



Hawai'i KIDS COUNT

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CREATING OPPORTUNITY FOR FAMILIES: A TWO-GENERATION APPROACH

A new report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation calls for a comprehensive effort to lift children out of poverty. The KIDS COUNT policy report focuses on the importance of delivering high-quality early childhood care and education while also providing parents with access to job training, career paths and other tools that enable them to support their families. *Creating Opportunity for Families: A Two-Generation Approach* outlines how the public, nonprofit and private sectors should work together to reduce poverty among the nation's 10 million low-income families with young children. The recommendations propose integrating state and federal employment, education and child care programs for parents and children to create better opportunities for the entire family.

Well over a third of Hawai'i's young children are living in families that are low-income. Balancing work and family life is challenging for most families, but low-income families face a web of challenges at work, in finding quality care and education for their children and in making ends meet that often intensifies the day to day difficulties of raising a family. The Foundation's two-generation approach seeks to equip low-income families with the tools and skills to get on a path to opportunity and overcome some of the obstacles they face, such as inflexible and unpredictable jobs that do not offer high enough wages to adequately support a family; lack of access to high-quality and reliable early child care and education; and increased stress levels for parents and children.

About half of Hawai'i's low-income families with young children have parents that lack secure employment and in almost three-quarters, parents do not have a post-secondary degree. The data highlight the need to equip parents who have limited education with the skills that can help them earn an income that can adequately support a family. Equally as important is providing low-income families access to quality and reliable early



childhood care and education. Doing so not only sets a solid foundation for children and puts them on a path for better outcomes as they grow and develop; it is also critical for allowing the parents to participate in the types of education and job training programs that will foster family financial stability.

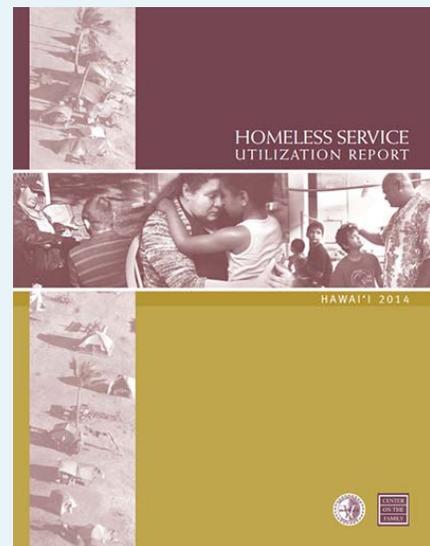
The report outlines three broad recommendations:

- **Create policies that equip parents and children with the income, tools and skills they need to succeed, individually and as a family.** State and federal governments should strengthen policies that expand job-training, education, and career opportunities; adopt policies that give parents more flexibility at work, such as paid time off; increase the Child Tax Credit for low-income parents of very young children; and expand the Earned Income Tax Credit to increase the income of noncustodial parents.
- **Put common sense into common practice by structuring public systems to respond to the realities facing today's families.** State and federal governments should promote collaboration and align policies and programs through interagency commissions and innovations funds. For example, child- and adult-focused state agencies should consolidate their data to look at the whole family.
- **Use existing child, adult and neighborhood programs and platforms to build evidence for practical pathways out of poverty for entire families.** Early childhood, K-12, home- visiting, job-training and supportive housing programs could partner with one another to connect parents with financial coaching, job-readiness assistance, education and other tools to achieve financial stability, while also ensuring their children have access to high-quality care and schooling.

HOMELESS SERVICE UTILIZATION REPORT: HAWAII 2014

The Center on the Family and the Homeless Programs Office of the Hawai'i State Department of Human Services have released the *Homeless Service Utilization Report: Hawai'i 2014*. Authored by Dr. Sarah Yuan, Hong Vo and Kristen Gleason, the report provides the most current data on the utilization patterns of homeless services in the state during the 2014 fiscal year. The information presented in this year's report departed from what was typically presented in previous years. In addition to providing information on the usage and outcomes of particular homeless service programs, the current report discusses new developments in the state's approach to homelessness and presents data on the overall patterns of inflow, outflow and return flow to the homeless service system in order to begin monitoring the effectiveness of these developments.

Data related to four types of programs that have been implemented in Hawai'i are presented in the report. In addition to usage information about Shelter and Outreach Programs, this year's report presents data related to two newer federally-funded programs. The first is the Rapid Rehousing Program, which uses a *housing-first* philosophy and is designed to provide financial and housing support services to homeless individuals and families. The goal of the Rapid Rehousing Program is to transition individuals and families as quickly as possible into permanent housing situations. Second, the report provides data related to the Homelessness Prevention Program. Unlike the other three programs, which target homeless populations, the Homelessness Prevention Program is targeted toward individuals and families who may have homes but are at risk of becoming homeless.



Child and family related data presented in the report include:

- Children under the age of 18 comprised a quarter of the population receiving homeless services.
- Of the 9,476 households served, 17% were family households with children.
- Families with children comprised about a quarter (26%) of households receiving Shelter Program services. Of households receiving Outreach Program and Rapid Rehousing services, 8% and 20%, respectively, were families with children.

The full report is available at:

http://uhfamily.hawaii.edu/publications/brochures/60c33_HomelessServiceUtilization2014.pdf.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTERISTICS AND CHILDREN'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Regular exercise is not only important for children's physical development, but also has positive psychological benefits. Additionally, children and youth who are physically active improve their chances of exercising regularly as adults and remaining fit. While the effects of home and school environments are heavily studied, the connection between the surrounding community and children's exercise is not completely understood. In an October research brief, Child Trends examined the relationship between physical exercise and neighborhood characteristics among children and youth using data from the 2011-2012 National Survey of Children's Health.

The report examines associations between the average number of days children ages 6 to 17 exercised in the past week and selected neighborhood characteristics (i.e., the presence of a playground or recreation center, whether it had dilapidated housing, and parents' perception of neighborhood safety). The presence of a neighborhood recreation center was associated with small increases in exercise frequency, but so was rundown housing. Neighborhood safety had mixed effects on exercise frequency, depending on whether or not children lived in a metropolitan area. Ultimately, the analysis showed only modest relationships between neighborhood environment and frequency of exercise.

The following are key findings for Hawai'i:

- According to parent reports, children ages 6 to 11 participated in moderate exercise an average of 5.2 days in the past week, higher than the national average of 4.8.
- Hawai'i had a smaller share (6.5%) of children and youth, 6 to 17, with no moderate exercise in the past week compared to the U.S. (9.1%).
- Hawai'i had a higher percentage of children and youth living in neighborhoods with a recreation center (81.8%) and a playground (90.5%), compared to the nation (69.2% and 83.6%, respectively).

The full report can be accessed here: <http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/2014-54NeighborhoodExercise.pdf>.



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