

**Testimony to the Elementary & Secondary Education Sub-Committee  
of the Appropriations Committee  
Governor's Budget Proposal – SDE  
In Support of Reinstating Funding for After School Programs  
Submitted by Nancy A. Vitale, EASTCONN Program Director  
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After-School program monies have been cut from the Governors' budget and we need your assistance getting these funds restored.

Over 50 students in grades 2-6 participate in the EASTCONN afterschool program, five days a week for four hours each day. In addition we hold family nights and special events on a shoe string budget. Each of these activities is based around new academic learning for students and their families. The program budget has been cut, by the State two times since initial funding a year ago – Our staff still makes it work for the kids, even though we have had to cut out many enrichments opportunities for our children and their families. Our program is located in Windham CT, on site at the VESTA HUD housing complex. Children get off the school bus every day at our centers front door for home work assistance, tutoring and enrichment activities in the sciences, health, nutrition and safety and the arts. These children are all part of the free afterschool snack program – for some this is their evening meal.

Our staff works closely with the Windham Public School teachers around our student's struggles and successes. We take a holistic approach with each and every child in our center. We meet with family members around their child/rens day with us and make referrals to community services when needed. All children complete their assigned home each night. To be able to accomplish this we have the assistance of education tutors for our neighboring university – UCONN. Our UCONN tutors work one-on-one or in small groups mainly in the area of early literacy skills. In most cases this is the only extra assistance our students will get with homework and extended learning.

On the national level there is such support (President Obama's state of the Union speech) for early childhood education that we cannot understand how the State of Connecticut can cut funding to educational afterschool programming. Parents who can afford academic support and enrichment do not participate in our program. Many family members of our children have limited English speaking skills, lower education levels, and are not and/or under employed. Their children need the assistance the most to become success and productive members of our society. We need the after school funding restored for the children of Connecticut and our future.