



Carelot Children's Center

"Building Strong Foundations for a Lifetime of Learning"

Center Locations

203 Boston Post Rd
Waterford, CT
860-447-1163

315 Flanders Rd
East Lyme, CT
860-691-1527

155 North St
Danielson, CT
860-779-0611

86 S. Main St
Brooklyn, CT
860-779-0400

6 Old Willimantic Rd
Chaplin, CT
860-455-0112

School Age Locations

Waterford
Elementary

Waterford @
The Friendship School

New London @
Harbor School

Voluntown Elementary

Griswold Elementary

Public Health Committee:

Re: (RHB)5306

Carelot Children's Center and Carelot Clubhouse strongly supports this legislation. We feel that if the State Department of Education deems a facility appropriate for students all day long that same facility is appropriate for after school hours.

Carelot Children's Center and Carelot Clubhouses have been in operation for 12 years in the State of CT. It has always been our policy to exceed State standards. All of our centers (with the exception of one pending) are NAEYC accredited and have a good record with the State Department of Health.

In August of 2004 Carelot began the process of opening an after school program in The Friendship School, a multi cultural magnet preschool serving Waterford and New London. We were unable to attain a license at first and had to run as an exception under the guidance of the Board of Education due to the school not receiving a certificate of occupancy by the opening of school. A certificate of occupancy is required to obtain a daycare license from the State of Connecticut but as we found out public schools can operate without one. We choose to maintain state ratios and standards even without a license but we were not mandated to do so and other organizations can make the other choice to operate outside of safe ratios and standards.

In September of 2007 Carelot opened more Clubhouses in Waterford's Clark Lane Elementary School and Griswold Elementary School. Both of these program received licenses. Some of the items we were sited on include plug covers, blind cords hanging too low, dirty vents in bathroom, hand washing signs, and peeling paint. Most of these items are out of our control to fix and we had to wait upon the schools to complete the maintenance before we would be licensed. We were lucky in these two instances where the schools were very receptive to the changes and therefore we received our license and continue to enjoy a license in Griswold. There are hardships however, it is nearly impossible to keep the plug covers from disappearing as children during the day and teacher remove them, covered trash cans disappear weekly as the teachers think they belong to the school and move them around, hand washing signs get ripped down regularly and have to be replaced. We are a for profit company so all of these expenses add up and result in less money being spent on important items like programming, art supplies, more staffing, more sliding fee scales and more corporate

scholarships. It is absurd to hold one organization (a public school) to one standard in a facility and another organization (the after school program) to another in the exact same facility.

We remain operating under the New London Board of Education because we are unable to receive a license in these facilities based on environmental concerns. The main problems in New London is the playground does not meet state standards and there is peeling paint on the ceiling in the cafeteria where we hold the program. This is the very same playground these children play on every day during recess and the same cafeteria they eat lunch in every day.

We are also currently operating under the auspices of the Waterford Board of Education as Oswegotchie Elementary still does not have a certificate of occupancy for us to present to the State.

The two main positive items that will come out of this bill will be more licensed programs which will result in our children being safeguarded and more programs being available to towns that would not normally receive a program. Carelot chooses which towns to operate in based on how many children will need care. The amount of children needed if these unnecessary costs were eliminated would decrease and therefore allow more towns to be served by quality programs. As a parent and an educator maintaining ratios and having properly trained and qualified staff is far more important to me than exceeding the standards already set forth in a public school.

Finally I would like to note that I do not believe it is right to lower our standards when it comes to the health and safety of our children. I think you should also consider some legislation which will force the Department of Education to meet the State of CT Health Department standards in all of their facilities. If these standards are what we believe will keep our children safe why are they not enforced in all educational facilities? I appreciate your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Melissa Bergeron
Vice President
Carelot Children's Center