



March 2, 2015

[APPtestimony@cga.ct.gov](mailto:APPtestimony@cga.ct.gov)

**Re: Elimination of funds for Coventry LECC**

My name is Mary Sposito and I live at 815 Wrights Mill Road in Coventry, CT. I am a parent, as well as, the Director of Operations at the Coventry Early Childhood Center, Inc. I have served as a member of the Coventry STEPS Executive and Nurtured Committees since 2008. In addition, the CECC program is the collaborative sponsor for the community planning grant and has been a supporter of the efforts for our youngest citizens in Coventry.

**I am writing to dispute the elimination of funds Coventry receives from the Office of Early Childhood for the continuation of this extremely important work.**

For the past 7 years, Coventry STEPS has strived to achieve the results statement, *ALL Coventry Children Birth- Age 8 are Nurtured, Healthy, Engaged & Successful Learners*. The LECC is dedicated to turn-the-curve on identified indicators and has been focused on the strategies for child abuse and neglect, health and education. Many key stakeholders in the community, including parents, educators, and local and state leaders have formed solutions to improve conditions for our children birth through age 8 and their families.

Many of Coventry STEPS accomplishments include; parent and provider engagement, provider training, public communication highlighting the importance of early childhood, resource guide production, creation of Coventry resident birth packet, and creation of the early childhood registry.

Personally, I have committed my time to working on the Nurtured Committee for Child Abuse and Neglect indicators. Despite the extremely difficult challenge of reducing the amount of substantiated and unsubstantiated cases for Coventry's children, we are confident that many of the accomplishments below will have a positive impact on the lives of children in our community;

- Coventry STEPS was integral in the Superintendent's Preschool Feasibility Committee. This Committee produced a report in 2014 on the current preschool

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programming in the community, the need for expanded services and the need for a Family Resource Center in the community.

- Coventry STEPS advocated for the continuation of the Parents as Teachers program.
- Coventry STEPS created Information and Referral sources for families, including a STEPS website, facebook page and Town of Coventry Early Childhood Resource Guide. These sources help families connect with services and resources they need!
- Coventry STEPS assisted in linking parents and staff with local resources (including the Child First program and ECCP)

The future strategy of the Nurturing Committee is to focus on the development of a Family Resource Center. This will help all families in Coventry, especially those families who do not have a lot of social supports. STEPS is currently working very closely with the Coventry Public Schools on this important initiative and the plan is to develop an FRC to be opened for the 2016-2017 school year.

I implore you to consider the following:

- Restore the Community Plans for Early Childhood line item in the budget. We have received approximately \$19,000-20,000 each year. This is matched by the Graustein Memorial Fund.
- Co-sponsor House Bill 6004 which strengthens the link between OEC and local collaboratives.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Mary Sposito  
Coventry Resident

CECC School Operations Director