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Visit us on the Internet at <http://www.danburychildrenfirst.org>

February 11, 2010

Re: Support of Allocations to Benefit Children

Dear Senator Toni Harp, Representative John Geragosian, and Appropriations Committee members,

On behalf of Danbury Children First and the Danbury School Readiness Council, we urge your support of increased allocations for the Care4Kids program to a total of at least \$96 million. This program provides Connecticut families of lower economic means the resources to have safe, affordable childcare while they work.

Danbury Children First also urges your support of preservation of the Parent Trust, the Commission on Children, and Nurturing Families program at locations that are not hospitals. These three were not funded in Governor' Reil's recent budget, and have benefits beyond the initial investment of state dollars. Each of these provides resources and services that benefit children and in dollars repays the initial investment many times over.

- The Parent Trust provides education for parents to improve conditions for children, and parents do this work as volunteers in our communities.
- The Commission on Children serves as a spokesperson, developer of best practices for children, and informer on public policy that good for children. Our children cannot not speak for themselves in these arenas, so if you must cut their funding please do not cut all of the Commission's funding, for the benefit of our state's children.
- The Nuturing Families programs have a proven track record of preventing child abuse and neglect. Why would some programs that are not run by hospitals be singled out for elimination? This program saves children and also saves the state money by these children not ending up in the DCF system, and/or prisons.

We urge your support of the Governor's proposed budget in the areas of education funding, especially to school districts, for Family Resource Centers in schools; for early care and education, including School Readiness, Head Start and State-funded centers; and for early intervention services (Birth to Three) for children with special developmental needs. We also ask that as you go through your deliberations, you keep the impact on children in mind, especially those of lower economic means, those with special needs, and those who are not faring as well in school as their peers. All children are precious and they are our future.

Danbury Children First is a parent-led organization with over 80 volunteers, members and partners that reaches 8,000 families annually. Danbury Children First works in partnership with the Danbury School Readiness Council that serves over 300 children, and is a member and supporter of the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance policy agenda that includes increasing resources to young children and their families to ensure that every child can reach their potential.

If you would like additional information, please contact me at (203) 797-8088 or at Lindak@danburychildrenfirst.org. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Sincerely,

Linda A. Kosko
Executive Director

The purpose of Danbury Children First is *to involve, empower, and support parents* to improve the lives of children at home, in school and in the community