



**Testimony  
In Support of an Office of Early Childhood  
Education Committee Public Hearing  
Friday, February 15, 2013**

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The Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition (BCAC) strongly supports HB 6359, An Act Concerning an Early Childhood System. This bill will create an Office of Early Childhood Education that will be responsible for:

- Coordinating the delivery of services to children birth to five years of age;
- Implementing an Early Childhood Information System to track the health, safety and school readiness of all children receiving publicly-funded early care and education services;
- Developing and implementing an early childhood accountability plan;
- Implementing a communications strategy for outreach to families, service providers and policymakers; and,
- By January 1, 2015, beginning a state-wide longitudinal evaluation of the school readiness program

Research clearly demonstrates the importance of early childhood education in closing the achievement gap and for later success in life. Children who participate in quality early childhood programs are more likely to do better in school, graduate, get a job, and earn a higher income than those children who do not participate.

Currently, early childhood programs and services, such as Care4Kids, Birth to Three and School Readiness, are spread across many different state departments. A coordinated, comprehensive early childhood system that integrates education, health and social services must be developed and implemented to maximize the benefits of these programs for young children. The creation of an Office of Early Childhood Education is a necessary and critical step to ensure that such a system moves forward.