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Good afternoon Sen. Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Melissa Faugno and I live in Stamford.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the the Governor's proposed budget for the Office of Early Childhood. Specifically I want to address: Funding for the Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership.

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 won a very competitive federal grant to provide the Head Start wrap around services to infant toddler care in both family daycare and centers. The state funds are needed to support the child care part of the equation.

I am extremely concerned about the cut of \$2.7 million from the Early Care and Education line. Our school readiness and Early Childhood Education systems need to be strengthened, not restricted of resources from lack of funds. Unfortunately, my daughter had an emotional reaction to her environment which we treated medically for 18 months; she just turned 3, that's half her life. Her center did not have proper educational training and resources available due to lack of funds for their teachers and not just our daughter, but our whole family was effected.

Further cuts would significantly impact the overall development of our children, and for some more specifically their social emotional learning. Learning starts early and our future relies on our youngest generation, literally. Without these funds, we are jeopardizing federal support, denying children with opportunities to succeed and denying their parents stable child care during the work day.

I strongly urge you to find funds to restore these cuts to give our youngest generation the quality care and learning they deserve.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to share my testimony.

Best,
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