

Keiki Caucus Meeting Notes Friday, November 17, 2006

The Keiki Caucus meeting was convened in room 229 at the Capitol on Friday, November 17, 2006 at 11:30 am. Sen. Suzanne Chun Oakland and Dennis Arakaki presided. Representatives of public and private agencies and organizations which provide services, training of providers and advocacy for the needs of children were in attendance.

Juliet Kandel, Client Outreach Representative for the Committee for Children, made the first presentation. **Committee for Children developed the *Second Step* program** which seeks to "improve children's lives by providing research-based violence prevention, anti-bullying, child abuse prevention, and emergent literacy programs for schools, families and communities". The curricula are sold to schools and organizations and the income is used for further development of the program.

Social and emotional learning are viewed as essential in order for academic learning to take place. These skills include empathy, impulse control, problem solving, and anger management. Nowadays children in large numbers arrive at kindergarten without these skills. Learning the skills promotes harmony in the classroom so that academic learning may take place. This harmony actually allows the teacher more time for academic teaching. The programs are evidence-based as to their effectiveness and are widely used in preschools, elementary and middle schools across the nation. There is a curriculum for parents. In Hawaii the programs are used in some schools and extensively by the Head Start schools.

Juliet Kandel may be reached by email at jkandel@cfchildren.org. The website is www.cfchildren.org for further information.

Early Childhood Education

Liz Chun, Director of Good Beginnings Alliance, presented an up-date on the development of quality early education. The 2006 Legislature established an Early Learning Educational Task Force which is charged with (1) developing a five-year plan for a comprehensive early learning system, (2) develop a pathway to maximize public and private resources and (3) develop a framework for professional competency and compensation. She emphasized that the mandate is for children zero to five, not just preschool-aged children. The reality is that the Legislature is looking almost exclusively at the needs of four year olds. It is expected that eventually they will get to zero to three. We want to be there when they do. The Task Force will make it's report before the next session. The bills to be proposed will come out of this report.

Liz Chun may be reached by phone at 531-5502 and by email at lchun@goodbeginnings.org.

Good Beginnings website is: www.goodbeginnings.org

Foster Children Bill of Rights

Blake Lanoza and Kathy Bowles are foster children who advocate for more recognition of the rights of children in foster care. Rights denied include food, privacy, religious freedom and more. An attempt to establish a Bill of Rights at the 2006 Session was made but failed. The Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition plans to try again in 2007. While some foster parents do a superb job it is recognized that some do not. The keiki Caucus suggested that clarifying the responsibilities of foster parents, foster children and the social worker might be helpful to supplement the request for a bill of rights. More work needs to be done on this issue.

The Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition may be contacted through Sen. Chun Oakland's office,

phone: 586-6130.

Medical Care for Emancipated Minors

Jeff Kaplan, Director of the Youth Outreach Project at Waikiki Health Center, told us of the situation of youth who are living outside their parental or guardian's home, "on their own". These children can not legally sign for medical care when they need it. The result is that common conditions such as urinary tract infection or otitis media go untreated until serious complications develop. In the 2006 session a bill was passed by the Legislature which would allow such children to sign for "primary care". However it was vetoed by the Governor. These children fall into the "emancipated children" group, Apparently there is a web of conflicting laws relating to such children.

From a medical point of view, it would seem emancipated children should be able sign for what ever medical care they need if they are, in fact, "divorced" from their parents and there is no designated guardian. From our point of view this also seems to be an issue in need of further study. Is there an AAP policy on medical care for emancipated children? Need to look it up.

Jeff Kaplan can be reached at jkaplan@waikikihc.org, phone, 922-4787.

Schedule for the Development of the Keiki Caucus Legislative Package

Sen. Chun Oakland's office has begun to write bills on issues for the 2007 session. At the next Keiki Caucus meeting on December 5th further work will be done. At this session Leo Parlin and Louise Iwaishi are scheduled to make a presentation relating to autism. It is hoped that legislation will come out of this for the Keiki Caucus package which the HAAP can support.

The package will be presented and finalized at the January 9, 2007 Keiki Caucus meeting.