HAWAI'I STATE COMMISSION ON FATHERHOOD



SUMMER 2025

https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/fatherhood/

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SPONSORSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

- NANAIKAPONO CHURCH
- MAUI FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES
- STORYBOOK THEATRE OF HAWAII
- KUALOA-HEEIA ECUMENICAL
 YOUTH PROJECT
- HAWAII CHILDREN'S DISCOVERY
 CENTER
- ADULT AND TEEN CHALLENGE
 PACWEST OAHU



Commissioner Cardines at Nanaikapono
Church's Be a Hero to Your Children and
Community Gathering.



Adult and Teen Challenge PacWest Oahu pictured at their fundraiser gala event.

FATHERHOOD COMMISSION MEMBERS

CHAIR - JEFF ESMOND
Representing the City and County of Honolulu

VICE CHAIR - MARTY OLIPHANT Representing the City and County of Honolulu

ALAN SUNIO
Representing the Hawai'i Coalition for Dads

ALLEN CARDINES
Representing the City and County of Honolulu

MARK AUGUSTINE
Representing the City and County of Maui

BRIAN ALSTON
Representing the County of Kauai

NEEL CHAUHAN
Representing the City and County of Honolulu

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FATHERHOOD AND TRAUMA

This summer's newsletter lead article builds on the informative April 2025 presentation by Kev Thompson, Project Manager for Hawai'i's Office of Wellness and Resilience, which highlighted the intersections of fatherhood and trauma.

As part of our ongoing commitment to promoting healthy family relationships, we explore the nature of trauma, its various forms, how it affects fathers and their children, and practical steps families can take toward healing.

WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Trauma is "an emotional response to a terrible event" that overwhelms a person's ability to cope, often producing intense fear, helplessness, dissociation, or confusion.

While experiences vary, trauma fundamentally disrupts an individual's sense of safety and well-being. In fathers, unaddressed trauma can quietly influence daily interactions, emotional availability, and the consistency of support provided to children.

TYPES OF TRAUMA

Trauma manifests in several forms:

Acute Trauma: Results from a single distressing event (e.g., a severe accident).

Chronic Trauma: Stems from repeated or prolonged stressors (e.g., ongoing domestic violence or childhood abuse).

Complex Trauma: Involves exposure to multiple, varied traumatic events over time. A fourth category, secondary or vicarious trauma, can occur when caregivers absorb the

emotional burden of loved ones who've experienced trauma

IMPACT ON MEN, FATHERS, AND PARENTING

Trauma can impair emotional regulation, making it harder for fathers to respond calmly under stress

Common reactions include irritability, difficulty concentrating, and withdrawal—barriers to consistent, nurturing parenting. Fathers carrying unresolved trauma may struggle with bonding, discipline, and co-parenting communication, potentially eroding trust and stability in the home. Recognizing these patterns is the first step toward restoring healthy father-child relationships.

IMPACT ON CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS.

Children exposed to trauma—either directly or through a parent's unaddressed stress—face risks to brain development, stress-response systems, immune function, and learning processes.

Adolescents may exhibit anxiety, withdrawal, or behavioral problems; younger children often show regression, somatic complaints, or difficulty expressing needs. Early identification of these signs enables families and professionals to intervene before long-term consequences set in.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT TRAUMA.

Early Recognition & Open Communication

Encourage honest conversations about feelings; validate struggles without judgment.

Adopt Trauma-Informed Practices

Frameworks like Community Connections' Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model (TREM) and its malefocused adaptation, M-TREM, offer evidence-based tools for healing.

Leverage Local Resources

Contact Ke Ke'ena Kūpa'a Mauli Ola (Office of Wellness and Resilience) for fact sheets, training, and referral networks.

Seek Professional Support

Trauma-informed parenting programs and mental-health services can guide families through structured interventions and peer support.

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2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION & STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

INTRODUCTION

The 2025 legislative session brought forth critical policy advancements that align with the Hawai'i State Commission on Fatherhood's mission. From strengthening family stability to enhancing economic opportunities, lawmakers focused on issues that directly impact fathers and families. As the Commission continues to advocate for father involvement, this report highlights key legislative developments and strategic opportunities. By integrating these policy shifts into our long-term goals, we can further empower fathers, enrich communities, and promote family resilience across the islands.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The 2025 Hawai'i Legislature advanced priorities aligned with fatherhood advocacy, including:

- Housing: \$400M investment, ensuring family stability.
- Education: HB 692 expands preschool access, offering opportunities for father engagement.
- Health & Reentry: \$4M allocated for wraparound services benefiting formerly incarcerated fathers.
- Economic Stability: Workforce training and support programs enhance fathers' financial security.

Strategic Plan Correlation & Next Steps

- Education: Integrate fatherhood-focused curricula in early learning programs.
- Reentry Support: Advocate for mental health services and parenting resources.
- Housing: Connect fathers with workforce development for economic stability.
- Policy Reform: Engage in legislative advocacy for parental leave and family equity.

By aligning with state initiatives, the Commission strengthens its mission to empower fathers, stabilize families, and build resilient communities.



Five Ways to
Restore FatherChild Relationships
in Hawai'i

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Partnering with local organizations and agencies to create support systems for fathers.

LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT

Advocating for policies that support fathers and their roles in families.

EDUCATIONAL INVOLVEMENT

Encouraging fathers to engage more in their children's education and addressing the educational disparities that affect boys in particular.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Focusing on improving the physical and mental health of men in Hawai'i, which directly impacts their ability to be present and supportive fathers.

EMOTIONAL WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Providing platforms for fathers to connect emotionally with their children.

CONCLUSION

Restoring the father-child bond in Hawai'i requires a holistic approach that acknowledges the lasting impacts of trauma while uplifting fathers through community, policy, and healing-centered practices. These five strategies offer a path forward—empowering men to reconnect, redefine their roles, and build resilience. Together, they strengthen the family unit and help create a future where every child feels supported, seen, and secure.

SPOTLIGHT: EMPOWERING FATHERS & FAMILIES

In this edition, we shine the spotlight on outgoing Commissioner Allen Cardines, Jr.—a devoted father, visionary pastor, and catalyst for community transformation in his beloved hometown of Nānākuli. We thank Commissioner Cardines for his time on the Commission on Fatherhood.

As Senior Pastor at Nanaikapono Church since 2003, Pastor Allen dedicates his time to building safer, stronger families through the power of Aloha. Commissioner Cardines brings deep roots and deeper compassion to every effort—whether training family advocates, supporting foster families, mentoring incarcerated fathers or mobilizing Neighborhood Security Watch programs.

Commissioner Cardines is also the heart behind "Be a Hero to Your Children," a transformative initiative that empowers men to embrace their roles with courage, humility, and love. From boardrooms to prayer circles, from schoolyards to prison ministries, his message is unwavering: fatherhood is leadership—and it starts with healing, hope, and showing up.

RESOURCES

RESOURCE LIST

- O'ahu
- Maui.
- Kaua'i

SUPPORT SERVICES

Details on counseling, educational programs, and support groups specifically designed for fathers in Hawai'i.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Reach out to the Hawai'i State - Commission on Fatherhood and other key organizations for support and information. Jeff Esmond, Chair, Hawaii State Commission on Fatherhood 808.550.0080

fatherhoodcommission.hi@gmail.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS (2)-

HS-COF is looking for Commissioners to represent the following counties: Hawai'i. Please email fatherhoodcommission.hi@gmail.com for more information.