STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

Connecticut Office of
Early Childhood

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Myra Jones-Taylor, Ph.D.
Commissioner

Testimony of Myra Jones-Taylor, Ph.D., Commissioner
Office of Early Childhood
Before the Appropriations Committee
Re: H.B. 5043 - An Act Making Deficiency Appropriations For The Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2016
March 18, 2016

Good morning, Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Myra Jones-Taylor, Commissioner of the Office of Early Childhood. I am here today to testify concerning H.B. 5043 – An Act Making Deficiency Appropriations for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2016, specifically the Birth to Three program deficiency.

The Birth to Three System is a federal and state entitlement program under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and under 17a-248 of the Connecticut General Statutes. Our Birth to Three program supports families in meeting the needs of their infants and toddlers who are eligible due to significant developmental disabilities or delays.

Funding for Birth to Three Program is comprised of federal funds under IDEA Parts B and C, state appropriated funds, commercial insurance and parent fees in which 96% of all funding is used for direct services.

The OEC projects a $6.2 million deficiency in the Birth to Three program for the current fiscal year. The OEC plans to mitigate part of this deficiency through an FAC action that would transfer $1.5 million from Child Care Services, which is projected to lapse funding, for a net deficiency of $4.7 million. The following outlines the components of this $6.2 million shortfall. While the deficiency amount is the same as projected in November of 2015, the reasons and numbers below are updated based on actual enrollment and attendance numbers through February.

1. **A $3.4 million** shortfall was assumed by the OEC when the program was transferred from the Department of Development Services (DDS). Last year DDS transferred, with the approval of the Finance Advisory Committee, $2.9 million from other DDS accounts to address a program shortfall; the enacted budget did not annualize this adjustment.

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Additionally, $500,000 in unpaid FY15 invoices carried over into FY16.

2. **$1.8 million** is largely due to a projected FY16 increase in caseload of 2.11% representing an average increase of 115 children per month.

3. **$1 million** is due to a projected 9.5% increase in the number of children needing more intensive services, primarily children diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. This represents an average increase of 40 children per month. Children with autism receive an average of 15-20 visits per month compared with children with other needs who receive four visits per month.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am joined today by Pietro Rosato, Fiscal Administrative Manager and Lynn Johnson, Division Director of Family Support Services. We are happy to answer any questions that you may have.