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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

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RELATING TO EARLY LEARNING.

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

1       SECTION 1. The legislature finds that high-quality early  
2 childhood education programs are critical for young children's  
3 development. The legislature finds that more of our children  
4 are entering kindergarten without the physical, cognitive,  
5 linguistic, and social skills necessary to prepare them for  
6 success in school. For example, only thirty per cent of  
7 students entering kindergarten demonstrated baseline readiness,  
8 according to data provided by the department of education. It  
9 is no coincidence that the University of Hawaii Economic  
10 Research Organization also reports that only fifty-five per cent  
11 of students who entered kindergarten had attended preschool.  
12 This is a lower percentage than in years past.

13       According to kindergarten teachers in the department of  
14 education, many of the children who do not have experiences in  
15 pre-kindergarten programs could be eighteen to twenty-four  
16 months behind in development than their peers who do. The link  
17 between school readiness and success in school is indisputable.



1 The State must commit to efforts to promote school readiness,  
2 especially in light of its expectation that kindergarten  
3 students master the grade-level common core state standards to  
4 develop the academic competencies and habits of mind necessary  
5 for college and career success.

6 In 2009, Utah created an in-home, technology-delivered  
7 kindergarten readiness program for preschool children. The  
8 program is administered by Waterford.org and publicly funded to  
9 give four-year-old children individualized reading, mathematics,  
10 and science instruction. Research shows that children who  
11 participate in the program outperformed state averages in grades  
12 first through third. In 2019, the Waterford UPSTART program was  
13 brought to Hawaii as part of a 2019 TED Audacious Project,  
14 giving two hundred keiki early learning opportunities.

15 The legislature finds that providing preschool children  
16 across the State access to a home-based early learning program  
17 with strong parental involvement would improve a child's  
18 transition to five-year-old kindergarten. Accordingly, the  
19 purpose of this Act is to establish within the early learning  
20 system a three-year pilot program that uses a home-based early



1 learning program to develop the school readiness of preschool  
2 children across the State.

3 SECTION 2. Chapter 302L, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
4 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated  
5 and to read as follows:

6 "§302L- Home-based early learning program. (a) There  
7 is established within the early learning system a three-year  
8 pilot program to administer a home-based early learning program  
9 to three- and four-year-old children who are in the two years  
10 prior to kindergarten entry pursuant to section 302A-411, with  
11 priority extended to underserved or at-risk children, as defined  
12 in section 302L-1.

13 (b) A service provider that administers a home-based early  
14 learning program under this Act shall be selected in accordance  
15 with chapter 103D, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

16 (c) The office shall ensure that a home-based early  
17 learning program meets the following standards:

18 (3) The program shall include the following components:

19 (A) Computer-based instruction to children on a home  
20 computer;



1        (B) Individualized software instruction in reading,  
2        mathematics, and science that align with Head  
3        Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework  
4        implemented in accordance with the Head Start  
5        Act, 42 United States Code section 9801 et seq.;

6        (C) A multisensory reading tutoring curriculum;

7        (D) A validated adaptive reading test that does not  
8        require the presence of trained adults to  
9        administer and is an accurate indicator of  
10       reading readiness of children who cannot read;

11       (E) An evaluation that measures a child's growth over  
12       the course of the program; and

13       (F) Parental engagement and involvement.

14       (2) The service provider shall:

15       (A) Be a nonprofit organization that has been granted  
16       tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service  
17       pursuant to section 501(c)(3) of the Internal  
18       Revenue Code of 1986, as amended;

19       (B) Have at least three years of experience in  
20       administering a home-based early learning  
21       program; and



1           (C) Demonstrate the efficacy of a home-based early  
2           learning program to the office using independent  
3           evaluations.

4       (3) The service provider shall provide:

5           (A) Individualized software instruction for children;

6           (B) Technical support to families for the  
7           installation and operation of the instructional  
8           software; and

9           (C) The installation of a computer, a tablet, or  
10          other electronic or peripheral equipment, and  
11          Internet access in homes of participants who are  
12          eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch  
13          under 42 United States Code 1758(b)(1) .

14       (4) The service provider shall submit an annual report to  
15       the office that contains the following information:

16           (A) The number of children participating in the  
17           program;

18           (B) The number of families that were provided a  
19           computer, tablet, or other electronic or  
20           peripheral equipment, and Internet service;



1           (C) The frequency of use of the instructional  
2           software;

3           (D) Student performance on kindergarten entry  
4           assessments conducted by the board of education  
5           for students who participated in the program and  
6           those who did not participate in the program;

7           (E) Obstacles encountered with software usage,  
8           hardware, or providing technical assistance to  
9           families; and

10          (F) Parental feedback on the program."

11           SECTION 3. The office shall submit an annual report to the  
12 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
13 the regular session of 2026, 2027, and 2028 that includes the  
14 information it receives pursuant to section 2 of this Act.

15           SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general  
16 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$750,000 or so much  
17 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the  
18 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year  
19 2026-2027 for the implementation of the pilot program  
20 established pursuant to section 2 of this Act.



# H.B. NO. 908

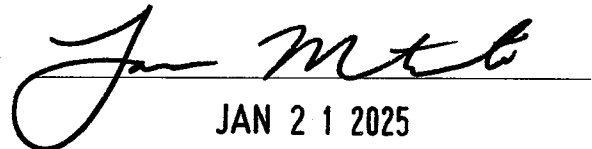
1       The sums appropriated shall be expended by the executive  
2 office on early learning for the purposes of this Act.

3       SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.

4       SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025, and  
5 shall be repealed on June 30, 2028.

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INTRODUCED BY:

  
JAN 21 2025



# H.B. NO. 908

**Report Title:**

School Readiness; Pilot Program; Home-based Early Learning Program

**Description:**

Establishes a three-year pilot program within the early learning system to administer a home-based early learning program. Serves three and four-year-old children. Provides individualized software instruction in reading, mathematics, and science. Appropriates funds.

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

