

**Testimony Presented to the Education Committee of the Connecticut General
Assembly**

March 3, 2014

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the **S.B. 25, An Act Establishing the Office of Early Childhood Education** and **S.B. 26, An Act Expanding Opportunities for Early Childhood Education**.

I represent the Middlesex Coalition for Children, which advocates for children in Middlesex County and on state-wide issues that affect children.

S.B. 25, An Act Establishing the Office of Early Childhood Education

We fully support S.B. 25 that will formally establish the Office of Early Childhood, as it will be instrumental in the coordination and implementation of new and existing early childhood programs. In particular, the language that grandfather existing teachers with a bachelor's degree and twelve credits in early childhood education into the workforce is important, as we do not presently have sufficient numbers of teachers with degrees in early childhood education to hire.

S.B. 26, An Act Expanding Opportunities for Early Childhood Education

We urge the passage of S.B. 26 and support the governor's goal of universal preschool in Connecticut. Going forward, we must be mindful of the need for flexible funding in this plan so that we reach all of Connecticut's children in need. We urge maximum flexibility so that the School Readiness funding can be used to support quality preschool experiences for children across the state regardless of where they live.

We applaud the inclusion of funding increases for slot expansion and long overdue rate increases for School Readiness and State-Funded centers and the increases in Care4kids rates for licensed centers and family day care homes. They are essential to maintain and improve program quality.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Izzi Greenberg