

March 10, 2014

Sen. Andrea Stillman and Rep. Andrew Fleischman, Co-Chairs
Connecticut General Assembly Education Committee
Room 2300
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Testimony in support of SB 424

Dear Senator Stillman and Representative Fleischman:

As a pediatrician who evaluates and treats children thought to have been abused or neglected by their caregivers, I am writing to express my support for SB 424: "Every abused or neglected child aged 3-5 who is committed to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) be enrolled in high-quality preschool".

I applaud Governor Malloy's commitment to striving for universal access to preschool for all of Connecticut's young children. Extensive scientific research shows that high-quality preschool is a cost-effective and important educational investment for young children. Access to high quality preschool is paramount for abused and neglected children due to the toxic effects of emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect on their social, emotional, and intellectual development. Consensus exists among early education experts that this vulnerable group of children should have priority access to high-quality preschool. As legal guardians of children under their supervision, DCF must insure that these children receive the educational, emotional and social support and instruction they need in preschool so as to improve the likelihood of success in elementary school and beyond.

Thank you for consideration of my testimony in support of SB 424.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Bechtel MD
Associate Professor of Pediatrics
Section of Pediatric Emergency Medicine
Department of Pediatrics
Yale-School of Medicine