Child care professionals from across Hawaiʻi urge Governor to protect child care industry

HONOLULU, March 23, 2020 — Child care professionals from across the state urged Governor David Ige to take immediate action to ensure essential workers can access child care and protect the state’s struggling child care industry.

“Child care is critical to getting through the COVID-19 crisis and will be critical to our state’s economic recovery,” said Deborah Zysman, Executive Director of Hawaiʻi Children’s Action Network. “We must act now to ensure this industry has what it needs to survive.”

“States across the nation are getting ahead of the impending childcare crises and there are multiple resources Hawaiʻi state officials can use as guides,” said Kerrie Urosevich, Lead, Network Design and Innovation, at Early Childhood Action Strategy. “According to the Yale School of Medicine, 65,038 children of essential workers birth to 11 need care in Hawaiʻi. We need immediate and long-term solutions to ensure the health and safety of our keiki, financial support for essential workers and the childcare industry that supports them.”

If child care providers start closing, the entire economy will be affected. Losing just 30% of available child care slots would result in losing approximately 1,300 jobs. Hawaiʻi was already experiencing a severe child care shortage; the state now stands to lose a significant share of its current capacity.

The child care community’s recommendations include:

- Ensuring child care for essential workers.
- Continuing federal funding for child care providers, even if children don’t attend due to COVID-19.
- Offseting costs of child care for families impacted by COVID-19 and for essential workers.
- Creating a state grant program to ensure child care facilities can continue running for the next 6 months.
● Allowing temporary waivers so child care providers serving essential workers can increase capacity.
● Ensuring providers have needed sanitation equipment and supplies to operate safely.
● Allocating state and local funds for child care providers impacted by COVID-19.

Download the full letter to the Governor, list of 25 signatures, and logos at https://www.hawaii-can.org/covid19childcare.

HCAN Executive Director Deborah Zysman and ECAS Lead Network Design and Innovation Kerrie Urosevich are available for press interviews.

About Hawai‘i Children’s Action Network (HCAN): HCAN is a nonprofit creating a unified voice for Hawai‘i’s children. Its grassroots movement strives to ensure that all keiki are safe, healthy, and ready to learn. For more information, visit http://www.hawaii-can.org.

About Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS): ECAS is a statewide public-private collaborative designed to improve the system of care for Hawai‘i’s youngest children and their families. For more information, visit https://hawaiiactionstrategy.org/.