

March 17, 2015

Re: Local Early Childhood Collaboratives

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Karen Skudlarek and I am testifying on House Bill 7010. I am a resident of Coventry, Connecticut and have been heavily involved in our local Early Childhood Collaborative, Coventry STEPS. We have representation from parents, police, teachers, town administrators, librarians, the list goes on. As a parent I understand the need for the community to come together to support our children, especially in their formidable early years of their life. Our collaborate examines three main content areas for children birth to age eight to ensure that they are nurtured, healthy, and engaged and successful learners. We put together a well-thought-out Community Plan that is data driven and includes local and state data about how Coventry children are doing on identified Indicators. The Community Plan includes strategies aimed at improving the indicators. We have made a large impact on our community by increasing the number of programming offered to families at the local library, giving families all the information they need in one place, the addition of a reading consultant at one of our schools, offered home day care and preschool provider professional development and training, purchased 100 board books to distribute to families who have a new baby, to name a few. Without our collaborative we wouldn't be able to accomplish all that we have and more importantly would adversely affect our children's future.

Also, there is a need to strengthen the connection between the Office of Early Childhood and the local collaboratives so we can become even more effective and efficient. By working closely with OEC we'll be able to access resources and offer support for all of our children and families in Connecticut. I am in support of House Bill 7020 and know that it will have a positive impact for Connecticut.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Skudlarek". The signature is written in a cursive style and extends to the right with a long horizontal line.

Karen Skudlarek