



## Survey on Hawai'i's Young Children's Health

**Background:** The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) partnered with the University of Hawai'i's Healthy Hawai'i Evaluation Team (HHET) to develop a new survey that focused on young children's health. The survey aimed to gain a better understanding of current practices in nutrition, physical activity, and other wellness behaviors among young children in Hawai'i, and to identify areas where further support and resources may be useful. This information is intended to help DOH, early childhood care and education (ECE) providers, and community partners expand their knowledge of the needs of young children in Hawai'i, particularly as there is a data gap with children in the 0 – 5 age group.

**Survey Development:** The survey instrument was created in collaboration with DOH and HHET. Regular meetings were held with DOH and HHET to discuss the number of survey questions, the specific language of the survey questions and response options, the target audience, and the dates for survey distribution. Final survey questions were chosen based on the need expressed by DOH, as well as prioritizing information that has not recently been gathered for young children in Hawai'i. Once the survey questions were selected, DOH and HHET worked together to: 1) further refine the language of the survey questions; 2) determine eligibility criteria for respondents; 3) write the survey introduction; and 4) prepare the email invitation to be distributed to potential participants. HHET then created an online survey using the survey tool, Qualtrics, and an initial round of pilot testing took place to gather feedback. This helped ensure that the content was accurate and the response options were clear and logical.

**Survey Description:** The survey questions were adapted from multiple sources that have previously been validated: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), Missouri Child Health Assessment Program Survey, and National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH). Questions were targeted toward parents who had at least one child between 0 – 5 years old. The survey included a total of 26 questions divided into 6 main sections and covered the following topics: nutrition, sleep duration, screen time behavior, oral health, community, and demographics.

**Survey Dissemination and Recruitment:** The survey was open for participation for approximately one month from November 9, 2021 to December 6, 2021. Recruitment was conducted by HCAN, Hawai'i Children's Action Network, who held a virtual community information session regarding the survey and recruitment process. HCAN also designed and distributed a digital informational flyer, which was sent to organizations and individuals that work with, or provide services to, caregivers and parents of children ages 0 – 5. These organizations then distributed this information to parents and caregivers in their communities and networks. During the final week of recruitment, HCAN also designed and distributed targeted social media advertisements through HCAN's Facebook and Instagram accounts to parents and caregivers. The first 400 survey respondents received a \$15 electronic gift card as a token of appreciation.

**Summary and Results:** There were 4,498 initial responses to the survey. After reviewing the eligibility and inclusion criteria, the final number of respondents included for analyses was 3,148. An internal report was produced for DOH that describes the survey eligibility criteria, recruitment methods, respondents, incentive distribution, and presents the findings and recommended strategies to improve future surveys about young children's health. The results will be used to support programmatic planning, grant applications, contribute to discussions with stakeholders, and to help inform policies for future legislative sessions. Given this was a pilot survey, it is reasonable to expect that minor revisions may be necessary for any future iterations in order to best meet the needs of those working to enhance the health of young children. Overall, this was a collaborative and informative endeavor to obtain nutrition, physical activity, and wellness information among children in the 0 – 5 age group in Hawai'i.