



Sharing Together Enriches Potential Success for Children

3453 Main Street Coventry, CT 06238 • coventrysteps@yahoo.com

March 17, 2015

Dear Members of the Education Committee,

This letter of testimony is in support of House Bill 7020 “An Act Concerning Early Childhood Educators and Initiatives.” Coventry STEPS is Coventry’s early childhood collaborative. It is a 50+ member organization comprised of local and state leaders, early care and education professionals and parents and community members that seeks to ensure that ALL Coventry children are Nurtured, Healthy and Engaged and Successful Learners. Coventry STEPS depends on the funding from the State Office of Early Childhood and the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund to operate our Collaborative. It is imperative that the funding from the Office of Early Childhood continue!

The following is a listing of many of our accomplishments.

- Engagement of parents/community
 - Increased awareness among parents regarding early childhood opportunities (preschool, playgroups, story times, etc.)
 - Increase in the number of children enrolled in the state Ages & Stages program
- Engagement of early childhood providers
 - Established the Home Day Care Provider Network- offer trainings, networking opportunities for providers
 - Resources and information shared with providers (WIC, Child First, ECCP, Office of Early Childhood)
- Communications with public highlighting the importance of early childhood
 - Early Childhood Resource Guide
 - Coventry STEPS website focused on early childhood. The website has had almost 1300 UNIQUE hits since it was created a year and a half ago
 - Birth Packet mailed to all Coventry families who have a baby. This is a partnership with Town Clerks Office.
 - The creation of a local early childhood database for children under the age of 5. Currently have approximately 70 children in the database.
 - Outreach to faith community and local businesses about early childhood
- Secured additional grant funding
 - 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 UCONN People Empowering People (Parent Leadership Class) 15 Coventry residents participated and completed community service projects



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- Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut Data Collection Project for improved collection of local health data
- Through the Graustein Memorial Fund, STEPS applied for and received additional funds to focus on Parent and Community Engagement

- Advocated for changes and improvements to the Preschool Screen (Child Find)
- Partnership with the local library - Advocating for additional and expanded opportunities (summer reading program, extended hours, early literacy initiatives). Distribution of board books to families with young children
- Collection of data
 - CHDI yellow health forms
 - Baseline data around the 9-5-2-1-0 campaign
 - BMI data
 - Early Reading Data
- Partnership with Superintendent of Schools on a Preschool Feasibility Committee Study to examine preschool programming within Coventry.

Thank you in advance for supporting HB 7020 “An Act Concerning Early Childhood Educators and Initiatives.”

Most Sincerely,

Kathryn Hassler
Coventry STEPS Coordinator