

New Britain Early Childhood Collaborative

Testimony of Merrill Gay, Executive Director of the New Britain Early Childhood Collaborative on SB 1106

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischman and distinguished members of the committee,

My name is Merrill Gay, I am the Executive Director of the New Britain Early Childhood Collaborative, and I am here to express my strong support for SB 1106, An Act Concerning the Establishment of the Department of Early Education and Child Development.

The state of Connecticut has a number of early childhood programs aimed at providing child care and early education to the young children in our state. Each of these programs meets an early care need that we have identified, and each focuses on the job that they have been assigned. And, I believe, each does a remarkable job fulfilling their roles. However, these programs – all focused on early care and education – often operate in isolation, fragmented because they are administered by several different agencies, with different data collection requirements, reporting and methods of payment. There is little or no coordination or collaboration between the programs. Without uniform data collection, there is no way to track our overall progress. Our overall effectiveness in the area of early childhood is difficult to measure or hold accountable.

A Department of Early Education and Child Development would position Connecticut to not only coordinate our early childhood efforts, but reduce the redundancies created when multiple agencies are collecting and analyzing similar data and reports, essentially duplicating efforts. And, even more importantly, a Department of Early Education and Child Development would focus solely on meeting the needs of our youngest children. It is a job that is essential to the long-term well-being of our state.

I can speak from the experience of the New Britain Early Childhood Collaborative about the intrinsic value of focusing the planning and coordination of early childhood services, as our community has engaged in an intensive process to coordinate our approach to the health, care, education, nutrition and family support for young children.

The creation of a designated Department of Early Education and Child Development will have a similar impact. Such a focus can only improve our effectiveness in ensuring that all children are healthy, ready for school, and prepared for lifelong success.

c/o Community Foundation of Greater New Britain
74A Vine Street New Britain, CT 06053

(860) 229-6018 x309

www.NBdiscovery.org