



Educational Resources for Children, Inc.

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RE: Testimony to the Appropriations Committee
In Support of Funding for After School Programs

BY: Claire C. Hall, M.Ed., Executive Director of ERfC

DATE: February 24, 2014

Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today.

My name is Claire Hall, Executive Director of Educational Resources for Children, (also known as ERfC) located in Enfield, CT. ERfC has been providing out-of-school time activities for Enfield children since 1994. ERfC provides school-year and summer enrichment programs for over 400 children.

I am here today on behalf of the children and families we serve in Enfield and for other communities in Connecticut. I urge you to recommend full reinstatement of funds for The After School Grant; approve additional funding to develop a state-wide quality infrastructure for after school programs; and provide funding to support student success by expanding learning opportunities for students during the summer.

- **Provide funding to support accreditation of After School Programs**

After school providers need a solid infrastructure in order to provide high quality programs that facilitate the positive development of children in the state of Connecticut. With funding, a state-wide accreditation process will provide standards that will emphasize the following: Cultural competency; evidence-based and outcomes-oriented skills; support programs; and a workforce in both Enfield and throughout the state.

- **Reinstate Full After School Grant Funding**

In order to run full-year programs from September through June for children and their families throughout the state, dollars must be reinstated to maintain grant sizes from \$150,000 to \$200,000. By reinstating full After School Grant funding, an additional 20 communities will provide after school services.

- **Create a New Summer Learning Grant Program**

We know what the research shows—there is a major loss of learning in the summer for many children. Funding for summer learning will give us an opportunity to keep working with children we are serving during the school year, not only providing recreational and enrichment activities but to infuse project-based academic support activities based on core standards.

Mission Statement

Educational Resources for Children, Inc., teams with kids, communities, schools, and families to grow resilient kids. Through innovative community collaborations, we help kids learn, reach their goals, and contribute to their communities.

For many children in Enfield, and in communities across the state, summer begins hours of unsupervised time without activities or guidance. By supporting Summer Learning, we will be able to provide essential services for children. Summer learning programs provide kids a safe and supervised environment to continue developing socially and academically through enriching activities. Healthy snacks and meals are also provided. Support for a summer learning grant program is especially vital for children living in high levels of poverty, homelessness, and with food insecurity. Research shows how these children perform poorly given the disparities in education and access to enrichment and physical activities when schools are closed.

ERfC is committed to working together with community and state partners to see how we can be a voice for our children. We know firsthand how high quality after-school programs help create lifelong learners. The results are clear, our programs not only engage children—but the students enrolled in out-of-school time activities demonstrate improved grades, work habits, school attendance, social skills, and reduced risky behavior.

Please work together to:

- Reinstate funding levels for The **After School Grant** so children in all Connecticut communities can realize their full potential to become responsible, contributing citizens.
- Fund the development of a state-wide quality infrastructure to insure that all programs implement best practices
- Fund the inclusion of Summer Learning for communities to provide all Connecticut children and youth with academic, social and emotional growth opportunities

Your action today will help protect and support Connecticut children and make it possible for communities to continue to develop and provide successful, high-quality after-school and summer programs.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share this information with you.

*C.C. Hall Testimony
February 24, 2014*

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