

Testimony Regarding

An Act Concerning the State Purchase of Service Contracts for Health and Human Services

Public Hearing March 13, 2007

History:

State Funded Centers (SFC) were established by the legislature in 1967 under the Department of Social Services. State Funded Centers have been serving low-moderate income families for over 35 years. They have been a safety net for many families and help them to avoid welfare. State Funded Centers benefit family's statewide.

Why Bill 1396 is important

If the State Funded Centers unit rate system goes out to bid, there will be a loss of continuity of care and services.

- The Torrington Child Care Center is funded for 30 slots. If the unit rate goes out to bid and we only receive 10 slots, the other 20 families who have been in our center would have to pay full cost of care or switch to a center who received the slots. This is a disruption to the family and can have dire consequences for children. There is a great likelihood that the 20 families mentioned above would not be accepted in the other programs due to currently enrolled families who qualify.
- State Funded Centers are mandated to provide 80% of a child's daily nutrition. We serve children breakfast, lunch and snack. The Child and Adult Nutrition Program does not cover the full cost of the food program. If the center lost unit rate reimbursement which subsidizes the food program, we would not be able to provide what could be some children's only nutritious meals.
- There would be a loss of quality care. All State funded centers are NAEYC accredited. The loss of funding would put the center at risk of losing qualified teachers and therefore loss of accreditation.
- This would jeopardize our partnership with the City of Torrington and our other local collaborators, which took many years to build. Over the past 29 years, we have built a reputation for offering a quality program that ensures children arrive at kindergarten ready to learn. This would be a great loss not only to the City of Torrington but also to its families.
- This center was built with bond funds. The bond funds would not be utilized for their original purpose if the center had to close due to lack of Department of Social Services funds.

We have had 29 years of experience working with The Department of Social Services and the State of Connecticut. It has been a wonderful partnership and has helped many families to grow and achieve financial stability. Please pass bill 1396 so we can continue to offer the quality care that the families in Torrington have come to depend on. Thank you in advance,

Sincerely,

Mary Cecchinato

Mary Cecchinato

Executive Director Torrington Child Care Center