



**CAFCA**  
Connecticut Association  
for Community Action

**March 6, 2020 Public Hearing Testimony before the  
Connecticut General Assembly's Education Committee**

*In Support of*

**House Bill 5220: An Act Expanding Eligibility in the Care4Kids  
Program to Parents Participating In an Even Start Program or  
Enrolled in Certain Secondary Education Programs**

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Distinguished Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons, Ranking Members, and Members, my name is Deb Polun and I am the new Executive Director for the Connecticut Association for Community Action (CAFCA), the state association that works with Connecticut's nine Community Action Agencies (CAAs), the state and federal designated antipoverty agencies.

I am here to express our support for House Bill 5220, *An Act Expanding Eligibility in the Care4Kids Program to Parents Participating in an Even Start Program or Enrolled in Certain Secondary Education Programs*.

As the largest statewide safety net service provider, Connecticut's network of Community Action Agencies connect neighbors in need with resources that stabilize and improve lives and communities. Every year, we work with over 259,000 low- and moderate-income people across the state – including your constituents – to provide them with vital services like energy assistance, job training, nutrition, housing support, and early child care and education.

By investing in a multigenerational approach to early care and learning, Community Action Agencies prepare children for future success. Last year, our network enrolled over 5,600 children in early childhood services across the state. The goal of the Care4Kids program is to make child care affordable for low to moderate income families in Connecticut, and H.B. 5220 expands eligibility for this critical program. This means more children will receive the care they need, allowing their parents or caregivers the time to go to work, get an education, or search for a job.

We know that providing support for both children and their families as a whole is key in helping to ensure positive and improved mental, social, emotional, educational, and developmental outcomes – and in reducing the achievement gap. And, access to high-quality, early childhood care education programs is essential in helping to break the cycle of poverty.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to working with you to help ensure all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential in Connecticut.