
A BILL FOR AN ACT

To provide a statutory framework for a national early childhood comprehensive system that can be used to improve the health and well-being of all children through culturally appropriate and evidence-based practices that address the current and emerging developmental issues affecting the child at the family, community and national levels.

THE PEOPLE OF PALAU REPRESENTED IN THE OLBIIL ERA KELULAU DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 **Section 1. Short title.** This Act may be cited as the Palau National Framework on
2 Early Childhood.

3 **Section 2. Public policy; legislative findings and history.** The Olbiil Era Kelulau
4 makes the following findings:

5 (a) The Olbiil Era Kelulau recognizes that it is the obligation of the national
6 government to develop and provide an integrated system of services for all children.

7 (b) The promotion and implementation of the International Convention on the
8 Rights of the Child will facilitate optimal development of all children.

9 (c) As a member of the United Nations, the Republic of Palau has pledged to work
10 for achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and a framework for a
11 national comprehensive system addressing issues of early childhood.

12 (d) Republic of Palau has pledged to prioritize Early Childhood Education as one
13 of the strategies for Education for All.

14 (e) As a member of the United Nations, the Republic of Palau has pledged to
15 prioritize the World Fit for Children Goal of providing quality education through achievement
16 of the target to “Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education for
17 girls and boys, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

18 (f) For the best interests of the child, the leaders of our government are committed
19 to support the well-being of all children, whether within the family, the community, or the
20 nation.

21 (g) Research has shown that early comprehensive services for children lead to

1 better health, education and development.

2 (h) A need to establish and implement national policies and programs to ensure
3 the enhancement of our children's physical, mental/emotional, social/cultural and spiritual
4 development.

5 (i) A need to establish national health indicators for children.

6 (j) An investment for children today will decrease future health care costs, increase
7 chance for school success, and reduce later societal costs in the Republic.

8 **Section 3. Purpose.** This Act shall be construed and applied to promote its underlying
9 purposes and policies.

10 The purposes and policies of this act are as follows:

11 (a) to develop and implement quality services to all children by creating a
12 nationwide early childhood comprehensive system based on a collaborative agreement
13 between community-based organizations, government agencies and interagency support group;

14 (b) to improve the health and education of children in the Republic of Palau;

15 (c) to increase family knowledge, skills and participation in activities that prevent
16 illness and promote health as well as activities that facilitates education, especially in early
17 childhood;

18 (d) to protect children from any means of exploitation and other vulnerabilities;

19 (e) to provide access to a continuum of comprehensive, high quality early
20 childhood programs that meet established standards, promote school readiness, and address
21 the needs of the child and family;

22 (f) to create affordable options for high quality early (childhood) care, health and
23 education services that are designed flexibly to meet the various needs of families; and

24 (g) to ensure smooth and effective transition from early childhood to primary
25 school.

26 **Section 4. Definitions.**

27 (a) "Council" means the Palau National Framework on Early Childhood Council.

1 (b) For the purpose of this legislation for the Republic of Palau “Early Childhood”
2 means the years from birth to age 7.

3 (c) Transition year is defined as the earliest years of primary education, ages 5 to
4 7 child.

5 (d) “Child” as defined by the Convention on the Rights of a Child and 17 PNC
6 §3901. It also means a person who has not reached the age of majority as defined in 21 PNC
7 §105.

8 (e) “Child with Special Needs” as defined by the Convention on the Rights of a
9 child.

10 (f) “Minister” means the Minister of Health or person designated to compile
11 information, prepare reports, or perform any functions required or permitted under this chapter.

12 (g) “Health” means the state of optimal physical, mental, social and spiritual well-
13 being, and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity.

14 (h) “Family” means a group consisting of parents and their children. It also means
15 a group of persons connected by blood, by affinity, or by law.

16 (i) “Development” means the process of growth and differentiation.

17 (j) “Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems” means an integrated and evidence-
18 based and community-based programs that employs a variety of effective approaches to
19 enhance a child’s early growth and development, which includes but it is not limited to early
20 learning/literacy and other quality experience.

21 **Section 5. Financing/Funding.** Services required by this Act shall be funded at a
22 level as requested by the Council or no less than the amount awarded to the Republic of Palau
23 from any external funding sources.

24 **Section 6. Establishment of a Palau National Framework on Early Childhood**
25 **Council.**

26 (a) It is hereby established an entity called the Palau National Framework on Early
27 Childhood Council, hereinafter referred to as the “Council”.

1 (b) Membership- Members shall include, to the maximum extent possible,
2 representatives of the Bureau of Public Health of the Ministry of Health, including a
3 representative of the Family Health Unit of the Bureau of Public Health.

4 (c) representatives of state governments;

5 (d) representatives from faith-based organizations;

6 (e) representatives of the Ministry of Education, including a representative of the
7 Special Education Program;

8 (f) representatives of the Palau Community College;

9 (g) representatives of the licensing board for childcare centers;

10 (h) representatives of the Palau Community Action Agency including a
11 representative of the Heath Start Program;

12 (i) one or more providers of early childhood education program who represent the
13 diverse range of early childhood education program settings;

14 (j) representatives of a parental organization and referral agency;

15 (k) representatives or parents of a child with special needs;

16 (l) representatives of the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs;

17 (m) representatives from private schools;

18 (n) a girl and a boy representing children below the age of 19;

19 (o) a member of women & men's organization.

20 (p) Each member of the Council shall adhere to and execute a collaborative
21 agreements which defines the role and organization of the collaborative groups in the council.

22 (q) The term of the members of he Palau National Framework on Early Childhood
23 Council shall be provided for in its rules and regulations.

24 Section 7. Powers, duties and functions of the National Framework on Early
25 Childhood Council.

26 (a) The Palau National Framework on Early Child hood Council shall have the
27 following powers, duties and function:

- 1 (i) establish the basic guidelines and procedures for the implementation of
2 Palau National Framework on Early Childhood;
- 3 (iii) develop a plan for a comprehensive and unified system of early
4 childhood care, for the Republic of Palau;
- 5 (iv) conduct a periodic survey and evaluation of the early care;
- 6 (v) propose legislations to the Olbiil Era Kelulau and state legislatures
7 pertaining to its programs, powers and duties;
- 8 (vi) coordinate and communicate regularly and provide recommendations
9 to the Ministry of Health and other collaborative agencies.

10 **Section 8. Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation by Ministry of Health.**

- 11 (a) The Ministry of Health shall designate an existing entity to serve as the
12 monitoring agency of the Palau National Framework on Early Childhood Council (Council).
- 13 (b) The Ministry of Health shall design an internal monitoring and reporting system
14 that allows continuous feedback and focus on quality improvement of the various components
15 within the Palau National Framework on Early Childhood.
- 16 (c) The essential purpose is to test the system:
- 17 (1) to ensure that it works in a timely and adequate manner;
- 18 (2) identify where changes may be necessary;
- 19 (3) measures accountability, efficiency and efficacy of the system; and
- 20 (4) provide decision makers and stakeholders with data and reports that will
21 support their abilities to make the best decisions possible for the children and families
22 in the Republic of Palau.
- 23 (d) The Ministry of Health may contract an external evaluator to assess the
24 progress of the programs within the Palau National Framework on Early Childhood.

25 **Section 9. Authorization.** Any sums of money, whether from the United States
26 federal program funds or other external funding sources or from the revenues of the Republic,
27 necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act, are hereby authorized to be appropriated as

1 part of the National Unified Budget for any given fiscal year.

2 **Section 10.** Effective date. This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the
3 President of the Republic of Palau, or upon its becoming law without such approval.

Date: 1-27-09 Introduced by: /s/
Regina Mesebeluu, Senator

/s/
Mlib Tmetuchl
Senate President

/s/
Kathy Kesolei
Senate Vice President

/s/
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Regis Akitaya, Senator

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Toribiong Joel, Senator

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Surangel Whipps, Jr., Senator

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