

## **Testimony regarding: Governor's Proposed Budget**

Submitted By:

Krista Pisano 48 Sommers Hill Drive Southington, CT 06489  
Executive Director, Margaret C Griffin Child Development Center of Southington

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. The \$2.7 million cut to the early care and education line item
2. The continued lack of parity in funding for the Child Development Centers

I am extremely 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 slot that was put into the 2nd year of the budget. Minimum wage will increase again next September so our costs for staff will go up. Unlike other businesses, I can't reduce staffing because we have staff ratios set in regulation. Unlike other child care programs I can't generate more revenue through higher tuition because under the State Funded Child Day Care Center regulations parents pay on a sliding scale based on their income. That puts me in a bind. CDC providers have gone years without an increase. That was hard enough with insurance costs going up every year, but minimum wage is really going to have an impact. I urge you to find the money to restore this cut.

It is my opinion that the future of the Early Childhood Workforce in Connecticut is in jeopardy. An increase in revenues is needed so that we can pay our teachers a wage that is comparable to public school teachers and one that is based on their education and experience. The increase would enable us to pay teachers more, in hopes that we can attract and retain them as teachers and to provide continuity of care to our children. Research repeatedly shows us that building positive relationships within predictable, consistent care is critical to young children's development and a mark of quality centers.

All of those problems that I just described 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's not fair, and that's one of the reasons why several 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 identical care, should be paid at the same rate.

Adequate funding for early care and education in all settings will support small businesses, compensate teachers with fair and equitable wages, and improve outcomes for children and working families.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and I am happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully Submitted,

Krista R Pisano

Executive Director

M. C. Griffin Child Development Center of Southington, Inc.