



Congresswoman  
**Rosa L. DeLauro**

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*Press Release*

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**Connecticut's Summit on the Early Years Ensures State Continues to  
Prioritize Children's Well-being**

*First to duplicate National Children's Summit at state level*

**Hartford, CT** – Congresswoman Rosa L. DeLauro (Conn.-3) joined with state officials, and leading scientists and experts in a wide array of areas, including early childhood learning, health care, and child care to participate in the Connecticut Summit on the Early Years. This summit is the first to replicate the National Summit on America's Children held earlier this year in Washington, D.C., and of which DeLauro was a co-chair.

“New and improved science on young children and their families has demonstrated that there is a huge chasm between what we know is good for America's children and families versus what we as a country do about it. And when it comes to our children, Connecticut is already leading the way in many areas,” said DeLauro. “The Connecticut Summit on the Early Years will further focus the states attention on this chasm, the problems that ensue if we do nothing and the opportunities for the state to use science to dramatically improve the opportunity for children in this country.”

During the day-long Summit the expert panelists will present recent scientific findings on how children's brains are shaped, how positive behaviors can be encouraged, and how investments in early childhood create success in later years. They will focus on five subjects: the science of early childhood development; early learning; health and mental health; income and family support; and a systems approach to young children's needs. This Summit is a critical part of ensuring that state policies on children reflect the latest scientific developments.

Below is the text of DeLauro's remarks [as prepared for delivery].

“Thank you for that generous introduction. I am proud to be here, and proud that Connecticut is first to hold a state conversation modeled on the 2007 Congressional Summit on America's Children. I helped organize that Summit this spring, and I could not be more excited to see the momentum carry us forward today and beyond in my home state.

“Our goal here, as it was earlier this year, is to bring the most current national research to the public and the policymakers. And we are well on our way with such a powerful gathering of leaders and activists, researchers, and educators – focusing on early childhood development and strengthening policies that recognize the needs of families and support parents. Thanks for being here.

“Thank you for your kind words Speaker Amman, I am delighted to share the stage with you, as you continue to fight tirelessly for our state's children. And thank you as well to our moderators today, Elaine Zimmerman with the Connecticut Commission on Children and George Coleman with the Department of Education, for making this day possible—and for making so much more possible for our children. Together with our esteemed friend Dr. Zigler of Yale University and your unceasing advocacy you helped create Connecticut's comprehensive school readiness law which, with attention to health, safety and learning, has become a national model.

“And we continue to move in the right direction – Connecticut is the first state to bring results based accountability to the way our government approaches these challenges. Formal accountability is part of the budget process now.

Thanks to Senator Toni Harp and Rep. Denise Merrill, everyone in the legislature and executive branch is trained to look at population trends, ways to improve or turn the curve in a trend. And we all know Janice Gruendel leads the governor's cabinet on early childhood development. With *'Ready by 5 & Fine by 9'* they are looking at pre-natal through grade three, not just preschool. She is a close friend and always has my ear.

“Ultimately, it is about confronting, the chasm that exists between what we know is good for America's children and what we actually do as a country to make it happen. We must fashion a public policy agenda that focuses on the earliest years of life.

“We know that 80 percent of brain development occurs by age three. Prominent scientists all agreed – the first year is critical in laying foundation for future development, with neuroscience pointing the way to how positive relationships and experiences play a large role in the development of the child's brain. And while early abuse, neglect, or trauma can have a profound negative impact on a child's development, we also know he or she will recover far more quickly with the right care in the right environment.

“However, these are not just children's issues, they are family issues. At the national Summit in Washington we talked about our responsibility to confront the unique challenges that INCOME INSECURITY places on working and middle class families. With our fortunes are increasingly tied to an evermore volatile economy, when things do not go as planned, families are on their own with very limited protection and very little means to recover.

“There is no simple answer. And at the national summit we probed exactly what is at stake and what is possible. Dr. Lawrence Aber from NYU, for example, made it clear there is no longer any question that income and material hardship matter for children's development. We have a responsibility to build on policies already in place, he said, and take key steps like increasing the minimum wage and expanding the EITC and the children's tax credit.

“In Washington, we are working hard to follow through with real policy on the challenges we confronted during the Summit. Just last Thursday in Congress, Democrats and Republicans, approved new legislation to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program and provide health care for 10 million children. It was about standing with the states and standing with the American people to make real everything we are discussing here today. Sadly, this administration continues to undermine that great promise, pushing back against the progress we are making.

“When those kind of obstacles are created on the national level, its individual families and children right here who feel the consequences. But here in Connecticut, we are still finding ways to respond, still making a lot progress, as the first state in the nation to create a goal and benchmarks for reducing child poverty – 50 percent in ten years. And you are not afraid to talk and address this difficult problem – bringing in the best economists in the nation to advise you on direction. I will send someone on my behalf to take careful notes at this December meeting.

“And now, Connecticut is also the first state to follow our national summit, with a state conversation like today's. Using research and best practices, policy will guide us to the outcomes that will help our children succeed. Today, you are taking what we did in Washington to the next step. You are putting Connecticut center stage. You are looking also at oral language development, and of great interest, you are looking at what we need to do to create a real system from birth to five years. Thank you, Connecticut, for leading the way.

“Speaker Pelosi has a few comments to share by video. Indeed, she planted the first seed, the original idea for our Congressional Summit – it was a great success and real sign of her priorities as she leads our new Congress with a new direction.

“Your work here today carries those priorities forward. It is a sign that we can build new lasting partnerships across old boundaries. I know we will, because, for our children's sake, we must. It is up to us to do it together and to do it for them, nothing could be more important.”

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