



Shaping Our Children's School Success

5426
Middletown School Readiness Council

**Testimony Presented to the Committee on Human Services
of the Connecticut General Assembly
February 5, 2009**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on **H.B. 5426, *An Act Concerning Child Care Subsidies For The Unemployed Under The Care 4 Kids Program***. H.B. 5426 proposes to continue the child care subsidy for a parent who becomes unemployed for a period of twenty-six weeks. We wholeheartedly support this proposal. Presently, unemployed parents can continue to receive their child care subsidy for only a four week period, which is far too brief a time to secure new employment, especially in these difficult and unprecedented economic times. Since unemployment benefits are granted for a twenty-six week period; it makes good sense for child care subsidies to be granted for that same length of time.

Keeping children in their child care program and providing nurturing educational experiences is best for children. Children need stability to thrive, especially when the family is already in crisis over a job loss. We are seeing an increase in the number of children in our community who must leave their child care program because their parent became unemployed. While that parent searches for new employment, the child is left with an array of different caretakers. If we want our young children to have nurturing experiences and quality care, leaving them in their child care program in a familiar environment and staff who know them well is the practice we must support.

Additionally, our child care programs need the steady income from subsidies to operate. As more and more of our parents become unemployed, fewer and fewer child care subsidies will be received by programs making them more and more at risk of closing to all families.

This is the right time to grant an extension of subsidy benefits to parents. Connecticut will not have to bear the full cost of this proposed extension, as the federal stimulus package includes \$2 billion in funds for the Child Care and Development Block Grant.

We thank you for this opportunity to comment on House Bill 5426. We ask that you support this bill so that families who become unemployed can find new work.

The Middletown School Readiness Council

Sebastian Giuliano, Mayor

Dr. Michael J. Frechette, Superintendent of Schools

Betsy Morgan, Council Chair, Middlesex Coalition for Children

Terri Ayala, Parent and Literacy Coordinator
Monica Belyea, Middlesex Hospital Family Advocacy Program
Wendy Berlind, Middletown Cooperative Nursery School
Ed Bonilla, Middlesex United Way
William Boyd, Board of Education
Paula Cabrera, Early Head Start
Cindy Cappetta, Director, Even Start Program
Jewel Christy, St. Francis Church
Sheila Daniels, Family Day Care Provider, Board of Education, Parent
Julie Deak, Community Health Center
Lisa Ellis, Director, CRT Head Start Program
Alice Ellovich, Dept. of Social Services
Christine Fahey, School Readiness Coordinator
Dr. Stephen Gaarder, Parent
James Gaudreau, Principal, Wilbert Snow School
Tina Gomes, Special Projects, Manager & Budget Analyst to the Mayor
Dr. John Hennelly, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Renata Lantos, Principal, Bielefield School
Dr. Jerome Long, Grandparent
Megan Lubert, Coordinator, Child and Family Agency Early Head Start Program
Susan Macary, Family Advocacy Program, Middlesex Hospital
Donna Marino, Parent Resource Coordinator
Dr. Cliff O'Callahan, Pediatrician, Middlesex Family Practice/Family Residency
Christine O'Grady, P.L.T.I. Coordinator, Parent
Maureen Partyka, Director, Family Resource Centers
Alvenis Reddick, AME Cross Street Zion Church
Kitty Robinson, Children's Department Head, Russell Library
Dr. Robert Rosenbaum, Chair, PIMMS, Wesleyan University
Alice Torres, Area Cooperative Education Services