Putting them in a learning environment at 3, it teaches them what is expected of you in the classrooms.

Sherry Crandall, PACT’s West Hawaii area manager, said of the gathering of parents in a place that’s geared toward child development. “There’s a lot of a-ha moments.”

The monthly meetings are not only an opportunity for the parents to learn, but a chance to lead in their child’s learning environment. The committee is simply one of several ways PACT Head Start families are involved in their children’s education. “(Parents) need to be part of and helpful and in charge of their kids’ education as well. It’s a good way for us to start,” said Marbella Alford, Parent Committee chairwoman.

PACT is a wrap-around, family-focused nonprofit that provides low-income families with access to early childhood education. Statistics show kids exposed to early education are more likely to graduate high school. But more than that, PACT guides parents in how to develop and foster their families.

Via family advocates, PACT Head Start offers parents help with finding a job, housing, formatting a resume, and putting a budget together. “Anything like that can help (parents) have a good sense of, ‘I’m worth it,’ because we deal with some families where their past has not been as fruitful as what we would like to be, so we’re there to encourage them, to empower them — so that when our families are successful, the children are successful,” Crandall said.

True to its name, PACT encourages parents and children to actually be together in the classroom with parent-volunteer opportunities. In her son Matteo’s class, Alford volunteers regularly by reading stories.

“This particular morning, his mother reads with his teacher, Chotika Gaspar. “It’s wonderful,” said Alford.

“Mid-story, teacher Gaspar asked Mattaeo to point to the pictures,” Alford said. “He’s like, ‘I want to read it myself.’”

Above, Matteo Alford reads with his teacher, Chotika Gaspar. GITA HOWARD/WEST HAWAII TODAY
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Keiki Day

Celebrating 50 years... together

MESSAGE FROM RYAN KUSUMOTO
CEO OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN TOGETHER

“Together” is a powerful word. By working together, we become more efficient. By sharing our strengths, we create a more powerful voice for our cause. By sharing our stories, we create a more powerful understanding of the issues we face.

This Keiki Day is a celebration of our 50-year journey and the work we’ve accomplished together. We’re proud to present original artwork and stories from keiki all over the state, each sharing what the word “together” means to them.

We’re also celebrating healthy relationships that bring people together — the bond between a child and his or her parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle, brother or sister, cousin, godparent or teacher that provides guidance, safety and support. For 50 years, Parents And Children Together has worked to strengthen these important bonds with our educational, social service and community building programs.

Most of all, we’d like to thank you for standing with Parents And Children Together all these years, supporting our mission and sharing our vision of a peaceful, safe and vibrant Hawaii where everyone has the opportunity to fulfill their dreams. With your support, we hope to continue serving Hawaii for the next 50 years and beyond.

Mahalo,
Ryan Kusumoto
CEO, Parents And Children Together
Celebrating Hawai‘i’s Keiki

Childhood is about innocence and joy. It is about exploration and freedom. Please join me in celebrating Hawai‘i’s keiki and those who make a difference in their lives.

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* Sign up for Bike Fest and Fun in the Sun will begin in late May.
Keiki Day

2018 KEIKI DAY CONTEST WINNERS

Writer: Gideon Clark
School: Kealakehe High School
Grade: 11

“Together” We Ruined the World
Together we are evil,
Together we are cruel.
We fight one another,
Fright like frivious fools.
We all are different,
Yet all the same.
We just can’t seem to find,
The right person to blame.
For all our muttering problems,
All our flaws and views.

Middle School Artist: Raylynn Lopez
School: Kealakehe Intermediate
Grade: 6

Artist: Carlos Nakamoto
School: Konawaena Elementary
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Matteo, “Do you want to play?” The 4-year-old responded by eagerly bolting to the other side of the room to chat with his classmates.

“He’s nonstop from the time he wakes up to the time his head hits the pillow. A Tasmanian devil, slash Dennis the Menace, slash — you know, he’s just a kolohe baby,” Alford said, and laughed.

PACT has helped the family get a handle on Matteo’s high energy by instilling routines inside and outside of the classroom.

“He just has his routine down and it’s really nice, like, ‘Mama, after this we have to do this,’ and he sings his songs in the morning,” Alford said.

“Four him it was trying to get him to control his active behavior, and you know so it was the complete opposite of Kainoa,” she said.

Kainoa Alford is Alford’s oldest son, a recent Head Start graduate and now 6-year-old kindergartner.

While Matteo runs wild and social, Kainoa is more studious and introverted.

“Central to the program is school readiness, preparing children from the ripe ages of 3 to 5 for both the social and academic components of school.

“PACT: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Kealakehe Head Start teacher Sandra Daiker plays catch with her preschool students. LAURA RUMINSKI/WEST HAWAII TODAY FILE PHOTO
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Pictured: Brown Keiki – Thor, Kynzie & Caspar

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