



Education Committee Testimony February 15, 2013

On behalf of the New Haven Early Childhood Council and New Haven's youngest children and their families, we are pleased to express our support for the Governor's proposed plan to build a comprehensive and coordinated early childhood system and urge all legislators to support HB 6359, an act concerning an early childhood system. We support HB 6359 because we believe children and families are at the heart of the Governor's proposed plan to create an Office of Early Childhood.

We are in favor of HB 6359 because it moves programs and services from the current fragmented, multi-department structure, into a centralized office that will oversee all critical early childhood programs. A coordinated and comprehensive early childhood system will ensure that families of young children have ongoing and continued access to the programs and services they need to support their child's health, safety and readiness, from the prenatal period through to their entry into kindergarten.

With support from the state and William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, early childhood collaboratives throughout Connecticut have been working toward a more coordinated early childhood system and can attest to the value a strong collaborative has in improving service delivery for children and families. The New Haven Early Childhood Council is comprised of organizations, parents and programs that support our vision that all New Haven children are healthy, safe, thriving in nurturing families and prepared to be successful lifelong learners. We believe that a coordinated statewide early childhood system will support local efforts and ensure that communities have the tools they need to provide comprehensive high-quality programs and services and that families have the information they need to access them. We are pleased that HB 6359 recognizes the important value local school readiness councils play in determining community need and coordinating services.

We hope that you will support the reorganization of early childhood services into the Office of Early Childhood and urge you to vote in favor of HB 6359.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Heath
Co-chair NHECC

Cyd Oppenheimer
Co-chair NHECC

