
I am honored to be presenting testimony on the issue of Expanding Eligibility for Certain Families in the Care4Kids Program.

This is an issue that is very important to me. I am in UConn’s Early Childhood Development and Education program and am currently student teaching in a Preschool classroom with plans of being an Early Childhood Educator after graduation. I know how important quality childcare is for families and children and unfortunately it can be very expensive. It can be difficult and sometimes impossible for parents who are working or in school to find affordable, high quality, reliable childcare.

It is crucial to expand eligibility for families in the Care4Kids program to include families with a gross income of up to 75% of the statewide median income. Quality early childhood care and education is critical for healthy development of young children and to allow parents to fully participate in the workforce. However, federal changes have gradually diminished the pool of eligible families since 2015, causing many children and families to suffer. Without the Care4Kids subsidy, childcare is too expensive for many families. We need to change this. Childcare is the largest expense for low income working families, with the cost of child care averaging at $19,521 in 2016. This is 28% of the median household income for a family of four. Over the past few years, families below 50% state median income, teen mothers, and families in TANF became ineligible for the Care4Kids program. This program went from serving 22,957 children to 13,223 children, and there are still many children and families who are being underserved. In order for parents and children to succeed, we must expand the income eligibility of Care4Kids to allow more low income families access.

This is an issue that will impact the educational well being and future of Connecticut’s young children and requires immediate action. If a policy change is enacted where more families are
eligible for the Care4Kids program, it will reduce stress for children and their families. Additionally, it would work to reduce poverty levels of families in Connecticut if families are able to work and not spend so much of their income on childcare. Longitudinal studies of children who receive high quality early childcare and children who do not have yielded consistent results, showing that investing in high quality early education leads to positive long term results for children. For every dollar invested in high quality early childhood education, the public saves 13$ in the place of costs for special education, public assistance, unemployment benefits, and crime. Expanding eligibility for families in the Care4Kids program would improve the lives of not only children and families, but also Connecticut taxpayers. Cuts to the Care4Kids program are not an acceptable way to balance the budget.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify about S.B. No. 933 AN ACT EXPANDING ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN FAMILIES IN THE CARE4KIDS PROGRAM. Thank you for your consideration.