
Testimony Supporting
H.B. 5121: An Act Concerning Certain Protections for Group and Family Child Care Homes
Housing Committee
February 18, 2020

Dear Senator Anwar, Representative McGee, and members of the Housing Committee:

We are submitting testimony today on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based child advocacy organization working to ensure a Connecticut that is thriving and equitable, and where all children have an opportunity to achieve their full potential.

CT Voices supports H.B. 5121: An Act Concerning Certain Protections for Family Child Care Homes. This bill will increase the number of licensed child care providers that meet the needs of Connecticut’s working families—particularly those with infants and toddlers—by clarifying, enforcing, and expanding housing and zoning protections for licensed group child care and family child care homes. A 2018 report found that 44% of Connecticut’s population lives in a “child care desert,” defined as a census tract with “little or no access to quality child care.” The child care shortage is particularly acute for the state’s youngest children: according to a recent estimate from Connecticut’s Office of Early Childhood, the state is short 51,000 child care slots for infants and toddlers.

Family and group child care are an essential part of Connecticut’s early care and education systems as well as economic and employment systems.

- First, these children care options provide essential educational foundations for children. Research shows that the first three years of life are when children experience their most rapid growth and development and, as such, critical for their success and overall well-being later in life. Access to high-quality early care and education settings ultimately make a difference in the lives of children.
- Second, these child care options are particularly important for families that face the greatest barriers to accessing jobs and care—Connecticut’s most overburdened, under-resourced families—such as families with infants and toddlers, families that work nontraditional hours, and families that lack access to reliable transportation.
- Third, this sector of work is one we can collectively help nurture in Connecticut, ultimately helping grow the state’s economy.

Family and group child care programs are uniquely well-positioned to meet the needs of infants and toddlers, providing safe, nurturing individualized care in a small group setting and providing access to the developmentally appropriate early learning opportunities critical to their healthy growth and development. They also provide economic benefits to the recipients and providers of child care as well as to the state. Despite all this, many current and prospective providers face housing and zoning barriers to starting, maintaining, and/or expanding their home-based child care businesses. These barriers are often rooted in systemic racism and discrimination. We can aid in the dismantling of these systems by passing H.B. 5121 while also providing a safe, nurturing environment for children in their early years of learning that supports individualized and collective growth.

Thank you for your consideration.

JUST FACTS

Family and group child care are a win-win-win for Connecticut, offering benefits for children, parents, and child care providers:

- A safe, nurturing residential environment for children to receive individualized care
- Affordable and accessible child care that meets the diverse needs of working families
- A study conducted by the University of Connecticut's Center for Economic Analysis found that every family child care provider licensed with the support of All Our Kin allowed 4-5 parents to enter the workforce
- Opportunities for home-based entrepreneurs to operate child care businesses, providing for their own families and supporting the broader economy
- The UConn study found that between 2006 and 2009, family child care providers licensed through All Our Kin created about \$18.4 million in additional tax revenue and generated \$15.2 million in macroeconomic benefits to the New Haven region alone