
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that more of Hawaii's
2 children are entering kindergarten without the physical,
3 cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional skills necessary to
4 prepare them for success in school life. The preschool open
5 doors program, authorized in 1991, was established to contribute
6 to the school readiness of children, particularly those who have
7 special needs, for whom English is a second language, or who are
8 homeless, by providing a developmentally appropriate experience
9 to prepare children for a public education prior to entering
10 kindergarten.

11 The link between school readiness and success in school is
12 indisputable. Act 13, Session Laws of Hawaii 2002, defined
13 school readiness to mean that "young children are ready to have
14 successful learning experiences in school when there is a
15 positive interaction among the child's developmental
16 characteristics, school practices, and family and community
17 support." According to kindergarten teachers within the



1 department of education, many of the children who do not attend
2 pre-kindergarten programs could be eighteen to twenty-four
3 months behind developmentally than their peers who do attend
4 preschool.

5 When first established, the preschool open doors program
6 provided financial assistance to parents of three- and four-
7 year-old children living at or below seventy-five per cent of
8 the state median income. Act 169, Session Laws of Hawaii 2013,
9 reestablished the preschool open doors program as the statewide
10 school readiness program, but only for children in the year
11 prior to entering kindergarten, namely four-year-olds.

12 The State must commit to promoting school readiness,
13 especially for children with special needs, for whom English is
14 a second language, or who are homeless. By not providing
15 preschool services to these children when they are three years
16 old, their school readiness will likely decrease while they wait
17 to become eligible for these services at four years of age.

18 Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to re-establish
19 eligibility to the preschool open doors program for three-year-
20 old children prior to entering kindergarten so the program will
21 serve three-year-olds and four-year-olds. The preschool open



1 doors program will be administered by the department of human
2 services.

3 SECTION 2. Section 346-181, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

5 "(b) Subject to the availability of funds, the program
6 shall serve three- and four-year-old children, with priority
7 extended to:

- 8 (1) Children who are not eligible to attend public school
9 kindergarten in the calendar year in which they turn
10 five years of age because their birth date occurs
11 after the kindergarten eligibility date pursuant to
12 section 302A-411; and
13 (2) Underserved or at-risk children."

14 SECTION 3. No later than twenty days prior to the
15 convening of the regular session of 2018, the department of
16 human services shall report to the legislature on the following:

- 17 (1) The number of applicants to the preschool open doors
18 program as amended by this Act;
19 (2) The number of applicants that were placed on a
20 waitlist for the preschool open doors program;



- 1 (3) The geographic distribution of services to
- 2 participants in the preschool open doors program;
- 3 (4) The number of participating providers; and
- 4 (5) A summary of any capacity and funding issues the
- 5 department has experienced in carrying out the
- 6 purposes of this Act.

7 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
8 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much
9 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2017-2018 and the
10 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
11 2018-2019 for subsidies for the preschool open doors program.

12 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
13 of human services for the purposes of this Act.

14 SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.

15 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2075.



Report Title:

School Readiness; Preschool Open Doors Program; Appropriations

Description:

Re-establishes eligibility for the Preschool Open Doors Program to indicate that the program shall serve three-year-old children, in addition to four-year-old children. Requires the Department of Human Services to report to the Legislature. Appropriates funds. (HB388 HD1)

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

