



Session 1-D

‘Ohana Time, Preparing for ‘Ohana Time & Challenges

H.A.N.A.I. Pre-Service Training

(Hawai‘i Assures Nurturing and Involvement)

For children in out of home placement (foster care) under the legal jurisdiction of the
Hawai‘i Department of Human Services

Training Agenda

1. Welcome Back	5 Minutes
2. What is `Ohana Time?	10 Minutes
3. Child Welfare Services Policy	45 Minutes
4. `Ohana Time Preparation	10 Minutes
5. `Ohana Time Observation Activity	30 Minutes
6. `Ohana Time Challenges	30 Minutes
7. Frequently Asked Questions	10 Minutes
8. Questions?	10 Minutes

Competencies and Objectives

- Resource Caregivers will be able to understand the benefits of 'Ohana time and creating a family connection between youth in care, siblings, parents, and extended family members.
- Resource Caregivers will be able to understand the policies and importance of 'ohana time.
- Resource Caregivers will understand special developmental considerations and challenges that could impact 'ohana time.

What is 'Ohana Time?



'Ohana Time is an interactive face-to-face contact between a youth and his/her parents, siblings, or other family members to support reunification and connections. The goal of 'Ohana Time is to preserve the family connection between the youth, parents, and other family support. In-person face to face contact should always be the goal however if that is limited other options can be utilized such as FaceTime video, Skype, Zoom, or other forms of video interaction.

Resource caregivers must work with the child welfare team to plan and prepare for 'ohana time. Planning for 'ohana times ensures that children and parents are informed about 'ohana time. During the process of developing a plan, the CWS team identifies the level of supervision, the location of the 'ohana time, and the frequency of the 'ohana times. Resource caregivers must follow the 'ohana time plan.

Benefits of 'Ohana Time

- Strengthens and maintains relationships
- Enhances youth's well-being
- Affirms the importance of parents in the youth's life
- Provides an opportunity for parents to learn and practice new parenting skills and demonstrate safe parenting skills.
- Allows CWS and the court to observe and assess families and their progress.

What We Know

- One of the best predictors of successful reunification is the frequency and quality of 'ohana time between a youth and his or her parents.
- Without family interaction, parent/child relationships deteriorate.
- 'Ohana Time allows the social worker involved to assess the parent-child relationship as well as the level of readiness for reunification. It also provides an opportunity to promote the importance of youth safety and emotional well-being.

Policy on 'Ohana time & Family Connections

Child Welfare Services Branch	HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES POLICY ANNOUNCEMENT	
	Policy No: PA 2005-6	Issuance Date: 07/01/05
	Subject: MAINTAINING AND ENHANCING FAMILY CONNECTIONS FOR CHILDREN UNDER VOLUNTARY, COURT-ORDERED, AND PERMANENT CUSTODY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES	

Research on family connections and 'ohana time cited by the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning have shown that frequent, purposeful, and consistent 'ohana time for children in care constitutes best practices in child welfare.

These practices are as follows:

- 'Ohana time helps maintain the parent-child connection and preserves the continuity of the relationship.
- More frequent parent-child `ohana time is associated with shorter placements in care and children more likely to be returned to their parents' care.
- Decreases a youth's behavioral problems in care when visits are provided regularly.

This policy directive affirms CWS's policy that all children in out-of-home placement shall have visits with their birth parents and siblings who are not placed with them, other family members, and their family support network. CWS's goal is to ensure the safety and well-being of the youth during 'ohana time. 'Ohana time is to promote positive, safe, and non-blaming connections between the youth, his/her parents, resource caregivers, siblings, or other important people in the youth's life. Permitting or withholding visits shall never be used as a reward or punishment for the parent or the youth.

CWS workers shall involve all the parties, including but not limited to, birth parents, resource caregivers, the guardians-ad-litem, family members, therapist for parents, and/or the youth, in developing a written 'ohana time plan. All parties must know about the plan and their responsibilities, and copies of the 'ohana time plan shall be provided to all parties. 'Ohana time shall occur in the least restrictive, most home-like setting, or during natural family occurrences, including but not limited to, school activities, sports events, or religious services, and not at CWS offices unless a closely supervised, structured, and monitored environment is warranted to maintain the youth's safety. If 'ohana time requires additional support and/or therapeutic services it shall be provided by CWS to facilitate, promote, and maintain ongoing family connections.

VIDEO: Our Keiki, Our Kuleana: Weaving `Ohana Together (10 min. 29 sec.)

DISCUSSION:

- What moment(s) really stood out for you?
- What impact did it have on the children to have their resource caregiver & parent talking?
- What impact did it have on parents?
- Why do you think it made a difference?

`Ohana Time Plan

CWS workers are to ensure that the 'Ohana Time Plan is implemented within 30 days of the date the youth enters care with parents, resource families, and or other supportive parties. Some of the activities or duties could include but are not limited to the following items:

Caregiving task: Feeding, diaper changing, assisting with laundry, running errands, bathing, homework, attend medical appointments, or school meetings.

Event/Cultural Activities: attend meetings/practices for sports or extracurricular activities, allow parents to be involved with prom, pictures, etc.

Leisure: playing games or age-appropriate toys, doing crafts, family activities/events, spending quality time with children.

'Ohana Time plans are meant to be fluid and become less or more restrictive as the case plan moves along. Each month, the ongoing plan should be reviewed during face to face visits with the social worker. There will be an initial 'Ohana time that is facilitated by the social worker or CWS team help at CWS with parents & resource families to discuss the 'ohana time plan.

Supervision Level of `Ohana Time

The supervision level of `Ohana Time shall be developed and individualized for each youth based on the safety concerns and goals for the family. It should be thought of as a continuum that ensures safety while allowing healthy family interactions. `Ohana Time plans are meant to be fluid and shall become less or more restrictive as safety concerns are eliminated or arise. The social worker shall set the level of supervision in consultation with his/her supervisor, the CASA/GAL, and service providers for the parents and youth.

Types of Supervision

Highly
Structured

“Supervised at all times”

Moderate

“Within eye contact”

Intermediate

“Pick up and drop off”

Unsupervised

“No supervision”

Highly Structured Supervision

'Ohana Time shall be supervised in a youth- and family-friendly 'Ohana Time environment that allows for targeted and structured activities, close monitoring, and instruction of the parent, including their conversation and activity. 'Ohana time may occur in the parent's home or the youth's current place of residence, as appropriate. The youth may not be left alone with the parent and must be escorted by the person supervising at all times.

Moderate Supervision Supervised

'Ohana Time in the home of the parent or a familiar environment of the youth. 'Ohana Time may occur at a school function, doctor visit, youth's sport or extracurricular activity, or family gathering. The youth needs to be within eye contact of the person supervising the 'Ohana Time.

Intermittent Supervision

'Ohana Time is intermittently supervised at the home of the parent or in a familiar environment of the youth. It should initially include a drop-off and pickup plan for the youth. The person supervising may only need to provide transportation to and from the 'Ohana time and may also need to check in periodically.

Unsupervised

Unsupervised 'Ohana Time shall be initiated only if there are NO safety issues for the youth. Unsupervised 'Ohana Time occurs without an 'Ohana Time supervisor. It may occur in the home for extended periods and may include sleepovers with the parent. It may also include other interactions/activities at locations other than the home. Unsupervised 'Ohana Time usually occurs as the case transitions to reunification.

The goal is to slowly increase the parent’s responsibility and move towards unsupervised ‘Ohana Time in the parent’s home while safely assessing the parent’s ability. When the parent and youth are interacting successfully during ‘Ohana Time, the plan should generally change one element of the ‘Ohana Time at a time, such as increasing the length of the ‘Ohana Time or changing the location to allow more liberal conditions. If there is a setback or repeated problems, the plan should go back to the last successful ‘Ohana Time plan.

Who Can Supervise ‘Ohana Time?

CWS staff, CWS-contracted providers, and resource caregivers are to supervise and/or facilitate ‘Ohana Time.

Roles and Responsibilities of ‘Ohana Time Supervisor:

- Support parents and children to have a safe and positive time together.
- Ensure safety, including transportation issues regarding proper car seat equipment and usage, seat belts, etc.
- Discuss ideas and possible activities with parents for your ‘Ohana Time if possible.
- Give feedback on ‘Ohana Time to CWS—positives and challenges/concerns, including any safety concerns by using the ‘Ohana Time Observation Form.

DISCUSSION:

Who can you support you with `ohana time?

Are you supervising `ohana time?

What are some concerns or issues regarding `ohana time?

What are parents doing to connect with their children?

Preparing for 'Ohana Time

Scheduling: Birth parents may have many obligations as part of their service plan, work schedules, etc. Visits may be their priority, but logistically, may be difficult to schedule because of counseling, education, etc. Keep this in mind if schedules change or if it seems difficult to schedule a regular visiting time.

Geography: Your family may reside far from where the birth parents do. You may have to transport your youth in care at high traffic times or to areas you are not familiar with on the island. We should remember the importance of `ohana time and try not to let the traffic or travel time get to you.

Location: The preferred locations are in natural settings to allow for natural interactions. They may include homelike settings, churches, parks, and community and 'Ohana Time Centers. The location must allow for meeting the youth's developmental and safety needs and for the parent and 'Ohana Time supervisor to meet and interact positively.

Your Feelings about the Birth Parent: You may have various feelings about the birth parent due to what they have done to their youth. It is important to remember that this is not easy for the birth parents either. They have experienced many losses in their lives and will need assistance to care for their children. Resource caregivers must remember their role, which is to be a resource to families in need.

Transportation for Visits: Resource caregivers should transport children to their visits. This will help the youth to know that their resource caregivers are invested in their development and their relationship with their birth families. In cases where they may be a safety concern, resource caregivers need to work with the social worker regarding the transportation of visits.

Preparing the Youth: Resource caregivers should prepare children for visits. The ways to prepare a youth will vary by youth and situation. It is crucial to make/take time to have a conversation about the visit and answer any questions the youth may have. It may take time to identify the best way to prepare the youth. Resource caregivers will need to pay attention to the youth to determine what works best.

Considerations for Children’s Developmental Needs



Infants and toddlers: They benefit from more frequent `ohana time. At the very least visits should be every two or three days (3-4 times per week). Visits should initially be 1 to 2 hours per visit. Proximity to the attachment figure is the goal of attachment seeking behaviors in very young children.



School-age children (4-7 years): At this age, children can endure slightly longer periods of separation than infants because their need is for the caregiver to be available rather than in close physical proximity. The youth has developed strong attachments to particular caregivers. The youth's attachment is more related to knowing the parent is available rather than needing frequent contact. Children at this age benefit from contact two or three times per week. Face-to-face visits should be supplemented by telephone calls, video calling, and the parents' attendance at events occurring in the youth’s life. Separation can be traumatic and is unlikely to be mitigated by infrequent short visits.



School-age children (8-12 years): Older children may need less frequent `ohana time to maintain their sense of connectedness to their parents. Visits should be adjusted around the youth's life to incorporate school activities, sports games, medical appointments, and birthdays.



Adolescents (13-17 years): The relationship with parents becomes highly ambivalent as he/she develops autonomy from adults. The youth may express no desire to see his/her parents and may express relief that they don’t have to. Young teens express indifference or nonchalance to `ohana time, but their behavior often belies the pain they are trying to avoid. They may want to avoid `ohana time to avoid fear engendered by seeing a distraught parent. Young teenagers sometimes begin to fantasize intensely about parents who have been absent from their lives. Initial visits of short duration one to two hours allow parents to experience success. The older adolescent should be given a larger voice in `ohana time. Visits should be adjusted around the youth's life to incorporate school activities, sports games, medical appointments, and birthday.



Therapeutic supervision: Intensive `ohana time session which combines family therapy and parent training that is both educationally and therapeutically based. This type of `ohana time should be used with parents with mental illness or children who have been diagnosed with mental health issues.



Naptime/youth's schedule: especially with preschool-age children and in the first stage of visiting to allow for successful visits as opposed to over-exhausted children arriving at their visit.

Guiding Principles

Positive and Safe: 'Ohana Time is intended to encourage positive and safe contacts between the youth and his/her parents.

Strength-Based: The family will be engaged with respect and aloha and will be provided support for success.

Culturally Responsive: Family culture will be respected and encouraged. Interpreters should be provided if there are language barriers.

Inclusion of Siblings: Including siblings in 'Ohana Time with parents is essential to maintain sibling connections as well as to assess parent interactions. Per federal law (Fostering Connections Act of 2008), 'Ohana Time with siblings shall be arranged for siblings who are placed in different resource caregivers to maintain important sibling connections.

Part of the Family Service Plan: For the youth under court supervision or voluntary placement agreement, 'Ohana Time is part of the Family Service Plan. In court-involved cases, the Family Service Plan is ordered by the Family Court.

Created with Stakeholder Input: Parents will be involved in the planning of the 'Ohana Time schedule. Consideration will be given to parents' and family's schedules, multiple demands, and financial challenges.

About Relationships and Teamwork: Resource caregivers and relatives are critical for the support and success of the 'Ohana Time.

Multifaceted: Other factors will be considered when planning for 'Ohana Time such as developmental delays, behaviors, mental health concerns, substance use, incarceration, domestic violence, etc.

A Right, Not a Privilege: Each youth in care will be provided regular, supervised or unsupervised, in person, telephone, or other forms of contact with their parents, siblings while in care. It shall only be prohibited by a court order or deemed to be unsafe by the CWS worker, therapist, guardian ad litem, or CASA.

'Ohana Time Observation Form

Each 'Ohana Time presents an opportunity to observe the youth and family interaction. Documentation of each visit is critical to the assessment of the family. Assessment and documentation shall be strength-based while still addressing concerns and challenges. Any safety concerns that arise during an 'Ohana Time shall be documented with the 'Ohana Time Observation Form to assure that complete information is available to the social worker, reported to the social worker, and addressed by the social worker. These are some questions to think about as you complete the observation form.

- Have there been positive changes in the youth or parent's behavior?
- Have there been changes in positive communication between parents and youth?
- Have parents utilized their strengths to enhance the attachment and bond to their youth?
- Have parents demonstrated they can safely care for their youth?
- Have parents demonstrated that they have enhanced the capacity and skills to safely meet their youth's day to day needs?
- Do parents have support systems in place?

SESSION 1-D



'Ohana Time (OT) Observation Form



Family Case Name: _____		Family Case Number: _____	
Date: _____	Time: _____	Length of 'Ohana Time: _____ hours	
Location: _____	'Ohana Time: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Cancelled	<input type="checkbox"/> No show
Reason: _____			
Name and Role of 'Ohana Time Supervisor: _____			
<input type="checkbox"/> DHS staff: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Provider: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Resource Caregiver: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Relative (if not Resource Caregiver): _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> CASA or GAL: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Therapist: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: (please specify) _____			
Names of Children:		Names of Participants & Relationship to Child:	
_____		_____	
_____		_____	
_____		_____	
_____		_____	
If siblings are in different placements, did they all participate in this 'Ohana Time? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Primary Language of the Family? _____			
Ethnicity/Culture of the Family? _____			
1. ARRIVAL	Time parents arrived: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> On time <input type="checkbox"/> Early <input type="checkbox"/> Late		
	Time 'Ohana Time supervisor arrived: _____		
2. 'OHANA TIME			
Did the parent prepare activities for the 'Ohana Time? If parents planned or brought something to the 'Ohana Time, what did they plan or bring? Check all that apply and specify:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Toys: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Picture taking, viewing: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Arts/Crafts: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Baby items: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Books: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Video games/movies: _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Food: _____		<input type="checkbox"/> Other activities: _____	
Notes: _____			
3. CLOSING OF 'OHANA TIME Time parents ended: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> On time <input type="checkbox"/> Early <input type="checkbox"/> Late			
How did the 'Ohana Time end between the child(ren) and parents?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Ready with a ritual to try to end positively and to look forward to the next time			
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent worked with 'Ohana Time Supervisor and took cues to end positively			
<input type="checkbox"/> Challenging end			
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): _____			

SESSION 1-D

1. General Comments — Please consider these questions in filling out a-d below:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">o How did the child(ren) relate to the parent?o Was the parent able to set limits?o Did the parent demonstrate healthy attachment with the child and being nurturing and caring? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">o How did the parent relate to the child(ren)?o How did the child(ren) respond to the parent?o Did the parent demonstrate good knowledge of the child's development and providing good care? |
|--|--|

a. Strengths:

b. Direction or feedback you provided to the parents or children during or after 'Ohana Time:

c. Challenges or concerns:

d. Issues needing to be addressed with the parents or children by the caseworker:

2. Ideas that would help to strengthen future 'Ohana Time

'Ohana Time Supervisor's Name

'Ohana Time Supervisor's Signature and Date

Date Copy Sent to DHS Unit

'Ohana Time Challenges

While there may be challenges for resource caregivers when it comes to visits, you must work collaboratively with birth parents and other members of the team to ensure that children can connect with their parents. By working with birth parents, resource caregivers will be able to obtain useful information to assist them in caring for the children placed in their home.

- If the parent is more than 15 minutes late, before canceling the 'Ohana Time, the person supervising the 'Ohana Time shall call the parent to determine his/her whereabouts and estimated time of arrival. 'Ohana Time shall be provided for the duration of the time if the parent is still able to attend.
- If the parent appears to be intoxicated or inebriated, 'ohana time shall continue.
- If the youth expresses that he/she does not want 'Ohana Time, please discuss with the social worker or GAL/CASA.
- 'Ohana Time will not be canceled in situations where the parent is difficult to work with. 'Ohana Time shall not be seen as a reward or condition for compliance.
- If the parent does not show up for his/her 'ohana time without canceling, contact the social worker.
- If a parent is unable or unwilling to meet the conditions in the 'Ohana Time Plan, please share concerns with the social worker.

Group Activity

You are fostering your three nephews who have 'ohana time every Tuesday at 3 pm with their father at the park near your home. The birthfather is your brother, he's homeless, and is struggling with substance abuse. He's missed 'ohana time for the last 3 times and you have brought your concerns to the social worker however cannot change it due to it being court-ordered.

- How can you continue to support 'ohana time?

The birthmother of your 3-month baby comes to 'ohana time appearing to be intoxicated. According to the judge during the court hearing last week, 'ohana time is to continue.

- How can you continue supporting 'ohana time?
- What kind of support would you need?

Your 14-year-old teen has been living in your home for 6 months and 'ohana time has just started with her parents. She sees her mother twice a week and started acting out toward you and other children in the home.

- How can you continue to support 'ohana time?

Frequently Asked Questions About 'Ohana Time

QUESTION: *If the resource family has a vacation planned, what kind of permission would they need to take the youth in care?*

ANSWER: Vacations or trips planned by the resource family are to be notified to the social worker as soon as possible. The social worker would need detailed information to request approval from the judge. If 'ohana time is occurring the family needs to allow that to continue while on vacation.

QUESTION: *If the birth parent has been drinking or using drugs is 'ohana time still allowed to happen?*

ANSWER: If the birth parent is intoxicated or high, they can still see their youth. If the youth may be in immediate harm then it needs to be brought to the social worker's attention.

QUESTION: *Are resource caregivers expected to support a youth's contact with a birth family?*

ANSWER: YES. A resource family is required to support a youth's relationship with their birth family.

QUESTION: *Are resource caregivers required to give out their phone number to birth parents?*

ANSWER: NO. Your permission is needed before your phone number is given out. Resource caregivers should consider the impact that this will have on the youth placed in their home.

QUESTION: *If a youth is showing increased behavior problems immediately before or after a visit, does that mean that visits should stop?*

ANSWER: When children visit their parents, often they are reminded of separation or grief. They may feel a mix of loneliness, fear, confusion, and anger. This is to be expected and resource caregivers should prepare for these reactions. If behaviors get extreme or violent, then the social worker should be notified immediately.

QUESTION: *Do resource caregivers have to support the 'ohana time schedule even if they don't agree with the plan?*

ANSWER: A resource family is expected to support a youth's relationship with their family and participate in the 'ohana time plan. If the resource family has specific concerns, they should be reported to the social worker.

QUESTION: *Is it okay for resource caregivers to arrange 'ohana time with a youth's relative, without expressed permission of the social worker as long as that relative is not the one who abused or neglected the youth?*

ANSWER: If you believe that the youth should be having visits with someone important in the youth's life, discuss the matter with the social worker. You are not allowed to let the youth have contact outside of the agreed 'ohana time plan. If a relative or friend contacts you to have visits with the youth, encourage them to speak with the social worker.

QUESTION: *If the birthparent did not show up for 'ohana time then would 'ohana time continue?*

ANSWER: Yes. Birthparents are juggling a lot of appointments and maybe busy adjusting while their youth(ren) is in care. As resource families, we should understand that it may be difficult and if it is ongoing then they should discuss the matter with the social worker.