



ALL OUR KIN INC.

A SAFE AND LOVING PLACE WHERE PARENTS AND CHILDREN CAN LEARN

Testimony Opposing Closing Priority Group 6 of Care4Kids
Offered by All Our Kin, Inc.
February 22, 2013

Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Ana Rader, and I am testifying this evening on behalf of All Our Kin, a nationally-recognized, Connecticut-based nonprofit that trains, supports, and sustains community child care providers, ensuring that children and families have the foundation they need to succeed in school and in life.

I am here today to testify in opposition to the proposal to narrow Care4Kids eligibility. Specifically, the proposal calls to end rollover to Priority Group 6, causing families to lose Care4Kids support if they rise above 50% of the state median income. This loss would be an enormous setback to working parents who are using the subsidy in order to rise out of poverty and create better lives for themselves and their children.

The cost of child care is a huge burden for all parents. For many low-income and even middle-class families, child care is their single greatest household expense, often costing as much as or more than their rent or mortgage payments. This creates an immense burden for low-income parents as they seek to create opportunities for their children and promote their children's well-being. In this landscape, Care4Kids is a crucial workforce support, enabling parents to become employed and stay employed. One of the most beneficial components of the Care4Kids program is that as parents are able to work and earn more, ideally receiving raises and promotions along the way, the Care4Kids subsidy tapers off gradually, enabling parents to reach true economic independence over time. Yet this is precisely the component of Care4Kids at risk of being eliminated—the eligibility category "Priority Group 6".

Currently, about 602 families are in Priority Group 6, meaning they are between 50 and 75% of the state median income. These families use Care4Kids to provide care for 834 children. We commend the governor for understanding the need to allow these families to remain on Care4Kids. However, we strongly oppose the idea of ending Priority Group 6 for families in the future. This would hurt the parents who are just beginning to make it, to succeed in the workforce, and to create brighter futures for their families.

Governor Malloy has himself acknowledged that every time we invest in children, there's a savings. If we truly want to promote better outcomes for children and families, we must ensure that parents have the essential support of the Care4Kids subsidy program. Maintaining the current eligibility requirements for Care4Kids will create savings over time by supporting families throughout their journey to financial independence and by enabling parents to choose child care options that foster their children's healthy development.

Thank you.