

March 3, 2015

Dear Legislator,

Nine years I was employed as a preschool teacher at Mitchell College Children's Learning Center. One January afternoon in 2011, the president came over to announce that the program would cease. Not only was it a conclusion for the center but an end to college interns and students in the Early Childhood education to further their studies at the center. June 2011 halted the education of young children.

The closing brought resentment throughout the college that branched out into the New London community. College staff members were stunned and some lost their jobs. Those professors teaching Early Childhood classes experienced low enrollment. Community opposition reached the media and discontented parents, staff, and community leaders attempted to reverse the decision. They all failed.

My preschool position at Mitchell College provided me with a moderate income along with plans for retirement. My current employment in Early Childhood has lower wages and higher insurance costs. My take home pay is much less and I find the simplest costs of living are difficult to manage with rising food prices, rents, utilities, and insurances.

It is unfortunate that some legislators don't walk in our shoes and are blindfolded when it comes to educating and nurturing young children to have a worthy start for their beginning school years.

I am encouraging legislators to revisit Connecticut's Early Childhood Education wages to establish a positive quality of life for dedicated teachers.

What are your first learning experiences? We are not babysitters receiving less than minimum wages.

Underpaid,  
*Bette Ziemba*  
Bette Ziemba