

Testimony before the Education Committee  
Governor's Bill 6359 - An Act Concerning an Early Childhood System  
Testimony by Milly Arciniegas  
Connecticut Parent Power – Parent Delegate  
Friday, February 15, 2013

Good afternoon, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee. I fully support HB 6359 – an act concerning an Early Childhood System.

My name is Milly Arciniegas and I am a mother of two children who unfortunately did not have an opportunity during their early childhood to receive a birth to 4 school readiness program to prepare them for Kindergarten.

Coming from a Latino background my family always believed it was best for the children to stay with family members during the early years due to tradition or a lack of understanding of the educational benefits their children would acquire prior to entering Kindergarten. I myself continued the tradition with my two sons for the same reasons.

I witnessed both my boys struggle in Kindergarten with sounding out words and comprehension. My parents kept reassuring me that this was just a phase and that my children will eventually catch up. My children did eventually catch up, but at what cost. This is the question I struggle with every day.

The Governor's Bill will start breaking barriers and traditions early on for families to understand the benefits of school readiness. The Office of Early Childhood will solely concentrate on the early years of a child's education and serve as a resource for families and for school districts. I believe we can do better when it comes to outreaching and communicating to families on the benefits of school readiness and know the Early Childhood System act will serve that purpose and help our children be successful early on in their education and prevent them from "catching up".

I commend the Governor and this legislature for making this bold move that will also lead us in a direction of not only closing the achievement gap, but terminating it once and for all.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I look forward to your support on this critical bill for all diverse families/children.