

RB 5450 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STAFF QUALIFICATIONS REQUIREMENT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.

Dear Representative Fleischman, Senator Slossberg, Senator Boucher, Representative Lavielle and distinguished members of the Education Committee, thank you for reviewing this written testimony on the staff qualifications requirement for early childhood education.

Members of the CT Birth – Grade 3 Leadership Team appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on RB 5450.

High quality preschool education demonstrates positive long-term outcomes for children as well as solid long-term economic benefits to this investment in support for young children and their families. To this end, CT had been a leader among states to provide access to 3 and 4 year olds most notably through the School Readiness and Child Day Care Grant program begun in 1999 to reduce the preparation and achievement gaps.

The often cited Perry Preschool Project and the positive long-term outcomes employed teachers with a bachelor's degree as do the Abbott Preschools in New Jersey and those in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Both the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association recommend that early childhood educators have a minimum of a BA.

The Education Committee and the CT General Assembly took the bold, correct measure to mandate a minimum of BA degree in our state-funded preschool programs. Current data demonstrates that we still have a ways to go in meeting that goal by 2020. Many teachers have taken great strides to meet the requirement and must be supported for the endeavor.

WE SHOULD NOT ABANDON that goal. However, we should determine the barriers that have prevented the attainment of the degree requirement and address those barriers. The February 2018 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine Report, *Transforming the Financing of Early Care and Education*, offers important suggestions that can inform us.

[http://sites.nationalacademies.org/cs/groups/dbassesite/documents/webpage/dbasse\\_184857.pdf](http://sites.nationalacademies.org/cs/groups/dbassesite/documents/webpage/dbasse_184857.pdf)

Recommendations:

1. Keep the BA requirement for preschool teachers.
2. Consider changing the requirement for infant/toddler teachers to the AA degree, while retaining the BA for preschool teachers.  
Currently there are not sufficient teacher prep programs to accommodate the need for infant/toddler qualifications.
3. Develop a compensation strategy to support recruitment and retention of BA qualified teachers in state-funded programs.
4. Align policies and procedures for all state-funded preschool programs.
5. Examine availability and ease of access to people across the state to pursue a BA from an accredited higher education institution in CT

Our children, especially those most at-risk for school and life success deserve no less.

Thank you for your continued support of early childhood.

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