



Testimony Regarding S.B. No. 912 An Act Concerning Revisions to the Staff Qualifications Requirement for Early Childhood Educators
Peg Oliveira, PhD
Education Committee
February 28, 2017

Chairpersons Fleischmann, Slossberg and Boucher and members of the Education Committee: My name is Peg Oliveira and I am the Executive Director of the Gesell Institute of Child Development, a non-profit early childhood research and professional development organization that has worked nationally, from our headquarters in New Haven, Connecticut, for over 65 years to promote the principles of child development as the basis for all decision making for young children.

I am submitting comments Regarding S.B. No. 912 An Act Concerning Revisions to the Staff Qualifications Requirement for Early Childhood Educators. This bill would reduce the qualifications needed for an early childhood educator, moving Connecticut further away from providing high quality early care and education to all young children.

We would like the committee to consider the following:

Connecticut must maintain momentum toward a true early care and education system and stay on par with other states in this effort. The proposed reduction in qualifications for early education providers takes us away from this goal. A review of the research on teacher qualifications and preschool program quality demonstrates that in most states, recommending a BA in ECE or a similar standard would result in a significant raising of standards for teachers in early childhood settings.

High quality child care requires a highly educated and specialized workforce. As the author of *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*, Jack Shonkoff posed to Congress over a decade ago: “How can (we) emphasize the need for stronger performance standards and financial incentives to attract bright and highly motivated teachers, while we simultaneously tolerate large percentages of inadequately trained and poorly compensated providers of early child care and education who have an important influence on the foundations of school readiness?”¹

In an effort to maintain momentum toward a true early care and education system and stay on par with other states in this effort, to maximize the federal dollars allocated to Connecticut for the Care4Kids Program, and to best serve children, we recommend:

- Allow BA’s in Early Childhood, child study, child development, or human growth and development from any college in the country that is accredited by their regional accrediting body.

¹ Testimony to the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, February 12, 2002, p.3.

**Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony regarding S.B. No. 912.
Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or need additional information.**

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