The detrimental effects of the high cost of living, low wages and scarcity of affordable housing in Hawaii are magnified for our low-income families and their children. Fourteen percent of our children live in poverty, about half of our 3- and 4-year olds are not attending preschool and one-third of our homeless population are children.

Collaboration on a Children’s Policy Agenda serves as a starting point to ignite awareness of, bring together support for and amplify the advocacy for pro-children policy changes in our state.

During the convening of the Children’s Policy Agenda in October, 2016 and the subsequent online input more than 50 organizations and individuals came forward to support a number of issues affecting children and their families in our state. For the purpose of organization, we aggregated related issues and grouped these under the following focus categories:

- Economic Security and Equity for Children
- Family Strengthening
- Child Safety and Welfare
- Health and Wellness
- Education

The 2017 Hawaii Children’s Policy Agenda supports children by:

- Advocating for Hawaii’s children, families and communities
- Improving the future by focusing on children
- Promoting public policy changes and shared investment that benefits economic security, health and education for our children

Partners in the 2017 Children’s Policy Agenda are invaluable advocates who have dedicated themselves to improving the future for Hawaii’s children. Hawaii Children’s Action Network, respects the diversity of expertise, perspectives, and priorities within this community of advocates and is honored to advance the work of our peers in children’s advocacy. Hawaii Children’s Action Network supports all of the items within the Children’s Policy Agenda.
Economic security and equity: all children live in families that can provide for their needs and invest in their future

**Fact:**
- 29% of Hawaii’s children live BELOW 200% of the poverty line
- 41% or 125,000 children live in households with a high housing cost burden
- Hawaii ranks 46th in the country for children living in households with a high housing cost burden
- 43% of Hawaii state residents are renters
- At the current minimum wage, a worker would have to work 161 hours a week to afford rent on a 2 bedroom apartment in Hawaii at the fair market rent price

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

- Increase funding for public housing, expand access to and affordability of rental housing; increase rental housing stock.
  - **Lead:** Hawaii Construction Alliance

**AFFORDABLE FOOD**

- Renew low-income tax credit for General Excise Tax on food purchases.
  - **Lead:** Hawaii Appleseed

Convened by Hawaii Children’s Action Network
» Increase participation of children from low-income families in the free and reduced breakfast, lunch and summer food programs.

**Lead:** Hawaii Appleseed  

**LOW INCOME TAX CREDITS**

» Increase the low-income renter tax credit. The tax credit is presently $50 and has not increased since 1989.

**Lead:** Hawaii Appleseed  

» Create a State earned-income tax credit that is 10% of the federal (EITC).

**Lead:** Hawaii Appleseed  

**RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE**

» Increase the minimum wage to $15 by 2023.

**Lead:** Hawaii Appleseed  

**PAID FAMILY LEAVE**

» Establish a Paid Family Leave policy for all workers.

**Lead:** Paid Family Leave Coalition  

**HOME VISITING**

» Maintain an appropriation of at least $3 million in the State Budget for the Department of Health-Home Visiting program.

**Lead:** Hawaii Home Visiting Network  
Convened by Hawaii Children’s Action Network

2017 HAWAII CHILDREN’S POLICY AGENDA


**Health and wellness:** all children are born healthy, grow healthy and have access to affordable, comprehensive, and high-quality care

**Fact:**
- Hawaii ranks 22nd in the country with 8% of babies at low-birth weight
- 49% of Hawaii’s children receive free or reduced school lunch
- 49,000 Hawaii children live in households that are food insecure

**Child safety and welfare:** all children are safe in their homes and communities from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence

**Fact:**
- There are 1,221 children in foster care
- 39,700 (13%) children in unsafe communities
- 60,800 (20%) children have experienced two or more adverse experiences

**RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH**

» Maintain appropriation for services for unaccompanied runaway and homeless youth-outreach, shelter, family strengthening, and transitional living.

**Lead:** Hawaii Youth Services Network


**FOSTER CHILDREN**

» Seek improvement to existing rights of foster children and establish a grievance policy when their rights are violated.

**Lead:** EPIC Ohana

**Supporter:** Imua Family Services, Waiokela Church

**CHILD DEATH/MATERNAL MORTALITY REVIEW**

» Maintain $150,000 appropriation in the State Budget for the Department of Health, Child Death Review and Maternal Mortality Review.

**Lead:** Hawaii Maternal & Infant Health Collaborative


**MENTAL/BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

» Licensing of School Psychologists.

**Lead:** Hawaii Association of School Psychologists


» Adjust reimbursement rates for mental health providers contracted by Department of Health-Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division and support mental health/behavioral health services for youth that are
both special education and specifically now special education eligible.

**Lead:** Parents and Children Together  

**VISION AND HEARING SCREENING**

**» Establish a full time staff position within the Department of Health to oversee vision and hearing screenings in the Department of Education schools and work with existing community stakeholders to execute screenings.**

**Lead:** Project Vision Hawaii  

**» Secure an appropriation in the State Budget for vision and hearing screening in the Department of Education elementary schools.**

**Lead:** Project Vision Hawaii  

**EARLY INTERVENTION**

**» Secure an appropriation in the State Budget for the development of a data system for the Early Intervention Section of the Hawaii Department of Health.**

**Lead:** Hawaii Early Intervention Coordinating Council  

**» Pay parity – Secure an appropriation in the State Budget to convert state and purchase of service positions in the Early Intervention Section of Department of Health to be commensurate with similar level positions in other state departments.**

**Lead:** Hawaii Early Intervention Coordinating Council  

**SEX TRAFFICKING**

**» Expand intervention services statewide to eliminate sex trafficking.**

**Lead:** Parents and Children Together  

**SEXUAL ABUSE**

**» Extend or eliminate civil case statute of limitations for children of sexual abuse.**

**Lead:** Sexual Abuse Treatment Center  

**» Insurance coverage for management of complex sexual assault/abuse, mental and behavioral health patients.**

**Lead:** Sexual Abuse Treatment Center  

Convened by Hawaii Children’s Action Network
2017 HAWAII CHILDREN’S POLICY AGENDA

>> Request the formation of a task force concerning a Sexual Abuse Prevention Education Program in the Department of Education.

Lead: Sexual Abuse Treatment Center

Tobacco Prevention

>> Restrict online sales of tobacco products (including electronic smoking devices).

Lead: Hawaii Public Health Institute – Coalition for Tobacco Free Hawaii

SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGES

>> Acquire warning labels on sugar-sweetened beverages, products and advertisement.

Lead: Hawaii Public Health Institute – Obesity Prevention Task Force

Finding: all children have access to high quality child care, early learning and education to reach their academic potential

Fact:
- 49% of 3 and 4 year olds are NOT in preschool
- Hawaii ranks 45th in the country with 71% of 4th graders BELOW proficient in reading
- 74% of Hawaii 8th graders are below reading achievement levels

PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND CHARTER SCHOOLS

>> Establish a new dedicated funding source to adequately support our public schools above their current funding level.

Lead: Hawaii State Teachers Association
Expand use of Title 1 monies to fund Pre-Kindergarten and other Early Learning programs in Department of Education public schools and charter schools.

**Lead:** Early Learning Advisory Board  
**Supporter:** Hawaii Association of School Psychologists, Waiokela Church Preschool, Learning Disabilities Association of Hawaii, PATCH, Keiki O Ka Aina, Maui Family Support Services-Early Head Start

Expand the Pre-Kindergarten program in the Department of Education for 4 year olds and provide the Executive Office on Early Learning with additional resources for staff and professional development.

**Lead:** Early Learning Advisory Board  

Secure funding for Native Hawaiian education in early learning programs in Department of Education public and charter schools.

**Lead:** Kamehameha Schools  

Secure appropriation in state budget for facilities at public charter schools.

**Lead:** Hawaii Charter School Network  

Increase Preschool Open Door subsidies funding from the current $10 million and expand the program to younger children.

**Lead:** HE‘E Coalition  

Increase Childcare Connections subsidy to enable low income families to pay less out of pocket.

**Lead:** Childcare Business Coalition of Hawaii  

Visit us on the web: [www.hawaii-can.org](http://www.hawaii-can.org)
FUTURE POLICY IDEAS FOR HAWAII’S KIDS

ECONOMIC SECURITY AND EQUITY
• Modify tax brackets to reduce taxes on low income families

FAMILY STRENGTHENING
• Establish new funding for Family Child Interaction Learning programs
• Increase funding and access to Home Visiting programs

CHILD WELFARE & SAFETY
• Ensure employment non-retaliation for reports of child abuse or neglect
• Safe and sick leave for families

HEALTH & WELLNESS
• Funding for a staff position for Early Childhood Health Coordination in Department of Health
• Funding for Department of Health to implement “one key question.”
• For non-hospital births, improve access to birth certificates
• Funding for vision and hearing screening in all elementary schools
• Programs for young children needing behavioral health services
• Parity of service array between insurers for behavioral and mental health services
• Lactation services reimbursement
• Increase the number of nurses within schools

EDUCATION
• Re-visit constitutional amendment for state support of non-profit education/childcare
• Funding for pre-kindergarten programs in public charter schools
• Increase per pupil funding for public charter schools
• Establish new funding streams for high quality early learning programs/activities
• Expand vocational education programs in Department of Education middle and high schools
• Establish a kindergarten entry assessment

EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM
• Establish new state funds for a comprehensive early childhood longitudinal child data system
Participants

The Hawaii Children’s Policy Agenda reflects the input of 48 organizations and many individuals who are committed to improving the lives of Hawaii’s children by promoting public policy changes that benefit their health, safety, education and economic security. The collaboration on this agenda is the starting point to ignite awareness with policy makers of the changes in policies and investments necessary to make Hawaii a great place to be a child. Given the number of issues identified in this agenda, participants support one or more of the priorities listed.

Aloha United Way • American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Hawaii • Autism Society of Hawaii • Center on the Family • Chamber of Commerce Hawaii • Child & Family Service • Childcare Business Coalition of Hawaii • Coalition for Children with Special Needs • Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii • Early Learning Advisory Board • EPIC Ohana • Hawaii Appleseed • Hawaii Association of School Psychologists • Hawaii Charter School Network • Hawaii Construction Alliance • Hawaii Early Intervention Coordinating Council • Hawaii Family Support Institute • Hawaii Home Visiting Network • Hawaii Maternal and Infant Health Collaborative • Hawaii Public Charter School Network • Hawaii Public Health Institute - Coalition for a Tobacco Free Hawaii • Hawaii Public Health Institute - Obesity Prevention Task Force • Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women • Hawaii State Teachers Association • Hawaii Youth Services Network • Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Hawaii • HE’E Coalition • Hui Ola Pono - UH Manoa Public Health Club • Imua Family Services • INPEACE • Kamehameha Schools • Keiki O Ka Aina • Learning Disabilities Association of Hawaii • Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc. • Maui Family Support Services - Early Head Start • Maui Youth and Family Services • Paid Family Leave Coalition • Parents and Children Together • Parents for Public Schools of Hawaii • Partners in Care • PATCH • Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii • Project Vision Hawaii • Seagull Schools • Sexual Abuse Treatment Center • Waianae Coast Early Childhood Services • Waiokela Church Preschool • YWCA Oahu

Hawaii Children’s Action Network (HCAN) is committed to improving lives of Hawaii’s children. Our mission is to build a unified voice educating and advocating for Hawaii’s children. We are honored to be the convener and coordinator of the pro-child organizations and coalitions who participated in this agenda.