



ALL OUR KIN INC.

A SAFE AND LOVING PLACE WHERE PARENTS AND CHILDREN CAN LEARN

March 7, 2014

Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and Esteemed Members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Jessica Sager, and I am the Executive Director of All Our Kin, a nationally-recognized, Connecticut-based nonprofit that uses a two-generation approach to help parents and children thrive. I am here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 340, "An Act Concerning a Two-Generational School Readiness Plan."

Two-generational approaches represent a smart investment in the future of Connecticut's parents and children. We know that education is the surest pathway out of poverty for Connecticut's low-income parents, many of whom are single mothers with young children. According to a recent report from the Working Poor Families Project, the proportion of female-headed working households nationally that are low-income increased by 4 percentage-points—from 54 percent to 58 percent—between 2007 and 2012. Connecticut alone has 40,985 female-headed, low-income working families.<sup>i</sup>

Low-income parents seeking to continue their education and advance professionally face numerous obstacles, including high financial costs, lack of transportation, and insufficient access to affordable and high quality child care. We need to do more to support these parents as they achieve their educational goals and, in the process, transform life outcomes for themselves and their children. As noted by Ascend at the Aspen Institute, two-generation strategies can help create "an intergenerational cycle of opportunity" by assisting parents to attain higher levels of education, build financial stability, and deepen their social networks.<sup>ii</sup>

Here in Connecticut, All Our Kin has demonstrated the positive effects of such intergenerational approaches. We train, support, and sustain family child care providers to ensure that children and families have the foundation they need to succeed in school and in life. Through our programs, child care professionals succeed as business owners; working parents find stable, high-quality care for their children; and children, the workforce of tomorrow, gain an educational foundation that lays the groundwork for achievement in school and beyond.

All Our Kin's workforce development efforts have deep, positive impacts on the providers we serve. According to an evaluation of our work by the University of Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis, almost 60 percent of the providers that All Our Kin helps become licensed report increases in earnings of at least \$5,000 the first year after licensure. In the second year, over 45 percent report earning at least \$10,000 more. After completing the Tool Kit Licensing Program, 55 percent of graduates pay down debt, 42 percent open a savings account, and 31 percent move to a larger apartment or house. The majority of Tool Kit Program graduates go on to achieve either an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education or a Child Development Associate Credential.<sup>iii</sup>

Research shows that education and training programs—including GED programs, courses for English Language Learners, and college—have strong and sustained effects on parents' earning capacity and employment levels.<sup>iv</sup> Studies have also demonstrated that children benefit when parents, especially mothers, receive literacy training and other forms of education.<sup>v</sup> Two-generation approaches are proven to affect the life trajectory of both parents and children.

In closing, I would like to reiterate my strong support for this bill and recommend that the State take these additional steps to support parents and children as they move toward financial stability and educational success:

- 1) Extend Care 4 Kids eligibility to parents who plan to continue or complete their education, whether they are enrolling in English language courses, completing their high school diploma, gaining job-specific training, or returning to school to attain a post-secondary degree.
- 2) Expand access to high-quality child care, especially infant-toddler care, which is so critical both to enabling parents to succeed in the workforce and to children's healthy development.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jessica Sager  
Executive Director  
All Our Kin, Inc.

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<sup>i</sup> Deborah Povich, Brandon Roberts and Mark Mather, "Low-Income Working Mothers and State Policy: Investing for a Better Economic Future," The Working Poor Families Project, Winter 2013-2014: [http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/WPFP\\_Low-Income-Working-Mothers-Report\\_021214.pdf](http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/WPFP_Low-Income-Working-Mothers-Report_021214.pdf).

<sup>ii</sup> Joan Lombardi, Anne Mosle, Nisha Patel, Rachel Schumacher, and Jennifer Stedron, "Gateways to Two Generations: The Potential for Early Childhood Programs and Partnerships to Support Children and Parents Together," Ascend at the Aspen Institute, January 2014: [http://s.bsd.net/ascend/default/page/file/d3336cff8a154af047\\_07m6bttk2.pdf](http://s.bsd.net/ascend/default/page/file/d3336cff8a154af047_07m6bttk2.pdf).

<sup>iii</sup> "The Economic Impact of the All Our Kin Family Child Care Tool Kit Licensing Program," Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis at the University of Connecticut, 2011: [http://allourkin.org/sites/default/files/All%20Our%20Kin\\_CCEARReport.pdf](http://allourkin.org/sites/default/files/All%20Our%20Kin_CCEARReport.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup> See, for example, "Economic Benefits of the GED," prepared for the Tennessee Department of Human Services by Gail Cope, Dr. Mary Ziegler, and Dr. Donna JG Brian of the University of Tennessee Center for Literacy Studies, August 2001: [http://www.cls.utk.edu/docs/Economic\\_Benefits\\_of\\_the\\_GED2.doc](http://www.cls.utk.edu/docs/Economic_Benefits_of_the_GED2.doc), citing David Boesel, Nabeel Alsalam, and Thomas M. Smith, "Educational and Labor Market Performance of GED Recipients," February 1998: <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED416383>; Dr. Lennox McLendon, Debra Jones, and Mitch Rosin, "The Return on Investment (ROI) from Adult Education and Training," McGraw-Hill Research Foundation and the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education, 2011: <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CCYQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.mcgraw-hillresearchfoundation.org%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2Fthe-return-on-investment-from-adult-education-and-training.pdf&ei=k9sZU96kOofg0gHA1lCgAg&usq=AFQjCNH64jGmJYHmK6AZ8kPQwPgFZ4eddg&bvm=bv.62578216,d.dmQ>.

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<sup>v</sup> See, for example, Katherine Magnuson and Sharon McGroder, “The Effect of Increases in Welfare Mothers’ Education on their Young Children’s Academic and Behavioral Outcomes,” University of Wisconsin, Institute for Research on Poverty Discussion Paper, 1274-03, 2003: <http://www.jonescollegeprep.org/ourpages/auto/2013/1/17/61972839/Effect%20of%20Increasing%20Welfare%20Mothers%20Education%20on%20their%20Young%20Childrens%20Problems%20and%20School%20Readiness.pdf>; “Improving Mothers’ Literacy Skills May Be Best Way to Boost Children’s Achievement,” National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, October 25, 2010: <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/news/releases/pages/102510-reading-family-income.aspx>.