Snapshot

The Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) brings together diverse stakeholders, including government and non-government organizations, to improve the system of care for Hawai‘i’s youngest keiki.

Ongoing Efforts
ECAS teams work collaboratively to determine and implement systems-level strategies to ensure:

1) More babies are born healthy
2) More children develop on-track
3) More children enter kindergarten school-ready
4) More children are proficient learners by third grade

ECAS also engages in policy and advocacy efforts to help support the goals developed across the network. Policy makers on all levels are beginning to understand the importance of investing in our youngest keiki. ECAS advocacy efforts use the collective knowledge and expertise across all sectors of Hawai‘i’s early learning system as the guiding compass to elevate our keiki and ‘ohana.

Cross-network Teams
Priorities that emerge from the network, but either require cross-team participation or additional coordination, are convened by the ECAS backbone team. The following teams are ongoing and coordinated by one of the ECAS backbone members, often in partnership with a Network partner and/or contractor.

Policy Team
The ECAS Policy Team supports policies that move ECAS teams’ outcomes. The Policy Team identifies primary, secondary and tertiary legislative priorities during each session to support.

Early Childhood Funders’ Hui
ECAS convenes an Early Childhood Funders’ Hui that meets quarterly to discuss priorities, share ideas and consider funding memos coming out of the ECAS Network.

State Integrated Infant and Early Childhood Behavioral Health Plan
All ECAS teams identified early childhood behavioral health as a top priority in their individual work. A team was formed to develop a State plan. The plan is anchored in the Department of Health Family Health Services Division and the team will stay together to assist with implementation.

Commit to Keiki Initiative
Hawai‘i ranks 7th from the bottom, nationally, in public spending on children. The Commit to Keiki Initiative is a non-partisan movement designed to ensure that young children and families are at the top of the agenda for elected leaders.

Family Childcare Pathways
To create additional academic and business pathways into child care, Windward Community College has developed a Family Childcare Essentials certificate program that will support students who plan to open their own businesses. This is an effort to expand the early care and learning workforce.

Ka ‘Upena Childcare Shared Services
Many child care providers are overwhelmed by the deluge of administrative needs required to stay in business. Providing centralized, shared services can relieve these administrative challenges and keep existing providers in business, as well as support potential providers with the start-up and early to ongoing stages of business operations. Ka ‘Upena is a two-year shared-services pilot, with a planned cohort of 15-20 family child care and small center-based providers.

Convener Team
The ECAS Convener Leadership Team meets monthly to share information across teams, troubleshoot where needed, discuss strategy and make decisions on the structure of the ECAS collaborative.

ECAS Teams
ECAS is organized into six cross-disciplinary teams, identified through the Executive Office on Early Learning’s strategic planning process in 2012. ECAS is modeled after Lisbeth Schorr’s Pathways to Third Grade Success framework. Each team identifies its goals, objectives, strategies and team members. Learn more about recent team highlights on the next page.

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ECAS Teams

Healthy & Welcomed Births

Team 1 is working to improve maternal and infant health outcomes, while advancing health equity and reproductive justice, by enhancing systems and support for Hawai’i’s families and communities.

Efforts include:
- Improve systems of care and support for perinatal women with substance use disorder
- Increase access to contraception and promote reproductive life planning
- Promote and support breastfeeding
- Support the implementation of recommendations to prevent preterm birth and maternal/infant mortality

Safe & Nurturing Families

Team 2 is working to support safe and nurturing families and improve the community-wide response to family violence.

Efforts include:
- Create an Aloha at Home/Nurture Daily framework that is: strength-based, skills-focused, based on validated national research, and is ready to be used by the network of practitioners
- Expand Aloha at Home direct-to-families toolkits to support safe and nurturing families
- Strengthen the system of support for families through the Aloha at Home platform
- Create a sustainable infrastructure for the effort

On-track Health & Development

Team 3 is working to ensure all children, especially those at-risk, are provided appropriate referrals and access to services to support their health and development.

Efforts include:
- Increase the number of children enrolled in a medical home
- Support child development screening and referral efforts
- Promote family engagement in child development
- Support the implementation of the Infant/Early Childhood Behavioral Health Plan
- Support the promotion and implementation of the ECE Wellness Guidelines in early care and education settings

Equitable Access To Programs & Services

Team 4 is working to increase access to early childhood programs and services throughout the state and to resolve program and service gaps community by community.

Efforts include:
- Support capacity-building in the early learning field, with a specific focus on access for infants and toddlers
- Increase access for children in unstable housing to early care and education programs and services
- Increase access to services for family engagement and parent leadership with a special focus on fatherhood/male-involvement initiatives
- Create a comprehensive, virtual and mobile, early childhood resource and referral service

High Quality Early Learning Programs

Team 5 is working to improve the quality of early childhood programs across all settings.

Efforts include:
- Support the development and implementation of an integrated and Comprehensive Early Childhood System of Personnel Development (CSPD) for personnel serving infants and young children with disabilities and their families

Successful Early Childhood Transitions

Team 6 is working with families and communities to strengthen and streamline transitions through early childhood into school.

Efforts include:
- Strengthen early childhood family literacy practices through Words Matter/LENA
- Target strong early language and literacy development efforts to communities of greatest need, leading to the development of a pipeline for early reading, kindergarten readiness and early academic achievement

ECAS also engages in SMALLIFY labs that allow our network to identify challenges and create innovative human-centered design solutions we can rapidly prototype and test to help our systems-level initiatives.