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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HEARING AND VISION PROGRAM.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that early identification  
2 of hearing and vision loss, with appropriate follow-up services,  
3 is critical for the development of children's language and  
4 communication skills needed for learning in school.

5           A hearing and vision program for school children is  
6 mandated by section 321-101, Hawaii Revised Statutes, which  
7 operated from 1978 in the department of health until it ended in  
8 1995 due to budget reductions with the assumption that primary  
9 care providers would provide the hearing and vision screening.  
10 The department currently provides consultation and training on  
11 hearing and vision screening protocols and tools.

12           The legislature further finds that improvement in hearing  
13 and vision screening for children is needed. Currently, hearing  
14 and vision screenings are conducted by primary care providers  
15 and community programs. However, providers and programs vary  
16 regarding protocols for hearing and vision screening and follow-  
17 up; screeners vary in their training and skills for conducting



1 screenings; and there is no uniform data collection for quality  
2 improvement.

3 Hawaii data indicate the need to improve vision screening,  
4 especially for younger ages children. The National Survey of  
5 Children's Health shows that the Hawaii vision screening rate of  
6 33.2 per cent for children ages zero to five years ranked low at  
7 forty-four out of fifty states. The Hawaii vision screening  
8 rate of 76.8 per cent for children ages six to eleven years and  
9 76.4 per cent for youth ages twelve to seventeen years were both  
10 close to the national average.

11 The Hawaii newborn hearing screening program data show a  
12 hearing loss rate of 4.5 per thousand infants. However, there  
13 is a need to continue hearing screening beyond the newborn  
14 period, as national data show that the hearing loss rate  
15 increases to about six per one thousand children by age six, due  
16 to congenital hearing loss that was not identified at birth or  
17 late onset or progressive hearing loss.

18 The purpose of this Act is to increase the early  
19 identification of children with hearing or vision loss by  
20 establishing consistent protocols for hearing and vision



1 screening and follow-up, screener training, and data collection  
2 and reporting.

3 SECTION 2. Part IX of chapter 321, Hawaii Revised  
4 Statutes, is amended by amending the title to read as follows:

5 "PART IX. [SYSTEMATIC] HEARING AND VISION PROGRAM"

6 SECTION 3. Section 321-101, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
7 amended to read as follows:

8 "§321-101 [~~Systematic hearing~~] Hearing and vision program.

9 (a) There is established a [systematic] hearing and vision  
10 program for children to be conducted by the department of  
11 health. The purpose of the program shall be to[-

12 ~~(1) Detect and identify hearing and vision deficiencies in~~  
13 ~~school children; and~~

14 ~~(2) Recommend to their parents or guardians the need for~~  
15 ~~appropriate evaluation of children who have hearing or~~  
16 ~~vision deficiencies, or both, and follow up and track~~  
17 ~~completed evaluations, including diagnostic and~~  
18 ~~treatment information.]~~

19 increase the early identification of hearing or vision loss in  
20 children by establishing consistent protocols for hearing and



1 vision screening and follow-up, screener training, and data  
2 collection for quality improvement.

3 (b) The department shall set recommended standards for:

4 (1) Protocol for evidence-based hearing and vision  
5 screening, including ages or grades for screening;  
6 screening tools, instruments, and passing and referral  
7 criteria for screening that are based on national  
8 guidelines and best practices; and referrals, tracking  
9 of referrals, and follow-up of children who do not  
10 pass screening;

11 (2) Training, certification, and qualifications of  
12 personnel who conduct hearing and vision screening,  
13 other than those who are licensed health care  
14 professionals acting within their legal scope of  
15 practice; and

16 (3) Data collection and reporting on hearing and vision  
17 screening, referral, and follow-up.

18 [~~b~~] (c) Within available resources, the program shall  
19 include [+



1       ~~(1) Consultation with students, parents, and health and~~  
2           ~~education personnel about treatment and rehabilitation~~  
3           ~~of hearing and vision deficiencies; and~~

4       ~~(2) Education of students, health and education personnel,~~  
5           ~~and the general public about preserving and caring for~~  
6           ~~hearing and vision and about preventing hearing and~~  
7           ~~vision deficiencies.~~

8       ~~(c) The departments of health and education, in~~  
9           ~~cooperation with each other, may conduct classes and lectures in~~  
10          ~~hearing and vision conservation and prevention of hearing loss~~  
11          ~~and blindness for teachers, public health nurses, and others~~  
12          ~~engaged in similar work. The departments shall also cooperate~~  
13          ~~with public and private organizations and societies to educate~~  
14          ~~the public in the importance of hearing and vision~~

15          ~~conservation.] consultation with, and education of students,~~  
16          ~~parents, and health and education personnel about hearing and~~  
17          ~~vision screening, treatment, and services."~~

18           SECTION 4. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
19           and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

20           SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.



**Report Title:**

Hearing and Vision Program; Hearing Screening; Vision Screening

**Description:**

Amends the hearing and vision program statute to increase the early identification of children with hearing or vision loss, by establishing consistent protocols for hearing and vision screening and follow-up, screener training, and data collection for quality improvement. (SD1)

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

