

Testimony regarding: Appropriations Committee Public Hearing on the Governor's Proposed Budget H.B. No. 6439 for Human Services

Submitted By:

David Kulick, Co-president, Connecticut Association for the Education of Young Children (CTAEYC)

Good Afternoon members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is David Kulick, and I am the Co-President of CTAEYC and live in Mystic, CT.

On behalf of our nearly 1100 early childhood education and care professionals across the state that make up our membership, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the Governor's proposed budget.

CTAEYC strongly urges the committee to move the money that Department of Children and Families (DCF) uses to pay for child care for children in foster care over to the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) so that it can be administered by the Care4kids automated system instead of DCF's paper system. There have been chronic problems of DCF not paying child care providers in a timely matter which is why our membership requests the committee to move the money to OEC and have Care4Kids handle the payments.

This is highlighted by one of our members who is a Director of multiple Early Childhood Programs in Waterbury as she shares:

"I am advocating in support of H.B.No.6439 to move the funds that DCF uses to pay for childcare for children in foster care over to the OEC so that it can be administered by the Care 4 Kids automated system. Our programs are currently carrying unpaid balances that exceed 90 days overdue, in excess of \$15,000, which increases with each week that we continue to provide childcare. This is unacceptable and we cannot continue to provide services without an improvement in the invoice and payment process. We have contacted

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DCF offices without timely results, only excuses for the process. We have reached out to individual child DCF case workers, who are sympathetic and try to assist but have little influence over the process. I appreciate your attention to this issue and look forward to your support for childcare programs providing care to children in the DCF/Foster care system.”

In closing, CTAEYC implores you to move this money out of DCF and over to OEC so that Care4Kids can administer the payments. This will help to streamline the process and get programs paid what they are owed in a timely manner and ultimately ensure that Connecticut’s most vulnerable children have access to quality early childhood programs.

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