



Nā Leo 'Ohana

March 2023

Kristen Bachiller Parent Partner at Epic, 'Ohana East Hawai'i

“Seeing the change in my children while they were in foster care was what motivated me. I saw that they were happy and I knew I had to make a change”.

That was the turning point for Kristen after being involved with Child Welfare Services in 2019. Kristen had a history of addiction, being in prison, and formerly in a domestic violent relationship. Initially she struggled working with Child Welfare Services, she stated “I never thought this would happen to me. I was upset and had a bad attitude”. About two months working with Child Welfare Services, she began to see change in both herself and her children. She was able to see her children three hours a week and was committed to get them back. Kristen shared that her greatest support was her social worker at the time, Donalyn Nihipali. Donalyn was available, supportive, and encouraged her to engage with her services. “I didn’t grow up with a lot of support so her words of encouragement helped me”.



Kristen is happily reunited with her children, and her experience with Child Welfare has a direct impact on the work she does today. Kristen is currently a Parent Partner with EPIC 'Ohana supporting and advocating for families, which is one of her biggest passions. Kristen believes in empowering family, and ensuring they are provided the opportunity to understand and have clarity as to why Child Welfare Services is involved with their family. “In order for systems to change, our hearts need to be all in. There is not enough resources and support currently for families, but creating supportive and safe environments is what they need.”

Kristen not only is a Parent Partner but is also involved in partnering with agencies that work with families in an effort to strengthen and inform our community from her lived experience.



SHARED PARENTING

A positive working relationship between parents and resource caregivers is pivotal to the well-being of the keiki. This event in Hilo celebrated the importance of shared parenting, bringing families together in aloha for one another and our keiki. Please click on the link below:



[Ho'okahi Ke Aloha \(All United in Harmony and Love\)- Celebrating Shared Parenting](#)

Messages to...

Resource Caregivers: *"Remember that there are parents that long for that relationship with you. Parents want to be able to support you while you are fostering their children. I wish that the resource family that my children lived with got to know me as a person and not what they read on paper."*

Parents: *"Don't give up. Don't let external events make you change your mind and don't let a mistake stop you because in the end it's so worth it."*

Service Providers: *"Really listening to birthparent voice for what it's like for them. Understanding how removal affects both the child and the parent."*



Child Tax Credit

Children in foster care who have been placed in the license resource caregiver home may claim the child in foster care as long as NO ONE ELSE IS CLAIMING THE CHILD (parents).

To determine a Qualifying Child or Relative for the Earned Income Tax Credit, visit: <https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/individuals/earned-income-tax-credit/qualifying-child-rules>

Relationship

To be a qualifying child for the EITC, your child must be your:

- Son, daughter, stepchild, adopted child or foster child
- Brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, stepsister or stepbrother
- Grandchild, niece or nephew

Adopted Child Definition

An adopted child is a child who is lawfully placed with you for legal adoption.

Foster Child Definition

For the EITC, you can only claim a foster child that is placed with you by:

- A State or local government agency
- An Indian tribal government
- A tax-exempt organization licensed by a state or an Indian tribal government
- A court order

ONGOING TRAINING REQUIREMENT

ONGOING TRAINING REQUIREMENTS



As of January 2023, each licensed resource caregiver are required to complete 13-hours of renewal training hours. Registration is available on the Resource Caregiver website. [Trainings – Resource Caregivers Hawaii](#)

HANAI TRAINING

Beginning in April, Year two (13-hours) will provide opportunities to connect and apply principles and concepts in practice through their experience as a resource caregiver.

Year 1 TOPICS

- Introduction & Licensing Process, Role of a Resource Caregiver, Rights of Youth in Care, Child Welfare Team & Court Process
- Child Welfare Service, Child Abuse, Neglect, and Human Trafficking, Discipline Guidelines, Safety, What is Trauma & ACES
- Impact of Trauma on the Brain, Separation/Loss/Grief, Culture, Prudent Parenting, Special Considerations, Consultation, & Support, and Bill of Rights
- 'Ohana Time
- Sexual Health, Childhood Development, & LGBTQA+

Year 2 TOPICS

- Ola Ka 'Ohana
- Trauma & Developmental Stages, Being Trauma Responsive, Attachment, Resource Caregiver Toolkit
- Sibling Connections, Social Capital, Normalcy for Youth in Foster Care, Promoting Resiliency
- Transitions, Mandated Reporting, and Becoming an Advocate, Community Resources available to support families

SIBLING CONNECTIONS CORNER

Keep Siblings Connected this Summer

by Delia Ulima, EPIC 'Ohana, HI HOPE'S Initiative Manager

The Issue

Did you know that approximately 70% of children in foster care in the United States have at least one sibling in care, as well? In Hawai'i, although efforts are made to keep sibling groups intact, there are a number of siblings who may be placed in separate homes. Sometimes siblings may go weeks or months without contact with their brothers and sisters. Sibling relationships can be lifelong sources of love and support. Connections with brothers and sisters can serve as a protective factor for children and contribute to their well-being and positive outcomes. Summertime is often filled with wonderful memories and activities. For children and youth in foster care, it may be a particularly stressful or worrisome time, with some wondering if they will get to see their brothers and sisters or be included in family vacations. It is the kuleana of child welfare professionals and resource caregivers to mālama and keep the keiki connected.

What Can You Do?

Here are some ways you can encourage and support sibling connections this summer:

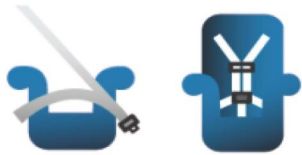
- 1) **Ask the keiki what they would like to do this summer:** Are they interested in sports, outdoor fun or summer classes? How would they like to have their siblings included in any of these activities?
- 2) **Connect with other resource caregivers:** If the keiki live in separate homes, can you coordinate with their caregivers to host sibling outings or join in group gatherings? If you don't know the other RCGs, reach out to your social worker and ask for support in making introductions and initial connections.
- 3) **Reach out to service providers for support:** On O'ahu, contact Family Programs Hawai'i to ask about their Project Visitation services and sibling summer camp. Check out www.familyprogramshawaii.org or call (808) 521-9531. In East Hawai'i, reach out to PARENTS, Inc. and inquire about their sibling visitation support services. (808) 235-0255.
- 4) **Have the keiki participate in activities that bring foster care siblings together:**
 - a. 'Ohana is Forever Conference: This annual event is being held on Friday, July 14 on O'ahu. Teenagers and young adults involved in foster care from across Hawai'i may participate. Find out more from your social worker or check out the Family Programs Hawai'i website in June.
 - b. HI HOPE'S Events:
 - i. The O'ahu HI HOPE'S board will hold a Sibling Summer Bash on Saturday, July 29. Contact Delia Ulima at dulima@epicohana.org for information.
 - ii. The Kaua'i HI HOPE'S board will hold its annual Olympic Day during the summer. Contact Tiffany Darragh at darragh@epicohana.org for information
 - c. Check with Catholic Charities, your local Friends of the Children's Justice Center and other providers in your area about their summertime activities. Go to www.fostercareresources808.org for information about \$500 enhancement funds and contact information for statewide providers.



Mahalo for your kōkua in keeping siblings in foster care connected this summer and making it a special one to remember!

CHILD PASSENGER RESTRAINT LAW

Hawaii has a New Child Passenger Restraint Law



A child passenger restraint or booster seat is required for children 4 years old but less than 10 years old unless the child is over 4 feet 9 inches tall



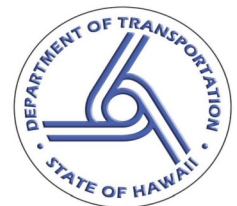
A rear facing or forward facing child passenger restraint system is required from 2 years old up to 4 years old



If the child is under 2 years old, then they **MUST** be properly restrained in a rear-facing child passenger restraint system.



All children under the age of 10 years old must be restrained regardless of how many seat belt assemblies are in the vehicle. Violators could face fines of \$100 or more, be required to attend a driver's education class, and pay additional surcharges. Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) §291-11.5.



UPDATED TRAVEL POLICY

DHS Memo dated January 24, 2023

Hawaii Child Welfare Services (CWS) Travel Policy for Children and Youth in Foster Care

Traveling for children in foster care is sometimes necessary to achieve child well-being, safety, and permanency goals. Additionally, allowing children in foster care to travel with their Resource Caregivers (RCGs) may be in their best interest and promote normalcy, and is consistent with Prudent Parenting.

In May 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, CWS issued travel policies to support the safety of staff and the families that we work with, which addressed the budget crisis the department was facing at the time. Since then, guidance on travel from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Department of Health (DOH) has changed because of updated research, expansion of vaccines to additional age groups, greater availability of testing, and increased immunity amongst the community. To align with these changes and to promote normalcy and consistency with prudent parenting standards, CWSB has updated its current travel policy, as well as expanded its guidance to provide a comprehensive procedure on travel.

The updated travel policy and procedure is outlined below.

I. Travel Request to Caseworker

Travel requests may be initiated by various parties and all travel requests regarding children in foster care must be considered. Travel requests can include actions that support the concurrent permanency goals, normalcy, and wellbeing for children and families. When a travel request is received, the caseworker shall gather sufficient information to determine the type of travel request and assess if the destination is safe considering public health emergencies and travel notices.

A. Persons who can initiate a travel request

1. Child or youth
2. Parents or caregiver
3. Other supportive family members
4. Resource Caregiver (RCG)
5. CWS Caseworker
6. GAL/CASA



B. The caseworker shall gather the following information:

1. Names of persons travelling and their relationship to the child
2. Destination(s), including tentative flight, land/ground and/or sea itinerary
3. Dates of travel or tentative dates
4. Purpose
5. Individual paying for the trip
6. Approximate costs or receipts of the following
 - a. Flight cost
 - b. Baggage fees
 - c. Ground transportation
 - d. Lodging
 - e. Other expenses
7. Current public health or travel alerts for the destination.

II. Engaging Parties to the Case

After gathering the travel logistics, the caseworker's recommendation for the travel request must be based on safety, permanency, and well-being.

UPDATED TRAVEL POLICY (continued)

A. The caseworker shall discuss and consult with the following parties to inform them of the request, understand the purpose, and identify if they are in agreement with the request:

1. Parents
 - a. Parental consent from both parents/caregivers is required for all travel, see V.C. *Completing a Travel Notice for Emergency Travel* for emergency circumstances
2. Child/youth
3. GAL/CASA
4. RCG



B. The caseworker shall discuss the following with the parties listed above:

1. The concurrent permanency goals and plan
2. Reunification efforts (including 'Ohana Time)
3. Child or youth's best interest
4. Agreement or disagreement of parties listed in II. Engaging Parties to the Case, A.
5. Current public health or travel alerts for the destination and plans to adhere to current public health and safety rules and regulations. Refer to Travel Advisories posted at:
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>

III. Administrative Timelines and Completing a Travel Notice

In consideration of the travel process, it is important that CWS staff are aware of the administrative and court timelines that are in place to ensure travel can occur as scheduled.

A. Administrative Timelines

1. Caseworkers shall complete the necessary forms and notifications within the following timelines:
 - a. Interisland: 2-4 weeks prior to the departure date
 - b. Interstate: 4-6 weeks prior to the departure date
 - c. International: 6-8 weeks prior to the departure date

B. Completing a Travel Notice

1. If all parties are in agreement with the travel request, the caseworker shall complete the following:
 - a. Travel within the state
 - i. Draft a letter to court
 - ii. Complete a Travel Approval Form (TAF) and supporting worksheets.
 - b. Travel outside state
 - i. A court order needs to be obtained prior to any travel (see exceptions in C. Completing a Travel Notice for Emergency Travel.)
 - ii. Draft a letter to court and submit as a motion to DAG
 - iii. Contact the assigned Deputy Attorney General (DAG) to initiate the motion to court.
 - iv. Complete a Travel Approval Form (TAF) and supporting worksheets.
 - v. Complete a Travel Internal Communication Form (Travel ICF) to be reviewed and approved by the Division Administrator.
2. If any party is not in agreement with the travel request or DHS is unable to obtain consent for travel, the caseworker shall:
 - a. Consult with their supervisor
 - b. Draft a letter to court and submit as a motion to DAG
 - c. Contact the assigned Deputy Attorney General (DAG) to initiate the motion to court

UPDATED TRAVEL POLICY (continued)

C. Completing a Travel Notice for Emergency Travel

Emergency travel requires that flight arrangements be made immediately and requires approval by CWSB. Due to the urgency of the travel, a court order may not be possible to obtain prior to travel. A request for a motion must be submitted once travel has been completed. Situations that warrant immediate action involves:

- travel to obtain services that address health, medical and dental needs,
- placements (including ICPC) that support the permanency goal and require immediate attention and response
- 'Ōhana time needs that must be addressed timely and require immediate attention and response
 1. In the event of emergency travel, the caseworker shall:
 - a. Take appropriate action to address the emergency
 - b. Draft a letter to court and request for a motion
 - c. Contact the assigned Deputy Attorney General (DAG) to initiate the motion to court
 - d. Complete a Travel Approval Form (TAF) and supporting worksheets.
 - e. If travelling out-of-state, complete a Travel Internal Communication Form (Travel ICF)

IV. Travel Logistics

A. Financial Support

1. CWS shall be responsible for ensuring airfare costs of essential travel for the child or youth is covered
2. CWS clerical staff shall research state's mileage points first to determine if miles can be used to book flights
3. CWS shall explore other funding sources to cover additional expenses (ground transport, lodging) such as:
 - a. Contributions from parents, RCGs
 - b. Friends of the Children's Justice Center
 - c. Enhancement Funds
4. Medical travel should be authorized via the medical plan prior to travel, whenever possible. If approval is not possible prior to travel, due to urgent needs, consult the respective supervisor for instructions on requesting after-the-fact reimbursement via the medical plan.
5. Additional funding of up to \$2000 per family, per trip, may be reimbursed to a prospective caregiver, when travel is occurring to support the permanent placement with the goal of adoption or legal guardianship. This additional funding can be extended to support reunification with a birth parent who resides out of state, on a case-by case basis. This funding may be used to cover expenses in situations where a prospective caregiver may accrue lodging or transportation expenses when travelling to pick up a youth.

B. Escort and Seat Purchases

1. Children and youth cannot travel alone. They must be accompanied by a CWS staff member, family member, RCG, or other escort approved by CWS, at all times. The purpose is to help ensure the child or youth's safety, as well as provide support when the travel plans change unexpectedly.
2. All children and youth traveling with a community or school group must have designated chaperones as approved by the community organization or school. See [Prudent Parent Standard](#). Caseworkers may consult with their supervisor for due diligence and further guidance.
3. When a child, under the age of two (2), is travelling out-of-state and is accompanied by one (1) chaperone, an airline ticket/seat shall be purchased for that child.
 - a. Children under the age of two (2) accompanied by two (2) chaperones do not require their own seat.

TALK STORY TUESDAYS

Talk Story Tuesdays

*Resource caregivers we want to
invite you to our monthly
"Talk Story Tuesdays"
With Child Welfare*

4:30 pm—5:30 pm

April 11, 2023

September 12, 2023

May 9, 2023

October 10, 2023

June 13, 2023

November 14, 2023

July 11, 2023

December 12, 2023

August 8, 2023

Click Below to Join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87168462250>



Beginning in April 2023 we will be having monthly "Talk Story" sessions to discuss topics related to your foster youth. Some of you might be curious about resources that foster youth have and may not know where to start or who to contact, this may be beneficial for you. We want to be able to support you and your families' needs, so please join us. Topics could be related but not limited to clothing allowances, respite, traveling. We look forward to seeing you there!

You will be able to receive 1 DHS approved Training for recertification by attending these sessions.



Check out our mobile application
available now in the Apple Store
and on Google Play.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES
HAWAII



Visit <https://rcg.hawaii.gov>



- Register for On-going Trainings
- Register for Support Groups
- Find resources on many topics
(childhood development, safe sleep,
licensing requirements and other foster care topics)

SPIN CONFERENCE

Save the Date for our 36th annual
SPIN CONFERENCE

"It's a Marathon, Not a Sprint: Part 2"

Raising a child with a disability is not a sprint to the finish, it's a marathon of training, humor, endurance and support.

Join us for a full-day of

- In-person workshops about special education, advocacy, disabilities, transition and more
- Virtual access to all workshops
- In-person Resource Fair
- SPIN Awards Luncheon
- Laughs, learning & skill building

APRIL 22, 2023

9:00 am – 3:30 pm
UH Manoa Ballroom

for more info:

www.SPINconference.org
SPIN@doh.hawaii.gov
808-586-8126



CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

April 2023

Child Abuse Prevention Month

*Join us in the month of April in sharing awareness of
Child Abuse Prevention*



**April
3-7**

Wear **BLUE**

Take a **PICTURE & SHARE** your photos wearing blue on social media and use hashtag:

#wearbluehi2023

Tag us on

Facebook: [Resource Caregiver Support Services](#)

**April
10-14**

Plant a pinwheel in your personal space

Take a **PICTURE & SHARE** your photos of your pinwheel on social media and use hashtag

#wearbluehi2023

**April
17-21**

Do an activity with your child(ren)



Doing Things Differently:

Moving from the Challenge to the Change

childwelfare.gov/preventionmonth
#ThrivingFamilies



THE PARENT LINE



The Parent Line

Funded by the Hawai'i State Department of Health, Maternal and Child Health branch

IS OFFERING VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL ON:

SAFE SLEEP

Tuesday, April 4, 2023 @ 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

When babies sleep safe, parents rest easier. Learn some tips on how to ensure safe sleep for your baby.

MODELING AND TEACHING CHILDREN DECISION-MAKING AND NEGOTIATION SKILLS

Tuesday, April 11, 2023 @ 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

To increase parent's ability to model and teach decision-making and negotiation skills.

UNDERSTANDING AND OWNING YOUR FEELINGS

Thursday, April 13, 2023 @ 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Learn more about your own feelings and how to acknowledge and ways to express them.

UNDERSTANDING TODDLER TEMPER TANTRUMS

Thursday, April 20, 2023 @ 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Learn more about toddler temperament and ways to prevent and handle their tantrums.



FOR MORE QUESTIONS, WORKSHOPS, OR TO RSVP,

CALL THE PARENT LINE AT (808) 526-1222



*The virtual workshops are voluntary and intended for enrichment purposes.
Certifications and/or credits are not offered.*

RECRUITMENT

WE NEED MORE FOSTER HOMES.

Do you know someone who could offer a safe home for a young life in Foster Care?

LEARN MORE OR APPLY TODAY!

WE HOST MONTHLY FOSTER CARE INFO SESSIONS ON ZOOM.

START THE ONLINE APPLICATION TODAY!



- STATEWIDE**
- ✓ 4/4/23 - 12PM
- ✓ 5/1/23 - 6PM
- ✓ 6/7/23 - 12PM

REGISTER FOR ONE TODAY!

- ✓ GENERAL LICENSING PROCESS
- ✓ STATISTICS
- ✓ Q&A

REGISTER HERE!



URGENT NEEDS

Safe Homes For:

- Teenagers**
- Sibling Groups**
- Medically Fragile Children**
- Infants**



We walk all general license applicants through initial steps to become licensed to foster in Hawai'i.

UPW Christmas Party



Mahalo United Public Workers who held a Christmas Party for Resource Families on the Big Island and on Kauai last December.

RHEA LANA—FREE SHOPPING



Free Shopping for Resource Families at the Rhea Lana Event

Resource Families were able to shop at the Rhea Lana event on February 27, 2023 at the former Toys'R'Us location in Pearlridge. Families shopped for clothes, shoes, toys, books, and baby furniture at no cost to them. Thank you, to Rhea Lana Honolulu for supporting the Resource Families.

Look out for the next Rhea Lana Event in June 2023



Rhea Lana is looking for seasonal workers to assist with the Rhea Lana events in Honolulu

If you are interested, please email Alma Pennell at alma@rhealana.com with your resume.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Join us for any of our upcoming events.

To register, click on the title links below or visit the **Hawaii Resource Caregiver Licensing Website** at <https://rcg.hawaii.gov> or

via the mobile app for resource caregivers
“Hawaii Foster Care Connections”

Download for FREE in the Google Play or Apple App store



HAWAII
**FOSTER CARE
 CONNECTIONS**



APRIL 2023

National Child Abuse Prevention Month

<u>Info Session</u>	April 4, 2023	12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Recruitment
<u>Statewide Support Group</u>	April 12, 2023	6:00 pm - 7:30 pm	Support Group
<u>Managing Self Care</u>	April 13, 2023	5:00 pm - 6:30 pm	Training
<u>Grandparent Support Group</u>	April 19, 2023	12:00 pm - 1:30 pm	Support Group
<u>Mandated Reporting</u>	April 25, 2023	5:00 pm - 6:30 pm	Training
<u>Kinship Support Group</u>	April 26, 2023	5:00 pm - 6:30 pm	Support Group

MAY 2023

May is Foster Care Month

<u>Info Session</u>	May 1, 2023	6:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Recruitment
<u>Statewide Support Group</u>	May 10, 2023	6:00 pm - 7:30 pm	Support Group
<u>Grandparents Support Group</u>	May 17, 2023	12:00 pm - 1:30 pm	Support Group
<u>Virtual Resource Fair</u>	May 18, 2023	4:00pm - 5:30pm	Virtual Event
<u>Antecedent Behaviors, Consequence (Part2)</u>	May 23, 2023	4:30 pm - 6:30 pm	Training
<u>How to Support Youth with Autism</u>	May 25, 2023	4:30 pm - 5:30 pm	Training
<u>Kinship Support Group</u>	May 24, 2023	5:00 pm - 6:30 pm	Support Group

JUNE 2023

National Reunification Month

<u>Info Session</u>	June 7, 2023	12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Recruitment
<u>In the Shoes of the Birth Parent</u>	June 8, 2023	5:00 pm - 6:30 pm	Training
<u>Statewide Support Group</u>	June 14, 2023	6:00 pm - 7:30 pm	Support Group
<u>Grandparents Support Group</u>	June 21, 2023	12:00 pm - 1:30 pm	Support Group
<u>Kinship Support Group</u>	June 28, 2023	5:00 pm - 6:30 pm	Support Group

Contact the Resource Caregiver Warm Line
 at (808) 545-1130 for any questions

MAY is NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH



TIPS TO Strengthen Minds & Uplift Families



1. Nurture youth's well-being early, often, and continuously. Don't wait for the signs.
2. Talk about mental health as needs and strengths rather than problems or issues.
3. Recognize what culture has to offer. Incorporate traditions, practices, and community.
4. Engage youth. Ask what types of supports they need—including traditional and nontraditional options.
5. Champion the well-being of families and caregivers to support youth's mental health.



National Foster Care Month
childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth

The Nā Leo 'Ohana Newsletter
is published quarterly by
Catholic Charities Hawai'i
1822 Keeaumoku Street
Honolulu, HI 96822

Contact information:
WarmLine:(808) 545-1130
E-mail: RCGSupportServices@CatholicCharitiesHawaii.org

This newsletter may be viewed
on the following:
Website: <https://rcg.hawaii.gov>
Facebook: [Resource Caregiver Support Services](#)



GO GREEN!

Contact us today and request an electronic copy!

The Nā Leo 'Ohana Newsletter

Contributing Writers

*State of Hawai'i Department of Human Services, Child Welfare
Services ~ Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Partners In Development Foundation ~ EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.
Resource Caregivers ~ Adoptive Parents ~
Former Youth in Foster Care*