

JAN 17 2025

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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

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RELATING TO THE PRESCHOOL OPEN DOORS PROGRAM.

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

1       SECTION 1. The purpose of this Act is to expand the  
2       eligibility criteria for the preschool open doors program,  
3       thereby enhancing access to child care opportunities for  
4       families with young children. This expansion seeks to address  
5       the needs of families with young children by increasing access  
6       to affordable childhood care services, contributing to the  
7       developmental outcomes for Hawaii's youngest residents.

8       SECTION 2. Section 346-181, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
9       amended to read as follows:

10       "**S346-181 Preschool open doors program.** (a) There is  
11       established within the department a [~~school-readiness~~] program  
12       to be known as the preschool open doors program within the  
13       department's child care assistance program. The program is  
14       intended to support families in accessing early learning  
15       services for young children. The program shall:



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(1) Provide access to ~~[school-readiness]~~ early learning services that address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional development;

(2) Require each provider to conduct ~~[school-readiness]~~ early learning assessments; and

(3) ~~[Give priority to children from low- and moderate-income families; and~~

~~(4)]~~ Prepare children for school through either of the State's two official languages.

(b) Subject to the availability of funds, the program shall continuously serve ~~[three- and four-year-old]~~ two-year-old through five-year-old children who are in the ~~[two]~~ three years prior to kindergarten entry until they enter kindergarten pursuant to section 302A-411[, ~~with priority extended in the following order during a priority application period established for each upcoming state fiscal year:~~

~~(1) Children who are not eligible to attend public school kindergarten in the calendar year in which they turn five years of age because their birth date occurs after the kindergarten eligibility date pursuant to section 302A-411;~~



~~(2) Underserved or at-risk four-year-old children who were  
previously served as three-year-old children;  
(3) Four-year-old children who were previously served as  
three-year-old children;  
(4) Four-year-old children;  
(5) Underserved or at-risk three-year-old children; and  
(6) Three-year-old children;  
provided that the department shall adopt rules, pursuant to  
chapter 91, to determine a child's underserved or at-risk  
status, if not duplicative of the rules already adopted under  
chapter 17-799, Hawaii Administrative Rules; and applications  
received after the end of the priority application period and  
through January 31 of each year shall be processed on a first-  
come, first-served basis for the remainder of the state fiscal  
year].~~

(c) A child care program chosen by a parent or guardian  
for the purposes of this chapter shall be limited to:

- (1) A group child care center that is licensed by the  
department under section 346-161;
- (2) A group child care home that is licensed by the  
department under section 346-161;



1       (3) An accredited family child care center that is  
2       registered by the department in accordance with  
3       section 346-171; or

4       (4) An exempt center-based provider that is listed with  
5       the department in accordance with section 346-152.

6       (d) Participation in the program shall not require  
7       preschools or early learning programs to be accredited by an  
8       approved accredited body.

9       (e) Enrollment in the program shall be voluntary. A  
10      parent or guardian of a child enrolled in the program shall  
11      share in the costs of the program through a copayment [~~according~~  
12      ~~to a sliding fee scale that is based on need~~] of up to one  
13      dollar pursuant to rules adopted by the department.

14      ~~[(d)]~~ (f) The department may adopt interim rules to carry  
15      out the purposes of this section without regard to chapter 91 or  
16      201M; provided that:

17      (1) The department shall hold at least one public hearing  
18      prior to the adoption of interim rules;

19      (2) The interim rules shall comply with all applicable  
20      state and federal laws; and



(3) The interim rules shall be effective for no more than one year after their adoption."

SECTION 3. Section 346-188, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

"(b) The department shall develop standards, policies, and procedures for the administration of the child care accreditation program, which shall, at minimum:

(1) Provide upfront grant funding to cover the cost of accreditation by one of the national early learning accrediting organizations, [~~as identified in section 346-184(b), or~~] as approved by the director;

(2) Provide grant funding for technical assistance to assist an eligible child care provider through the accreditation process; and

(3) Be available to licensed group child care centers, licensed group child care homes, licensed infant and toddler child care centers, and registered family child care homes."

SECTION 4. Section 346-184, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is repealed.



1       ~~["§346-184 Preschool open doors program; provider~~  
2       ~~accreditation. (a) Each service provider of the preschool open~~  
3       ~~doors program shall be accredited or shall obtain accreditation~~  
4       ~~within seven calendar years of first receiving any funds from~~  
5       ~~the preschool open doors program; provided that any existing~~  
6       ~~service provider unaccredited on July 1, 2022, shall commence~~  
7       ~~the accreditation process no later than July 1, 2029, and obtain~~  
8       ~~accreditation by July 1, 2034; provided further that the~~  
9       ~~director may grant to any service provider one or more~~  
10      ~~extensions to obtain accreditation on a case-by-case basis.~~

11      ~~(b) Accreditation under this section shall be obtained~~  
12      ~~from one or more of the following national early learning~~  
13      ~~accrediting organizations:~~

14      ~~(1) National Association for the Education of Young~~  
15      ~~Children;~~

16      ~~(2) National Early Childhood Program Accreditation;~~

17      ~~(3) National Association for Family Child Care; or~~

18      ~~(4) An accrediting organization approved by the director.~~

19      ~~(c) Notwithstanding subsections (a) and (b), a service~~  
20      ~~provider may receive or continue to receive funding through the~~  
21      ~~preschool open doors program if the service provider maintains a~~



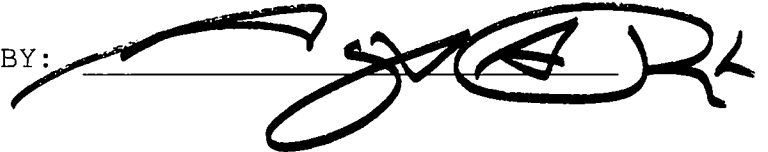
1 ~~satisfactory performance rating under the Classroom Assessment~~  
2 ~~Scoring System developed by the University of Virginia and~~  
3 ~~performed in conformance with United States Department of Health~~  
4 ~~and Human Services guidelines.~~

5 ~~(d) The department shall provide operational and financial~~  
6 ~~support to service providers to assist the service providers in~~  
7 ~~obtaining accreditation. The department may contract with a~~  
8 ~~private entity to assist service providers in obtaining~~  
9 ~~accreditation." ]~~

10 SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
11 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

12 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

13 INTRODUCED BY:

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. A. R.', is written over a horizontal line that follows the text 'INTRODUCED BY:'.

# S.B. NO. 712

**Report Title:**

Preschool Open Doors Program; Eligibility

**Description:**

Expands the preschool open door program's eligibility criteria.  
Repeals the requirement that open door program providers be  
accredited.

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

