

Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing, February 13, 2014
Testimony Submitted by Edie Reichard - Sleeping Giant Day Care, Inc.
Contact Information: 21 Trolley Circle, Milford, CT 06460 203-776-5029 ereichard@juno.com

Budget Hearing for Office of Early Childhood and Education

Senator Beth Bye and Representative Toni Walker and Members of the Committee:

My name is Edie Reichard and I am the Director of Sleeping Giant Day Care, Inc. in Hamden; secretary of the State Funded Child Care Center Director's Forum representing the 102 early care and education child care centers in CT; and the State Funded Child Care Center Representative on the Early Childhood Cabinet (formerly the SAC).

I am writing the testimony in support of the budget for the Office of Early Childhood in House bill 5030, An Act Making Adjustments to State Expenditures for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2015.

The budget represents a significant commitment to early childhood and recognizes the critical importance of access to high quality early learning for children in all settings. This is a great budget for children!

State centers are the foundation of the child care system in CT and my staff and I appreciate your support for our work over the last 40 years.

I appreciate the proposed rate increases in the child care subsidy program Care4Kids for Centers and respectfully ask that the budget reflect 3% increase for the total amount of federal and state portions of the grant.

I applaud the Governor's vision of access to universal pre-K for children in CT and stand ready to assist the Office of Early Childhood and the Governor in planning for the expansion in a manner that builds on the existing early care and education system and strengthens the relationship with the public school system.

The mission and vision of the Office of Early Childhood is to create a comprehensive, coordinated system of early care and education. The expansion of access to pre-K will entail new approaches and creative use of existing funds to ensure continued high quality settings and retention of excellent high qualified teachers in all settings. Research is clear that the teacher-child interaction is the single most important component that leads to optimal child outcomes. The Office of Early Childhood will help ensure a focus on bringing current disparate programs in public and private settings into seamless programs with the same standards and expectations for child outcomes.

In summary, I appreciate Governor Molloy's investment in early care and education and I urge the Appropriations to support these budget recommendations. Thank you for your consideration of these important issues.