

Testimony to the Appropriations Committee
Governor's Budget Recommendations for Early Childhood
HB 6380

Senator Harp, Representative Walker and Committee Members,

I am Elizabeth A. Aschenbrenner, Director of Early Childhood Initiatives, EASTCONN Regional Educational Service Center. I present this testimony on behalf of the Northeast School Readiness Council, representing the communities of Killingly, Plainfield and Putnam. Referred to as the Quiet Corner, our percentages of at-risk, substantiated child abuse and neglect and preschool experience prior to kindergarten are consistent with those of the larger cities.

First let me acknowledge that you have a very difficult job ahead of you! The decisions that you must make in the next several months will be difficult ones.

The Northeast School Readiness Council supports the recent comments made by Senator Harp regarding the importance of investing in early childhood education and full day kindergarten, especially the most vulnerable of our state. The long-term impact of investments in high quality preschool early care and education and have been substantiated by recent cost-benefit analysis of the Chicago Child-parent Centers. Below is the abstract that summarizes their findings.

Age 26 Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Child-Parent Center Early Education Program

Arthur J. Reynolds, Judy A. Temple, Barry A. B. White, and Suh-Ruu Ou, University of Minnesota and Dylan L. Robertson, Chicago Public Schools

Using data collected up to age 26 in the Chicago Longitudinal Study, this cost-benefit analysis of the Child-Parent Centers (CPC) is the first for a sustained publicly funded early intervention. The program provides services for low-income families beginning at age 3 in 20 school sites. Kindergarten and school-age services are provided up to age 9 (third grade). Findings from a complete cohort of over 1,400 program and comparison group participants indicated that the CPCs had economic benefits in 2007 dollars that exceeded costs. The preschool program provided a total return to society of \$10.83 per dollar invested (18% annual return). The primary sources of benefits were increased earnings and tax revenues and averted criminal justice system costs. The school-age program had a societal return of \$3.97 per dollar invested (10% annual return). The extended intervention program (4-6 years) had a societal return of \$8.24 (18% annual return). Estimates were robust across a wide range of analyses including Monte Carlo simulations. Males, 1-year preschool participants, and children from higher risk families derived greater benefits. Findings provide strong evidence that sustained programs can contribute to well-being for individuals and society.

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We encourage you to support the Governor's Proposed Budget regarding the funding of school readiness, child day care, Family Resource Centers and Head Start and thank the Appropriations Committee for its long standing history of supporting young children and their families.