



**United Way
of Greater New Haven**

March 7, 2021

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Committee,

My name is Karen Pascale. I am the Director of United Way of Greater New Haven's Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (UWGNH-EHS-CCP) program. On behalf of United Way, I am writing in support of the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Carve-out funding. I commend Governor Lamont for including the carve-out funding to support this federal award.

We know a child's brain is 90% developed by age five, making the early childhood years one of the best opportunities to shape a child's future. That's why United Way believes all children should have access to high quality early care and education. We fight to break the cycle of poverty by providing children of low-income families with a comprehensive program to meet their social-emotional, health, and nutritional needs and support the families in improving their lives.

Our program serves 88 infants and toddlers and their families living in New Haven, West Haven, and Hamden. We work with four community-based partners to do so; All Our Kin; a network of family child care providers, Elizabeth Celotto Child Care Center; located within Wilbur Cross High School, exclusively serving teenage parents enrolled in New Haven Public Schools; Morning Glory Infant Toddler Center; an accredited center in New Haven's West River neighborhood, and West Haven Child Development Center; a long-time staple in the West Haven community, with the only Early Head Start classroom in the city.

EHS is a federal to local program that provides child-development and family-centered services for income eligible families. This two-generational program focuses on the well-being of the child, as well as building a relationship with the family. Children benefit from the nurturing and learning provided in a year-round, high-quality program, while parents are connected to services that enable them to pursue goals such as going back to school and getting a job.

Starting early is a proven way to help children be successful in school and life and is a big part of United Way's strategy to make sure all children, no matter the obstacles, are ready for college and career.

Through the layering of carve-out funding this program helps transform opportunities for low-income families with infants and toddlers that face the greatest barriers to accessing the supports and services they need to thrive.

Carve-out funding goes directly to our partners to cover the cost of care and comprehensive services; the largest component of that cost is teacher and family child care provider salaries.

Without the carve-out funding, our program would be forced to reduce the number of children we serve by half. Thirty-one children would no longer have access to services through this partnership. At a time when Connecticut faces a shortage of 50,000 licensed child care slots for infants and toddlers, we cannot afford to exacerbate this crisis by destabilizing the current supply of high-quality care provided through our program.

A reduction in slots would mean fewer families finding success, like Sierra. Sierra was a parenting teen whose daughters, Khloe and Zoe, were enrolled in our partner agency, Elizabeth Celotto. With Khloe entering Kindergarten, and Zoe thriving at the center, Sierra was able to focus on her schooling. Sierra has said, "The reason why I was able to make it to where I am is because I had support (...)". Sierra will graduate in May with a BA degree in English.

I urge you to support the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Carve-out funding included in the Governor's budget and continue to help Connecticut families thrive.

Sincerely,



Karen Pascale
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