

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleishmann and members of the Education Committee,

My name is Erin Taylor and I am currently enrolled in the Master of Social Work program at the University of Connecticut. I support the bill to provide access to preschool for children in the care and custody of the Department of Children and Families. During high school and part of college, I worked as a teacher's assistant at a preschool and saw first hand the importance of early childhood education for children ages 3-5. I witnessed how children can grow and learn in the preschool setting. The growth and development at this early stage is crucial to a child's future.

Preschool helps children learn skills such as numbers, letters and shapes. These are the building blocks to learning. More importantly, it helps children learn socialization skills. Children in preschool learn how to interact with their peers, compromise, and problem solve. All which are essential to their development as contributing members of society later in life. Preschool promotes not only social but emotional development. It also helps our youth make a smooth transition to kindergarten. Studies have shown that children who attend preschool enter kindergarten with better reading and math skills and richer vocabularies, thus being better prepared to continue their educational journeys.

Preschools are important for children in the custody of the Department of Children and Families because these children are already at a higher risk for problems socially and developmentally due to possible exposure to abuse and neglect. We need to help support these children by allowing them to get the early education that they not only deserve but that they need.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Erin Taylor