



Connecticut
Early Childhood
Alliance

Testimony of Ann Pratt, Executive Director, Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance
HB 5293 and HB 6282

Representative Urban and members of the committee,

Please accept my written testimony regarding two raised bills, HB 5293 and HB 6282. These bills both aim to improve the delivery of early childhood programs in Connecticut and point to the need for a more comprehensive delivery of early childhood services.

HB 5293, An Act Extending the Care4Kids Program to Families with a Parent who is Actively Seeking Employment, aims to address an unfortunate reality in today's economic climate that is affecting many low-income families. The cost of child care is a major barrier to work for low-income families, and this subsidy is critical to breakdown that barrier. Care4Kids is an important component of our state's child care strategy, and every family, regardless of income, should be able to access high-quality early care and education for their children.

However, the Care4Kids program is often subject to administrative changes that jeopardize the care given to children and the support for working parents. This bill reinforces the intent of the Care4Kids program as well as past legislation, such as notification to parents. Because of the importance of Care4Kids in providing children with early learning environments and families with greater opportunities to work, the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance urges you to preserve the Care4Kids program, and to continue to seek out solutions, such as this one, to improve the delivery of childcare to Connecticut's families. In addition, we ask you to remain committed to the \$104M budgeted by the legislature for FY11 as directed in the language of this bill, "The Department shall open and maintain enrollment for the child care subsidy program and shall administer such program within the budgetary resources available."

Regarding HB 6282, An Act Requiring an Annual Results-Based Accountability Report Card Evaluating State Policies and Programs Impacting Children, the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance is keenly interested in ensuring that Connecticut's early childhood programs are effective and efficient. Currently, early childhood services are delivered by several agencies with different reporting requirements, making the overall impact of early care, early education, health care, and family services difficult to track. The Alliance believes that Connecticut should have a single entity that administers programs for children. This would improve the effectiveness of the programs already in place by reaching all the children who need services, ensuring uniform quality standards, access, and data collection, and would achieve efficiencies in spending and administration.

Thank you again the opportunity to address these bills, and all the work your committee undertakes to help improve the lives of the children in our state.