



**Testimony Supporting Governors H.B 6359:
An Act Concerning an Early Childhood System**
Karen Rainville, Executive Director
Connecticut Association for the Education of Young Children
Education Committee
February 15, 2013

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and distinguished Members of the Education Committee:

I am testifying today on behalf of the Connecticut Association for the Education of Young Children, the state early childhood professional association. We are the local affiliate of NAEYC, the nations leading voice on high quality early childhood education.

CAEYC strongly supports H.B. 6359, which would create an Office of Early Childhood.

Early childhood programs in Connecticut for far too long have functioned despite the fragmented patchwork of programs and service. This bill would be a tremendous step toward developing a truly efficient, effective, and comprehensive early care and education system for children and families in this state.

The governance structure outlined in this bill; with the Office of Early Childhood reporting directly to the Governor, is an important change that will give early childhood the critical focus it needs. “For this country to succeed in the 21st century we must have the most dynamic, educated workforce in the world and that education has to start early in life”, words spoken by our President earlier this week, and a message Connecticut has already demonstrated commitment towards with this bold legislative proposal.

I would like to thank each of you for your vision to pass PA 11-181 last session, setting the stage for the work that has lead us to this very exciting place. Thanks to the amazing planning team who has led this work over the last several months, Myra Jones Taylor, Mara Siladi and Carlotta Schechter. They embraced a process that was inclusive, transparent and put the best interest of children and families first and foremost. Finally thanks to the Governor and his staff for their ongoing commitment to making quality early childhood experience available for every child.

As the consolidation efforts begin and work of the Office of Early Childhood move forward, CAEYC stands ready to support your efforts. The development of an integrated, efficient early care and education system is vital to both the short- and long-term success of Connecticut’s children, families, and economy. H.B 6359 proposes the components essential to the formation of such a system and we support its passage.