



State of Connecticut

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Wednesday, March 6th, 2019

Education Committee
Public Hearing Testimony

Dear Senator McCrory, Senator Daugherty Abrams, Representative Sanchez, Representative Barry, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and other members of the Education Committee.

My name is Tim Ackert and I Represent the 8th District, which includes Columbia, Coventry, Tolland, and Vernon. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to speak on the following bills on today's public hearing agenda:

SB 931 AN ACT CONCERNING PAYMENTS TO CHILD CARE PROVIDERS.

SB 933 AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN FAMILIES IN THE CARE4KIDS PROGRAM.

SB 934 AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY IN THE CARE4KIDS PROGRAM TO PARENTS ENROLLED IN OTHER TYPES OF SCHOOL.

Care4Kids is an essential program that provides beneficial services to low and moderate income families in Connecticut. The total number of children Care4Kids currently serves is 14,925 which break down as the following-

5,795-- Infants/Toddlers
4,870-- Preschoolers
4,264-- School Age

Care4Kids has been plagued with delays in provider payments caused by a change to a new computer system and the high number of annual redeterminations.

Additionally, restrictive eligibility that prevent many families who cannot afford child care from getting help because they earn “too much”. A family of four with an infant and preschooler needs to have a household income of \$77,832 to cover basic costs (Includes \$20,292 for child care). Currently, a family of the same size earning just over \$56,275 annually would not be eligible for Care4Kids.

Work only requirements are also problematic. They prevent parents who want to further their education from getting child care assistance while they are in class or studying.

Furthermore, low payment rates force parents to pay more than they can afford. Center based providers have received one 3% raise since 2002 during which time the minimum wage has gone up from \$6.40 to \$10.10 (57% increase). The federal government recommends that providers be paid at the 75th percentile of the market. Connecticut pays centers at the 4th percentile for infants and toddlers and the 7th percentile for preschool. (Unionized family child care providers are paid at 70th percentile of the market).

As you can see, it is essential that Care4Kids receives appropriate funding and support. Thank you for your consideration of my comments and respectfully ask for your support of these proposals.