



Connecticut  
Early Childhood  
Alliance

**Testimony of Merrill Gay in support of Senate Bill 934  
AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY IN THE CARE4KIDS PROGRAM TO PARENTS  
ENROLLED IN OTHER TYPES OF SCHOOL**

Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 934. My name is Merrill Gay and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance, a statewide membership organization committed to ensuring that all children in Connecticut are healthy, safe and ready for lifelong success.

Currently in Connecticut, the Care4Kids child care subsidy helps low income parents with child care if they are: working, a teen parent completing high school, or in a TANF related job training program. These criteria are far more restrictive than in 47 other states<sup>1</sup> where parents can use the child care subsidy program while they are in school. The rules vary from state to state but we are one of only 3 states that just don't allow it.

Across Connecticut there are thousands of unfilled jobs that require some post secondary education. At the same time if you ask folks at our community colleges what are the things keeping students from finishing their degrees, child care problems are one of the the first things mentioned.

If we want to grow our economy and increase prosperity in the state, we need to make sure that we have the skilled workforce to meet employer's demand, otherwise they will go someplace else. Over the years, we have offered all sorts of incentives to companies and yet we continue to ignore the reality that investing in our residents is a much more durable way of building our economy and helping families earn their way into the middle class.

Expanding eligibility to allow parents access to Care4Kids while they can pursue post secondary education will cost money. None of us want to go through another Care4Kids closure, so I urge you to pass this bill, get OFA to calculate a fiscal note and then lets all go advocate at the Appropriations Committee to increase the Care4Kids line item to account for the added cost.

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<sup>4</sup><https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/33646/413254-Child-Care-Assistance-for-Parents-in-Education-and-Training.PDF>