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**Department of Human Services Announces
Application Period for Preschool Open Doors Program**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Jan. 29, 2015

The Department of Human Services (DHS) will be accepting applications for its Preschool Open Doors (POD) program between March 1 and April 30, 2015. Applications received during this period will be considered for preschool participation between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016.

POD is a DHS child care subsidy program that provides statewide services to eligible low- and moderate-income families sending their children to a licensed preschool, prior to kindergarten entry. The goal of POD is to promote school readiness and to provide children with the opportunity to gain essential foundational skills they need to be successful in life.

Families are reminded that a child must be five years old on or before July 31 to enter kindergarten. Families with children born between August 1, 2010 and July 31, 2011 are encouraged to apply for the POD program. Underserved or at-risk children will receive priority consideration for the 2015-2016 POD year.

POD applications will be available from the DHS contractor, PATCH, beginning March 1, 2015. To reserve your packet on Oahu call 791-2130; on the Neighbor Islands call 1-800-746-5620. Starting March 1, applications also can be downloaded from the PATCH website <http://www.patchHawaii.org>.

Applications must be received by April 30, 2015 to be considered for the 2015-2016 program year. Return the completed POD application to:

PATCH - POD
560 North Nimitz Highway, Suite 218
Honolulu, HI 96817

POD subsidies help Hawaii families pay tuition at any of the state's 424 licensed group child care facilities (i.e. preschools). Eligible families may select the preschool of their choice. Contact the PATCH office to find a preschool in your area.

Priorities for POD program selection are detailed in HAR 17-799 posted on the DHS website at <http://humanservices.hawaii.gov/admin-rules-2/admin-rules-for-programs/>. For more information about DHS programs and services, visit www.humanservices.hawaii.gov.

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