



Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan

Moving Forward Together: Many Partners, Many Efforts, One Purpose

2025–2030



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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING

Aloha kākou,

It is my honor to introduce Hawai'i's Early Childhood State Plan, which brings together our shared commitment to supporting children, families, and the early learning and care workforce. In Hawai'i, keiki grow within a strong network of relationships—'ohana, early educators, health providers, cultural leaders, community partners, and state agencies. This plan helps align our efforts so every child has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive.

Developed with input from more than 300 community members across Kaua'i, O'ahu, Maui, Lāna'i, Moloka'i, and Hawai'i, the plan reflects both the work already happening and the needs identified by those who care for young children every day. We strive to improve access to services, uplift Native Hawaiian culture and leadership, strengthen supports for infants and toddlers, invest in our workforce, build strong partnerships, and create a solid foundation for Hawai'i's early childhood system.

This plan represents Hawai'i's ongoing promise to its youngest children. Moving forward will take all of us—no single agency or organization can do this work alone. Together, we can ensure that every keiki, every 'ohana, and every community has what they need to thrive.



Yuuko Arikawa-Cross (she/her)

Ke'ena Ho'okele Ho'ona'auao Pae Kamali'i o Hawai'i Moku'āina
Director of the Executive Office on Early Learning



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INTRODUCTION

The 2025–2030 Hawai‘i Early Childhood State Plan provides a statewide roadmap for ensuring that all keiki and ‘ohana have the resources, opportunities, and support needed to thrive. Building on lessons from the 2019–2024 State Plan and findings from the 2024 Comprehensive Needs Assessment, the 2025–2030 State Plan update embraces a community-centered, inclusive approach—ensuring that ‘ohana, providers, agencies, and community partners each have voice and kuleana in shaping Hawai‘i’s early childhood system.

Why the State Plan Matters

Over the past 5 years, Hawai‘i’s early childhood system faced unprecedented challenges—from the Maui wildfires to the lasting impacts of COVID-19—that reshaped both immediate needs and long-term priorities. These events intensified existing gaps in access, support, and opportunity for keiki and ‘ohana, while underscoring the critical need for collaboration, coordination, and shared responsibility across the early childhood system. To meet these challenges and build on the collective strength of Hawai‘i’s communities, the State Plan offers a shared path forward—one that strengthens the system’s effectiveness, responsiveness, and resilience.

Cross-Sector Alignment and Collective Impact

The 2025–2030 Hawai‘i Early Childhood State Plan builds on community input to unify ongoing initiatives under a shared framework, fostering partnerships, alignment, and coordinated action. Three core frameworks—**Mapping the Course; Many Paddles, One Canoe**; and **Navigating Together**—served as the foundation of the process, leveraging strengths, guiding decision-making, and supporting systemwide learning.



Mapping the Course

The 2024 comprehensive needs assessment provided a critical foundation for Hawai'i's 2025–2030 State Plan by identifying the early childhood system's most pressing challenges. Building on this foundation, early childhood providers, program leaders, 'ohana, and community members shaped the State Plan's Goals and Action Priorities. From May to November 2025, more than 150 participants attended in-person forums across Kaua'i, O'ahu, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, Maui, and Hawai'i Island, while over 300 contributed virtually through surveys and listening sessions. Their input directly informed the Plan's strategies, ensuring it reflects the lived realities and priorities of Hawai'i's diverse communities.

Many Paddles, One Canoe

Rather than prescribing actions or resource allocation, the State Plan provides a strategic frame that sets common goals; elevates existing work; promotes collaboration across 'ohana, providers, and agencies; and ensures that the early childhood system advances with shared purpose and measurable impact.

Navigating Together

By weaving together diverse perspectives, community voice, and data collected annually from partners across the early childhood system, the 2025–2030 State Plan provides a living map that can strengthen programs, policies, and partnerships—ensuring that Hawai'i's early childhood system remains resilient, responsive, and united so that all keiki and 'ohana thrive.

THE STATE PLAN

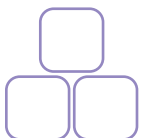


The State Plan is organized to guide coordinated action across Hawai'i's early childhood system. Key components of the State Plan are defined below to clarify structure, purpose, and progress monitoring, which will help community members, educators, policymakers, and partners engage effectively and align efforts toward shared outcomes.



Definitions

Every effort was made to prioritize clear and accessible language and, where possible, to avoid jargon throughout the State Plan to ensure that it is understandable to all audiences, from community members to practitioners and policymakers. Where technical terms are used, they are in **boldface** and are defined in the [Glossary](#).



Building Blocks

These constitute the overarching structure of the State Plan, organizing the early childhood system into six key focus areas.



Goals

These are the desired outcomes for each Building Block over the next 5 years. Each Building Block includes one or two goals that guide priorities and focus efforts.



Action Priorities

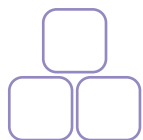
There are three to five actionable priorities that translate each goal into practical steps based on current needs and build upon ongoing work across the state.



Annual Progress Data

Building Block Committee participants from across Hawai'i discussed sharing data from work they are currently undertaking to advance the Action Priorities, with the opportunity for additional partners to join over time. These data will be collected and published annually to illuminate trends, celebrate successes, identify gaps, and inform continuous improvement.

BUILDING BLOCKS



The overarching structure of the State Plan is six **Building Blocks** that represent key focus areas across the **early childhood system** sectors of health, wellness, and **early care and learning**. Building upon the strengths of the 2020 State Plan, these six Building Blocks carry over from the five included in the 2020 State Plan, with the Foundations for Early Learning Building Block split into two areas of focus: Access to Early Care and Learning Opportunities and Keiki Learning and Development.

Building Block 1

Keiki and 'Ohana Health, Safety, and Well-Being

Ensuring that all families have equitable access to resources that promote optimal health, safety, and well-being is fundamental to supporting Hawai'i's keiki in reaching their fullest potential. A strong early childhood system depends on coordinated efforts that address the physical, emotional, and social needs of keiki and 'ohana. Goals for this Building Block focus on expanding access to comprehensive healthcare—including preventive screenings and community-level supports—while also emphasizing the importance of holistic, trauma-informed approaches to well-being.

Building Block 2

'Ohana Partnerships and Engagement

Strong partnerships with 'ohana are essential to ensuring that Hawai'i's keiki receive the coordinated care, learning opportunities, and support they need to thrive. When 'ohana are engaged as active partners, their voices help shape systems and services that are more equitable, responsive, and effective. Goals for this Building Block emphasize the importance of fostering ongoing, meaningful communication with families across communities and ensuring they have seamless access to comprehensive information and resources.

**Building
Block
3**

**Keiki Learning and
Development**

High-quality early care and learning experiences form the foundation for keiki to grow, learn, and thrive. Nurturing and inclusive learning environments that reflect Hawai'i's diverse culture and languages honor each child's identity while supporting their holistic development. Goals for this Building Block emphasize access to culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate experiences that promote social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth.

**Building
Block
4**

**Early Childhood
Workforce**

Foundational to quality care and learning for Hawai'i's keiki and 'ohana is a strong, stable, and well-supported early childhood **workforce**. Well-prepared, fairly compensated, and valued early childhood professionals are better equipped to create nurturing environments where keiki can thrive. Goals for this Building Block emphasize the importance of strengthening the early childhood workforce through equitable compensation, improved working conditions, and access to professional growth opportunities.

**Building
Block
5**

**Access to Early Care and
Learning Opportunities**

A robust and equitable **mixed-delivery system** ensures that every 'ohana can access early care and learning options that reflect their values, priorities, and unique circumstances. Meaningful choices among high-quality programs ensure 'ohana are able to support keiki development and learning in environments that feel familiar and responsive. Goals for this Building Block emphasize expanding access to affordable, high-quality opportunities across the mixed-delivery system while honoring the cultural and geographic diversity of Hawai'i's communities.

**Building
Block
6**

**Early Childhood
Systems**

Strong alignment across Hawai'i's early childhood health, wellness, and early care and learning systems is essential for providing keiki and 'ohana with comprehensive, accessible services and supports. Coordinated systems reduce duplication and utilize resources efficiently, providing 'ohana with seamless access to needed services. Goals for this Building Block emphasize increased communication and cohesion across early childhood programs, establishing shared definitions of quality and enhancing data-sharing efforts to inform decision-making.

Building Block Goals and Action Priorities

Building Block 1

Keiki and 'Ohana Health, Safety, and Well-Being

Access to resources for optimal health, safety, and well-being allow all 'ohana and keiki to thrive.



Goal 1A: Increase access to comprehensive healthcare that includes **screening** and community-level support.



Action Priorities

- Increase the number of keiki who have an identified **medical home**, with a focus on keiki in rural communities and neighbor islands.
- Increase the number of 'ohana in rural communities and neighbor islands who receive support in navigating and accessing health and mental health services.
- Increase the number of keiki who receive screening and referrals for follow-up services.



Goal 1B: Promote holistic approaches to health and well-being.



Action Priorities

- Increase access to integrated trauma-informed care and infant and early childhood mental health services.
- Increase opportunities for physical activity and nutrition that optimize early childhood health.

Building
Block
2

'Ohana Partnerships and Engagement

'Ohana engage as partners and seamlessly access comprehensive information, resources, and services.



Goal 2A: Foster meaningful, ongoing conversations with families across all islands, being adaptive and responsive to their needs and priorities.



Action Priorities

- Ensure that **family councils** represent the diversity of the 'ohana enrolled and are designed to enable 'ohana to fully participate in decision-making.
- Increase the number of early care and learning programs and elementary schools that include 'ohana and communities in planning for **kindergarten transition** outreach and supports.



Goal 2B: Equip 'ohana with knowledge about keiki development, parenting practices, and available support services.



Action Priorities

- Increase 'ohana access to information about resources, learning opportunities, and public support services.
- Increase 'ohana partnership and learning opportunities about keiki development, positive behavior support, and support for **keiki with disabilities or delays**.
- Increase use of peer support models within family services.

Building
Block
3

Keiki Learning and Development

Nurturing early care and learning experiences enable all keiki to grow and learn to their fullest potential.



Goal 3A: Ensure all keiki receive early care and learning experiences that are culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate.



Action Priorities

- Increase the number of early care and learning programs that include authentic **Hawaiian culture, language, and values** in their planned everyday experiences with keiki.
- Increase the number of early care and learning programs that include positive behavioral, social, and emotional regulation strategies in their planned everyday experiences with keiki.
- Revise the **Hawai'i Early Learning and Development Standards** based on research and engagement with early care and learning, Hawaiian language, and other community interest-holders. Include standards for Hawaiian language development and incorporate Hawaiian culture throughout.



Goal 3B: Ensure all keiki receive comprehensive services and resources to support their growth and development throughout their early care and learning journey.



Action Priorities

- Increase the number of family-centered services and improve service coordination for 'ohana with infants and toddlers.
- Ensure young keiki with disabilities and delays have access to services that meet their specific needs, including high-quality, inclusive early childhood programs that provide appropriate individualized support to empower keiki to fully participate in play-based learning alongside their peers.
- Increase the number of neighborhoods and early care and learning programs that include spaces for robust gross-motor play. Ensure that these spaces provide equipment and environments that are based on local priorities; feature local, natural materials; and include shade for play areas.

Building
Block
4

Early Childhood Workforce

A well-prepared, supported, and compensated workforce supports Hawai'i's keiki and 'ohana.



Goal 4A: Increase and stabilize a qualified workforce to meet the staffing needs of the early care and learning system.



Action Priorities

- Use policy approaches and associated financing to increase wages and benefits to achieve competitive and fair compensation for the workforce across all settings.
- Ensure that all programs are fully staffed with a qualified workforce.
- Provide the workforce with access to positive working conditions, including comprehensive mental health supports.



Goal 4B: Ensure that all early childhood workforce providers have comprehensive knowledge of keiki development and learning.



Action Priorities

- Increase access to developmentally appropriate, culturally affirming, language-affirming, **place-based**, and research-informed preservice and in-service professional learning, coaching, and consultation opportunities for all provider types.
- Increase the number of workforce members across all settings who have completed coursework, training, or coaching in positive behavior supports; inclusion of keiki with disabilities and delays; and Hawaiian culture, language, and values.

**Building
Block
5****Access to Early Care and Learning Opportunities**

‘Ohana are able to choose early care and learning opportunities that meet their needs and priorities across a robust mixed-delivery system.



Goal 5A: Ensure all ‘ohana have access to affordable, high-quality early care and learning opportunities.

**Action Priorities**

- Expand access to early care and learning programs for keiki ages birth to 5 across the mixed-delivery system.
- Expand access to community-based and Family Child Interactive Learning Programs (FCIL) to promote early development through culturally responsive, ‘ohana-centered support.
- Increase the number of programs that provide tailored strategies and resources to ensure that keiki from **underserved populations** have equitable access to early care and learning.
- Increase ‘ohana awareness and utilization of programs that support families with tuition and other costs associated with early care and learning.

Building
Block
6

Early Childhood Systems

Alignment across Hawai'i's early childhood health, wellness, and early care and learning systems provides comprehensive, accessible services and supports.



Goal 6A: Increase communication and cohesion and reduce duplication of efforts across early childhood systems.



Action Priorities

- Improve the alignment and cohesion of key tools and resources that are shared across early childhood systems.
- Reduce duplication of efforts, remove barriers, and streamline processes across early childhood systems.
- Develop a shared definition of quality for early care and learning and align resources and supports to advance quality.



Goal 6B: Support informed decision-making and alignment across early childhood systems through data-sharing efforts that address gaps, streamline collection processes, enhance interagency coordination, and ensure data security.



Action Priorities

- Collect and share annual progress updates for the State Plan.
- Develop and launch an **Early Childhood Integrated Data System**.



NAVIGATING TOGETHER 2025–2030



Annual Progress Data

As part of the State Plan’s development, Building Block Committee participants from across Hawai’i discussed sharing data from work they are currently undertaking to advance the Action Priorities, with the opportunity for additional partners to join over time. The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) will collect and analyze these data annually and publish the findings in aggregate, providing a systemwide snapshot of implementation and impact.

As the EOEL launches the Building Block Network alongside the publication of the Hawai’i Early Childhood State Plan, they will reach out to partner agencies and organizations to establish data governance protocols and additional presentations in the future. This data collection will reflect the goals and Action Priorities within the State Plan. Establishing a data pipeline will involve three phases:

- **Phase 1:** Data availability and format
- **Phase 2:** Data sharing agreement and transfer
- **Phase 3:** Data analysis, reporting, and visualization

This approach identifies areas needing further investment and fosters collaboration and continuous improvement across Hawai’i’s early childhood system.

The following list represents the types of data that community partners volunteered to share annually, with the scope of data collection expected to grow as more organizations join the Building Block Network.

Examples of Annual Progress Data

- number of 'ohana with a primary provider for their keiki
- number of peer support models used across Family support services
- number of early care and learning programs self-reporting that they include authentic Hawaiian culture, language, and values in their planned everyday experiences with keiki
- number of 'ohana enrolled in home-based, multigenerational, or other 'ohana-centered services for 'ohana with young keiki
- number of early care and learning workforce providers participating in apprenticeship programs
- number of slots at **publicly funded classrooms** across all islands
- number of slots at community-based classrooms across all islands
- data on increasing flexibility in degree paths toward multiple teaching pathways
- data on efforts related to the launch and use of the Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan



Building Block Network

The 2025–2030 Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan represents the culmination of extensive collaboration among agencies, organizations, and communities across the state—demonstrating a shared commitment to strengthening Hawai'i's early childhood system. While the plan's development marks a major milestone, the work is ongoing. A key step in sustaining this collaborative effort is the transition of the Building Block Committees into a Building Block Network, which will continue to prioritize a community-centered and inclusive approach, broaden participation, and build momentum through implementation.

This network will bring together original BBC members and additional early childhood providers, healthcare professionals, policymakers, business leaders, philanthropic organizations, and 'ohana and community members to collaborate around the State Plan's priorities. As participation expands and more partners engage, the Building Block Network will strengthen alignment, enhance coordination, and increase collective impact—ensuring that diverse perspectives inform and sustain systemwide improvement.

The EOEL will support the Building Block Network through ongoing communication and engagement opportunities, including

- **quarterly newsletters** highlighting work in alignment with the State Plan;
- **in-person meetings** one or two times per year for the Building Block Network to review progress, address challenges, and welcome new partners; and
- **annual town halls** on neighbor islands and O'ahu to share progress with 'ohana, community members, providers, and partners, fostering dialogue around local needs and priorities.



OUR COLLECTIVE JOURNEY

THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THE STATE PLAN

The 2025–2030 Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan was created through a deeply collaborative and iterative process centered on shared leadership and community voice. Grounded in data, feedback, and lived experience, the State Plan captures both the realities of today and the collective vision for a brighter future for Hawai'i's youngest keiki and their 'ohana. The following section highlights the design approach, partnerships, and decision-making processes that brought this vision to life.

Defining the Need

The 2019–2024 Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan and accompanying Strategic Implementation Plans (SIPs) brought together cross-sector partners to envision a coordinated early childhood system for Hawai'i's youngest learners. Leveraging Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) funding, the EOEL was tasked with developing the 2025–2030 State Plan, serving as the local convener while bringing in WestEd, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research, development, and service agency, as a neutral third-party facilitator.

The revision process for the new State Plan drew on two key foundations: lessons from the 2019–2024 State Plan and findings from the 2024 Hawai'i Early Childhood Comprehensive Needs Assessment. Focus group data and outcomes from the earlier State Plan highlighted important successes—including strengthened cross-sector collaboration and a shared systemwide vision—while also revealing opportunities to improve structure, accountability, and alignment with implementation strategies. A notable limitation of the earlier planning effort was that the State Plan and SIPs were developed separately, which reduced coherence and integration across the system.



The needs assessment reinforced these insights by underscoring systemwide challenges—including staffing shortages, the need to strengthen supports for children with disabilities and delays, and the importance of deeper intra-agency partnerships—and strongly shaped the 2025–2030 State Plan Goals and Action Priorities.

Together, these lessons informed the State Plan’s revision structure and processes, resulting in a more aligned and coherent approach that centers families, providers, and those closest to the work in decision-making.

In March 2025, WestEd convened Hawai’i PDG B-5 leadership to review successes and challenges from the prior State Plan and assess whether a new State Plan was needed. After careful deliberation, participants agreed that a new State Plan was essential—a comprehensive resource to capture work happening across the islands, strengthen partnerships, and support coordinated and aligned action.

The 2025–2030 State Plan builds on these lessons through five guiding strategies.

Guiding Strategies

- Retain the core Building Block structure while refining descriptions
- Integrate Goals and Action Priorities into a singular State Plan, ensuring alignment, coherence, and implementation efforts
- Empower early learning and care providers as members, codesigners and decision-makers of Building Block Committees
- Establish a Steering Committee of state-level leaders to provide guidance and cohesion
- Incorporate 'ohana and community voice from across Hawai'i

Throughout 2025, monthly meetings of the Building Block Committees and Steering Committee, combined with multiple community engagement events, ensured that the State Plan reflected both statewide priorities and local realities.



Community Engagement

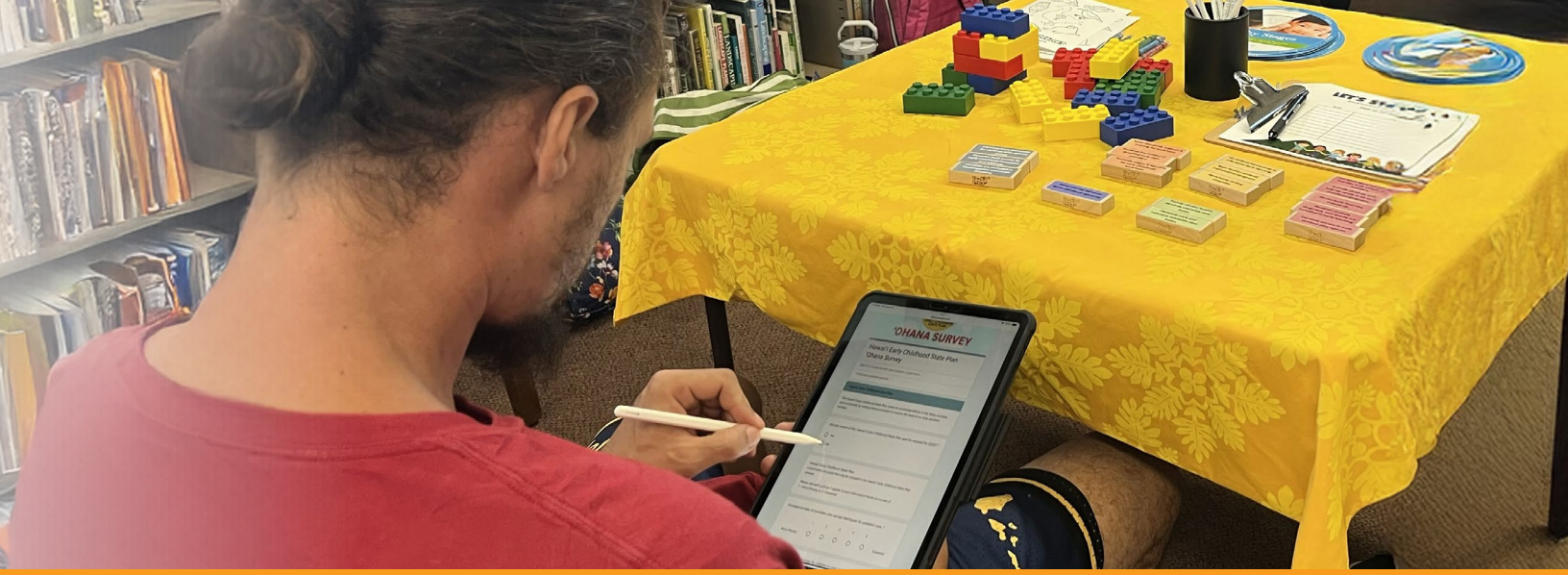
Community and ‘ohana voice is central to shaping the 2025–2030 Hawai‘i Early Childhood State Plan, ensuring that it reflects local priorities, honors diverse perspectives and needs, and advances a shared vision for the state’s early childhood system. WestEd and the EOEL engaged ‘ohana, providers, and community partners across the islands through multiple channels.

Community Engagement Forum (May 2025)

To launch the revision process in the community, the EOEL and WestEd convened a 2-day, in-person meeting with representatives from across the early childhood system and communities around the state. The meeting identified priorities and set the tone for ongoing engagement. More than 100 interest holders, including ‘ohana, providers, and policymakers, shared visions for keiki and ‘ohana, reviewed key data, and provided input on draft Goals and Action Priorities. Community contributors recommended participants for the Building Block Committees, establishing a foundation for the State Plan’s collaborative development.

‘Ohana Survey (July–October 2025)

Nearly 300 families, caregivers, and community members provided input on early childhood experiences, challenges, and draft Goals, emphasizing priorities such as improving access to quality care, supporting inclusion and cultural preservation, strengthening the workforce, and creating ‘ohana resource hubs.



**14th Annual Hawai'i Island
Early Childhood Conference
(September 2025)**

Draft Goals and Action Priorities were presented to educators, providers, and community members. Interactive discussions gathered feedback, identified community-specific needs, and validated priorities for the State Plan.

**Neighbor Island
Talk Story Events
(September–October 2025)**

Family-centered sessions on Kaua'i, Lāna'i, Maui, Moloka'i, and Hawai'i Island captured diverse perspectives, highlighted local needs, and ensured that the State Plan reflects lived realities across the islands.

**Hawai'i Association for the
Education of Young Children
(October 2025)**

Draft Goals and Action Priorities were presented to educators, providers, and community members. Interactive discussions gathered feedback, identified community-specific needs, and validated priorities for the State Plan.

These engagement efforts ensured that the State Plan is evidence based, community driven, and grounded in the needs and aspirations of Hawai'i's keiki and 'ohana.



Development Timeline

JANUARY 2025

Project launch

MARCH 2025

In-person kickoff meeting with EOEL, PDG B-5 Support Team, and WestEd

MAY 2025

2-day, in-person Community Engagement Forum

JUNE–AUGUST 2025

Monthly Building Block Committee and Steering Committee Meetings

SEPTEMBER 2025

- Hawai'i State Early Learning Board presentation
- Hawai'i Island Early Childhood Conference session
- County Coordinator Focus Group (virtual)

OCTOBER 2025

Final Building Block Committee and Steering Committee Meetings

NOVEMBER 2025

- Compilation of data and draft of State Plan by WestEd
- Building Block Committees and Steering Committee review State Plan draft

DECEMBER 2025

Delivery of 2025–2030 Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan to EOEL

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



The 2025–2030 Hawai‘i Early Childhood State Plan would not be possible without the collaborative efforts and contributions of many from across the state. We extend appreciation to the Hawai‘i PDG B-5 Support Team for initiating this work, as well as to those who laid the groundwork in the 2019–2024 State Plan. We are grateful to the parents, caregivers, providers, interest holders, and elected officials who attended the Community Engagement Forum to voice their hopes and vision for our ‘ohana and keiki. The thoughtful contributions of community members from across Hawai‘i further strengthened the development and evolution of the Goals and Action Priorities contained within this State Plan. Mahalo!

Revision Process

The 2025–2030 Hawai‘i Early Childhood State Plan’s revision process was guided by a balanced structure composed of the State Plan Steering Committee and the Building Block Committees. BBC members brought hands-on experience and extensive knowledge of local challenges, needs, and system intricacies to develop the Goals and Action Priorities. The Steering Committee, composed of statewide leaders with system-level perspectives, provided guidance and ensured cohesion across the State Plan. This collaborative structure combined local insight with statewide vision, ensuring that the State Plan is both practical and strategically aligned.

Steering Committee

The State Plan Steering Committee provided strategic oversight and cross-sector guidance for Hawai'i's Early Childhood State Plan. Consisting of leaders from state agencies, community organizations, and early childhood initiatives, the Steering Committee ensured that the State Plan's Goals and Action Priorities aligned with broader statewide priorities and policy frameworks. Its members offered systems-level expertise, connecting the work of individual Building Block Committees to the larger early childhood system. The Steering Committee also championed collaboration across sectors, identified opportunities for partnership and resource alignment, and ensured that progress toward shared goals was monitored and supported. By maintaining a focus on both strategy and accountability, the Steering Committee helped ensure that the State Plan is actionable, cohesive, and responsive to the needs of Hawai'i's keiki and 'ohana. Drawing on its systems-wide perspective, the Steering Committee also led the development of the Goals and Action Priorities for Building Block 6: Early Childhood Systems.

Steering Committee Members

Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, **Executive Office on Early Learning**

Lauren Breckenridge Padesky, PhD, for Superintendent Hayashi,
Department of Education

Deanna D'Olier, **Hawai'i Association of Independent Schools**

Deanne Goya, for Director Noh, **Hawai'i State Public Charter
School Commission**

Shelli Kim, for Jack Wong, CEO, **Kamehameha Schools**

Dayna Luka, for Director Yamane, **Department of Human Services**

Malia Maier, for Justina Acevedo-Cross, **Hawai'i Community Foundation**

Nathan Murata, PhD, for President Hensel, **University of Hawai'i**

Ben Naki, **Hawai'i Head Start Association**

Keiko Nitta, for Director Fink, **Department of Health**

Elaine Yamashita, **Hawai'i State Early Learning Board**

Building Block Committees

The Building Block Committees served as the core content and decision-making bodies for each focus area within the State Plan. Composed of individuals with direct experience in their respective sectors—such as providers, program leaders, community members, and ‘ohana—these committees met monthly to develop Goals, define Action Priorities, and identify annual progress data for their Building Blocks.

Their work ensured that the State Plan reflects real-world expertise, is grounded in practical implementation, and remains responsive to evolving community needs. The Building Block Committees operated with guidance from the Steering Committee but retained primary responsibility for shaping the content and priorities of their areas, fostering a sense of ownership, collaboration, and accountability across Hawai‘i’s early childhood system.

Building Block 1 Committee Members

Momi Akana, **Keiki o ka ‘Āina**

Mikako Deguchi, **Executive Office on Early Learning**

Jennifer Elia, **Early Childhood Action Strategy**

Dr. Kenneth Fink, **Department of Health**

Dr. Ruben Frescas, **Department of Health**

Dr. Sulma Ghandi, **Hawai‘i State Early Learning Board**

Dr. Lindsey Heathcock, **Hawai‘i State Early Learning Board**

Erin Henderson-Lacerdo, **Association for Infant Mental Health in Hawai‘i**

Shawn Malia Kana‘iaupuni, **Partners in Development Foundation**

Joanna Kwon, **Wai‘anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center**

Malia Maier, **Hawai‘i Community Foundation**

Deb Marois, **Ho‘oikaika Partnership**

Dale Matsumoto-Oi, **Department of Health**

Scott Morishige, **Department of Human Services**

Melanie Murakami, **Department of Health**

Dr. Jeffrey Okamoto, **Hawai‘i Chapter of the American Academy
of Pediatrics**

Dr. Matt Shim, **Department of Health**

Christina Simmons, **Early Childhood Action Strategy**

Cecilia Sakata, **Hawai‘i Island Community Health Center**

Sharon Thomas, **Department of Human Services**

Eden Watabayashi, **Department of Health**

Building Block 2 Committee Members

Brian Alston, **State of Hawai'i Commission on Fatherhood**

Kau'i Burgess, **Hawai'i State Early Learning Board**

Ann Davis, **Family Hui Hawai'i**

Chad Domingo, **Department of Education—Community Children's Council**

Kellie Furtado, **Maui Family Support Services**

Ka'iulani Galon, **Department of Health**

Allison Hanley, **Executive Office on Early Learning**

Disa Hauge, **Department of Education**

Nicole Higa, **PATCH Hawai'i**

Leilani Kailiawa, **Hawai'i Children's Action Network 'Ohana Leadership**

Katherine Korenaga, **Department of Human Services**

Michelle Mahuka, **Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture**

Kathlina Martin, **Pacific Resources for Education and Learning**

Kathleen O'Dell, PhD, **Hawai'i 'Ohana Support Network**

Christopher Padesky, PhD, **Chaminade University**

Rosie Rowe, **Leadership in Disabilities & Achievement of Hawai'i**

Steven Vannatta, **Department of Education—Community Children's Council**

Building Block 3 Committee Members

Aulia Austin, **Department of Education—Office of Hawaiian Education**

Heather Barnhill, **Executive Office on Early Learning**

Lauren Breckenridge Padesky, PhD, **Department of Education**

Verna Chinen, **Department of Education—Exceptional Support Branch**

Deanne Goya, **Hawai'i State Public Charter School Commission**

'Ānela Iwane, **Department of Education—Office of Hawaiian Education**

Rowena Kamo, **University of Hawai'i**

Coleen Momohara, **University of Hawai'i**

Bobbi-Jo Moniz-Tadeo, **University of Hawai'i**

Eva Moravcik, **University of Hawai'i**

Kim Pierce, **Kalamapi'i PLAY School**

Ephraim Schwab, EdD, **Executive Office on Early Learning**

Cherilyn Shiinoki, **Family Hui Hawai'i**

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Building Block 4 Committee Members

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GLOSSARY

Building Blocks: The foundational focus areas of Hawai‘i’s early childhood system outlined in the 2025–2030 State Plan. Carried over from the 2019–2024 State Plan and refined by the Building Block Committees, the Building Blocks were adjusted to reflect current priorities and include the addition of a new Building Block 6. Together, they represent the essential components—health, wellness, and early care and learning—needed to support the holistic development and well-being of Hawai‘i’s keiki and ‘ohana.

Early Care and Learning: Programs and services that support the development, health, and learning of keiki from birth through age 5, including child care, preschool, and ‘ohana support initiatives.

Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS): A centralized system that collects, links, and analyzes data across early childhood programs, agencies, and services to inform policy, practice, and decision-making.

Early Childhood System: The coordinated network of programs, services, policies, and partnerships that work together to support the healthy development, learning, and well-being of keiki from birth through age 8 and ‘ohana. Hawai‘i’s early childhood system includes sectors such as health, mental health, ‘ohana support, early care and learning, and special education, all aligned to ensure that every keiki has equitable opportunities to thrive.

Family Councils: School and community groups of ‘ohana, caregivers, and local stakeholders that advise, guide, and inform policies and programs affecting keiki and ‘ohana, ensuring culturally responsive decision-making.

Hawai‘i Early Learning and Development Standards (HELDS): HELDS is a set of research-based standards that outline developmental expectations for children from birth to kindergarten entry. While HELDS currently focuses on English-medium education, Hawai‘i recognizes both English and ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i as official languages. The “Hawai‘i Early Learning and Development Standards,” referenced in Goal 3A, Action Priority 3, are intended to support the development of basic Hawaiian language (‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i) knowledge for all keiki.

Hawaiian Culture, Language, and Values: The traditions, language (‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i), customs, and principles (e.g., aloha, mālama, kuleana) that guide social interactions, learning, and community practices in Hawai‘i.

Keiki With Disabilities or Delays: Keiki identified as having physical, cognitive, developmental, behavioral, or social–emotional conditions that require specialized support or intervention to promote optimal growth and learning.

Kindergarten Transition: The process and supports that help keiki and ‘ohana move successfully from home and early care and learning programs into kindergarten, ensuring readiness and continuity of development and learning.

Medical Home: A continuous, accessible, and coordinated source of primary healthcare that ensures keiki receive preventive, acute, and specialty services in a supportive setting.

Mixed-Delivery System: A coordinated network of early childhood programs and services that includes a variety of providers—such as public, private, nonprofit, and ‘ohana-based settings—offering care and education for young keiki. A mixed-delivery system leverages the strengths of different settings to ensure families have access to high-quality, affordable, and culturally responsive options that meet their diverse needs.

Place-Based: Strategies, programs, or initiatives that are designed to meet the unique needs of specific communities or geographic areas, leveraging local strengths, culture, and resources.

Publicly Funded Classrooms: Classrooms that receive public funding, encompassing Head Start, charter schools, special education preschool, and EOEL programs.

Screening: The systematic process of assessing the health, development, and social–emotional well-being of keiki to identify needs early, guide interventions, and connect ‘ohana with appropriate services.

Underserved Populations: In this context, the term refers to keiki with special health needs, keiki with disabilities and delays, English Learners, keiki in foster care, keiki experiencing unstable housing, and those living in rural communities.


Workforce: The collective group of professionals who support the learning, development, and well-being of Hawai‘i’s keiki and ‘ohana across early childhood sectors. This includes educators, caregivers, program administrators, health and mental health providers, family support professionals, and other specialists.

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