

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY:**  
**HB 6359**

Prepared by Sue Tenorio, Ed. D.  
February 14, 2013  
:

This is to submit my **support for HB 6359: *AN ACT CONCERNING AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM.***

For too many years statewide, our early care and education programs and services for young children have been splintered across multiple agencies, each with its own policies and procedures. Parents have not known how to gain access to necessary services and care providers have experienced repeated frustration while piecing monies from various funding sources, each with its own mandate and requirements.

Despite best intentions, the lack of an established early childhood system in Connecticut has oftentimes led to fiscal and operational inefficiency and ineffectiveness. For the sake of our young children and their families, we can and must do better.

Through the establishment of an Office of Early Childhood:

- Major early childhood programs and staff from five agencies will be reorganized into one office
- A single governmental structure with its own staff, bonded through a common purpose, will result.
- Duplication of reporting requirements and mandates of different funding sources will be reduced for providers.
- A visible, unified system will afford more efficient program oversight as well as accountability
- Parents will experience greater ease in knowing where to seek information and with whom to speak.
- Responsiveness to parents regarding program availability and accessibility will increase

Such a major reorganization with all its attendant details, major and minor, will not be without strain and discomfort. Wisely, the movement of individual programs will be staged over two years. Care must also be taken to minimize disruption of services to families and financial standing of providers. The transition from no system to a fully functioning system must be both transparent and inclusive. Yet clearly the end goal of a single, coordinated Early Childhood System will be well worth the effort involved.