

**Testimony for the Education Committee**  
**Governor's H.B. 6359 – An Act Concerning an Early Childhood System**  
**Submitted by Kimberly Dole, Executive Director**  
**The Riverfront Children's Center, Inc**  
**Friday, February 15, 2013**

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee, thank you for taking the time to read and hear testimony today.

I am writing on behalf of the Riverfront Children's Center and its families in support of **Governor's H.B. 6359 – An Act Concerning an Early Childhood System**. An Office of Early Childhood, reporting directly to the Governor, will allow for cohesive early childhood services and will eliminate the fragmented system we now have between programs from five state agencies: SDE, DSS, DPH, DDS, and BOR.

We appreciate the efforts of the Governor and the Early Childhood Planning team for looking at the whole picture around young children and their families. The amount of work that went into this process and the fact that families, educators and communities were truly listened to is greatly appreciated. The design that has been submitted to you will give a coordinated system that benefits all those affected by the current systems in place.

Our hope is that the children and families are front and center and remain so throughout the process of establishing and implementing this new Office of Early Childhood. Parents must be able to understand and maneuver within the system easily to lessen the stress of finding appropriate services for their child.

We understand that this will be a huge undertaking for the Legislature and current agencies, but we feel the investment is well worth the long-term benefits for children, families, educators and communities. We believe that this is the best direction for our state to ensure that our children are prepared emotionally, educationally and to succeed in life.

Thank you for your time, consideration and investing in the future of our children.

Sincerely,  
Kimberly Dole  
Executive Director  
The Riverfront Children's Center, Inc.  
Groton, CT