficult to alter. Scientists use the term “plasticity” to refer to the capacity of the brain to change. Plasticity is maximal in early childhood and decreases with age. Although “windows of opportunity” for skill development and behavioral adaptation remain open for many years, trying to change behavior or build new skills on a foundation of brain circuits that were not wired properly when they were first formed requires more work and is more “expensive.” For the brain, this means that greater amounts of physiological energy are needed to compensate for circuits that do not perform in an expected fashion. For society, this means that remedial education, clinical treatment, and other professional interventions are more costly than the provision of nurturing, protective relationships and appropriate learning experiences earlier in life. Stated simply, getting things right the first time is more efficient and ultimately more effective than trying to fix them later.

Implications for Policy and Practice

- These findings direct our attention to the importance of informal family support and formal preventive services (when needed) for vulnerable children before they exhibit significant problems in behavior or development. When policy makers assure that all young children who are at high risk for poor outcomes are enrolled in high quality programs whose effectiveness has been documented, the returns are far greater than those achieved when only a subgroup of eligible children are served. At the same time, the extent to which some early concerns may be self-correcting maturational delays underscores the need to avoid premature labelling of vulnerable children and families who could benefit from early assistance.
- The basic principles of neuroscience and the process of human skill formation indicate that early intervention for the most vulnerable children will generate the greatest payoff. Although the large number of children and families who could benefit from additional assistance will require significant

Getting things right the first time is more efficient and ultimately more effective than trying to fix them later.

increases in funding, extensive research indicates that investment in high quality interventions will generate substantial future returns through increased taxes paid by more productive adults and significant reductions in public expenditures for special education, grade retention, welfare assistance, and incarceration. Stated simply, the largest returns will be realized from effective services for the neediest children and families well before they enter school.

- Research indicates that policy makers can achieve greater return on investments in early childhood education for children from families with low incomes and limited parent education than from remedial programs for adults with limited workforce skills. In fact, long-term studies show that model programs for three- and four-year-olds living in poverty can produce benefit-cost ratios as high as 17:1 and annualized internal rates of return of 18% over 35 years, with most of the benefits from these investments accruing to

the general public. While it is not realistic to assume that all scaled-up early childhood programs will provide such handsome returns, it is likely that benefit-cost ratios still will be considerably greater than 1:1.

- The essence of quality in early childhood services is embodied in the expertise, skills, and relationship-building capacities of their staff. The striking imbalance between the supply and demand for well-trained personnel in the field today indicates that substantial investments in training, recruiting, compensating, and retaining a high quality workforce must be a top priority for society.

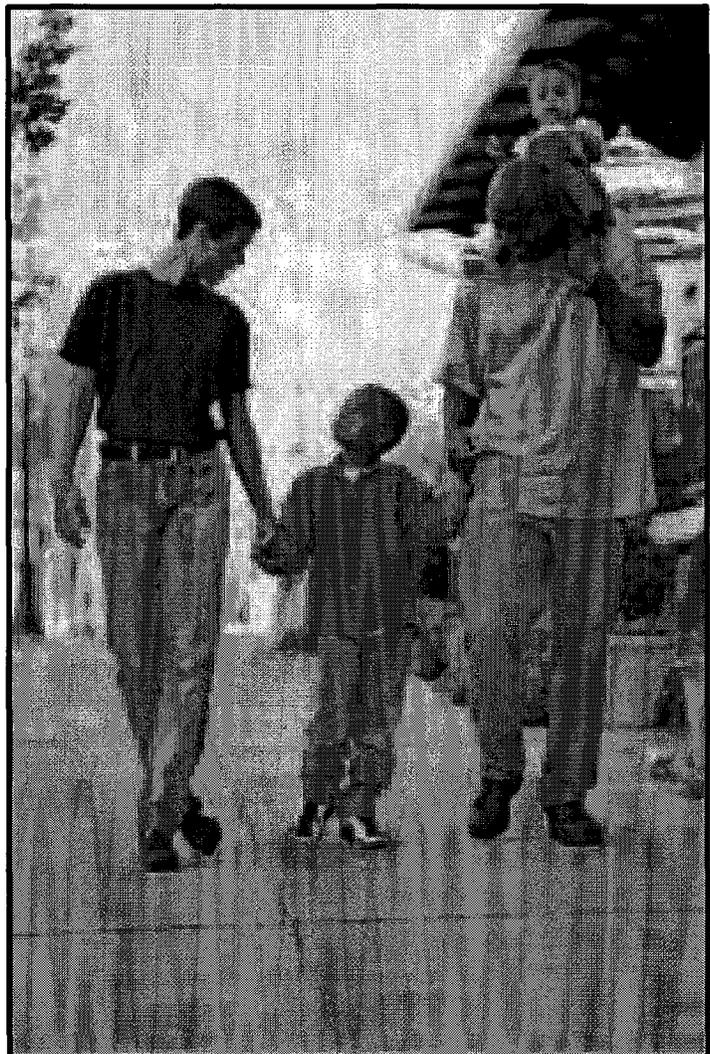
Responsible investments in services for young children and their families focus on benefits relative to cost. Inexpensive services that do not meet quality standards are a waste of money. Stated simply, sound policies seek maximum value rather than minimal cost.

Concluding Thoughts

Decades of rigorous science and centuries of common sense all converge on the core principles articulated in this paper. Within this context, the time has come to begin to close the gap between what we know (from systematic scientific inquiry across a broad range of disciplines) and what we do (through both public and private sector policies and practices) to promote the healthy development of all young children.

The need to address significant inequalities in opportunity, beginning in the earliest years of life, is both a fundamental moral responsibility and a critical investment in our nation's social and economic future. As such, it is a compelling task that calls for broad, bipartisan collaboration. And yet, debate in the policy arena often highlights ideological differences and value conflicts more than it seeks common interest. In this context, the science of early childhood development can provide a values-neutral framework for informing choices among alternative priorities and for building consensus around a shared plan of action. The well-being of our nation's children and the security of our collective future would be well-served by such wise choices and concerted commitment.

It is in this spirit that we, as scientists, offer this paper as a way to share what we know about how brain architecture is constructed and competence is built over time, beginning in the earliest years of life. We trust that the content of this document will inform the important work of citizens and policy makers to support families and communities in promoting the healthy development of young children, just as it will serve as a foundation on which the next generation of scientific knowledge will be built. ●



Selected Background Readings

From the National Academy of Sciences

National Research Council and Institute of Medicine: *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development, Shonkoff J., Phillips D. (eds.). Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC, National Academy Press. 2000.

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National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, Working Paper No.1
<http://developingchild.net/pubs/wp-abstracts/wp1.html>

Children's Emotional Development is Built into the Architecture of their Brain. (2004)

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, Working Paper No. 2
<http://developingchild.net/pubs/wp-abstracts/wp2.html>

Excessive Stress Disrupts the Architecture of the Developing Brain. (2005)

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, Working Paper No. 3
<http://developingchild.net/pubs/wp-abstracts/wp3.html>

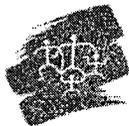
Early Exposure to Toxic Substances Damages Brain Architecture. (2006)

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, Working Paper No. 4
<http://developingchild.net/pubs/wp-abstracts/wp4.html>

NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL ON THE DEVELOPING CHILD
Center on the Developing Child  HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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PACT

PARENTS AND CHILDREN TOGETHER

A Family Service Agency

1485 Linapuni Street, Suite 105
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96819
Tel. (808) 847-3285
Fax (808) 841-1485

**TO: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland
Senate Committee on Human Services
Conference Room 226**

**FROM: Haaheo Mansfield
Vice-President of Programs
Parents And Children Together**

DATE: February 4, 2009

SUBJECT: SB 791 Relating to Children

OAHU PROGRAMS

COMMUNITY TEEN CENTER

CPS VISITATION CENTERS

EARLY HEAD START/
HEAD START

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
CENTER

FAMILY PEACE CENTER

FAMILY VISITATION CENTER

HANA LIKE HOME
VISITOR PROGRAM

HAWAII FAMILY SUPPORT
CENTER

INTENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

KANEOHE COMMUNITY
FAMILY CENTER

KPT FAMILY CENTER

OHIA - DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
SHELTER

PU'UHONUA DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE CENTER

RESPITE CARE

MAUI COUNTY PROGRAMS

FAMILY PEACE CENTER

INTENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

LANAI INTEGRATED SERVICES

FAMILY VISITATION CENTER

KAUAI COUNTY PROGRAMS

FAMILY VISITATION CENTER

INTENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

MEMBER:

CWLA

ALOHA UNITED WAY

COA

My name is Haaheo Mansfield. As the Vice-President of Programs at Parents And Children Together (PACT), I strongly urge you to support SB 791, a bill supporting an appropriation for Healthy Start. PACT has been a member of the Healthy Start Network since 19891, and prior to that, had been delivering home based services to families identified as at risk for child abuse and neglect through our Hana Like Home Visitor Program.

Healthy Start has made a significant difference in the lives of Hawaii families. The most recent study completed by Johns Hopkins University found the program to be a successful secondary prevention model for this population. I am sure you or your staff members have seen the recent on air interviews of at least two of our Hana Like consumer families, both praising the services they received and how the program significantly changed their lives.

The scientific community has deemed Healthy Start to be effective, consumer voices have echoed their agreement with the research findings and a number of high profile citizens have come forward to leverage their reputations in support of Healthy Start. The evidence is clear and to the point, Healthy Start is effective and very much needed by our community.

The only issue, of course, is money. Although I am not privy to the reasoning behind the Department of Health's decision to have Healthy Start bear the brunt of the mandated cuts, I am dismayed that the Department did not share the cuts unilaterally across their entire budget. While I have great confidence in Dr. Fukino and trust her administrative decisions, I cannot say I agree with how this particular decision was made.

Thank you for allowing me to testify on this very vital and important service. I strongly urge you to support SB 791.



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KAUAI COUNTY PROGRAMS

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- INTENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

MEMBER:

- CWLA
- ALOHA UNITED WAY
- COA

TO: Senator David Ige, Chair
 Committee on Health
 Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair
 Committee on Human Services

FROM: Julie Falicki, Program Director
 Parents And Children Together
 Hana Like Home Visitor Program

DATE: February 4, 2009

RE: SB 791
In Support of Funding for Healthy Start \$9.4 M

My name is Julie Falicki. I am the Program Director for PACT's Hana Like Home Visitor Program. Hana Like is a member of the statewide Healthy Start Network. I have worked in the Healthy Start program in a variety of roles since 1993. PACT is one of Hawaii's leading not-for-profit human services providers, with 12 programs statewide serving over 9,000 clients annually. I am submitting testimony **in support of funding for Healthy Start.**

The importance of the first three years of life has been well established. The years from birth to three lay the foundation for each child's cognitive and emotional development. The quality of the child's early environment, including their relationship with their parents and the provision of early learning experiences, is predictive of that child's later success in areas such as school performance and social adjustment.

It is the mission of the Healthy Start program to optimize each child's development during these critical years by providing at-risk families with the skills and support needed to nurture their child's development and to avoid setting patterns of parenting which may lead to child abuse and neglect and poor developmental outcomes. This is done through regular home visitation by a Home Visitor, developmental screening to identify and address developmental concerns, the provision of information on effective parenting techniques and child development, and referral to community resources to reduce family stress. The services provided by the paraprofessional Home Visitor are supported by professional Child Development Specialists, who address developmental concerns, and Family Specialists, who address risk factors such as mental health issues and substance abuse.

During these tough economic times, it is tempting to eliminate programs that may be viewed by some as non-essential. Families



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- COA

referred to Healthy Start are those determined to be at risk for child abuse and neglect, as measured by a validated tool. The Healthy Start program has proven to be effective in ameliorating those factors associated with child abuse and neglect, such as unrealistic expectations of children, lack of knowledge of child development, history of abuse and neglect in the parents' own childhood, substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health issues, social isolation, and limited resources. This is accomplished through direct services by the Healthy Start team, as well as referrals to community resources. The program aims to build supports and reduce stressors, thereby promoting each family's capacity to foster their child's development as well as the family's self-reliance and resilience. The program also promotes the use of a medical home, immunizations, family planning and prenatal care to avoid costs associated with crisis care.

Elimination of Healthy Start will take away this safety net for vulnerable families, which will result in increased costs elsewhere, such as Child Welfare Services and foster care, and costs associated with developmental delays such as special education. Additional short-term costs include unemployment insurance for over 200 Healthy Start employees statewide. The state will lose income from Medicaid reimbursements drawn down by the program at a rate of around 1.5 million a year, as well as a federal Administration for Children and Families grant of 2.5 million recently awarded to the Department of Health, Maternal and Child Health Branch to continue to improve the program over the next 5 years.

Long-term costs associated with child abuse and neglect include school failure, substance abuse, an unprepared work force, mental health treatment, crime, as well as illnesses now known to be associated with early trauma and neglect. Healthy Start has been a national leader in prevention services for over 20 years, and has been a model for similar programs in over 35 states. Let us continue to be a model for protecting our most vulnerable citizens.

Testimony on SB 791

By Howard S. Garval, President & CEO, Child & Family Service

Presented to Senate Committee on Human Services

February 9, 2009

We must protect our keiki from child abuse and not just after the fact when abuse has already occurred. Hawaii had the incredible foresight to recognize that child abuse prevention is a great investment to make when it invented Healthy Start back in 1984. By 2001 the program was deployed statewide. It has been replicated in over 30 states under Healthy Families America because other states recognize the value and efficacy of the program.

Before I present the reasons Child & Family Service supports these bills, one amendment I suggest for SB 791 is to appropriate the general operating funds to the Department of Health (DOH). Clearly the TANF funds would need to come from the Department of Human Services (DHS), but the Department of Health is not identified in this bill. Currently funding for Healthy Start comes primarily from DOH, although HB 1354 appropriately continues the sum of \$1.66 million of TANF dollars to Healthy Start. Again, any TANF funds have to come from DHS. Also, DHS supports Enhanced Healthy Start which is currently under the master contract for Healthy Start that is administered by DOH.

There are multiple reasons that Child & Family Service wholeheartedly endorses SB 791. Let me outline these below:

- Healthy Start works. In FY 08 for families that stayed 12 months or more in the program, over 99% had **no** report of child abuse! This exceeds child abuse rates that are higher nationally and in Hawaii.
- Healthy Start works with families in which at least one parent is at substantial risk of abusing and/or neglecting her/his baby/child. A

scientifically validated checklist called the Kempe Family Stress Checklist is used to determine parental risk of child abuse. Only those families who score at a high enough level (scores of 30 and above) are referred to Healthy Start. Therefore, the program is working with high risk families and getting a terrific result as noted above.

- In Hawaii, Johns Hopkins University has been evaluating the program for many years. This has led to significant program improvements/enhancements that have strengthened the program. It also has helped to define a group of “anxious” mothers for whom Healthy Start has been very effective. For these moms, Healthy Start helped reduce child abuse by 60% and child neglect by 56%. This longitudinal evaluation was done using a control group which is the most valid form of evaluation.
- For a cost of \$3,000 per family, Healthy Start served over 4,000 families in FY 08. Estimates are that without Healthy Start services, 13% of the children would end up being abused. If one assumes 4,000 children who would be at risk if Healthy Start is eliminated, then 13% of that is 520 children who are likely to be abused. If you were to add up child welfare services costs including investigation, foster care, mental health treatment, potential future juvenile delinquency and school dropouts, the costs to the state would be substantial and would likely wipe out any savings achieved through program elimination.
- Hawaii would also walk away from **\$4.5 million** if Healthy Start is eliminated. Healthy Start bills under the Early Intervention Special Funds and draws down about **\$1.5 million** in Federal Medicaid reimbursement each year. Also, **\$.5 million** would be lost that comes in to the state from CAPTA and is allocated to the Children’s Trust Fund managed by the Hawaii Community Foundation. Because of Hawaii’s success in Healthy Start in having a research partner (Johns Hopkins University) with the Maternal Child Health Branch of the Department of Health, DOH recently was awarded a highly competitive grant from the Federal government of **\$2.5 million** over 5 years. If Healthy Start is eliminated, the state would be

walking away from a total of **\$4.5 million** in revenue from other sources other than the state.

- While the state faces a significant budget shortfall, it makes no sense to eliminate a successful program where the cost to the state will only be higher if the services are no longer provided. Even reducing the program makes more sense than outright elimination. This ultimately would lead to fewer families being served and will heighten the risk of child abuse for some children, but is less damaging than no services at all to this high risk population.
- Very few programs that the state funds can match the rigorous evaluation and research that Healthy Start has had. Nationally there is growing research that documents the effectiveness and importance of home visiting programs in preventing child abuse. Even if Healthy Start is not perfect, this does not explain elimination. In fact if the state accepts the \$2.5 million from the recently awarded grant, Healthy Start can be strengthened even further so it can be even more effective.
- In addition to preventing child abuse, Healthy Start achieves certain other important outcomes such as: ensuring the family has a medical home, providing prenatal care for subsequent pregnancies for Healthy Start parents, performing developmental screening for a high percentage of one year olds and two year olds. Since children with special needs are at considerably higher risk of child abuse, it is important that special needs are identified early and referrals can then be made to appropriate service providers.
- While the Governor is to be applauded for trying to prevent layoffs of state employees, SB 791 could soften the impact of or actually prevent layoffs in the nonprofit organizations that provide Healthy Start services throughout the state of Hawaii. Eliminating Healthy Start would result in the layoffs of 400-500 employees statewide among the six providers of Healthy Start services. Our estimate of the unemployment costs would be \$2.4 million. This assumes a mix of paraprofessional and professional staff who would be laid off statewide if the program is eliminated with an estimated \$300+ for

in unemployment payments to paraprofessionals and \$545/week for professionals for 30 weeks under the new federal extension of unemployment benefits.

- There is no equivalent or duplicative program to Healthy Start. Enhanced Healthy Start only gets involved when the family is an active CWS case and abuse and/or neglect has already occurred. Therefore, if Healthy Start is eliminated, at least 4,000 families in Hawaii who are at risk of child abuse and neglect will not receive services. There is no other program that would pick up these families and it is likely that the family won't be known unless they end up as a Child Protection case with CWS or when the children are ready to enter school. By then, if there was abuse and/or neglect, the trauma and damage to the child(ren) will have already occurred and it will be more expensive to treat.

For all of the reasons stated above, Child & Family Service strongly supports SB 791 that restores funding through state general operating funds and TANF funds to the Healthy Start Home Visiting program. We can continue to intervene early to prevent child abuse and strengthen families, or we can pick up the pieces only after abuse and/or neglect has occurred when the damage is already done that may have lifelong consequences for children. I urge you to opt for the former by restoring funding to the highly successful Healthy Start program.

To: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Norman Sakamoto, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

Senator David Ige, Chair
Senator Josh Green, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Shan Tsutsui, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Darlene Beatty, Division Administrator
Catholic Charities Hawai'i

Date: February 9, 2009

Place: Senate Human Services and Health Committees
February 10, 2009
Conference Room 016
1:15 p.m.

Re: **Testimony in support of SB 791**

My name is Darlene Beatty, I am the Division Administrator for Family and Therapeutic Services of Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH). In these difficult economic times it is vital that those most vulnerable in our community continue to have a safety net to help them survive. Much needed services like those provided by Healthy Start help prevent child abuse and neglect which could escalate with the increasing stress faced by families living on the financial edge. It is critical that child abuse prevention programs like Healthy Start continue to be funded. Healthy Start also ensures that from the beginning the infants served receive needed health care in order to thrive and be healthy.

I urge you to pass SB 791 to continue funding for the much needed Healthy Start programs in order to ensure that our keiki and families survive and thrive.



Hearing date:
TUESDAY,
February 10,
2009, 1:15 p.m.
Senate Human
Services & Health
Committees
Room 016

To: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator David Y. Ige, Chair
SENATE COMMITTEES ON HUMAN SERVICES AND HEALTH

From: Elisabeth Chun, Executive Director
Good Beginnings Alliance

Date: Thursday, February 5, 2009, 8:15 am
Conference Room 329

Subject: **SB791: Appropriate funds from general revenues and the temporary assistance for needy families funds for the healthy start program.**

The Good Beginnings Alliance is a policy and advocacy organization focused on Hawaii's youngest children and their families. We strive to ensure a nurturing, safe and healthy development for all children from pre-birth to age eight. We believe all children deserve safe and supportive environments that meet their needs as they grow and develop.

We support this bill.

One note: As the basic Healthy Start program is currently operated by the Department of Health, we question this appropriation designation to the Department of Human Services and the reason for this change. Please clarify.

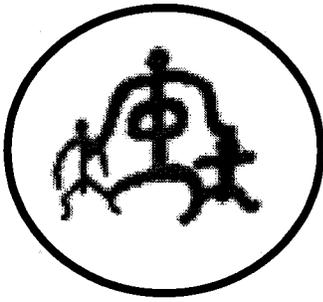
Hawaii's Healthy Start program is regarded as foundational to our early learning system. The hospital screenings as well as the home visits are critical to the prevention of child abuse and neglect for Hawaii's families. Healthy Start also initiates vitally important parental engagement and training as to how the family can foster a child's early learning and healthy growth.

At a time when Hawaii's weakened economy is placing more stress on families, it is critical that programs such as Healthy Start not be eliminated. At a minimum, the maintenance of prevention programs is a must. Long-term studies show that if we do not support prevention, our state will have to pay more in social services and remedial education costs years from now as these children enter school, and eventually join the workforce and become parents.

Please protect our young children and support their healthy development.

Mahalo for your support.

For more information contact: Good Beginnings Alliance; phone: 531-5502;
lchun@goodbeginnings.org



HAWAI'I EARLY INTERVENTION
COORDINATING COUNCIL

1350 South King St. Suite 200 ☞ Honolulu Hawai'i 96814

Date: February 7, 2009

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Senator David Ige, Chair
Senator Josh Green, MD, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

Fr: Leolinda Parlin, Chair, Hawaii Early Intervention Coordinating Council

Re: **SUPPORT** – SB791 – Appropriation for Healthy Start

On behalf of the Hawai'i Early Intervention Coordinating Council (HEICC), I submit this testimony in **support** of SB791 which appropriates funds from general revenues and the temporary assistance for needy families funds for the healthy start program.

Healthy Start plays a vital role in our continuum of care not only for the infants and toddlers with special health needs, but also for the families of these children. Healthy Start serves those who are at risk for abuse and neglect; the interventions provided by the program attempt to minimize these risks; towards strengthening and preserving the family. Services for children, who are environmentally at risk, are provided through the Healthy Start Program. These services are mandated in the Hawai'i Revised Statute.

The Council is concerned about the state's ability to meet compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education and Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004 if the primary vehicle for serving children who are environmentally at risk is eliminated from the state budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration. The Council is available answer any questions or concerns raised by the committee.



To: Senator David Ige, Health Committee Chair

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 791, Relating to Children

Bill scheduled to be heard by Senate Health Committee, Monday, February 9, 2009

Healthy Start is the only proactive, preventative program available to help support new parents in creating safe, healthy environments for their child in order to reduce the incidence and impact of child abuse and neglect. Some have cited that since Healthy Start is a *voluntary* program, that this suggests it is not needed or somehow less effective. YWCA has provided Healthy Start services on the Island of Hawai'i in the Districts of Puna, Hilo and Hamakua for the past two decades, and have witnessed firsthand the benefits to families who ***choose to make proactive decisions and changes in their lives for the welfare of their children and themselves.*** When parents voluntarily choose to become better parents, as do those accessing Healthy Start, as compared to when they are referred through Child Welfare and are ***forced*** to do so, the benefits of services provided are more pronounced, longer lasting and foster empowered citizens' who have taken control of a situation BEFORE it spiraled into the abyss fear and imminent danger to children.

One Healthy Start mother expressed how vital were the services she received during the incarceration of her newborn's father and his subsequent return. Without Healthy Start assistance, she was doubtful they would have surmounted the many struggles, stressors and readjustments of that time, and that her children *"have an advantage"* as a result. They now have two more children together are stable.

A former participant shared: *"As a 16 year old with a newborn and I had never held a baby....I was in an abusive relationship, and received help from Healthy Start when no one else offered it."* That help led to escape from the abusive relationship and getting her high school diploma. Ten years later, this former single teen mom has acquired a master's degree, and states she and her daughter have become *"successful contributing members of the community"*.

A current mother of 4 shares that prior to accessing Healthy Start following the birth of her 3rd child, that her husband would *"wake me up several times at night to hurt me, he provided no financial support, would not let me work and was constantly on drugs. Because of the nightly abuse, anger and shame, I did not know how to treat my two little boys with anything but anger or I was too tired to deal with them. I hate to think about what my children would still be going through"*. She goes on to say, *"If this program is cut, it will be a sad day for all the children they could have helped...if it does(get cut), they better raise the pay for judges because they'll be seeing a lot more cases of children who were abused who become abusive adults"*.

These are only three examples of how Healthy Start makes a sound investment for the future. Prevention programs are a sure investment; they save lives, support families, prevent child maltreatment, promote child health, development and school readiness.

Although state funds are short, in the long run, we believe **Healthy Start saves tax payer dollars** by fostering positive parent child relationships during the first 3 years of life. This saves money later by preventing future school failures, delinquency, and incarceration rates for children whose home environment has been overwhelmed by disadvantage, lack of adequate resources or the right help at the right time. During this time of high unemployment, why cut the jobs of nearly 200 workers who provide these important services? Doing so will pull the rug out from under some of our most vulnerable members of society.

It is important to note that in 2004, the SOH Department of Human Services implemented the Enhanced Healthy Start program, modeled after the DOH-MCHB funded Healthy Start, as the best means to improve services to families previously referred to Child Welfare Services. The reason was because it was shown to be the most effective to prevent further child maltreatment and it continues to do so today.

On behalf of the YWCA Hawai'i Island board of directors, staff, members and over 200 Healthy Start families served annually, I respectfully request the committee vote in favor of SB 791 for the fully funded amount of \$9.4 million total from general funds and/or TANF funds.

If the legislature determine to allocate funds for the Healthy Start Program statewide, I urge that it will do so with assurances that these funds will not be later restricted. This will assure that the promise and intent of the legislature to your constituents is fulfilled.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Albers
Executive Director

YWCA of Hawai'i Island
145 Ululani St.
Hilo, HI 96720-2947

Office: 808-935-7141
Cell: 808-987-1850
Fax: 808-935-5150

www.ywcahawaiiisland.org



FAMILY PROGRAMS HAWAII

Date: February 10, 2008

To: Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Linda Santos, President & CEO, Family Programs Hawai'i

RE: Senate Bill 791
Hearing on 2-10-09 1:15 PM Conference Room 016

Purpose: Senate Bill 791, SD –The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds from general revenues and the temporary assistance for needy families' funds for the Healthy Start program.

Introduction: I am Linda Santos, President and CEO of Family Programs Hawai'i. We provide services to prevent foster care placement; support children and families involved in out of home placement; and assist young adults emancipating from the foster care system.

Agency Position: Family Programs Hawai'i is strongly in favor of this bill which supports programs such as Healthy Start to provide resources for overburdened families to assist them with safe and successful parenting and reduce child abuse and neglect.

Family Programs Hawai'i is proud to be in partnership with the Department of Human Services on several Child Welfare Services programs and to be a part of the systemic change that is reducing the numbers of children in foster care and lowering the re-abuse rates in Hawai'i. We are concerned that the elimination of funds for social services, especially Healthy Start, will significantly negate the improvements we have made.

One of the services we offer is Voluntary Case Management, a program that works with families who have been identified by Child Welfare Services for abuse and neglect due to the existence of problems such domestic violence, substance abuse, mental illness and poverty. These problems are core risk factors that the Healthy Start Program addresses in its mission to eliminate child abuse and neglect and help foster nurturing and healthy home environments for



FAMILY PROGRAMS HAWAII

Hawaii's keiki. Healthy Start is an invaluable resource for the families we serve. Eliminating this "front line of defense" of child abuse and neglect, will impact VCM and Child Welfare Services' caseloads. More of the "risk factors" that are being addressed by Healthy Start will become substantiated abuse and neglect, resulting in more children entering the foster care system. Subsequently, prevention and intervention programs will either lose their current effectiveness, or require expansion costing more dollars than currently being used to fund the Healthy Start Program.

We realize the dire need to balance the budget in these economically challenging times, but we are equally worried that during these times of economic distress cutting programs like Healthy Start that support our needy families, will undermine the safety of our children in high risk families. We respectfully request that you fund this program that has been shown to have a substantial positive effect on parenting in our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Testimony in Favor of SB 791 , Relating to Children and Healthy Start

From: Linda Coble, Advisory Board of Hawaii Family Support Institute
and child abuse prevention volunteer
284-2000

Dear State Senators Chun Oakland, Baker, English, Green and Ige,

I was shocked and confused, when I learned that Healthy Start was being eliminated from the State budget for reasons that absolutely are not valid. Healthy Start is not duplicative of other services. The program's outcomes and effectiveness have been measured and evaluated more than any State funded program I know. Hawaii's Healthy Start has been the model for the nationwide Healthy Families America child abuse prevention programs across the country.

I have been involved as a volunteer since the first Healthy Start pilot in Ewa 25 years ago, and am proud of the fact that the program has morphed with the needs of our served community, to include clinical specialists able to address the more serious environments in which our most vulnerable keiki live. In fact, a recent 5-year, 2.5 million dollar grant from the Federal Administration for Children and Families to enhance the quality, impact and sustainability of Hawaii's Healthy Start Program...a highly competitive contract that went to only 17 programs nationwide...illustrates our success and potential. That will evaporate with the end of Healthy Start. But more importantly, I can't imagine what will happen when, in this skidding economy, the safety net is yanked out from under our greatest resource.

Please appropriate funds to maintain this ID and home visiting program that prevents child abuse and neglect, and promotes healthy development among newborns of families at risk. Prevention is the key! Who will connect with families in hospitals at the birth of newborns to accurately assess risk for abuse, neglect, or developmental and learning problems? Who will provide valuable home visiting services that strengthen families, prevents child mal treatment and promotes child health and development? Who will keep the floodgates in place, so other providers and hospitals don't drown in new cases after the damage is done?

I respectfully will defer to the providers, the number crunchers, the families who have found success in raising their children in a healthy and non- abusive environment because of Healthy Start, for the core arguments.

But as a volunteer...as a citizen of my adopted state...as a reporter who has covered the ugly end of abuse and neglect...as someone who understands the value of front end prevention...please use the smarts we elected you to exhibit, to keep Healthy Start intact for these difficult times to come. This is not the time to turn our backs on prevention. In the tough economic times, guess who is on the short end of the fist? I know you know. And once you know...you cannot pretend that you don't.

Thank you for paying now, so we don't have to pay big time in the years to come.

Aloha,
Linda Coble
284-2000
3279 Beaumont Woods Place
Honolulu, Hi. 98222

TESTIMONY

Dawna Krueger, Director
2444-A Main Street
Wailuku, HI 96793
(808) 242-1995- day time

Governor Lingle and Legistors;

Speaking from the position of the director of Iao Preschool for 15 years, and a board member on the advisory board of Maui Family Support Services I know first hand about how important a stable first three year are. Healthy Start (HS) provides a safety net to Hawaii's most vulnerable families and infants along with its mission of preventing child abuse and neglect by providing supportive services to at-risk families. A commonsensical approach in such a desperate time would be to increase safety net programs such as HS, not to dispose of them completely, as you have proposed in your latest budget.

It is not surprising to know that economic stress on families is a large predictor of child abuse and neglect. A study for Johns Hopkins University says the "prevention programs (such as Healthy Start) saves lives, prevents child maltreatment, promote child health, development and school readiness and that these same programs save tax payer dollars by preventing school failure, delinquency and incarceration in children growing up in families experiencing disadvantage and stress."

By cutting HS services, you are allowing those families who are at-risk to fall through the cracks. By removing the safety net of the HS program, CWS and other short-term services such as Enhanced Healthy Start would be overloaded with high-risk cases. Without HS, children are being harmed by the risks that could otherwise have been prevented. In an effort to balance the budget, our children are being left to abuse and neglect. They are our future and our greatest gift, they deserve to be cared for.

Sincerely,

Dawna Krueger
Director Iao Preschool



Hawai'i
Association for the
Education of
Young
Children

1806 So. King Street | Suite 30 | Honolulu, HI 96826 | (808)942-4708 | FAX (808)955-2739 | haeyc@hawaiiayc.org

To: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

From: Shelley Ng, Vice President of Public Policy for
Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children (HAEYC)

Date: Tuesday, February 10, 2009
1:15p.m. Room 016

Subject: SB 791, Relating to Children

Aloha Chair Chun Oakland, Vice-Chair Ihara, and esteemed members of the Senate Committee on Human Services.

As the vice president of public policy for the Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children (Hawaii AEYC), I represent 1,000 members who are early childhood development and educational professionals across the state. My name is Shelley Ng.

Hawaii Association for the Education of Young Children (Hawaii AEYC) supports SB 791 to appropriate funds from general revenues and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds in order to continue the Healthy Start program in Hawaii.

While Hawaii AEYC's domain is in the early child care and education setting, we know it is essential for parents to be able to provide a safe, healthy, and happy home environment especially in their newborn's early years. A young child that has been raised in a chaotic, stressful environment will likely have more difficulty with learning, expressing emotions appropriate to situations, and in developing healthy relationships. Healthy Start provides parents with positive parenting skills and knowledge, access to material assistance, emotional and social support, and specialized, therapeutic help when it is needed. Healthy Start assists stressed out parents become more resilient so that they may provide their children a safe, healthy, and home. These are essential prerequisites for success in early child care and education, not to mention success in kindergarten and beyond. We want all of Hawaii's children to be successful with a Healthy Start.

Please recommend SB 791 for passage.

The volunteers and staff of Hawaii AEYC would be happy to provide you more information to facilitate your decision-making. Please call 942-4708 or contact us at haeyc@hawaiiayc.org.

Thank you for considering this bill.

Our mission is to promote, support, and expand quality and professionalism in early childhood programs and services for Hawai'i's young children (0-8) and their families.

Dear Committee Members,
I strongly urge you to ensure funding for Healthy Start and support SB 791.

Fact: Healthy Start is the only home visiting service for child abuse prevention in Maui County and it has provided services for over 28 years.

Fact: Research has shown the Hawaii Healthy Start produced a 60% decrease in substantiated child maltreatment and a 54% decrease in neglectful behavior toward the child.

Fact: 99.3% of families participating in Healthy Start for a year are NOT confirmed for child abuse or neglect.

Fact: The Federal Government has chosen Hawaii Healthy Start as a model program for best practices in the prevention of child maltreatment.

Fact: David McClain, former UH President, conducted a study and found a 3:1 cost benefit of Healthy Start over child welfare and other short term services. National studies range from 4:1 to 7:1.

Fact: Research has established that prevention programs save lives, prevent child maltreatment, promote child health, development and school readiness, and that these same programs save tax payer dollars by preventing school failure, delinquency, and incarceration in children growing up in families experiencing disadvantage and stress.

PLEASE – SUPPORT THIS BILL. TO CUT OUT HEALTHY START WOULD COST US MILLIONS MORE THAT IS SAVED FROM THIS PROVEN PROGRAM.

Sincerely,

Randy Echito
Executive Director
Friends of the Children's Justice Center of Maui
1773-A Wili Pa Loop
Wailuku, HI 96793
Phone: (808) 986-8634
Fax: (808) 243-8688

Aloha,

I am writing in reference to the Healthy Start Program. Healthy Start has been a wonderful program for the families in our community. I have seen great positive outcomes with numerous families throughout the County of Maui. I have heard awesome testimonies regarding the Healthy Start Program. I am very concerned with the possible "eliminating," (per: Gov. Lingle,) of the much needed and well- respected Healthy Start Program. The future depends on programs like Healthy Start. Child Neglect and Child Abuse are the worst nightmares! After all, our Children ARE our future! Our Children and ALL families deserve a Healthy Start, especially in these "times" of economic downfall. SAVE HEALTHY START AND SAVE OUR FUTURE!!!

Patty Paranada

Outreach Family Assessment Worker

Maui Family Support Services

1844 Wili Pa Loop

Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii 96793

phone: (808)242-0900

fax: (808)249-2800

email: patty@mfss.org

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PLEASE – SUPPORT THIS BILL. TO CUT OUT HEALTHY START WOULD COST US MILLIONS MORE THAT IS SAVED FROM THIS PROVEN PROGRAM.

Sincerely,

PREVENT Institute 2009, National CAN Prevention Institute
Maui Team Members
Brandy Akimo, Neighborhood Place of Wailuku
Randy Echito, Friends of the Children's Justice Center of Maui
Venus Rosete-Hill, Neighborhood Place of Wailuku
Jani Sheppard, Maui Family Support Services

RE: Testimony in favor of SB791

Aloha Committee Members,

On behalf of Maui United Way, I am writing in favor of SB791. As a Maui United Way partner agency, Maui Family Support Services (MFSS) has supported families through the Healthy Start program (in compliance with our Standards of Excellence) here in Maui County for over 10 years. Following in the direction of United Way of America, we have encouraged and supported our partner agencies in focusing on prevention programs, which is much more cost effective than treating the causes of child neglect and abuse later in life. This program provides families with the skills and education they need to encourage prosperous living situations that contribute to functioning, healthy and happy families. Maui United Way supports the Healthy Start (HS) Program & SB791 for the following reasons:

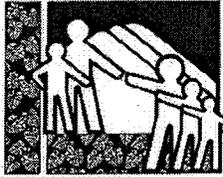
1. Maui County, particularly Moloka'i , Lana'i and Hana have limited resources and puling this program will leave a large gap in serves for families.
2. HS is an evidence based program and over 99% of the families participate in in the program are not confirmed for Child abuse and neglect.
3. The Enhanced Program is for families who are already involved in the Child Welfare system for Harm to children. The Healthy Start program provides services for families who have scored at risk for child abuse and neglect and works to prevent child abuse and neglect.
4. The program is not asking for full funding to be restored as they realize that everyone must participate in cutting back until the community can get through these difficult economic times. The proposed legislation represents a 25% cut versus the 100% cut the Governor has included in the State budget.
5. Over 4200 families a year participate it the Healthy Start program and without this services, child abuse rates will increase.
6. For every dollar spent on this program , the Hawaii community saves \$3 in more costly services after a child has been hurt or a family affected.
7. Healthy Start was started in Hawaii and has been operating for over 25 years. It has been replicated in 40 there states because it is an effective model for preventing child abuse and neglect. The State has received \$2.5 million dollars this year, out of only 17 program across the country, because it is effective. This funding will be lost to the State if this program ends.
8. Eliminating the program will result in the loss of over 200 jobs averaging 2million dollars in unemployment costs.

Please support funding for Hawaii's Healthy Start Program. If you have any questions, I can be reached at 244-8787. Mahalo for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Laksmi M. Abraham, President/CPO

Maui United Way
270 Ho'okahi St. Ste. 301
Wailuku, HI 96793
(808) 244-8787
Fax: (808) 244-8958
laks@mauiunitedway.org



Family Support Services of West Hawaii

75-127 Lunapule Rd., #11

Kailua-Kona, HI 96740

Phone: (808) 326-7778 Fax: (808) 326-4063

Email: kids@fsswh.org

To: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair and Senator David Y. Ige, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair and Senator Josh Green, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committees on Human Services and Health

Date of Hearing: Tuesday, February 10, 2009

Time of Hearing: 1:15 pm

Place: Conference Room 016, State Capitol

Testimony: In **support** of SB 791: RELATING TO CHILDREN

Good Morning Senator Chun-Oakland, Senator Ige,, Senator Ihara and Senator Green.

I am grateful for the opportunity to present this testimony to your Committees on Human Services and Health. My name is JoAnn Bishop Freed. For the past twenty-five years, I have been involved with Hawaii's Healthy Start Program, first as a volunteer and now as the Executive Director of Family Support Services of West Hawaii, a community-based non-profit organization on the island of Hawaii whose mission is "to support families and communities in providing love and care for our children."

The state of Hawaii has been a visionary force in the relatively new field of infant mental health, supporting the establishment of Hawaii's Healthy Start Program in 1984. At that time the legislature acted intuitively to prevent the effects of trauma caused by adverse early childhood experiences including child abuse and neglect. They led the rest of the nation in the support of prevention and early intervention based on what they felt to be the right approach.

Twenty-five years later, this intuitive notion has been validated by science. In the summer of 2005, the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child at Harvard University printed a working paper entitled *Excessive Stress Disrupts the Architecture of the Developing Brain*. This group is a multi-disciplinary collaboration of leading scientists in early childhood and early brain development whose mission is to bring sound and accurate science to bear on public decision-making affecting the lives of young children. The Council states that "the science of early childhood development, including the knowledge of stress on the developing brain, is sufficiently mature to support a number of evidence-based implications for those who develop and implement policies that affect the health and well-being of young children. Public and private actions can prevent the kinds of adverse circumstances that are capable of derailing healthy development as well as increase the likelihood that effective interventions will reduce potential damage to a young child's developing brain architecture and thereby promote greater resilience.

In December, 2008 the Council published its follow-up Working Paper entitled *Mental Health Problems in Early Childhood Can Impair Learning and Behavior for Life*. This paper went into even more detail as to how significant adversity early in life can increase the likelihood of significant mental health problems that emerge either early on or years later. They found that young children who experience family turmoil, neighborhood violence, extreme poverty, recurrent abuse or chronic neglect, who regularly witness domestic violence or who live in homes permeated by parental mental health or substance abuse problems are particularly vulnerable. Aversive family and community environments can have an enduring emotional impact on young children when they are experienced as toxic stress and not buffered by supportive relationships.

The Council warns us that if young children are not provided appropriate help, emotional difficulties that emerge early in life can become more serious disorders over time. It has been proven that early prevention strategies and efforts to identify and treat emergent mental health problems are likely to be more psychologically beneficial and cost-effective than trying to treat emotional difficulties after they become more serious at a later age. It has been proven that many early mental health challenges can be prevented before they begin through systems of support that assist parents to provide warm and secure relationships and detect emotional problems before they become more resistant to change and through public policies that help to amelioration the conditions that cause some families to struggle. We simply cannot go on ignoring this body of knowledge, pretending that there are not life-long consequences to our state's children who are born into conditions that place them at environmental risk.

The Council supports what Hawaii has been saying for twenty-five years—because young children's emotional well-being is so closely tied to the emotional status of their parents and non-family care-givers, the emotional and behavioral needs of infants and toddlers are best met through coordinated services that focus on their full environment of relationships. Multi-generational, family-centered approaches offer the most promising models for preventing and treating mental health problems in young children. They go on to state that “Indeed, sometimes the best intervention strategy for young children is to focus directly on the primary needs of those who care for them.”

In that same month of December, 2008, we learned that Hawaii's Healthy Start Program had been eliminated from the proposed state budget. At the very moment when members of this legislative body should have been able to stand tall and bask in the knowledge that they helped bring this now scientifically proven issue to the attention of the rest of the country and in fact to other countries as well, they must now struggle to maintain its very existence.

I sincerely hope that you support Senate Bill Number 791: Relating to Children. Flexible approaches to funding are needed to provide the family-based preventive and therapeutic approaches offered by Healthy Start and Enhanced Healthy Start services.

The prevention of life-long consequences from adverse childhood experiences lies in our ability to take a multi-pronged approach to family support. We must have the ability to provide preventive services to children right from the start as well as the capacity to provide more

intensive intervention services to infants and toddlers who have been brought to the attention of Hawaii's Child Welfare system in order to help them heal and prevent further consequences to their development.

But I don't need to tell you—you knew that already. You have been supporters all along of this pioneering model and I am proud to have been one who has been able to bring this opportunity to hundreds of families each year on the island of Hawaii. It is my sincere hope that future generations on our island and in our state will continue to benefit from today's Healthy Start program.

Thank you very much.

JoAnn Bishop Freed
Kailua-Kona, HI

To: Committee on HTH-HMS
RE: SB791 - Relating to Children
HEARING: Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2009 @ 1:15 p.m. in
State Capitol Conference Room 016

SB791 is a reasonable proposal in meeting the critical needs of the Healthy Start Program. A 100% cut is not the appropriate response to the economic crisis facing our state and nation.

I urge you to support SB791.

Mahalo nui loa,

Roy Katsuda
Executive Director
Hale Mahaolu

February 09,2009

Dear Committee Members,

It's a huge concern regarding cuts in the Healthy Start Program. I have witness tremendous positive outcomes this program has to offer. Families and children has benefited from programs such as Healthy Start. Parents develop into nurturing families and babies flourish as the results of their parents understanding and patience. Children react to the bonding and special love from their parents.

Healthy Start provides support to families regarding their childrens development and referrals if necessary. Healthy Start gives parents that one on one attention parents need to do a great job with raising their children. Children are the beneficiaries of this wonderful program, please continue to support the SB 791.

Living on Molokai we very limited with programs that help families to be nurturing parents. Please keep Healthy Start available for us here on the Friendly Isle of Molokai. I strongly request you to ensure fundings for Healthy Start and support SB791.

Mahalo,

Corinne Young

In Favor of SB791

Aloha Legislators,

I am hopeful that you will ensure that Maui's Healthy Start program is continued at present levels.

Healthy Start was a model for our nation. Nurses (LPN's) visit all new mothers in the hospital on Maui after they give birth to assess whether they are at risk for child abuse. Healthy Start nurses then connect new mothers who are at risk, voluntarily, with one of their experienced, paraprofessional home visitors who can help to support them for months or years as needed.

This prevention and support is essential to our children and families here. Teaching new mothers what they need to know during the very stressful time after a newborn comes home is what makes a difference in children's lives--and to the lives of future children born in that family.

With the economic stresses affecting families at present, this type of support during the crisis period after birth is even more important.

I hope that you will view this unique, model program here with a systems perspective.

Please think of the State money saved by our many State Departments by this type of prevention! Short term savings are with the Dept. of Human Services, Child Protective Services and our Courts, along with their contractors to whom abusive parents are referred for services.

Intermediate range savings would be for Public Health nurses at the Dept. of Health, who have to visit families with very sick children who didn't receive their immunizations on time and become seriously ill as a result. As well as the Dept. of Human Services' program which covers hospitalization for indigents.

Longer term savings would be for Department of Health and Education's behavioral health services, such as special education programs and Dept. of Health Child/Adolescent Family Mental Health services.

Long range savings would be, again for Courts, for jails, police, detention home, the Ko'olau teen facility, and our prisons. (Savings also for the Dept. of Health, Adult Mental Health Program, which already has to care for many chronically mentally ill and has just received major cutbacks in services.)

Please think of the money our State has already saved by funding this important Maui program for nearly 30 years! Also, please, think of the future of our society in Hawaii, which is based upon children and their families.

We am counting on you to find a creative way to continue this important prevention program, run frugally by a non-profit agency.

Sincerely yours,

Colleen O'Shea Wallace, M.P.H.
P.O. Box 1899, Makawao, Hi
PH. 808-268-0286

Chair of the House or Senate Committee
Hawaii State Legislature

Barbe Bright
Former client of the Healthy Start Program

Testimony for Tuesday, Feb 10, 2009.
In SUPPORT of SB 791
Written Submittal for Barbe Bright

Aloha,

My name is Barbe Bright, I am a former client of the Healthy Start program, Molokai. I am testifying in support of resolution SB 791 and I thank you for hearing my testimony today. I am testifying to the fact that this program is an important and effective on the Island of Molokai, and has indeed touched our lives with positive results.

As a mother of a recent Healthy Start Graduate, and proud parent of Mahealani, a healthy, happy, well adjusted 3 1/2 year old who is school-ready. I can attest to the fact that this program is one of the reasons for my daughter's hope-filled future. I can personally say that this program has helped our family through some very challenging times, and has been so supportive of Mahealani throughout her stages of development, both mentally, and physically.

Auntie Lottie, our affectionate name for the worker who has tirelessly stood beside our family through the good and the bad times, as helped us early on with home visits, and with moral support. She brought to our attention updated research findings and information available to help us parent our child in the most educated and effective ways. She informed us of local events that would foster her social development.

She was on top of Mahealani's childhood progress from birth through her graduation of the program with a number of questionnaires and developmental age-appropriate suggestions to help us along. She worked with us continually while being sensitive to my personal parenting style. Always willing to answer questions I had, and being available night or day, at home or work. This was especially valuable as parenting is a 24 hour process.

During our rough and stressful times of going without some of the basics, when we needed a hand, Auntie Lottie and all the staff at Healthy Start Molokai were there for us, sometimes with food certificates from the local grocery stores, sometimes Christmas presents and basic necessities items. More importantly at times they provided less tangible things, like a simple hug, or words of encouragement that go a long way to help a very stressed out mother trying to raise a child during times of extreme difficulties.

Even after the rough times subsided, the staff at Healthy Start gave us positive suggestions and directed us to other helps, like the Tutu and Me program, which is a kind of "mommy & me" type of pre-school, where we are still attending, and where my daughter continues to flourish.

I thank God Mahealani is a very Healthy child, and besides the tough economic times there were no physical challenges or learning disabilities to overcome, but I speak now on behalf of other parents that have come through the program, or may need it in the future. Some may have other trials or hardships to go through, and some may not. But I sincerely believe that this program is a necessary comprehensive safety net that definitely would help any child and family who are participating get the maximum care and possibly prevent a variety of problems that could emerge, if not for that family-style program and close relationship that these staff members build. I believe that some problems truly can be minimized or stopped before they become something too large for a child or parent to overcome.

I stand before you thankfully, with a Healthy Child who has a bright future and implore you on behalf of those who come in the future, please support SB 791, so that we can have more bright futures for our keiki ahead.

Thank you for this opportunity to present my testimony in support of SB 791.

Barbe Bright

Scotty Wilhelm
Written submittal in support of SB 791

Tuesday, February 10, 2009.
Support for SB 791

Aloha, my name is Scotty Wilhelm and I am testifying in support of SB791.

As for my personal testimony, I am a native of MOlokai and I can attest to the fact that living on the Island there is hard. We do whatever we can to provide for our families, we hunt and fish and farm. It is a basic living, but there are stresses and outside influences that make it hard sometimes to deal with. It's easy to get caught up also in a life that is on the wild side, and I've had my share of difficulties and have tried to overcome many of them. For me, having our family in the Healthy start program was one of the factors that helped me find the strength to be a more successful father. Even in my darkest times the kindnesses extended to me by the healthy start workers and the love I saw in Auntie Lottie as she helped my family, softened my heart. Auntie Lottie and her quiet willingness to help us, made me more willing to pick up reading materials she would bring by and learn things I wasn't open to before.

I could see, from a father's standpoint, my child growing and learning things quicker than I thought possible. My eyes became open as my partner would share things she learned in meetings and visits, and these were important things to my family. The healthy start team did alot to help my family during financial hard times, and when times became better they were filled with encouragement. Everytime I went to a monthly family meeting or gathering, they went out of their way to encourage me, a father. That had an immediate impact on my confidence. I felt it more possible for me to be a better provider, not just by having a job, but by being there to offer emotional support to my family as well.

I am very much in support of this program, and resolution SB 791. I hope more father's can have a positive impact through this program, Healthy Start.

Thank you for this opportunity,
Scott H. Wilhelm
Support SB 791

Testimony in Favor of SB791 for Healthy Start

February 9, 2009

Dear Committee Members,

Because Healthy Start is a voluntary program, its credibility of being an essential service gets lost.

The fact that HS is a voluntary program should be one of the very reasons why this program should be included in the budget.

The Healthy Start program provides a voice for our most vulnerable population in society. Serving women and families that have newborns, infants and toddlers, the Healthy Start Family Support Workers provide home visiting services to help keep a safety net around the children from prenatal to 3 years of age.

By cutting Healthy Start services, you will be allowing those families who are at-risk to fall through the cracks. By removing the safety net of the Healthy Start program, Child Welfare Service and other short term services would be overloaded with high risk cases. Without Healthy Start, children are being harmed by the risks that could otherwise have been prevented. In an effort to balance the budget, our children will be at risk.

So I ask you to think about the "FUTURE Of OUR KEIKI'S".....because Keiki matter!

A very concerned citizen and mother,

Zina Andrade

Dear Committee Members,

It is with great sadness to hear about the elimination of the Healthy Start Program for the State of Hawaii. I'm sure many are coming before you to encourage continued funding for their program. But, for the Healthy Start Program, we are looking at the total elimination. When I heard what Governor Lingle was proposing on the 6:00 pm news, I thought I heard the most incredible mistake ever. If we want to eliminate child abuse & neglect from our islands, doesn't it make sense to prevent these concerns now? The Healthy Start Program not only helps to prevent child abuse & neglect, but equally important it provides positive parenting & early child development.

Evaluations completed by researchers from Johns Hopkins University since 1985 clearly shows Healthy Start is an effective program. And, for families that remain in the program 12 months or more, 99% showed there was no report of child abuse. Are you aware of that Healthy Start lowers Special Education costs by facilitating early intervention during the critical first three years of life? The cost of Special Education per child is about \$20,000.00 annually & indefinitely. Whereas, the cost of the Healthy Start Program is about \$3000.00 per year per family. Additionally, the home visitors conduct developmental screenings & refer those with developmental delays to the Child Development Specialist, & if necessary to other early childhood services in the community.

Are you aware of the fact that Hawaii invented Healthy Start? Now, Healthy Start has been replicated in 35 states under the Healthy Families America name because these states recognized that Healthy Start is worth replicating because of its positive results. Also, both Canada & the Philippines have replicated the Healthy Start Program. Hawaii is & has made tremendous strides in preventing child abuse & neglect, let us not regress to the point where a child will be scarred for life & continue the cycle of abuse & neglect. Or worst, a child died or is permanently disabled.

I want to thank you for this opportunity to express my support for the Healthy Start Program, & sincerely hope all of you will do what is best for the children of Hawaii. I strongly urge you not to eliminate the Healthy Start Program & not to place the many families being positively served in a state of despair.

Sincerely,

Renee Morris

Testimony in support of SB 791

Honorable legislators:

I am urging you to support SB791 which supports the invaluable Healthy Start program for our state.

The Healthy Start program provides a voice for our most vulnerable population in society. Serving women and families that have newborns, infants and toddlers, the Healthy Start Family Support Workers provide home visiting services to help keep a safety net around the children from prenatal stages to 3 yrs old.

According to the Hawaii State Department of Health, Office of Health Status Monitoring, Vital Statistics from 1997 to 2000, a report on Child Population and Child Deaths by Age Group for Hawaii residents revealed that children in the age bracket of 0 to 1 year old comprise only 5% of the youth population from 0 to 17 years old yet their death rates total up to 74% of all child deaths.

Healthy start prevents maltreatment and neglect before our keiki are damaged and the family has to be reported to Child Welfare Services. It is our moral duty and civic obligation to protect newborns, infants and toddlers and their families. Healthy Start is a must to avoid costly future interventions. Please fund the Healthy Start program!

Nicole Shea
58 Kalola Place
Kihei, HI 96753
268-9410

TESTIMONY TO THE COMMITTEES ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
REGARDING
**SUPPORT OF SB 791, APPROPRIATING FUNDS FROM GENERAL REVENUES AND THE
TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES FUNDS FOR THE HEALTHY START
PROGRAM**

Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2009
1:15 pm, Room 016

Chairman Chun-Oakland, Chairman Ige, and Members of the Committees on Health and Human Services:

My name is Nathan Chang. I am a social worker and a faculty member at the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. I am testifying today in support of SB 791, which seeks to appropriate funds for the continuation of the Health Start program in Hawaii.

As a social worker who spent the early years of my professional career in Child Protective Services, I am very concerned about the possible termination of one of the few prevention programs that exists in the child welfare system. Prevention, either primary or secondary, and early intervention are key strategies in the fight against child abuse and neglect. We need to direct as much of our resources as possible toward the goal of strengthening families if we want to effectively impact this and other social problems that have plagued our society for too many years. This is what the Health Start program has been doing for almost twenty five years in this State.

The issue of where continued funding will come from for this important program is certainly an issue in itself. While I am not necessarily in support of tapping into TANF funds for this purpose, I encourage the legislature to explore all possible sources. Prevention programs are historically the most difficult ones to secure funding for. And yet, they are so much more cost effective than long-term treatment programs. Let's not lose another good program that has proven itself over time.

I urge you to support SB 791 and thank you for considering my comments.

Testimony in Favor of SB 791:

Dear Committee Members,

I'm writing this letter to request you to ensure funding of the Healthy Start Program at Maui Family Support Services and SB 791.

Studies show that it effectively prevents child abuse and neglect in families participating in the program for at least a year. With the economy creating more stress for Maui families, now, more than ever, we need to keep this essential program. Maui and other rural communities in the State do not have the variety of resources that people living on Oahu can readily access. The loss of this program will have devastating consequences for our island community. It is the only program of its kind here.

Family Support Workers visit families on a regular basis to provide child development information for parents of keiki ages 0-3 years of age. They also assist with parent education and family planning; and child care referrals for parents in school or reentering the work force. Family Support Workers call upon Child Development Specialists to help the family if a child's growth is under par and help the child get services to achieve developmental milestones. If a mother appears to be suffering from postpartum depression, domestic violence or substance abuse, they can consult with a Clinical Specialist to help her get these services.

Without Healthy Start on Maui, I anticipate:

- 1.) An increase in untreated mental health problems--contributing to a number of tragic consequences--including more suicides.
- 2.) An increase in untreated developmental delays in infants, leading to a need for more special education services when the child enters school.
- 3.) More substance abuse and more domestic violence; and more medical and legal problems for the State to pay for.
- 4.) More child abuse and neglect; again, an increase in the need for medical and legal intervention; and perhaps tragically, an increase in infant mortality.

It seems to me that the State is faced with the following choice: **either pay now for preventing these problems—or pay later for more expensive intervention and treatment programs.** (e.g., foster care, out of the home placement and residential treatment programs; along with increased legal and medical costs to the State.)

You have the power to prevent a lot of needless suffering for your most vulnerable constituents, the keiki of Maui. Please continue to fund Healthy Start!

Sincerely,

Antonette Rodriguez, MA

35 Holomakani Drive
Kula, Hawaii 96790
Home: 808.878.1651
Cell: 808.264.9392

February 9, 2009

Dear Committe Members:

I would like to strongly request that you ensure funding for Healthy Start and support SB 791.

Put children first in making public policy and resource decisions so that all of Hawaii's children will have a better chance for a bright future in difficult times. We are raising our collective voices to inform Governnor Lingle of our strong disagreement and opposition to her plan to eliminate funding for the Healthy Start Program. Children cannot speak for themselves in the political arena; yet their cries must be heard to ensure their lives are safe from violence, neglect and abuse, as is provided by Healthy Start services.

Very few of Hawaii's residents or organizations will escape the pain of these economic travails. Everyone's bottom line will be adversely affected by lower revenues. For non-profit human service organizations, our "bottom line" is our mission. When we see funding cuts to programs like Healthy Start that prevent child abuse and strengthen families, we have to ask how this makes any sense at all in human or economic terms. We know families will be at increased risk of child abuse and domestic violence; therefore making these funding cuts to programs that prevent abuse, or intervene to help people heal and reject domestic violence in their lives, will only exacerbate the effects of the weaker economy. If we reduce services like these, we know the dollar costs will be greater in the long run than the savings; the cost in human suffering cannot be justified or measured. The impact will surely include more children entering the foster care system because we could not intervene to prevent family disruption. Health care costs will rise because of greater numbers of abused children and adults will require more intensive and more expensive treatment. The impact of trauma on more children will have lasting and debilitating effects.

As a mother, grandmother, Aunt and Family Support Worker, please count me among Hawai'i citizens who demand a halt to this ill-devised plan that would effectively pull the safety net out from under Hawai'i most vulnerable children and their families.

Respectfully,

Leonora Etrata - Family Support Worker

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 791 for Healthy Start

Dear Legislators,

My name is ShyAnn Pebria. As a child I have been through many foster homes from age 5, because my father was in jail and my mother couldn't take care of me and my 6 siblings. Both of my parents had alcohol and drug problems. As they say, "the apple does not fall far from the tree", I was getting into trouble as a teen with drinking and partying. When I turned 19 years old I had my first child and knew that I did not want my daughter to go through what I went through. This program has helped me to grow in positive ways not just for myself, but also my children and my siblings who I was able to refer in to the Healthy Start program where they are now participants.

Programs like this have taught me goal setting skills, early childhood development, cause and effects of drug and alcohol abuse. It has changed my life, my focus and my priorities where I am now actively involved with voluntary opportunities in the program and now serve as a Board Member for Maui Family Support Services. It has also encouraged me to pursue an early childhood development career.

Programs like this give children and families the hope that they can and do make a difference to better themselves and their communities. Thank you for supporting our program.

ShyAnn Pebria
126-A South Wakea Avenue
Kahului, HI 96732

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 791 for Healthy Start

Dear Legislators

The Healthy Start program is critical to our children, families and communities during the present economical conditions that our country is faced with. This is a time that services provided by the Healthy Start program will be most effective.

In such a time as this within our country, children, families and communities are faced with the most challenging times they ever have been in their entire lives. Most are being laid off of their jobs, having their hours cut back or loosing jobs completely and others are unemployed with now less of a chance of securing employment. Families are forced to go without the proper amount of food and supplies to comfortably provide for their children and families. Others are loosing their homes entirely. All of these issues factor into not being able to adequately provide for themselves or their children which is affecting both families and communities physically, emotionally and mentally. The Healthy Start program provides services to these families that meet their specific needs where it concerns the children and parents, resulting in a stronger, better community for all, but most importantly our children.

Now faced with the reality of families loosing their means to comfortably provide for their children it is crucial that the Healthy Start program be in place to make available services such as early childhood development screenings, referrals for health care benefits, dental care, Part C services, etc. that are so desperately needed by our children and families. It is unconscionable to completely remove a service that is invaluable to the families and communities that it provides services to.

I thank you in advance for reconsidering your decision to cut this program in its entirety and for your decision to continue to support the Healthy Start program.

Alethea Lee
610 S Alu Rd
Wailuku, HI 96793

To Senate Members

I am sure you are all aware of the facts pertaining to SB791 as you have read them over and over again. So, I will not reiterate the numbers again. What I do want to convey to you is behind each fact and number is a face and voice of each family member and child that have received Healthy Start Services. Each face and voice represents the future of our State...our children that will represent Hawaii as adults to our neighbors, to our nation and to the world in future years to come.

The benefits of Healthy Start benefits ARE short-term as each child is prepared to enter pre-school after their 3rd birthday. Those that are parents know that three years goes by pretty fast. Children are eager to participate in learning because their parents are eager for their success! Between the ages of 12 and 18 years old, a child develops into a citizen of its community, either through the education system, workforce or through the juvenile criminal justice system. You project budgets and projects 10 years or more into the future...how can you say 13 or 18 years is too long of a term to reap the benefits of this program?

After receiving Healthy Start services, each child is better able to handle the complex world of a formal education, they are more apt to get along better with their peers, and are more confident in getting their needs met. In the short-term, a confident individual who is better able to make the best decisions for themselves.

Healthy Start is in the dream building business. It helps parents visualize the opportunities that are there for their children. It supports the "I can do this" self talk. And as parents dream...so do their children and we all know that dreams are what futures are made of.

Please support SB791

Glenna Okamura, M.S.W.

Resident

Maui, Hawaii

To: Committee on HTH-HMS
RE: SB791 - Relating to Children
HEARING: Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2009 @ 1:15 p.m. in
State Capitol Conference Room 016

Testimony in Favor of SB791

Dear Committee Members,

I strongly encourage you to ensure funding for Healthy Start and support SB 791. At this point, Healthy Start is the only program within the State of Hawaii that provides services to pregnant women and families of newborns that are at-risk for child abuse and neglect, as well as developmental delays. It has been stated that children in poverty are more than 22 times more likely to be abused and 44 times more likely to be neglected. With the way that the economy is going it would be a mistake to remove a program that is aimed at preventing child abuse and neglect, especially at a time when it is needed most. It has been shown that 99% of the families that have been in Healthy Start for a year or longer, have no reported cases to Child Welfare Services.

I currently work with Healthy Start on Maui, and am not writing this testimony to save my job, but writing it for the families that I serve. Most of the families that I work with are Micronesian, whom have limited English skills. It is through them that I could understand their culture, and the ideas that it was okay to hit or "spank" their children for being disobedient. But it was through the Healthy Start program, that they realized that it is not okay to hit or to spank. They now understand other means of discipline, such as distraction or gentle reminders to their children of why they shouldn't do something. This has also open doors to communication between parents and their young children, something that isn't always practiced in their culture.

This program is beneficial to numerous families and I feel that it would be in the best interest to keep this program going. I feel that the people of Hawaii deserve the chance to be the best parents that they could possibly be, even if the economy continues to dwindle. It is through this program that we give them hope and a chance to change, instead of staying the same, without having to go through Child Welfare Services.

Sincerely,

Ashley Canillo, B.A.
Healthy Start FSW II
Maui Family Support Services
1844 Wili Pa Loop
Wailuku, HI 96793
242-0900 ext.243

Testimony

SB791 Relating to Children
Senate Committee's on Health and Human Services

Date	Time	Room
2-10-09	1:15pm	016

Aloha chair Chun Oakland and aloha chair Ige and members of the senate committee's on Health and Human Services. My name is Megan Mayer and I am a Masters student at the University of Hawaii Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work. I am here today to **Strongly Support SB 791**.

Healthy Start is a childhood abuse and neglect prevention program designed to reach out and provide support to vulnerable, overburdened parents prenatally or from birth. The goals of Healthy Start are to reduce stress in vulnerable families, identify developmental delays, develop parenting skills and capacity, and help parents be more self sufficient in providing a home and productive life for themselves and their children.

Children's brains are about ninety percent developed by the age of three years old. The earliest experience of a child greatly defines their adult functional capacity. Childhood abuse and neglect can damage the brain and greatly affect normal child development. Statistics show a positive correlation between childhood abuse and school failure, delinquency, mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse, crime and homelessness. Hard economic times such as what we are currently experiencing show a significant increase in child abuse and neglect. These are the times when programs such as Healthy Start are crucial.

Studies show that increasing the availability of programs that begin immediately after birth and (preferable prenatally) can enhance the experiences of young children in families with limited education and low income. In addition, enrolling all children who meet the eligibility criteria for early intervention and prevention programs as early as possible would help infants with developmental delays and disabilities build the foundational skills needed to realize their full potential.

In Hawaii there are no comparable programs with the services that Healthy Start provides. Without the Healthy Start program families in need of services may not be noticed until their children enter pre-school or elementary school. By that time the critical age from 0-3 in regards to development of emotional stability and early cognitive development has passed. In Hawaii a significant number of young children reach kindergarten and first grade not ready to learn and function in school, socially or cognitively. This greatly affects the child ability to succeed. Eliminating a program like Healthy Start at these critical times can lead to the

increase in child abuse, social and health problems, and loss of future human capital and productivity.

I have had the unique opportunity of working for Healthy Start in the Early Identification Program. This program works with a team of individuals that screen and assess high-risk families after they have given birth. In this job I refer between ten to twenty families a month to the Healthy Start Home Visiting program where they receive the resources and services they require. These families are presented with issues such as homelessness, drug abuse, no support, unemployment, limited education, limited resources, low income, single mothers, teen mothers and fathers, mental illness and Child Protective Services history or involvement. Many of these families are relieved to get the support that Healthy Start provides and past family members acknowledge the many benefits they have experienced from the program. With our current economic downfall and uncertainty I feel that the Healthy Start Program is vital to the growth of healthy families in our homes as well as in our communities.

I urge you to pass SB 791 to the necessary committees in order for the Healthy Start Program to continue to serve the at risk children in Hawaii.

If there is any more information that I can provide please contact me at (808)256-7675. Mahalo for the opportunity to present my testimony.

Dear Committee Members;

Re: Testimony in favor of SB791

Evidently, our economy is struggling. With this struggle comes rapid job loss, drastically reduced incomes and consequently, increased rates of stress, anxiety and depression among families and communities. The Center for Law and Social Policy found that instances of child abuse and neglect increase during financial downturns. Healthy Start (HS) provides a safety net to Hawaii's most vulnerable families and infants along with its mission of preventing child abuse and neglect by providing supportive services to at-risk families. A commonsensical approach in such a desperate time would be to increase safety net programs such as HS, not to dispose of them completely, as you have proposed in your latest budget.

It is not surprising to know that economic stress on families is a large predictor of child abuse and neglect. A recent study on the relationship between unemployment and physical abuse of children found that 49% of maltreating families were experiencing unemployment at the time of abuse. What is surprising though is that in knowing this, you are still willing to cut this essential program completely amidst a growing economic crisis.

By cutting HS services, you are allowing those families who are at-risk to fall through the cracks. By removing the safety net of the HS program, CWS and other short term services would be overloaded with high risk cases. Without HS, children are being harmed by the risks that could otherwise have been prevented. In an effort to balance the budget, our children are being used as pawns in a match they cannot afford to lose.

I strongly encourage you to ensure funding for Healthy Start and support SB 791.

Thank you,

Shannon Reinelt
(808) 242-7198

Committee on Human Services
Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

Committee on Health
Senator David Y. Ige, Chair
Senator Josh Green, M.D., Vice Chair

S.B 791, Relating to Children; Children; Healthy Start; Keiki Caucus; Appropriation (\$)
House Conference Room 329016, 1:15 p.m.
February 10, 2009

*Testimony of Michelle Pester, BA Psychology
Master's of Social Work Candidate, University of Hawaii*

Good afternoon members of the committee,

My name is Michelle Pester. While I have a degree in psychology and am a MSW student, I am not testifying today as just a social worker, but also as a woman, a mother and as a resident of Hawaii. Today and every day, I advocate for the rights of all children

Today, I submit my testimony to demonstrate strong support of Senate Bill 791, Relating to children; which if passed, will provide appropriation of -funds from general revenues and the temporary assistance for needy families funds for the healthy start program.

I draft these statements to express my genuine support children and high risk families on having assistance for their needs especially in such times of economic distress. I am advocating for their right to have access to the Health start program.

The children of today are the future of tomorrow. Providing them with the proper support and a healthy environment will make sure that our future will be a healthy one.

Supporting the Healthy start program will make sure that kids are raised in a better environment. As the S.B 791 bill stated "Once enrolled, parents are offered practical support in the form of food, clothing, and housing and employment resources, as well as parenting support from social workers and child development specialists. Loss of the support offered by the healthy start program to high-risk families in such critical times can lead to increased child abuse, social and health problems, and loss of future human capital and productivity. "

As I understand that these are times of economical problems and that budget cuts are being made every where, I urge you to make available resources to provide assistance for high risk families and their kids. If our kids are not taken care for now, the future is uncertain and the price to pay for it later is much higher. It is not right to make our kids pay for our mistakes, they deserve the chance of having a good, better brighter future.

The passing of this bill will demonstrate Hawaii's compassion for families in need and the support for our children, our future leaders.

| Therefore, I plead to the Honorable committee members to recognize the healthy start appropriation as a compassionate, affordable, cost effective resource for our children and vote to pass this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Dear Legislators:

When a family with young children has serious challenges, little or no capital, lack of knowledge of community resources, under extreme financial duress, and they themselves are perhaps products of their own difficult childhood, their children suffer. Under stressful and disadvantage circumstances they are more likely to be abused and neglected. The effects are obvious; without prevention and early intervention, the children are statistically more likely to fail in school, be incarcerated, abuse substances, become teen parents, suffer health disparities, and need expensive services. Felitti's 2000 study, Adverse Childhood Experiences, shows a direct correlation of children with adverse experiences with adult chronic diseases: diabetes, obesity, heart and lung disease, cancer, smoking, depression and suicide, leading to premature death. They too will perpetuate their legacy to their children's children.

Hawaii's leaders have knowledge backed by research: they can anticipate, they can prevent abuse, neglect and poor health outcomes for our children. Healthy Start is prevention. Taking away Healthy Start from our community is waiting for a tragedy to happen that we know can be avoided. It would be negligent. The DHS data for 2007 showed there was no confirmed abuse/neglect among 99.34% of high-risk families participating in the program for at least 12 months.

I truly believe in the wisdom and capacity of our community leaders that they will have the larger vision, insight, and aware of the depth of the repercussion of their decisions. Their decisions will impact people profoundly.

Cynthia Koziolas
P.O. Box 2206
Kihei, HI 96753

February 3, 2009

Dear Legislators,

First of all, thank you for your assistance and continued support of Healthy Start. I'm depending on you to fight for Healthy Start and for your communities, families and children!

I'm a strong supporter of the Healthy Start Program, and I write this letter to urge you to **TAKE A STAND** with Governor Linda Lingle to let her know that you are in opposition of her wanting to remove Healthy Start funding from the State Budget in July 2009. Let it be known, that you are totally against the removal of funding to Healthy Start programs that are essential in making a difference in the lives of parents, children, and our communities.

It would be a **HUGE MISTAKE** for Governor Linda Lingle to cut funding to this most valuable and important program. Researched evidence proves that Healthy Start program services prevent child abuse and neglect. The Healthy Start program not only offers vital services to families, but also gives them hope for a bright future with their keiki. Families not only receive much needed services and tools that they need to be better parents, but also receives lots of love, friendship, understanding, compassion, fairness, guidance, opportunity, essential information, family planning/contraception, food, clothing, personal items, household goods, books, toys, social outings/activities, arts and crafts, and the list goes on and on, but most of all, how to be outstanding, self-sufficient, and productive parents!

Please **SUPPORT** families now and in the future, especially the keiki. **SAVE FUNDING** to the much needed Healthy Start programs that benefits the well-being of families in need.

*Lots of Aloha,
Robin Dickson
Supporter of Healthy Start
(808) 878-6062*

Dear Committee Members;

I urge you to support Senate Bill 791 and ensure continued funding for the Healthy Start Program.

As a pregnant 18 year old was invited to participate in the Healthy Start program. From my home visitor I learned the importance of prenatal care, immunizations, fist dentist visits, reading, and routines. She encouraged me to set goals, go to college and eventually move to Maui.

In 2001, I became a home visitor in the Healthy Start program. I've heard many stories and seen many families make great changes in their lives. These changes didn't happen because of me, but because of a program that is focused on children and families. I may have been the tool, but without the funding to provide the opportunity for these families to learn and grow those changes would not have happened.

Sometimes, these changes and growth are not measurable in the ways that we would like to see things measured, but that does not mean they are not real or unimportant.

In these tough times, it is understandable that we all must make sacrifices, however to completely remove such a long standing and valuable program from the budget is a mistake that will be felt in the increased need to provide intervention in the future. In the long run, you will not be saving money but causing greater financial burden.

Daphne Ladia
Wailuku, Maui

Written Testimony on Senate Bill 791

Annette Keanu
MSW Graduate Student
(808) 306-5947

Thursday, 5 February 2009

I STRONGLY SUPPORT SENATE BILL 791; Relating to Children

INTRODUCTION

Aloha, My name is Annette Keanu and I am a graduate student at the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Worker at UH Manoa. I am here to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 791. Each year an estimated three million cases of suspected child abuse and neglect are reported to Child Protective Service (CPS) agencies, yet more than half of child abuse fatalities are typically unknown to CPS. Almost three children die from child abuse and neglect each day. A report released by the Carnegie Corporation of New York stated that, "the earliest years of a child's life are society's most neglected age group, yet new evidence confirms that these years lay the foundation for all that follows." Programs such as Healthy Start that begin working with parents right after birth stand the greatest chance of reducing the risk of child abuse. I live and work in Waianae and have personally seen the impact that Healthy Start and programs like this have on my community. Hawaii's Healthy Start Program has been nationally recognized for its child abuse prevention strategies. A nationally recognized Nurturing Parenting program is modeled from Hawaii's Healthy Start. A few years ago, I had the opportunity to work with an outstanding group of Family Support workers from Child & Family Services, Healthy Start in Waianae. I can testify that this program works. Not only does this program prevent child abuse it provides parents with goal setting techniques, knowledge of child development, child health, positive parenting skills, and problem-solving techniques and mentoring from true professionals

that live in our community. I have personally seen the changes in our families and still see the children in a more positive environment. Healthy environments are essential to the well-being of children and their families. In closing, I would again like to state that I strongly support Senate Bill 791. We must ensure the future of Hawaii's Keiki. Thank you.

175 Ehilani Street
Makawao, Hawai'i 96768
February 6, 2009

Testimony in Favor of SB791

To the Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human and Services who have scheduled a public hearing on Tuesday, February 10 at 1:15 P.M.

David Y. Ige, Chair Health Committee
Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair Human Services Committee

Committee Members Health and Human Services

Re: Relating to Children

Dear Senators:

I urge you to please support this bill for funding for the Healthy Start programs.

In this time of economic woes, more families are under stress to provide for their children. Let us continue this very important safety net. Healthy Start programs provide interventions to help families cope with parenting problems and life stressors such as inadequate income and housing. Agency home visitors help families deal with substance use, mental health issues, prenatal and postnatal concerns--especially maternal depression, and Intimate Partner Abuse (IPA). Support interventions include teaching parenting skills and facilitating young families achieve short and long term goals.

Sincerely,

Barbara Ann Tanner
Barbara Ann Tanner, MS, BC
Advanced Practice Nurse in Pediatrics

Tannerb001@hawaii.rr.com
808-572-7505

Testimony on SB791, Relating to children; Healthy Start Program
Committee: HMS-HTH
February 10, 2009
1:15pm
Conference room: 016

Chair Chun-Oakland and members of the committee,

Good afternoon. My name is Jenai Hernandez and I am a student at the University of Hawaii-Manoa in the School of Social Work, Master's program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify for my support of this bill.

Please pass this bill to appropriate general revenue and TANF funds for programs, like Hawaii's Healthy Start program, designed to reduce child abuse and neglect by providing comprehensive services to promote healthy child development and develop parenting skills for high-risk children ages 0-3.

I believe that this program gives high-risk families an opportunity to obtain the ongoing support needed in their lives. These home visits implemented within the Healthy Start program emphasizes the importance of recognizing family strengths to reduce any risks of child abuse or neglect. Attending to strengths within the family would be a great starting point to encourage, (as quoted in the bill), "a nurturing environment for a child's physical and psychological development". This economic crisis we are facing gives a greater reason why healthy start should continue to provide support for high-risk children. Without this proactive approach to prevent maltreatment of Hawaii's infants and toddlers, I believe we will see a rise in more child abuse and neglect cases causing more monetary and emotional costs to society...however it is an even greater cost to the lives of these children.

Please pass this bill to give Hawaii's Keiki the deserved opportunity to have a healthy childhood as well as to give these families a chance to build a nourishing lifestyle for their children- supported by Hawaii's Healthy Start program through such appropriated funding by the general revenue and TANF.

Thank you very much for your time.

Jenai Hernandez
UH Manoa School of Social Work
jenai2@hawaii.edu
226-5129

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr, Vice Chair
Committee of Human Services

Support of HB 791 Relating to Children

Aloha,

I am a mother of three children and currently a MSW student at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. I strongly support HB 741 which would appropriate funds for the Healthy Start Program.

This statewide program identifies and monitors high-risk children from birth to age three and provides home-based outreach services through home visits. It is designed to prevent child abuse and neglect, promote healthy families, and ensure healthy child development among high-risk infants and toddlers.

Research shows families directly benefit from this program. Early intervention for at risk families including single, teen, and low-income parents prevents abuse and neglect situations from occurring. Additionally, the benefits of home-visiting programs have been shown to be effective in linking families to community resources, early childhood education, childcare, family literacy, employment, social services, developmental screenings, child development and interventions, service coordination and advocacy for families, and problem solving techniques.

Prevention programs are often taken for granted and may appear as an "extra" service rather than a necessary service. Caution should be used with this ideology. The Healthy Start Program ensures children are healthy, in a nurturing environment, and encourages parents to be good role models not only in their own family but everyone they are in contact with. It is about the opportunity to make a positive difference in the lives of children and their parents that will pass on to the next generation. Taking away and cutting services to children and their parents will have serious consequences in both the short-term and long-term.

Prevention programs such as Healthy Start should continue to be funded and available to ensure healthy children, healthy families, healthy communities, and a healthy State. I urge you to reflect on the larger issues that will develop if this program is not funded.

The State of Hawaii has a responsibility to give our keiki a Healthy Start.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Kerri Kahapea-Aquino

Honorable Committee Members,

I have worked in the human services community on Maui since the early 1980's in the fields of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, addiction, and incarceration. I have been intimately involved in community collaborations with numerous non-profit agencies over the decades.

The vital services provided by the Healthy Start programs - such as those provided by Maui Family Support Services - are a vital and necessary part of our investment in the prevention of far more costly interventions too often required down the road for our at risk families. The data that support these programs is clear. Without the support, skills and tools these families receive, we will undoubtedly find ourselves providing mandated interventions in the years to come in cases that we could have prevented with simple, relatively low cost support at the critical point of birth through the first years.

With our economy placing more people on the margins every month, we must invest in the most basic of these prevention and early intervention programs for our community members. If we do not, the financial costs, long term, will be enormous. The potential devastation to precious lives and families at risk will be incalculable. Research has been very clear that generational risks continue without prevention and early intervention. We cannot afford these financial and human costs!

Please provide funding for Healthy Start and support SB 791.

Mahalo,

Lee Stein, MSW, CSAC

Asst. Professor of Human Services, Maui Community College

**Lori Tsuhako, LSW, ACSW
P.O. Box 1332
Wailuku, HI 96793**

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SB791

Dear Committee Members,

As a long-time professional social worker and child and family advocate, I was very disappointed to learn that the Governor has proposed to completely eliminate the Healthy Start program across the state, effective July 1, 2009. Healthy Start has made a tremendous positive difference in the lives of many families I have served over the years. Even greater testaments to the efficacy of the program are the many families who, with support and intervention from Healthy Start, have avoided costly involvement with the child welfare, foster care, and the judicial systems.

Healthy Start programs have been an integral component of our community's safety net for twenty years; despite the looming budget crisis, I firmly believe that Healthy Start is a program the State cannot and should not eliminate. As a community, we can either pay now (for this valuable service) or we will pay billions more in social costs in the future.

I respectfully urge that you ensure funding for Healthy Start and support SB791. Thank you.

Lori Tsuhako, LSW, ACSW

Contact: Ltsuhako@hotmail.com
(808) 269-3180

To: Senators Chun Oakland and Ige

Re: Senate Bill 791, Restoration of Funding for the Healthy Start Program

Scheduled: 02-10-09 1:15 PM in conference room 016.

From: JoAnn Farnsworth

I am writing requesting that the Governor of the State of Hawai'i and State Legislature restore full funding for Hawaii Healthy Start for the fiscal year 2009-2010 State Budget; and if unable to restore full funding for the Hawaii Healthy Start for the fiscal year 2009-2010, that the Governor and State Legislature consider funding 80% (9.46 million) of full funding, in order to keep vital services in place and prevent total elimination of the program.

As a result of Hawaii's leadership and commitment to its children we have been looked upon for over twenty years as a model in the nation for comprehensive support for families and children in order to ensure the best possible outcomes for their physical, emotional and mental health.

We have implemented a model comprehensive system that begins with support, education and guidance for parents of our youngest children, our Healthy Start program. This is a broad net cast widely across our state reaching our most vulnerable and isolated families. No other program has this reach or ability. Not only does this effort prevent abuse and neglect of children, but it fosters their emotional and developmental health and supports their parents through difficult times and their own challenges with domestic violence and substance abuse.

Together with the changes that have been made to our child welfare system of increasing voluntary support programs for parents that are community based and culturally appropriate we have a system of care that is truly working. As valuable as the changes to our child welfare system have been we cannot neglect or dismiss lightly what research has shown us over and over again of the damage to our youngest children who experience trauma and neglect on their projected lifetime developmental outcomes. Healthy Start is the only way we can systematically reach families in our state with children during this most important time.

These two aspects, casting a broad net and services targeted to families known to be in danger, complement and support each other; one will not thrive without the other.

As we look to the future and better economic times the missing piece in a truly comprehensive system for our children from birth to five remains a quality early education experience that provides for family support.

laura dillon
p.o box 2005
kaunakakai,HI
96748
ph.(808)567-9159

i am a resident of molokai and i have been receiving services from the healthy start program for 4 1/2 years both on molokai and oahu. This program has helped me,my family and countless other families in hawai'i and nationwide.My whole family benefits from home visits from my healthy start worker Lottie burrows and she has been there supporting me and her numerous other clients on the island. As all parents know,one of the the biggest questions are is my child on the right track? are we on the right track? are we doing everything we can to help our children develop the best they can early on? Healthy start has always been there 24/7,any hour to help answer any questions or concerns the whole family might have. The confidence they give mothers,fathers,grandmas,grandpas and everyone in between will never be forgotten, but nourished and passed down to the next.Thanks to the program Hawai'i has been found one of the safest places in the country to be born. For the past 28 years this program has been offering continuous support and guidance. Anytime i needed help,had a question or concern they were just a call way.My car has been out of service before and they made sure we could make it to pediatrician,wic and prenatal care appointments.To families around the state they assist in linking families with childcare,respice care,adult education,early education groups,housing,nutritional, and financial assistance, substance abuse counseling,support groups of all kind and much more.The dozens of handouts,fact sheets,information leaflets,and workbooks that cover everything from pregnancy to preschool and on to the teenage years provide the home with education,tips&tricks that are very useful. They Also work with parents coping with children who need intensive care. So much comfort comes from knowing a trained paraprofessional is there to help monitor and screen baby&children's development and get them/the family help wherever needed. The staff continuously go out of their way for our families. Common frustrations including work,income,and general life stresses they are always there with open ears and healthy strategies to help parents help their children be the best they can be. It breaks my heart to have to wonder if future children and families' support systems are to be cut out of the budget.Now more than ever with increases in unemployment, the risks for child abuse,neglect,domestic violence, and substance abuse only increase.How will families facing hard times learn and have the resources to positively cope and succeed? The amount of lives saved,hours of dedication,support,and success stories are innumerable.The impact the program has made on hawai'is children and parents is irreplaceable. The program also offers support for troubled teens,workshops and programs for parents with troubled teens.They help children learn self control&nurture positive guidance. Instances with mothers abandoning their children because they feel as if they have no other option, Healthy start has been there to offer options and help make healthy decisions. Ladies and gentlemen Hawai'is children and families depend on the support,guidance and many other things Healthy Start has to offer. The work the agency does is remarkable. The staff who pour their sweat time and tears is outstanding. I can assure you that the money is being well spent. I look at my

children in awe and i know that healthy start has helped be be the best parent i can be.

Many other agencies in the mainland drew largely from existing research,knowledge,and experiences of Hawai'is Healthy Start program.

The program has always been there helping to set goals for ourselves and our families and helping us along to meet those goals.I will always be grateful to the program and never forget the invaluable lessons they have taught me. I hope that this generation of children,their families, and the next will continue to have that opportunity. All parents deserve to have the opportunity and the peace of mind to know they can be the best parent they can be, and all children deserve the opportunity to have a truly healthy start.

From Lisa Dillon
Po Box 2005
Kaunakakai
HI
96748

Aloha

I live on Molokai the birth place of Healthy Start. This is something I learned at the meeting on Molokai with Senator English.

Twenty eight years ago Clair Iverson had an office just up stairs from where Linda Lingle had an office a a journalist. I mention that because as a journalist you are keenly aware of your community success and failures and the needs of people. I was chosen by our Kupuna on Molokai who work for Healthy Start to come and speak here and I am humbled and honored to do so.

Please, when you listen to me realize you are listening to the families impacted by Healthy Start. The result of Healthy Start are the over 4000 clients served State wide. Again Healthy Start workers are your first responders in criss prevention Not only young mothers in crisis are involved. Healthy Start creates a network of health and education for young parents and concerned family members that is invaluable to preventing crisis. As well as gives our young parents the tools to make responsible decisions concerning their children with confidence. Take away Healthy Start, when our Country and State are in a Recession already depressed to the hilt. I don't understand this, it is courting crisis and irresponsible thinking to cut Healthy Start.

The

whole family is involved in raising our children on Molokai. Many homes on Molokai are multigenerational family's and those family members are also learning positive parenting skills that aid to help these young families. I am speaking to every one of you that is a parent or grandparent. Imagine if you did not have the services to catch early developmental delays for your children or your grandchildren. I know the feeling because it took three years before my grandson on the mainland was diagnosed with sever autism. Healthy Start would have caught that so much sooner had that program been available to my older daughter. I called our local health providers and asked if we have had an increase in teen births in the past 5 years. "There has been a marked increase in the past 3 years and it is not slowing down anytime soon". Every aspect of of the health community is outraged and saddened by this decision to cut funds for Healthy Start. Some who have been directly served by Healthy Start and became Community leaders because of the Nurturing of a handful of over worked and under paid workers from Healthy Start. Take away the safety net Healthy Start creates you are asking for a rise in crisis and all the costs crisis entails. Can Hawaii afford that?

Healthy Start saves the State

3 dollars for every dollar it spends on crisis intervention and crimes involved in neglect and abuse. I am sure the number are higher. I see the difference in family's who are involved in Healthy Start, these young families are gaining tools, knowledge and confidence to be great parents.

Because of my disabilities, I live with my daughter and her family, I see first hand the lessons implemented and the results.

Every parent deserves to know they are doing the right thing with their children. Our young mothers read the healthy parenting magazines at their Dr's office. Every one of them tell them "early childhood development i best for baby" Where are our young mothers and fathers going to get that without Healthy Start. Many

Healthy Start workers volunteer more than just hours to help their clients. Ms Lingle wants to cut a program that needs proper funding.

A Report from the Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics finds the program 40% underfunded. I implore you to take a moment and read the entire report Please, our Kupuna on Molokai say no thank you to new parks and roads at expense of our Keiki.

Soon Father Damian will be made a Saint, do we have to dumb down our children to pay for it in beautification projects for tourists.

I asked our Catholic Deacon on Molokai if we are ready for this?

Please, the world will soon focus on Molokai are they going to see an Island in crisis? they will if there are no funds for Healthy Start.

People are not going to just drive from one end of the Island to another and not observe the people.

Aloha is more than just a word it is a gift you give for goodness sake.

As a grandmother, I ask you to reconsider cutting funds for this program that helps my grandchildren. I promise every one of you you will not regret your decision. My grandchildren are better people because of Healthy Start. Every child impacted by Healthy Start is stronger because of it. That is the foundation of a healthy community.

Hawaii has money for Pork barrel spending? but not for Healthy Start?

a Program with a 98% success rate. I am sorry it just makes no sense.

You were elected and entrusted with the future of Hawaii and now we have the dubious distinction of being the 2nd highest on the list of Pork Belly Spending States. Is this really how politics has to get things done?

Our Healthy Start workers found out on Dec. 22nd by way of the TV that Gov. Linda Lingle aims to cut the program!

For all the hard work Healthy Start Hawaii does!

For all of the hours volunteered above and beyond because of lack of funding this is how our Government says Mahalo?

Take a walk down town Kaunakakai you will see babies at every turn. I look into their faces and wonder just what kind of future does Ms Lingle plan for them.

My daughters graduating class of 2007 had 28 girls, all but 3 are mothers today. Remember from the Woman's Health Center "We have seen a marked increase rise in teen pregnancy and it is not slowing down any time soon"

Who are these young mother and fathers going to turn too for best advise?

Healthy Start workers are our first responders. You take away that extra set of eyes the Health Dept Nurse needs, you cost the State more money! You take away the eyes of crisis prevention, you add to already over burdened systems.

It just does not

make any sense financially. President Obama aid in one Speech "No Working Program will be cut" Healthy Start not only has a 98% success rate here in Hawaii but also has great success Nation Wide. How can our fine Governor argue with that?

Thank you for your listening.

Much Aloha.

Lisa Dillon

Dear Committee Members,

I urge you to ensure funding for Healthy Start and support SB791.

Healthy Start services are necessary for our community so that our children are safe and cared for in a nurturing manner. As we all know, in times of stress and crisis, people revert to their (many times) unhealthy, deep seeded ways and lifestyles. The Healthy Start program teaches parents The Nurturing Parenting program that has statistically shown a positive change in parenting styles. Women are screened at Maui Memorial Medical Center for SPECIFIC risk factors that have shown statistical significance in the areas of child abuse and neglect. These factors include abuse as a child, witnessing domestic violence, sexual abuse, drug and/or alcohol abuse, lack of child development expectations of a baby/toddler, a parent(s) with a mental health issue(s) and of course being a teen parent.

If a family is aware of the developmental stages of their children, they have knowledge of how and why their children act and feel the way they do. When parents don't know about child development, they tend to think of children as small adults and that's when abuse can creep in their lives many times without their conscious awareness.

I have worked as a nurse on Maui for 13 years and have seen the Healthy Start program nurture the families so they can in turn nurture their children. Children don't come with directions and Healthy Start is the only in home program statewide that stays in the family's lives for 3 years. Parenting

can be an isolating experience for many families and they need guidance, support and knowledge so they are equipped to give their child the best experiences for growth and development.

If this program is cut, the consequences will be drastic for our community and state. There will be more unwanted pregnancies, more families involved with CWS (Child Welfare Service) and much more domestic violence in our communities.

Healthy Start is teaching the "at risk" families how to decrease their risks for child abuse and neglect. Without Healthy Start there will be no place a family can go to try and change their risky behaviors. In home visiting works and has saved the state millions of dollars by giving knowledge and power to the families of Hawaii and keeping children from going into the system (Child Welfare Services).

I am pleading with the powers that be in the state of Hawaii to rethink such a hasty and very unwise decision to eliminate Healthy Start from the lives of our ohana and keiki's. Our children deserve a happy, healthy, loving childhood. Don't you agree?? Hawaii's future is in your hands. Let's do what's Pono!!!!

Aloha,

Kathi Jones , RN, IBCLC

763 Haiku Road

Haiku, HI 96708

808-575-5141

Dear Committee Members,

I am shocked and very disappointed to hear of Governor Lingle's proposed plan to eliminate Health Start from the State budget in the new fiscal year!

This program has been a life line to thousands of families with young children over the past 25 years here in Hawaii and the model for the Healthy Families America programs across the United States. Its aim, to **strengthen family functioning, reduce stress and build competent, confident parents works!**

Families **most in need** of support are identified in the hospital after they give birth and are encouraged to enroll

in the Healthy Start program. Once they are enrolled they receive supportive services to insure they have everything

they need to raise healthy, well adjusted children. As you know, there are a million things that contribute/interfere with

this challenging task such as stress, poverty, violence, addiction, family crisis. That's why Healthy Start is so valuable.

Healthy Start staff help families maneuver through family challenges and gives them the tools they need to accomplish this critical goal.

Research indicates that policy makers can achieve greater returns on investments through early childhood **prevention** programs.

For every \$1.00 spent on prevention, \$4.00 to \$7.00 of expensive intervention later down the road is saved.

There is a famous line: "Babies don't come with instructions", well, Healthy Start provides that much needed instruction!

For the sake of our keiki, we can't afford to eliminate this very important and valuable safety net for Hawaii's most vulnerable.

Michelle Pietsch

Concerned Hawaii Citizen

P.O.Box 4089

Kahului, HI 96733-4089

Aloha,

I am in favor of continued funding for the Healthy Start program. As a social worker and administrator for a private children's agency on Molokai, I have seen the positive results over the years with this program that provides a learning opportunity for expectant or new parents and a healthy start for keiki who may otherwise be vulnerable for neglect and abuse. With all of the studies and data that support early childhood development, we cannot afford to lose this program for our more vulnerable population - our children. Parents are their children's first teachers, and at the most critical time of their development. We need to continue this proactive approach to assuring our children the best start in life possible.

Mahalo,

Barbara Kalipi

Dear Law Makers:

I have been a professional social worker in education and mental health for many years. The primary intervention programs such as Healthy Start have been very effective in promoting long term human investment that has time and time again had positive results both for the children and the overall quality of life in of our communities.

Medical professionals and human service workers all have seen the deleterious impact that the elimination of these programs have had in the past.

Please examine the evidence that these programs promote self sufficiency, quality education and healthy families as well as lifting up our entire nation as we strive to overcome poverty and economic problems. Without these programs our human service needs will increase, placing a burden on our entire population.

Thank you,
Marilyn Stephens, LCSW

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT
OF SB 791

January 27, 2009

The Honorable Linda Lingle, Governor, State of Hawaii,

As a participant of the Healthy Start Program, I would like to share why this program is important to me. I am a single mother with a history of drug and alcohol use and have suffered from post-partum depression. I have two sons, an 8-year-old and an 11-month-old. I have struggled with managing to provide for both of my children and myself, and am currently being supported by the Department of Human Services welfare program. Healthy Start has helped me to build my own self-esteem as well as my children's self-esteem by encouraging me to become a better parent.

Healthy Start has helped me change my life for the better by giving me tools including access to a personal counselor for my struggle with depression, and a specialist who helped me monitor the growth and development of my infant son. They have been invaluable these past 11 months by providing a solid and consistent base of support that my family has come to rely upon.

Without Healthy Start, my family will have to continue to progress on our own. I will have to take it upon myself to figure out if my son is growing and developing satisfactorily. The suggestions and monitoring from our Healthy Start worker will no longer be our guide. Being a single mother is difficult and sometimes issues like finding a job and a place to live will take precedence over my child's development. Since there is nobody to help me monitor this, it will be another burden to face in these challenging circumstances.

Please reconsider the decision to cut funding for the Healthy Start Program. My family has been greatly affected by the termination of services to us.

Sincerely,

Erin K. M. Nakano

Erin K. M. Nakano

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT
OF SB 791

Dear, Governor Linda Lingie, Chiyome Fukino, and Legislators;

As a participant of the Healthy Start Program, I'd like to share why this program is important to me and my family. Maui Support group helped us strive and achieve our goals. This program is very supportive and understanding whatever the outcome is. Maui ^{Family} Support group is also important to me and my family because they practice developmental activities. The staff of Maui Family Support group also takes the time to do home visits which makes it's very convenient to ~~us~~ and other family's. The staff also gives you counseling that's helpful while your children develops and also family training.

Maui Family Support healthy start has helped me and my family change our lives by becoming a more patient, Concerned parents and a parent with a positive attitude. The staff also changed our lives by making me and my family meet our needs to become better parents. They also helped us to learn our children's strengths and qualities and how important it is to our family.

Without Healthy start, my family wouldn't know too much baby development + how it's really important without Healthy start my children's wouldn't be up to date with their well-baby check-ups and immunization shots ~~our doctor~~ never gave up on me and my family they made sure our priority's was taken care of. Healthy start also is very important to my family and we appreciate everything they provided for us and taught us to become a better parents with a positive attitude. Thanks for taking your time to read this letter

Mahalo from: Kaupē Kahoohalahala ohc

Tiare L. Kaupē

Tiare L. Kaupē

Raylin K. Kahoohalahala Jr

GAYLEN K. Kahoohalahala Jr

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT
OF SB 791

Dear Governor Linda Lingle, Chiyome Fukino, and Legislator;

As a participant of the Healthy Start program, I'd like to share why this program is important to me.

Because they can help me through my family. Besides, it helps me alot for this program. That's why this program is very important to me because they can help my family.

Healthy Start has helped me to change my life for the better by,

it change my life for this program because what I've said that they can help many families through their problems. That's why I want this program to stay and help longer to those family that who wants for help. Without Healthy Start, my family will be unhappy without this program. So, I'd rather to stay with this program. So it will help our family.

Mahalo, 2/9/09

(Signature)
Norma Nabor
(Name)

We are in support of Bill 1679 because our son's services have been cut. He does not understand why he has to stay home 2 more days a week and why he can't see his Personal Assistant as much.

He may be able to adjust to a schedule change, but his P.A. and others who work for him are suffering from a severe pay cut. They are the lowest paid people in the system and do the work most of us would not like to do - hands on caring for folks with developmental disabilities.

Please restore the funding that has been removed from the Developmental Disabilities Division of the Dep't. of Health.

Thank you for your attention to this. James & Margaret Proffitt 2024 Aaniu Loop Pearl City
456-2777

Bob and Peggy Proffitt
bob@pixi.com

ChunOakland3 - Jody

From: Tremaine Balberdi [Tremaine.Balberdi@co.maui.hi.us]
Sent: Monday, February 09, 2009 3:13 PM
To: HMS Testimony
Cc: zina@mfss.org
Subject: SB791

HEALTHY START WORKS!!!!!! THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION!!

I cannot imagine families eliminating programs such as this one that promotes healthy lifestyles for families who otherwise may not have the chance to. Please, please reconsider not continuing to fund this program. Thank you.

- - - - -

County of Maui.

IT Security measures will reject attachments larger than 12 MB, and will block or quarantine high-risk file types in attachments.

I am writing in support of SB 791 for Healthy Start.

Who will save the baby
born into a world of drugs
where he is just a second thought
and sporadically given hugs

Who will save the young child
who was rarely ever praised
who learned that violence is acceptable
at a very early age

Who will save the young man
from following along the path
that his forefathers set before him
this young man filled with wrath

Who will save the adult
that this child has grown to be
from living his parents hellish life
because no one had intervened

**No one saved that child
no one said no more
no one validated his life
and now he breathes no more..**

WHO WILL SAVE THE CHILDREN???

Please save the Healthy Start Program, and save Hawaii's children from a future that could be like this child's life. It's up to all of us to look out for the babies that can't look out for themselves. Let's give them the chance of a better life- a Healthy Start!

Cindy Jakubczak

HEALTHY STARTS
WORK!!!! THANK YOU
FOR YOUR KIND
ATTENTION!!

Francisco and Jackie Balberdi, Jr.
GOD answers knee-mail

HEALTHY START
WORKS!!!!!! THANK YOU
FOR YOUR KIND
ATTENTION!!

June Stacey Eaton

Kamehameha Schools Maui
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SB791

HEALTHY START
WORKS!!!! THANK YOU
FOR YOUR KIND
ATTENTION!!

*Rachel P. Romena
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LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR



LILLIAN B. KOLLER, ESQ.
DIRECTOR
HENRY OLIVA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 9, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable David Y. Ige, Chair
Senate Committee on Health

The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: **S. B. 791 - RELATING TO CHILDREN**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 10, 2009, 1:15 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of S.B. 791 is to appropriate general funds and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) federal funds for the healthy start program.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) respectfully opposes this measure. With respect to the proposed general funds appropriation for the Healthy Start program, this measure will adversely impact the priorities set forth in the Executive Biennium Budget for Fiscal Years 2009-2010.

With respect to the proposed appropriation of TANF Federal funds for the Healthy Start program, we do not believe that expanding our investment of TANF Federal funds in Healthy Start would be the best use of our limited TANF resource.

It is important to note that Healthy Start, a Department of Health program, already receives about \$1.7 million in TANF Federal funds each year under Act 107, which Governor Linda Lingle signed into law in May 2007. Also, we already invest \$3.2 million of TANF Federal funds in Enhanced Healthy Start, which targets families reported to Child Protective Services (CPS) for child abuse or neglect.

To provide some background, starting in December 2004, DHS has invested TANF Federal funds in a wide range of poverty prevention programs, emphasizing family strengthening and positive youth development, across the State for families, keiki and youth. These include programs that help youth succeed in school and prepare for rewarding careers, while deterring substance abuse, truancy, crime and out-of-wedlock pregnancies. Other TANF-funded programs improve parenting skills and help prevent domestic violence.

All our TANF-funded poverty prevention programs are having a positive impact on reducing child abuse and neglect. Among these programs is Enhanced Healthy Start, which is based on Healthy Start and designed exclusively to help at-risk families who are already involved in CPS. DHS provides Enhanced Healthy Start with \$3.2 million in TANF Federal funds each year to promote healthy childhood growth and improve parenting skills and parent-child interactions.

Our investment of TANF Federal funds in a wide range of anti-poverty initiatives is already producing significant results. Since 2005, the number of children removed from their biological parents and placed in foster care has declined by half to just 1,500 children – the lowest number since 1993. More importantly, the child re-abuse rate has also fallen by half since 2005, meaning that Hawaii's keiki are now among the safest in the nation.

The success of these anti-poverty programs would be undercut if additional TANF Federal funds are diverted into the Healthy Start program. This would likely, and paradoxically, lead to a rise in child abuse and neglect cases, along with an increase in foster care placements. It should also be noted that Healthy Start, a voluntary program, had greater funding prior to 2005, but the number of foster care placements was rising during that time, along with our child re-abuse rates.

In conclusion, funding for Healthy Start should not come at the expense of anti-poverty programs that are producing significant results. Diverting additional TANF funds would also be contrary to the DHS mission of helping our most vulnerable residents, including at-risk families and children.

The Department also respectfully requests that the \$28.2 million in TANF Federal funds restricted in the current State fiscal year 2009 budget be restored for the biennium so that we can continue to fund the programs, services and benefits that have, among other positive outcomes, strengthened families and contributed to the reduction, by half, of child re-abuse and neglect since 2005. This is neither the time to freeze Federal funds nor divert Federal funds from the investment we have made that is working so well.

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