

Priorities

The Action Strategy network and partners devoted attention in 2021 to the broad set of challenges to early childhood development, health, safety and learning brought on by the coronavirus pandemic. In parallel, ECAS network partners took advantage of opportunities to shore up the foundations of - and improve access to - the systems that support young children.

1. Sustain and Strengthen Child Care and Early Learning

- * Expanded policy advocacy efforts in support of our child care infrastructure and system investments. ECAS ARPA funding proposals included suggestions for ways to support the maintenance and expansion of the child care industry, focused on expanding the workforce, strengthening provider quality measures, and increasing the share of families able to access subsidies
- * Launched a quarterly ECAS Child Care Provider Data Dashboard reviewing provider capacity across the state each quarter
- * With Windward Community College and early care and learning partners, launched a family childcare educational pathway to grow and support the family child care sector
- * Launched Ka 'Upena, a "Shared Services" pilot project in conjunction with PATCH, allowing family child care providers to pool their shared infrastructure needs and spend more time focused on the provision of child care

2. Prevent Family Violence and Protect Early Childhood Mental Health

- * ECAS team 2 and partners launched the *NurtureDaily* website providing vital resources to prevent family violence
- * Piloted the *Aloha at Home* family toolkit initiative, designed to encourage positive family interaction and share information on available resources

3. Support Safe Prenatal, Internatal, and Postnatal Care and Delivery

- * Expanded the Midwifery Integration Home Visitation Program (MI-Home), bringing perinatal care to the most vulnerable families
- * Funded and distributed telemedicine and prenatal care equipment to families that would otherwise lack access
- * Expanded the NEST breastfeeding text support system providing access to peer parent educators and clinical specialists through a secure text messaging platform

4. Reach the Hardest to Reach Families

Led by the ECAS CHAT (the Child Homelessness Action Team)

- * Partnered with Chef Hui to deliver meals to shelters that serve houseless youth
- * Convened listening sessions to identify ways to increase the number of homeless young children who attend quality childcare and preschool statewide
- * Working with the HI-DOE homeless liaisons and UH Center on the Family, created an early childhood family needs assessment to support homeless families with preschool-age children

The Early Learning Act (046) - Act 46 establishes a statutory commitment to providing access to early learning opportunities for all 3 and 4-year-olds in Hawai'i. Alongside many partners in the early childhood community, ECAS is working to support implementation of Act 046.

The Commit to Keiki Initiative elevates the wellbeing of young children in Hawai'i's electoral politics.

- * Conducted statewide and county-specific polls in the midst of the pandemic indicating that sizable majorities of voters want to protect and expand programs that support keiki
- * Hosted Zoom-side conversations with mayoral candidates about their priorities for young children and discussed how candidates would elevate those priorities if elected. The initiative has expanded to focus on both the mayoral and gubernatorial campaigns
- * Worked with the offices of Honolulu and Hawai'i County mayors to build strategic agendas, develop new staff positions, and prioritize efforts to support the wellbeing of young children and their families with ARPA funds

The Early Childhood Funders' Hui continues to focus on relief, recovery and sustainability efforts while pursuing positive change in the systems that support young children and their families. The collective effort and generosity of participants have proven critical to the private philanthropic response to the COVID-19 crisis.

- * Since 2020, this funders collaborative has committed close to \$2M to sustain related relief and recovery efforts
- * *Funders' Hui* participants include: Aloha United Way, Castle Foundation, Consuelo Foundation, Hau'oli Mau Loa Foundation, Hawaii Community Foundation, Hayashi Foundation, HMSA Foundation, Kamehameha Schools, Lili'uokalani Trust, Menehune Foundation, Samuel N. and Mary Castle Foundation, the Stupski Foundation, The Omidyar Group, and the Weinberg Foundation

Data Development – The pandemic amplified calls for targeted, real-time data on needs and effective interventions. In response, ECAS and partners:

- * Developed a dashboard to track capacity of the child care industry in Hawai'i
- * Prototyped early childhood data dashboards reflecting early childhood wellbeing across health, safety and learning
- * Employed agile, user-focused project implementation and evaluation designs
- * Tracked key projects to understand where efforts have led to system improvements
- * Partnered with Kamehameha Schools to support child care providers and families with young children in the `Ewa region of O`ahu

Align and Expand Long-Term Planning Efforts

- * ECAS partners and allies supported the development of the *Infant Early Childhood Behavioral Health* plan
- * Contributed to statewide collaborative initiatives including the *Hawai'i State Early Childhood* plan, the *Preschool Development Grant Birth-5* implementation plan and the Hawaii statewide child abuse and neglect prevention framework

1

Team 1- Healthy & Welcomed Births

(Hawai'i Maternal and Infant Health Collaborative)

- * Designed, secured funding, and began implementation of a demonstration project for peer support for perinatal substance using women
- * Coordinated One Key Question trainings, worked to reduce barriers to access to birth control, including efforts to create appropriate reimbursement strategies for long acting birth control
- * Piloted a breastfeeding toolkit, created information and outreach materials to expand awareness of breastfeeding benefits and supports, secured funding and staff to reduce disparities in breastfeeding
- * Expanded efforts to promote maternal health and reduce preterm birth

2

Team 2- Safe & Nurturing Families

- * Developed Business plan for Aloha at Home/Nurture Daily implementation and sustainability
- * Completed NurtureDaily.org website for families and providers working to support safe and nurturing families, including educational and resource information and training materials
- * Prototyped Aloha at Home direct-to-families activity boxes supporting positive family interactions and relationships

Team 3- On-track Health & Development

- * Piloted LENA START and SP interventions with families with young children with hearing concerns
- * Partnered with Family Hui Hawaii and NEST for families to promote and expand two-way text messaging support for families
- * Designed an action/implementation plan for the ECE Wellness Guidelines focused on outreach and marketing, and Technical Assistance/Professional Development objectives
- * Supported the development of the *Infant Early Childhood Behavioral Health Plan*
- * Partnered to provide computers and Internet access to 100 families

3

Team 4- Equitable Access to Programs & Services

- * Accelerated efforts to reach homeless children and connect them to early learning opportunities
- * Supported the HIDEO Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program in obtaining ideas on how to use American Rescue Plan (ARP) HCY funds to connect more birth to five keiki to early childhood programs and settings
- * Initiated an early childhood, county-level data collection project, secured funding and hired a contractor
- * Piloted *Family Child Care Pathways* and *Ka'Upena Shared Services* models to expand the supply of family child care
- * With Under My Umbrella (UMU) and Chef Hui, distributed meals to families at shelters on Oahu as part of a campaign to connect families with resources in their communities
- * Engaged in advocacy work around capacity building and access to services including CARES relief funding, ARPA stabilization grants, CCDBG ARPA funding, and the CCDF state plan

4

5

Team 5- High-quality Early Learning Programs

- * Created surveys to gather pre-service, in-service & recruitment/retention information across the early childhood continuum
- * Defined early childhood professions and their alignment with national standards
- * Identified all Hawai'i based Early Intervention - Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) preparation programs
- * Refined logic models and identified key metrics for the development of a comprehensive system of personnel development
- * Drafted a CSPD website

Team 6- Successful Early Childhood Transitions

- * *Words Matter / LENA* pivoted to virtual engagement to deliver early language and literacy development support to families during the pandemic
- * 236 families on O`ahu and Maui have participated in *Words Matter / LENA* interventions, strengthening early childhood language and literacy practices
- * Partners secured new funding
- * Developed an early literacy collaborative to target strong early language and literacy interventions to communities of greatest need, leading to the development of a pipeline for early reading, kindergarten readiness and early academic achievement

6