



**To: Connecticut Legislators**

**In support of re-establishing funding for CT Early Childhood Councils**

**Jean Schoenleber, LCSW**  
**Clinical Director, Child First service at the**  
**Lower Naugatuck Valley Parent Child Resource Center**  
**30 Elizabeth Street**  
**Derby, CT 06418**

**March 2, 2015**

*I am writing to strongly request that funding be restored in the OEC budget for the Community Plans for Early Childhood. I have been involved with the Derby Early Childhood Council for over five years while I have worked at "PCRC" in several different capacities in the early childhood field. Most recently, I have been directing the new Child First site here, begun in March 2013. One of the reasons that PCRC was awarded the opportunity to administer this new service was due to the strength of the early childhood community here, which has afforded the base for this program to quickly become integrated into a strong, well coordinated system of services. The Derby Early Childhood Council (DECC) has provided a place for providers to come together to share best practices and resources. By meeting regularly we are able to align our missions and work together to eliminate duplication of services and help make sure families receive the best services to meet their needs. Our service has quickly gotten up to full capacity and had a steady flow of appropriate referrals due, in part, to the excellent coordination available through the Council.*

*Further, I have seen directly the broader impact that this Council is having in the local community. The Study Circle Program, which is being implemented currently, is a highly innovative approach to tackling the thorny problems of racial and financial inequity as barriers to student achievement and parental engagement with the schools. Community members, students and parents across racial and economic lines have been engaged and begun to work together towards having genuine conversations about how these barriers and divisions might be addressed to everyone's advantage. The preparatory equity training for council members has raised all of our awareness of these issues and impacted our work in the community in a very positive way.*

*Staff from my agency have participated in numerous other programs sponsored by the DECC which have brought families and providers together such as the Kindergarten Roundtable, Kindergarten Registration Event, Parent Workshops and a social-emotional prevention program running social skills groups for young children. We have also contributed to the website which has been established and maintained by the DECC which provides vital information to both parents and providers about local events, resources and parenting information. All of these efforts would not have occurred without the direct support of the Derby Early Childhood Council. **These councils are grassroots community building at its best and most cost effective.** Loss of funding means the additional loss of the matching funds from the Graustein Memorial Fund.*

***Please support restoration of this funding which accomplishes so much for so little.***

**Jean Schoenleber, LCSW**

**Lower Naugatuck Valley Parent Child Resource Center**  
**30 Elizabeth Street ■ Derby, CT 06418**  
**Phone: (203) 954-0543 ■ Fax: (203) 954-0544**