

FAMILY–CHILD INTERACTION LEARNING PROGRAMS IN HAWAI‘I

Fact Sheet 2017

Nurturing, responsive family relationships and everyday experiences that support children’s natural curiosity lay the foundation for life-long physical, intellectual, and emotional health. By supporting parents in their role as a child’s first and most important teacher, **family–child interaction learning (FCIL)** programs strengthen families and promote child well-being. FCILs serve families of children age birth through five who are cared for at home by a parent, relative, or babysitter. Sometimes called play-and-learn groups, FCIL programs have a dual focus on parent education and child development. These programs fill a unique niche in our community and are a significant sector within the overall early childhood system.

"Capitalizing on the inherent love in the parent-child relationship, we teach parents to nurture and support their child’s development and education."
–FCIL Director



How Do FCIL Programs Work?



Children and family members attend group meetings together, usually twice weekly, for a total of four to six hours per week. Activities include group circle time, outdoor play, and a variety of learning stations—music, art, library, science, pretend play, fine motor, etc. FCIL sites look similar to childcare classrooms but with a key difference—families are responsible for their own children. Family caregivers engage with their children, facilitating learning through play. FCIL staff design the child development activities and support caregivers via on-the-spot discussion, demonstration, and mini lessons. Programs may also sponsor family field trips, guest speakers, and formal parent education workshops.

FCILs address parents' top concerns:



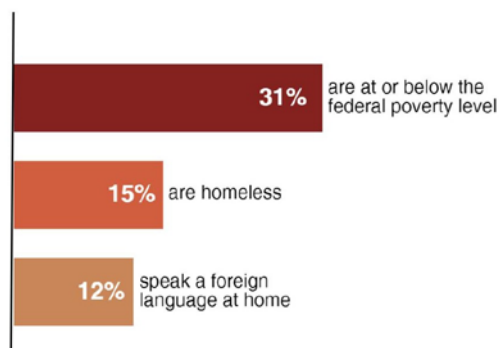
Activities to do with my child

Is my child developing on track?

Handling challenging behaviors

Availability

FCIL programs serve over 3,400 keiki state-wide, or about three percent of our early childhood population¹. The number of children enrolled in FCIL programs is larger than the number enrolled in either licensed infant-toddler centers or registered family childcare homes. FCIL programs also serve our youngest keiki—almost half of children enrolled in FCIL programs are under age three. Many FCIL programs target vulnerable families, such as those who are low-income, immigrant, or homeless.



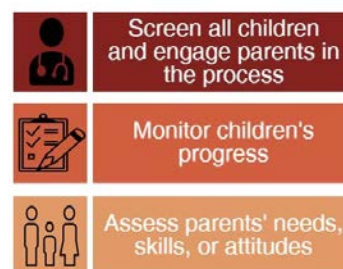
Cost

Families attend FCIL programs **free of charge**. This represents a tremendous resource for families. However, annual operating costs are about \$3,500 per child. Programs primarily rely on federal and philanthropic grants to stay afloat. These sources of funding can be unstable, which raises issues for program sustainability.

Quality

FCIL programs strive to deliver services consistent with best practices in parent education. Hawaii's programs tend to be strong in terms of child assessment, family engagement, Native Hawaiian cultural content, and program evaluation. FCIL programs are not licensed by the state Department of Human Services and there is no national accreditation specific to the FCIL model. However, some programs have received voluntary accreditation in indigenous education or early childhood.

Most Hawai'i FCIL programs:



Policy Recommendations

Action needs to be taken to increase access, sustainability, and quality in FCIL programs. Strategic investment in the FCIL sector would strengthen our early childhood and family services systems.

- Include FCILs in plans for the state's overall early childhood system. These programs fill an important niche by serving families who do not use childcare.
- Identify innovative uses of state or federal funds to support FCIL programs.
- Design and conduct rigorous evaluations of FCIL programs in order to inform the early childhood field about the potential effectiveness of the FCIL approach for child and family outcomes.



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¹ Data in this fact sheet are based on community surveys and may not include all FCIL providers in the state. Photographs courtesy of Partners in Development Foundation