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DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA LAWELAWE KAIĀULU
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA

ANTON C. KRUCKY
DIRECTOR
PO'O

AEDWARD LOS BANOS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O

September 9, 2025

The Honorable Andria Tupola, Chair
and Members
Committee on Housing, Homelessness, and Parks
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street, Suite 202
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Housing, Homelessness, and Parks Chair Tupola and Councilmembers:

As requested, please find attached, the Department of Community Services' Child Care Action Plan 2025-2028 and slides for presentation at the upcoming Committee on Housing, Homelessness, and Parks meeting on September 24, 2025.

We thank you for your interest and continued support. Should you have any questions, please contact me at (808) 768-7760.

Sincerely,

for Anton C. Krucky
Director

Attachment

APPROVED:

Michael D. Formby, Managing Director
Office of the Managing Director

DEPT. COM. 695 HHP

City and County of Honolulu

Child Care Action Plan

2025-2028



Honolulu Department of Community Services
Jordana Ferreira | 808.768.5712

Message from the Mayor

The opportunities our children will have tomorrow depend on the foundation we build for them today. Ensuring every child and every family has access to affordable, quality child care is essential for building a strong foundation in the earliest years of life — and by prioritizing accessibility and affordability, we can create opportunities for families to thrive here in Honolulu.

I am honored that the City and County of Honolulu has long-recognized the value that access to high quality child care and early learning opportunities has on our future. Investments in our keiki have immediate and long-lasting benefits and I am proud to say that we continue to be a leader in advancing these opportunities for young keiki.

We were the first — and remain the only — county in the State of Hawai‘i to open a City-constructed child care facility with capacity to serve over 260 children. We provide financial assistance and support services to families in incredibly vulnerable situations, including those that are experiencing residential instability and intimate partner violence. We've also been trailblazers in providing more affordable housing opportunities for our residents as well as unprecedented and innovative housing options that incorporate child care and early learning services on-site.

We are committed to building on these investments to provide more robust and comprehensive support, but we know our work is far from done. We all have a shared responsibility to do more for our families and communities and there is no better place or time to start than here, today, with our youngest residents.

We are excited to launch our three-year Child Care Action Plan and ask that you participate with us in taking action for our youngest keiki because — **together — we can make the City and County of Honolulu the best place to raise a family.**



Rick Blangiardi



Strengthening Honolulu's Child Care System

As part of the City's efforts to build resilient and thriving communities, **we are proud that Honolulu has been named the most desirable place to live in the nation** for the second year in a row according to the Global Livability Index. To elevate this standard, we are committed to ensuring that we are also creating better communities for our keiki.

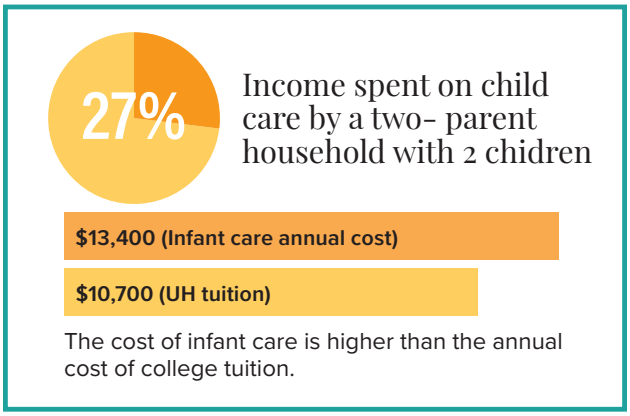
With nearly one-third of O'ahu households classified as ALICE (asset-limited, income-constrained, employed), action is needed to ease the economic burdens on local families so they can remain in Hawai'i. More than one in three households have already considered moving out of state. At the same time, the 2024 Point-In-Time Count reported a slight increase in family homelessness, rising 18 percent from 2023 to 2024 — underscoring the growing crisis facing our communities.

Now more than ever, it is essential for the City to prioritize initiatives to strengthen Honolulu's child care system. By improving access and affordability, we can empower our working families and our youngest keiki to achieve their full potential and contribute to a thriving future for our island.

A Bright Future Starts with Equitable Access

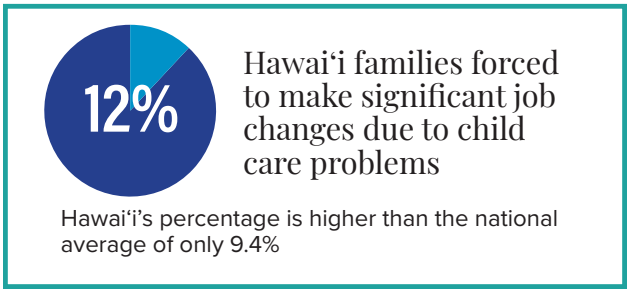
A family's ability to secure reliable, high quality child care and creating nurturing and responsive environments for children are contributing factors to boosting economic mobility and advancing equity. Access to child care allows working families the opportunity to secure employment and earn higher wages over the long-term, thereby enhancing their financial stability necessary to afford the high cost of living, while simultaneously equipping keiki with vital skills that have life-long positive impacts.

Time and again, studies demonstrate keiki who access early learning programs have higher educational achievement, better health outcomes, and earn higher wages. Investments in these programs are also associated with notable societal benefits, including cost savings from remedial education, health, and welfare programs. More importantly, high-quality programs offered before age three yield a 13 percent return on investment — nearly double the seven percent return for preschool programs serving only three- to four-year-olds —reinforcing the value of starting early.

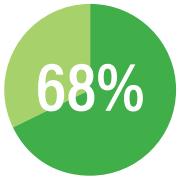


Systemic Impacts By the Numbers

Despite its importance, Hawai'i families struggle to access child care. Hawai'i has one of the highest costs of living in the nation, and the high cost of child care places a significant financial strain on many families. For single-parent



households, child care costs can consume as much as 48 percent of their income, leaving little room for other essential expenses. This financial strain often forces families to make difficult employment decisions, such as reducing work hours, switching to lower-paying but more flexible jobs, or leaving the workforce entirely. These choices result in lost income and diminished long-term financial stability.



Children living in a child care desert* with not enough child care options

*Any census tract with more than 50 children under 5 in which there are more than 3x as many children as licensed child care slots.



Children from birth to five years currently underserved on O‘ahu

There are a sufficient number for only 30% of keiki who have working parents. For all keiki birth to five, there are seats for only 19%.

The high cost of child care is only part of the challenge — access remains a major barrier even for families who can afford it. Hawai‘i faces a statewide child care shortage, with a particularly severe lack of infant-toddler care. Current capacity on O‘ahu only serves 19 percent of children under the age of five, with the greatest shortages of child care in the Leeward and Central districts of the island. There are simply not enough child care options, and even where options do exist, many families experience long waiting lists that can sometimes take years to clear. At the same time, child care businesses face immense challenges in sustaining operations. Nationally, most child care facilities operate on profit margins of less than one percent and in Hawai‘i, providers earn an average of just 13 to 17 dollars an hour. Without increased investments, providers cannot sustain their current operations, further impeding the ability to expand affordable options to meet growing demands.

Achieving Long Term Impacts Through Immediate Goals

We are committed to ensuring Honolulu is not just the best place to live, but also the best place to raise a family. Recognizing access to child care is a necessary strategy that promotes economic mobility and equitable opportunities for all, the City has developed a three-year Child Care Action Plan. It serves as a roadmap for addressing local needs, driving progress in creating a more equitable, accessible, and high-quality child care system.

These initiatives are housed within the Department of Community Services, which administers programs designed to meet the human services, workforce, and housing needs of economically challenged individuals and families, while also facilitating community and economic development in underserved neighborhoods.

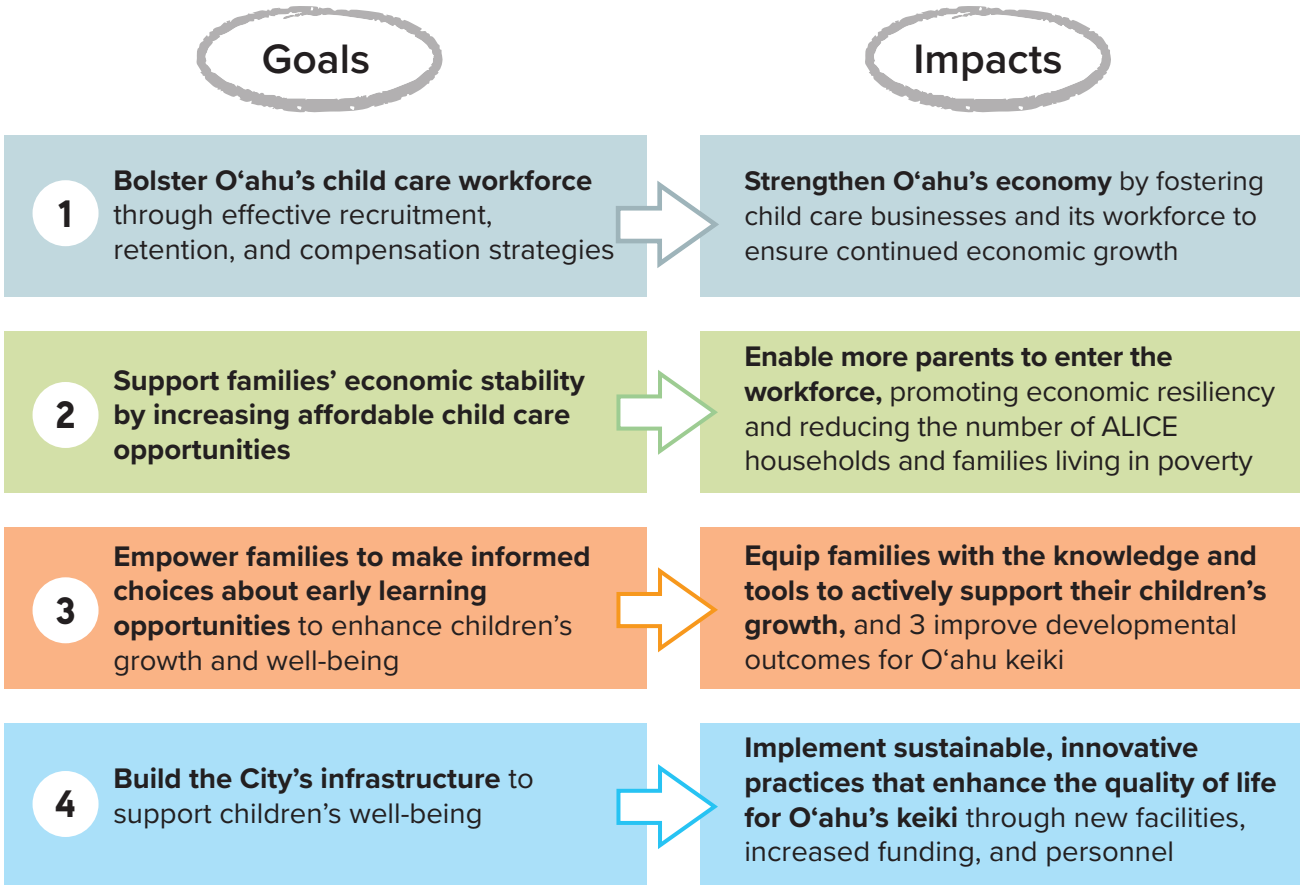
The Department’s logo, the pewa, is a patch traditionally used in Hawaiian culture to mend and strengthen wood. Symbolizing healing and resilience, the pewa reflects the essence of our early childhood work: nurturing and supporting the growth and development of young keiki. Just as the pewa reinforces what might otherwise be fragile, **our efforts aim to safeguard and empower families and keiki, preparing them to thrive in a complex world and contribute to stronger, more resilient communities for generations to come.**

Strategic Action

Our vision for O‘ahu’s families and keiki is grounded in the belief that strategic action today will lay the foundation for transformative change tomorrow. By focusing on four key goals over the course of the next three years, we aim to create lasting impacts that strengthen families and our communities.

The goals and strategies were informed by the invaluable insights of child care providers and other community stakeholders. This collaborative approach ensures that the Action Plan is community driven and reflects the real-world experiences and priorities of those at the heart of early childhood development.

By aligning these immediate goals with a vision for the future, we aim to create a ripple effect of positive change that touches every corner of our community. **The long-term impacts we envision are ambitious but achievable**, reflecting our shared responsibility to invest in the success and well-being of O‘ahu’s families and keiki.



The following pages of the Child Care Action Plan outline a comprehensive framework to support young children, families, and early learning professionals through targeted goals, evidence-based strategies, projected outcomes, and measurable metrics over three years to ensure accountability and track progress.

GOAL 1

Bolster O‘ahu’s child care workforce through effective recruitment, retention, and compensation strategies

ACTIVITIES:
Host industry job fairs to recruit more candidates to the field
Create an apprenticeship grant program designed to attract, retain, and advance more talent within the early learning field
Pilot a food distribution program for family child care providers to assist with meal planning and prepping, reducing operational costs for their child care business

OUTCOMES	METRICS
More individuals are interested in joining the child care industry	10% increase in the child care workforce
Reduction in staff vacancies and shortages at child care centers	5% reduction in child care staff vacancies
Expansion of workforce pathways with more individuals entering child care workforce opportunities	Recruit 30 new apprentices and 4 new employers to participate in the ECE apprenticeship program
Increase in child care business profit margins to sustain and expand more child care opportunities	2% reduction in operating cost-to-revenue ratio for child care businesses

GOAL **2**

Support families' economic stability by increasing affordable child care opportunities

ACTIVITIES:
Host application workshops and provide technical assistance to assist families in applying for financial support programs
Increase the availability of child care by strategically supporting new child care facilities in areas with projected significant development or identified high needs, such as in affordable housing developments and with Transit-Oriented Development plans
Collaborate with Department of Planning and Permitting to create an outreach program to help child care providers navigate the permitting process, reducing barriers to compliance and operational delays

OUTCOMES	METRICS
Greater access to child care in rapidly developing communities	Create 150 new child care seats to expand access for families
Greater equitable access to child care for ALICE families	10% increase in O'ahu families applying for child care subsidies
Reduced financial burden on families with a lower percentage of household income spent on child care	Families eligible for Preschool Open Doors pay no more than seven percent of income on child care
Increased understanding of the permitting process, reducing and facilitating faster facility expansion	75% of child care providers report an increase in understanding and navigating the permitting process

GOAL 3

Empower families to make informed choices about early learning opportunities to enhance children's growth and well-being

ACTIVITIES:
Integrate Family Child Interaction Learning (FCIL) Programs with Family Assessment Centers to support families experiencing residential instability with tailored resources and tools to nurture their children's development holistically
Launch an island-wide public awareness campaign highlighting O'ahu and State-specific early childhood and financial support resources, while raising awareness of the importance of these programs in fostering long-term success for children and families
Implement a pilot program that provides real-time vacancy data, making it easier for families to find and access available child care options

OUTCOMES	METRICS
More families feel confident and competent in supporting their children's development	90% of families in the FCIL program report an increase in knowledge on how to support their child's development
More families are aware of the importance of child care and what resources are available	75% of families with children under the age of 5 surveyed report increased knowledge of early learning resources
Families can easily navigate child care and available resources	50% of families surveyed report being able to navigate child care vacancies more quickly

GOAL 4

Build the City's infrastructure to support working families and children's well-being

ACTIVITIES:
Revamp the City's Early Childhood website to create a user-friendly, accessible, and comprehensive resource hub tailored to the needs of families and early learning professionals
Ensure all City-constructed child care facilities align with the City's energy efficiency goals
Require priority enrollment for City employees in contract agreements for child care operators in City-constructed child care facilities
Develop a strategy to secure diverse funding to support the City's early childhood initiatives

OUTCOMES	METRICS
Increase in utilization of the City's child care services by the public	50% increase in engagement on the Early Childhood section of the City's website
More child care facilities will adopt energy efficiency standards	Construct 2 new child care facilities that meet energy efficiency standards
Increased access to child care services by City employees	At least 25% of enrollment in City-constructed child care facilities are children of City employees
The City will continue to enhance its capacity to provide services that support young keiki and families	Increase in FTE counts and funding amounts dedicated to early childhood initiatives

Building the Best Place to Raise a Family

We are committed to ensuring Honolulu is not just the best place to live, but also the best place to raise a family. As we look ahead, the City remains steadfast in its commitment to these goals and the vision they represent. Through ongoing collaboration, innovation, and investment, we will continue to prioritize the needs of O‘ahu families and keiki. This dedication ensures that the foundations we build today will not only address immediate challenges, but also create a resilient, vibrant community for generations to come.

We extend a heartfelt mahalo to the child care providers and community partners whose dedication and collaboration have made this work possible. A special thank you also to City leadership and personnel for your continued support and vision in advancing these initiatives. Your unwavering commitment to supporting families and keiki is the foundation of our collective efforts, and we are deeply thankful for the role you play in building a brighter, stronger future for O‘ahu.

Your contributions inspire us to strive for excellence and remind us that meaningful change is achieved through unity, compassion, and shared purpose. Together, we are creating a community where every child has the opportunity to thrive, and every family feels supported.

For inquiries please contact:
Jordana Ferreira
Early Childhood Resource Coordinator
City and County of Honolulu
jordana.ferreira@honolulu.gov



INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU'S COMMITMENT TO FAMILIES & YOUNG KEIKI

JORDANA FERREIRA
EARLY CHILDHOOD COORDINATOR



CHILD CARE IS A "WICKED PROBLEM"

50%

HAWAI`I HOUSEHOLDS WITH KEIKI BELOW ALICE THRESHOLD



3rd

AFTER HOUSING & FOOD, CHILD CARE IS LARGEST EXPENSE

90%

KEIKI UNDER 3 WHO DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO A CHILD CARE SEAT

TWO- PARENT HOUSEHOLD INCOME SPENT ON CHILD CARE

25%

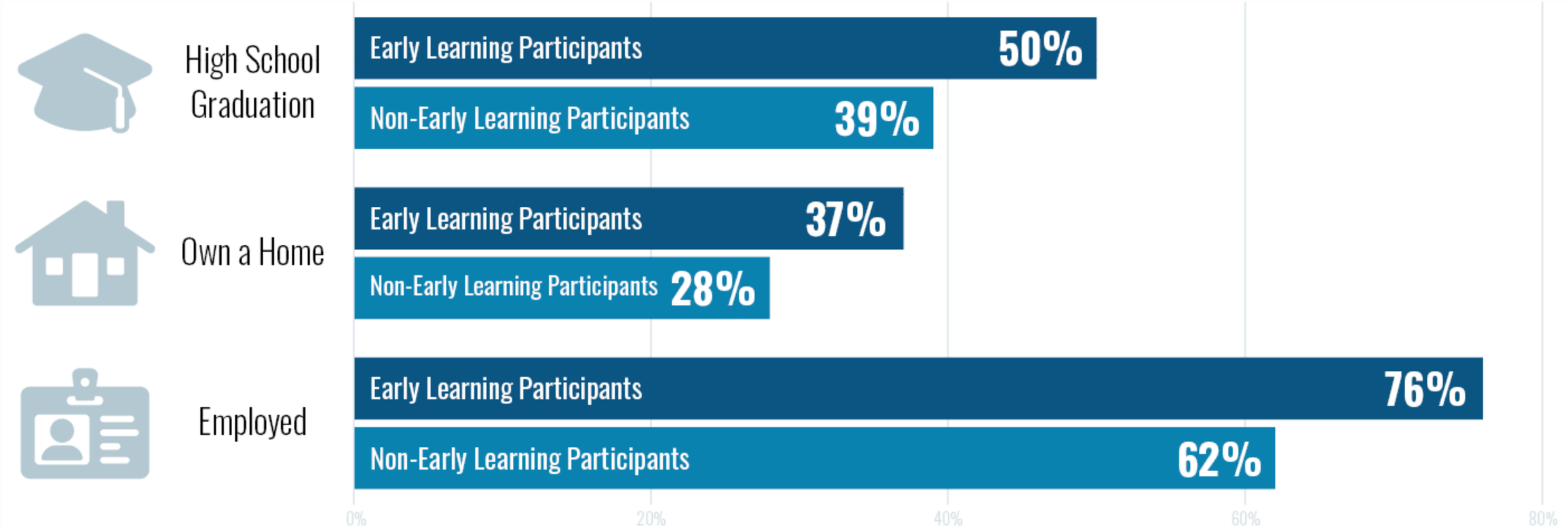


KEIKI UNDER 5 WHO DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO A CHILD CARE SEAT

53%

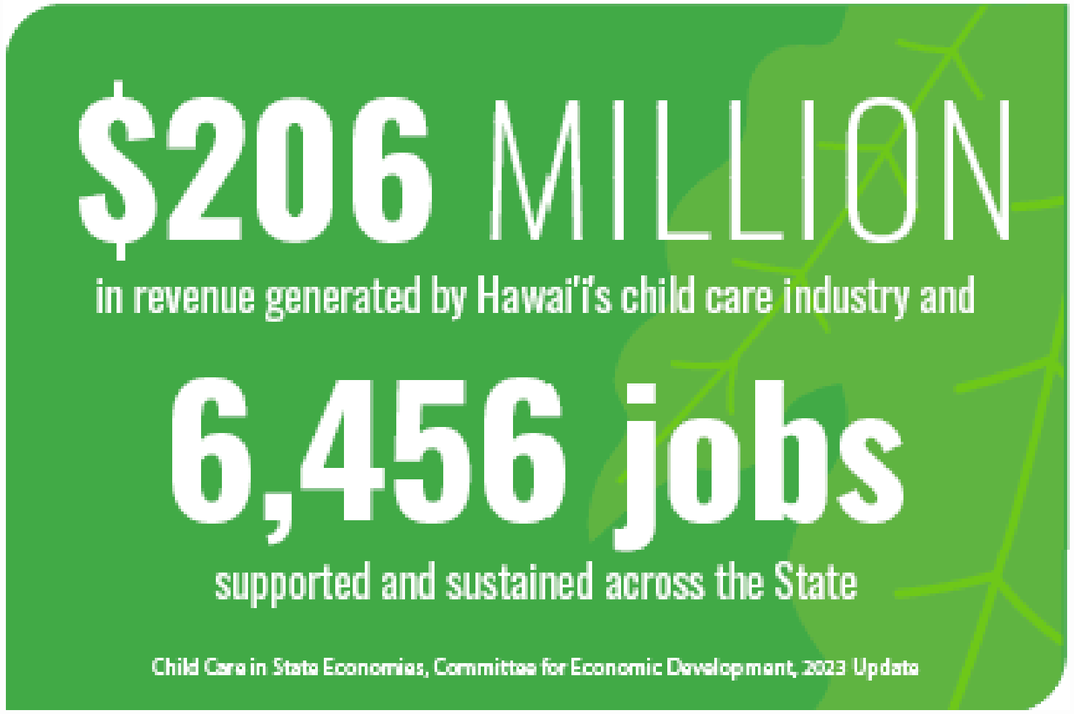


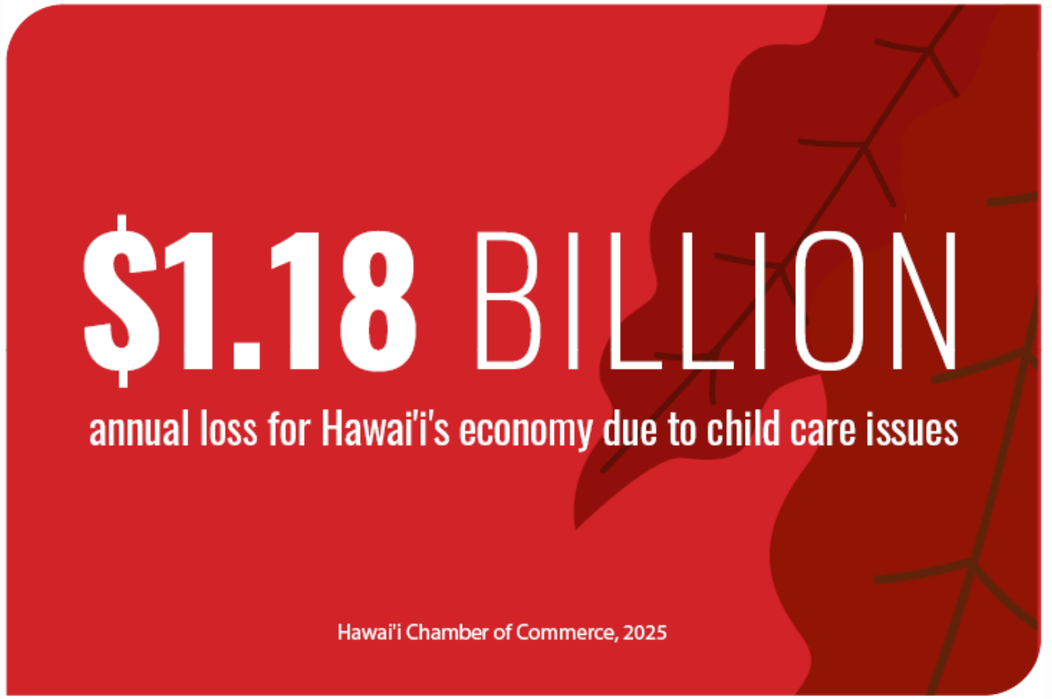
THAT PAYS OFF TODAY AND TOMORROW



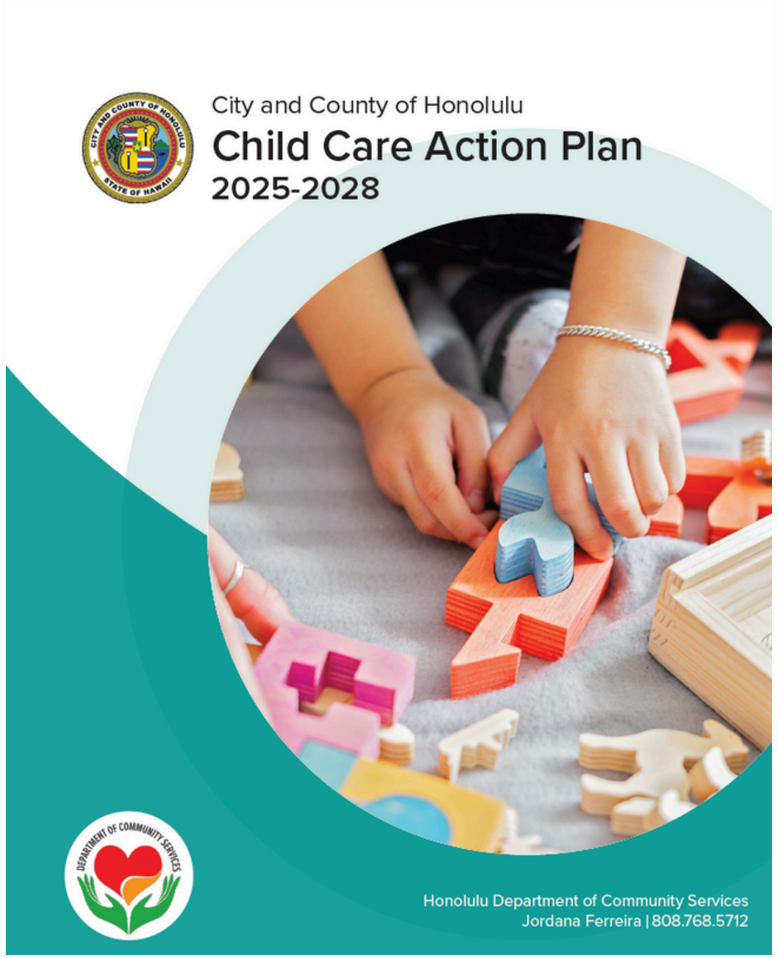
Chicago Child-Parent Center participants ages ranged from 4 to 6 from preschool to third grade and High/Scope Perry Preschool Project through age 40

AND BOLSTERS THE ECONOMY





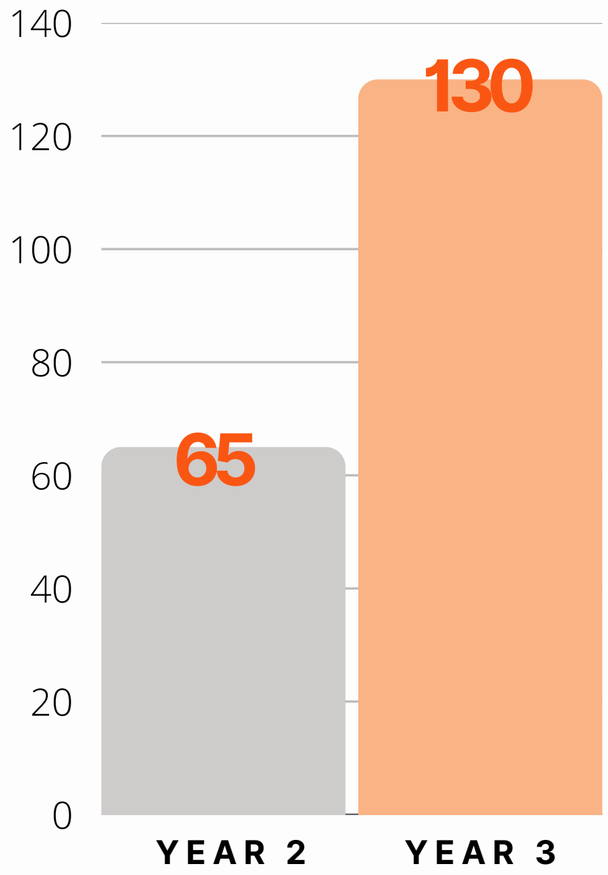
THE CITY'S COMMITMENT TO FAMILIES AND KEIKI



Goals	Impacts
1 **Bolster O'ahu's child care workforce** through effective recruitment, retention, and compensation strategies	**Strengthen O'ahu's economy** by fostering child care businesses and its workforce to ensure continued economic growth
2 **Support families' economic stability by increasing affordable child care opportunities**	**Enable more parents to enter the workforce,** promoting economic resiliency and reducing the number of ALICE households and families living in poverty
3 **Empower families to make informed choices about early learning opportunities** to enhance children's growth and well-being	**Equip families with the knowledge and tools to actively support their children's growth,** and 3 improve developmental outcomes for O'ahu keiki
4 **Build the City's infrastructure** to support children's well-being	**Implement sustainable, innovative practices that enhance the quality of life for O'ahu's keiki** through new facilities, increased funding, and personnel

GOAL 1: BOLSTERING O‘AHU‘S CHILD CARE WORKFORCE

PROFESSIONALS NEEDED



1 RECRUIT

- PLANNING INDUSTRY JOB FAIRS
- AMENDED LUO TO INCREASE HOME-BASED CHILD CARE WORKFORCE

2 UPSKILL

- PROVIDING TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE WORKSHOPS
- LAUNCHING INAUGURAL CHILD CARE BUSINESS ACUMEN COHORT

3 RETAIN

- DEPLOYING COST MODEL SURVEY
- SUPPORTING APPRENTICESHIP GRANT PROGRAM

GOAL 2: EXPANDING AFFORDABLE OPTIONS FOR FAMILIES

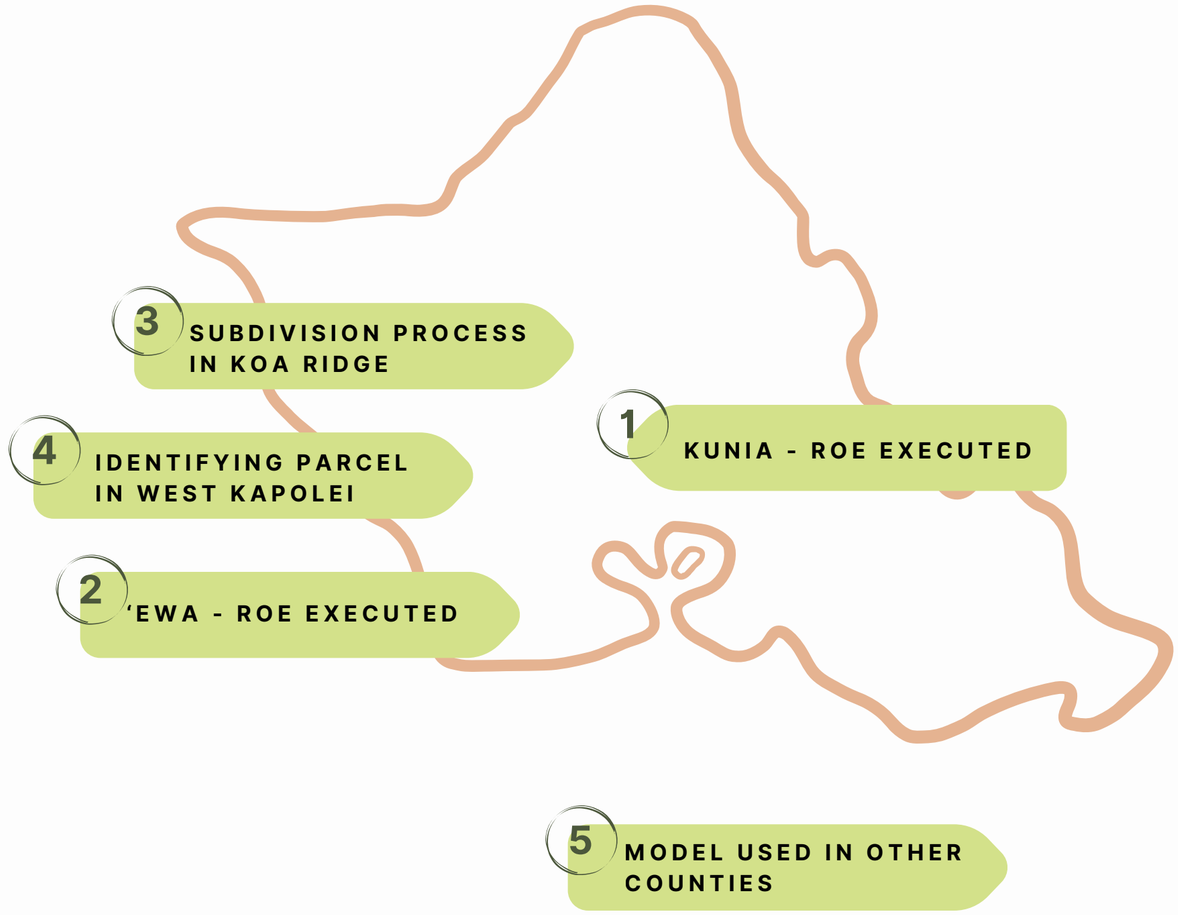
EXPAND EARLY EDUCATION CENTER MODEL

TO MORE COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE ISLAND

25%

ENROLLED IN THE EEC ARE CHILDREN OF CITY EMPLOYEES

- OFFER BELOW MARKET RATE FOR FACILITY
- AFFORDABLE RATES DEFINED & CAPPED
- PRIORITY ENROLLMENT FOR CITY EMPLOYEES



GOAL 2: BUILDING MORE, FASTER

OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE STATE TO CONSTRUCT CHILD CARE ON 2 CITY PARCELS IS COST- AND TIME-EFFICIENT



$12 M

SAVED IN CIP AND OPERATIONAL FUNDS

1 YEAR

SHAVED OFF CONSTRUCTION TIMELINE

+350

CHILDREN SERVED BY 2029

GOAL3: EMPOWERING FAMILIES

WE KNOW
DESPITE THE IMPORTANCE & NEED, CHILD CARE IS INCREDIBLY DIFFICULT FOR FAMILIES TO ACCESS



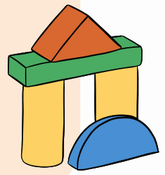


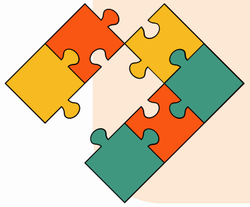
82%

OF FAMILIES UNDERSTAND EARLY EXPERIENCES SHAPE A CHILD'S BRAIN

89%

OF FAMILIES AGREE CHILD CARE IS A BUILDING BLOCK FOR CHILDREN'S GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT





70%

OF FAMILIES BELIEVE CURRENT CHILD CARE OPTIONS ARE NOT ENOUGH

58%

OF FAMILIES HAVE WORRIED ABOUT CHILD CARE ALMOST EVERY DAY



GOAL 4: BUILDING THE CITY'S INFRASTRUCTURE

BECAUSE OF OUR PARTNERSHIPS AND YOUR SUPPORT, WE ARE SEEING IMPACTS IN JUST

ONE YEAR!



3 FTE

GROWING OUR TEAM INCREASES OUR CAPACITY AND REACH

$678K

OF ADDITIONAL FUNDS INCREASES EARLY LEARNING & WORKFORCE OPPORTUNITIES

+78%

INCREASE IN O'AHU FAMILIES ENROLLED IN SUBSIDY PROGRAMS IN ONE YEAR

500+

O'AHU FAMILIES PROVIDED FEEDBACK ON EARLY LEARNING NEEDS

MAHALO FOR YOUR SUPPORT

“THE CITY’S INVESTMENT IN CHILD CARE IS NOT JUST ABOUT BUILDING FACILITIES, IT’S ABOUT BUILIDNG A STRONGER FUTURE FOR OUR KEIKI AND OUR COMMUNITIES”

DOUG CULLISON

SCHOOL FACILITIES AUTHORITY & PARENT
OF A CHILD ENROLLED AT THE EEC