



*Connecting Donors Who Care With Causes that Matter*

**March 3, 2015**  
**HB 6824 An Act Concerning the State Budget**

**The Community Foundation of Greater New Britain**, serving the communities of Berlin, New Britain, Plainville and Southington, believes there is perhaps no more significant challenge facing our communities than ensuring that our children are equipped to lead healthy, productive lives. That's why, as part of its role as a proactive community partner, the Community Foundation created *First Years First* in 2005, a long-term commitment to prepare the children of Berlin, New Britain, Plainville and Southington for success in school and in life by enhancing their early childhood development experience. Since then, the Community Foundation has **invested more than \$1.5 Million** in grant awards to strengthen early childhood programs in our area, and worked to develop partnerships with our area School Districts, Tunxis Community College, numerous Family and Center-based early care providers and community collaborations.

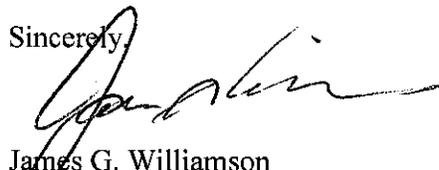
In recent years, Connecticut has made significant strides in developing state and local governance structures and funding as part of an effort to build a comprehensive early childhood system. **Connecticut's 41 local early childhood councils (LECCs) are a critical component of early childhood system building efforts as they bring together parents, providers, schools and others in a community-driven decision-making process that produces clear, quantifiable goals and benchmarks for child development and school readiness. They are the local centers of early childhood knowledge, networks and resources.** As a funder, we value these councils as vehicles for weaving the many supports and services required for young children to become successful. The LECCs offer state agencies a conduit to reach parents, families and providers. **LECCs mirror state government's efforts to coordinate services, policies and programs** among different agencies serving children and families.

**Statewide, local financial support for the LECCs has more than doubled in two years to \$1.2 million.** Combined with over \$1 million in funding from the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund and the Children's Fund, this results in a **\$2.45 match for every single state dollar.** These figures are strictly for core infrastructure support and do not include the millions of dollars in implementation funds. **Funders throughout the state have recognized LECCs as vehicles for investments in early childhood, family support and family engagement. The LECCs provide philanthropy with a vehicle to pilot innovations, many of which have been replicated statewide, and have increased our ability to leverage our dollars with national philanthropy and the federal government.**

In our own case, the Community Foundation has provided sizeable operating grants over the years to two active LECCs in our area, the **Coalition for New Britain's Youth** and the **Early Childhood Collaborative of Southington**. The loss of state funding support to these two vital and active organizations, each responsible for the creation and implementation of their community's respective "Community Plans for Children" would be devastating to these efforts, and would be discouraging to the Community Foundation's *First Years First* Goal, **"To Assure that All Children enter Kindergarten Ready to Learn."**

**Philanthropy relies on its partnership with the public sector, through investments in areas such as the LECCs and family engagement and leadership, to achieve progress in statewide early childhood systems building.** Therefore, the Community Foundation of Greater New Britain wishes to urge the Appropriations Committee to **restore state funding** which currently supports the LECCs.

Sincerely,



James G. Williamson  
Resident

cc: J. Leo Gagne, Chair, CFGNB Board of Directors  
Rebecca Karabin-Ahern, Chair, CFGNB Community Initiatives Committee