# State of Connecticut

Office of Early Childhood

Connecticut Office of
Early Childhood

**Office of Early Childhood**
**Testimony before the Public Health Committee**
**S.B. 48 – An Act Concerning Nutrition Standards for Child Care Settings**
**Myra Jones-Taylor, Ph.D., Executive Director**
**February 27, 2014**

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The Office of Early Childhood submits testimony in regard to S.B. 48 – An Act Concerning Nutrition Standards for Child Care Settings.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Children's Food Environment State Indicator Report, 2011 cites the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and recommends limiting the consumption of added sugar among Americans. The leading source of added sugar among children is sugar-sweetened drinks. CDC suggests that addressing policy, environment and behavior can play a role in reducing childhood obesity.

Each state is different in how they address nutrition standards in early child care settings. This bill would establish Connecticut nutrition standards for child care settings and early education program which would be in alignment with CDC's Report findings. It would also address survey results by the Department of Public Health that found 29.8% of Connecticut's kindergarteners are obese (13.9%) and overweight (15.9%). The survey found that Hispanic (22.6%) and non-Hispanic black (18.3%) kindergarteners were significantly more likely to be obese than non-Hispanic White (10.1%) kindergarteners.

In Connecticut, there are efforts to address nutrition in early childhood settings. Early child care programs have an opportunity to participate in the federally funded Child and Adult Care Food Program, which adheres to nutrition guidelines appropriates for each age group. CACFP, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, provides cash assistance for nutritious meals and snacks to infant and children in public and private non-residential licensed child care centers, family child care homes, homeless shelters, and children in eligible at-risk after school programs. Cash assistance is available for up to two meals and one snack, or one meal and two snacks for each child.

In addition, the State Department of Education has developed a guidance document, the Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies. The document can be found at: http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&Q=322594

The committee, however, should keep in mind that increasing the regulatory responsibilities of Connecticut's child care licensing program could create a fiscal impact for additional staff to monitor and follow-up with issues of noncompliance.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Phone: (860) 713-6410 • Fax: (860) 713-7037
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106
www.ct.gov/oec
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