

**Testimony regarding: H.B. No. 5005 AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2021**

Submitted By:

**Rachael Stamat, Pediatric Care Coordinator, Middlesex Health (2/13/2020)**

My name is Rachael Stamat and I am the Pediatric Care Coordinator of Middlesex Health

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Governor's proposed budget for the Office of Early Childhood. Specifically I want to address:

1. Funding for the Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership
2. The \$2.7 million cut to the early care and education line item
3. The continued lack of parity in funding for the Child Development Centers, and
4. The \$530,000 cut to After School programs in the Education Department Budget

I am very happy to see the Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership funded in the governor's budget. As you may remember this was taken out of the budget last year based on the assumption that the Federal funds were going away. In fact Connecticut gained a very viable federal grant to provide the Head Start wrap around services to infant toddler care in both family daycare and centers. The state funds are required to support the child care part of the programs.

I am very concerned about the cut of \$2.7 million from the Early Care and Education line. This represents the \$100 increase per full day full year child care opening that was put into the 2nd year of the budget. Minimum wage will increase again next September so the costs for staff will increase therefore causing the quality of child care to be affected and parents shouldn't have to struggle when trying to go to work to support their family. As a Pediatric Care Coordinator, I see a major need for this program on a daily basis. I work with many families in the community that would not be able to go to work without this program. The budget cut can affect a lot of people involved, many children, parents and staffing at these Child Care Programs. This program has been great to see over years as it has helped many families that need child care and after school programs. This will greatly affect families and as a care coordinator I will see a lot of the turmoil that the budget cut will cause.

All of the issues that I just described above are even worse for the state funded Child Development Centers because they are trying to provide the same NAEYC accredited care with \$357 less per child per year. That is not reasonable, and that's one of the reasons why years ago you combined the CDC and School Readiness line items into one Early Care and Education line item. These two programs, that are providing the same care, should be paid at the same rate.

Finally, many of our children rely on the after school programs until their parents get home from work. I strongly urge you to find funds to restore this cut so that all the kids being served now will still have after school programs next year this is very important.

Thank you for this opportunity to give a written testimony.