

Good afternoon Sen. Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Dominique Place and I am the Site Manager of YWCA Nike Tykes Early Learning Center in Manchester Connecticut.

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

The \$2.7 million cut to the early care and education line item

We are 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.

Our concerns stem from our commitment to the profession and to providing the highest quality of care possible to the families we serve. Majority of the families we are providing care to At Nike Tykes would be unable to afford care at the full pay rate. The School Readiness funding allows for parents to work or pursue an education of their own while knowing their children are well cared for during the day. This funding also helps us to maintain ratios and fill our center with qualified staff members to provide each student with the tools they need to be successful as they move on to kindergarten. Below is testimony from our team highlighting the importance of this funding to the community of Manchester;

Carli Johnson of South Windsor,

"I think our center and others like it should be funded because it is beneficial to families. The families here are appreciative of the School Readiness funding because it is very useful to them. If the funding is removed many of the children currently enrolled in our program would be unable to afford care. The children and their families are amazing and wonderful people it would be awful for them to struggle to find high quality care."

Julia Morrison of New Britain,

"To suggest that we cut \$2.7 million from our Early Childhood programs is simply a slap in the face as a whole. Yet again the future of our lower income families are put on the chopping block, do we even matter? These cuts will lead to teachers being laid off and our Early Learning Centers closing. I think our children are the future, do you?"

We urge you to find the money to restore this cut so that families and children like those in our center are able to thrive.

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

Dominique Place

Site Manager Nike Tykes Early Learning Center | **YWCA Hartford Region**

255 Garden Grove Rd
Manchester, CT. 06040

P 860.647.9325 ext #220 **F** 860.896.8221

[E dominiquep@ywcahartford.org](mailto:dominiquep@ywcahartford.org)

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