

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1220
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
MARCH 14, 2007**

Dear Chairs Handley and Sayers and Distinguished Members of the Public Health Committee:

I would like to offer testimony in support of Senate Bill 1220 before your committee today, Wednesday, March 14, 2007.

I have been an early intervention teacher in Connecticut for over 20 years. During this time I have seen the need for birth-to-three services increase and have seen corresponding growth in the program.

Unfortunately, in July 2003 a few categories of children previously served by the Connecticut Birth-to-Three System were deemed no longer eligible. This included children with significant delays in speech only as well as infants with very low birth weight or other medical complications.

This exclusion of this group of children for the past four years conflicts with all the medical and educational research indicating that children with developmental delays make the most gains when intervention and education are provided as early in life as possible.

The proposal before you today goes a long way towards solidifying Connecticut's commitment to serving infants and toddlers with special needs. The bill would restore eligibility to the group of children heretofore described. In addition, the bill would expand eligibility to children with a broader range of developmental and learning problems which, if left unaddressed, can decrease the child's readiness for preschool and kindergarten.

I urge the committee members to support this bill and make Connecticut a full team player in Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Thank you,

Steven Tucker
State School Teacher / Early Intervention Teacher
DMR Early Connections Program