



Office of the Administrative Director of the Courts – THE JUDICIARY • STATE OF HAWAII
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November 8, 2024

Via electronic submission

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

The Honorable Nadine Nakamura
Speaker of the House of Representatives
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear President Kouchi and Speaker Nakamura:

Pursuant to Section 607.56, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), the Judiciary is transmitting a copy of the *Report on the Parent Education Special Fund*, including an accounting of all deposits into and expenditures from the fund in Fiscal Year 2024.

In accordance with Section 93-16, Hawaii Revised Statutes, we are also transmitting a copy of this report to the Legislative Reference Bureau Library.

The public may view an electronic copy of this report on the Judiciary's website at the following link: https://www.courts.state.hi.us/news_and_reports/reports/reports.

Should you have any questions regarding this report, please feel free to contact Karen Takahashi of the Judiciary's Legislative Affairs and Special Projects Division at 808-539-4896, or via e-mail at Karen.T.Takahashi@courts.hawaii.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rodney A. Maile".

Rodney A. Maile
Administrative Director of the Courts

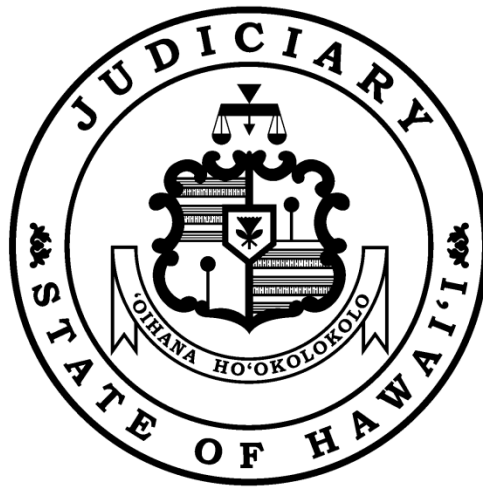
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**ANNUAL REPORT TO THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
2024 REGULAR SESSION**

A Report on the Parent Education Special Fund

Pursuant to HRS § 607-5.6



Prepared by:

The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i

November 2024

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE 2025 REGULAR SESSION

A Report on the Parent Education Special Fund

Pursuant to HRS § 607-5.6

The Parent Education Special Fund, established by the 1997 Legislature, State of Hawai'i, through Act 274, codified as HRS § 607-5.6, requires the Judiciary to submit a report on the Parent Education Fund.

On May 2, 2003, HRS § 607-5.6 was amended to increase the fund's surcharge from \$35 to \$50 for Family Court matrimonial cases and to add the surcharge to paternity actions.

The Purpose of the Fund

The Parent Education Special Fund is used to administer education programs to families currently involved in divorce cases in the state of Hawai'i. Parties litigating custody matters as well as children of unmarried or never-married parents living in the same household are also required to attend. Parents attending the divorce-education programs are encouraged to refocus on their children's needs by learning how continued fighting negatively impacts their children. They are also encouraged to mediate rather than litigate their custody conflicts. The programs emphasize that:

- family violence is never appropriate and is extremely harmful to children;
- children will thrive if they live in safe homes and are loved by both parents;
- the court takes into account the safety of victims and children in making custody and visitation decisions.

Children between the ages of six (6) and seventeen (17) also attend to learn how to cope with changes in their family. The programs emphasize that children are not the cause of parental separation, that parents do not divorce their children, and that there are many families going through similar experiences. Children and teens participate in age-appropriate discussions and activities focused on helping each child identify and understand their emotions.

After an opening statement is given by a Family Court judge, parents and children watch *The Purple Family* (1999), a timeless film which gently broaches themes of divorce and separation. The film is unique in that the words "divorce" or "separation" are never used explicitly to describe the family's situation. The programs distribute parenting guides with island-specific information on resources for counseling, domestic violence, parenting, and anger management classes. The website www.kidsfirsthawaii.com is also available to provide island-specific program and contact information to families.

Parent Education Programs

Each circuit administers its own parent education program. In the First (O'ahu), Second (Maui), and Fifth Circuit (Kaua'i), the program is called *Kids First*. Third Circuit (Hawai'i island) has two programs, the program in Kona is *Children First* and the program in Hilo is *Children in Transition*.

The O'ahu *Kids First* program is held most Wednesday evenings and alternates weekly between Ka'ahumanu Hale in Honolulu and the Ronald T.Y. Moon Court Complex in Kapolei. The Maui *Kids First* program is held on the second Wednesday of the month at Hoapili Hale in Wailuku. On Hawai'i island, Kona's *Children First* program is held on the third Wednesday of the month at the West Hawai'i Civic Center, and Hilo's *Children in Transition* program is held at Hale Kaulike on the second Tuesday of even-numbered months as well as the second and fourth Tuesday of odd-numbered months. Kaua'i's *Kids First* program is held on the second Wednesday of the month at Pu'uhonua Kaulike Building in Lihu'e.

In March of 2020 to August 2022, the COVID-19 pandemic caused unprecedented interruptions across the State of Hawai'i. The *Kids First* program and other court programs were suspended temporarily until alternate programming could be developed. During the month of April 2020, *Kids First* O'ahu created innovative online programming. The online program launched in May of 2020 and has since been utilized by families on O'ahu. The online program includes pre-recorded presentations by Family Court judges and *Kids First* licensed psychologists. The judges speak to parents about what to expect in Family Court and the presenters talk to parents about ways to minimize risks during the divorce or separation process. The programming also includes the *Purple Family* film, as well as a presentation by a licensed psychologist and interactive activities for children. Parents are asked to complete a feedback form and encouraged to ask questions, which are then forwarded to *Kids First* staff and licensed psychologists.

In April of 2022, the Firth Circuit, Kaua'i, resumed in-person programming once a month.

In May of 2022, *Kids First* O'ahu added a Zoom class for children, twice a week on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, and a parents' Zoom class was added in October 2022 on Wednesday evenings.

In October of 2023, the O'ahu *Kids First* program resumed in-person classes at the Ronald T.Y. Moon Court Complex in Kapolei and Hale Hilinai in Honolulu.

FY 2023-2024 Cases by Circuit	Divorce	Paternity	Civil Union	Total Cases
First (O'ahu)	2,970	571	2	3,543
Second (Maui, Moloka'i, Lana'i)	439	143	1	583
Third (Kona and Hilo)	515	212	1	728
Fifth (Kaua'i)	149	73	0	222
Total:	4,073	999	4	5,076

The percentage of filings for each circuit closely mirrors the population distribution for the State of Hawai'i. The majority of the cases were filed on O'ahu with 2,970 new divorce cases (73% of state total) and 571 paternity filings (57% of state total). Additionally, two (2) civil union divorces were filed on O'ahu (50% of state total).

Statewide, divorce-education classes were held serving a total of 4,352 individuals (2,624 parents and 1,728 children). In FY 2023-2024, *Kids First* O'ahu serviced a total of 3,137 individuals (1,966 adults and 1,171 children).

FY 2023-2024 Attendance by Circuit	Adult Attendance	Children Attendance	Total Attendance
First (O'ahu)	1,966	1,171	3,137
Second (Maui, Moloka'i, Lana'i)	306	218	524
Third (Hilo and Kona)	202	248	450
Fifth (Kaua'i)	150	91	241
Total:	2,624	1,728	4,352

Statewide revenue during FY 2023-2024 totaled \$116,137, which includes an interest amount of \$15,951. Total expenses were \$92,330.

The Parent Education Special Fund began collecting filing fee surcharges and donations beginning July 1, 1997. The attached financial report reflects the 27th year of collections. The Parent Education Special Fund continues to support all five of the State of Hawai'i Judiciary's parent-education programs.

