

Testimony for HB 6359

February 13, 2013

To Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee:

My name is Gail Nolan, Co-chair of the Early Childhood Alliance. I would like to support this bill. The early childhood system has needed consolidation for a long time. It has been a confusing web for parents and providers having to work through many different agencies, rules and procedures to get or provide services to CT's children.

By coordinating the programs and services into one office that reports directly to the Governor, families will be able to find and navigate the much needed services in an easier way. Services, such as helping families find affordable quality childcare, are vital to our economy. Parents need childcare they are confident in, to be able to work.

Once the programs such as School Readiness, Child Day Care and Care for Kids are under one roof, it will be easier for programs to work as one, for the benefit of children. Having CT Charts-a-Course in the same office would also help to align the programs and staff in their trainings. It makes a lot of common sense, and it should be easier to move the whole system of early childhood up the quality rating scale.

In Bloomfield, I am involved in The Alliance for Bloomfield's Children, which is a combination of the Discovery, School Readiness and Family Resource Center Councils. I think that the combination of the early childhood components into one office will also help strengthen local councils. It would be easier to distribute information in local communities from one agency and one-stop shopping is always easier for parents and providers, especially when timing is so critical. Having assessment and referrals flow across one office, on one type of form, is much more effective than having to transfer to other agencies or departments and fill in additional paperwork.

Thank you for making this a reality,

Gail Nolan, Director

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