

To Whom It May Concern,

Over the past 10 years I have been fortunate to experience the world of early childhood from numerous angles: as a Special Education paraprofessional, as a preschool teacher, as the parent chair of Coventry STEPS (our local Early Childhood Collaborative), as a member of Coventry's School Readiness Council, as the Early Childhood Coordinator at a NAEYC accredited preschool, and, most importantly, as a parent.

I have been impressed by the increasing level of communication and collaboration between early childhood agencies, and I attribute much of this to the support from the Office of Early Childhood for the Local Early Childhood Collaboratives. I strongly oppose the \$12 million overall cut to the Office of Early Childhood. I believe that such a significant cut will jeopardize all of the recent progress that has been made and that Connecticut will fail to be the leader that we have become in the realm of early childhood.

In addition, I oppose the block grant approach to the budget. In order for the existing programs to maintain the level of services necessary to support young children and their families, these programs need to be able to anticipate and advocate for an expected level of financial support.

I urge the Appropriations Committee to maintain funding for the numerous programs that provide direct services to children. Having been involved with Coventry's Community Planning progress from the beginning, I have seen the incredible impact it has had on our community and the vast improvements in services available for our youngest citizens. I would be devastated to see our town begin to regress in our efforts and for children to miss out on the services necessary to grow and thrive.

Thank you for your support.

Jillian Miner
CECC Early Childhood Coordinator