

Keiki Caucus Meeting Notes  
Tuesday, December 5, 2006

The Keiki Caucus meeting was convened in room 229 at the Capitol on Tuesday, December 5, 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.

**Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention/Education Proposal.** Allison Cordoni, CNP, from the child abuse and neglect staff at KMCWC, representing the Shaken Baby Alliance, presented the *Never Shake a Keiki Prevention Program* which is being implemented state wide. A 12 minute video and additional educational materials are given to families when the new baby is born. The dangers of shaking and alternative ways of dealing with persistent crying episodes are shown. Buffalo, New York, has such a program which has reduced the incidence of baby shaking syndrome by 47%. Hospitals are required to offer such programs in order to retain their accreditation. Nine states have passed laws making a legal mandate for programs to be offered. The Shaken Baby Alliance (SBA) is suggesting that such a law be passed in Hawaii. In the discussion the question was raised as to whether or not such a law is required here if the program is being expanded throughout the state voluntarily. SBA should gather together the stake-holders in the project to collaborate on a bill and provide advocacy if it is decided to go forward with legislation.

**Homelessness.** Sandy Myosin, director of Homeless Programs Branch of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA), reviewed the current situation of homeless individuals and families in Hawaii using the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Data on four categories was presented: unsheltered, sheltered, at-risk of losing shelter and self-sufficient. HPHA's goal is to move the homeless step by step to the self-sufficient level. Services and homeless programs are provided which are specific to each level. The numbers show a decrease in homelessness but a basic difficulty is lack of affordable rental units. The administration will be proposing bills in the 2007 session to increase affordable rental units as well as asking for support for the services and homeless programs. A relevant website for the Housing and Community Development Corporation of Hawaii (HCDCH) is: <[www.hcdch.hawaii.gov/housingprograms/homeless.html](http://www.hcdch.hawaii.gov/housingprograms/homeless.html)>

The results of a **needs survey of families with autistic children and providers of services to them** was presented by Leolinda Parlin, director of Family Voices of Hawaii, and Louise Iwaishi, MD., Pediatrics Department, JABSOM. The survey was conducted by students in the LEND program. The students interviewed families with children diagnosed with autism. Autism is now referred to as the Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). The spectrum includes children with extreme difficulty in communication, social responsiveness and behavioral problems ranging to children with relatively mild developmental delays in those areas. One of the needs reported was a standardization of what is appropriate for restraint of these children. They can be extremely active, wild and vocal. Parents are stressed to the max. There is a tendency for restraints to be extreme such as putting the child in a cage or in a closet without any light. There might be a need for legislation in this area. As the findings are reviewed, further legislative needs may be identified.

A most delightful presentation was made by Scotty Furushima, director of the **Kewalo Keiki Fishing Conservancy**. Young children meet at Kewalo Basin and are taught by experts how to tie the hook on the line, cast, reel in the fish, remove the hook, read the tag, put on a tag if one not present and throw the fish back in the water; conservancy. The children obviously enjoyed what they were doing and will grow up to be good conservators. It wasn't clear if legislation was needed but there was applause at the end of the presentation which very rarely happens in our Keiki Caucus meetings. We will give him unlimited support if legislation is proposed.

The final Keiki Caucus meeting prior to the 2007 Session will be held on Tuesday, January 9th, location and time to be announced. The Keiki Caucus package of bills will be finalized at that time.