

CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND PLAN

FOR CONNECTICUT
FFYS 2010 & 2011

PUBLIC TESTIMONY
FROM
PUBLIC HEARINGS
MAY 13, 18, & 20, 2009

AND

WRITTEN COMMENTS
RECEIVED BY DSS
ON OR BEFORE JUNE 8, 2009

Child Care Services in CT - CCDF Plan
Public Hearing
Notes of Public Testimony
LULAC Head Start CDC
5/13/09, 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
New Haven, CT

Public Hearing Convened at 4:00 p.m.

Hearing Administrators: Peter Palermino- DSS, Julie Bisi-DSS, and Jessica Sager – Child Day Care Council

Printed Documents available for the public: CCDF Plan, First Words First Steps Summary, Child Care Annual Report Summary, Care 4 Kids Press release.

Peter Palermino, Child Care Administrator, Connecticut Department of Social Services - gave an overview of the two year Child Care plan and funding information. This hearing also includes the one-time \$13.6 million in Stimulus funding provided for child care. The document contains details regarding how Connecticut used federal CCDF funding in the past and areas that are to be focused on. Until the state budget is finalized, the CCDF funding will be in draft format. The plan includes potential uses where the state may spend the Stimulus funding, and outlines the three categorical areas required – Quality Expansion, Quality Infant/Toddler and Child Care Services. The public hearing invites ideas and suggestions as to how to spend this one-time stimulus funding. Mr. Palermino also gave an overview of changes to the Care 4 Kids program that became effective on May 13, 2009, limiting new applications to families with TFA or formerly TFA, and with incomes below 50% of the SMI.

At 4:40 PM Mr. Palermino opened the public hearing to public testimony. Persons were invited to speak in accordance with the order that they signed in. Discussion regarding the Care 4 Kids changes would be held after people had a chance to discuss the plan.

Testimony

1. Marge Weiner, Gateway Community College, Early Learning Center

Expressed concern that the Quality Enhancement funds be reinstated. These funds are key to the multidisciplinary, education consultation, professional development, teacher training, resource centers, meeting School Readiness and NAEYC requirements for training consultation. The colleges have been hit by several funding cuts, which may impact accreditation, Director's Credentialing. She was concerned about parent's ability to pay with loss in jobs and the change in Care 4 Kids – child care will become out-of-reach for people.

Jacqueline Gonzalez, Parent – Hope Child Development Center

Discusses the role of the child care center on her child's development and success with morals, values, cultural diversity and language. She discussed the importance for quality education for children no matter what income level their parents are at.

Christine Fahey, Middletown School Readiness Council

Wanted to ditto what was said by Marge Weiner regarding the importance of Quality Enhancement funds and to articulate the funding and quality Enhancement programming in the Plan.

Notes of Public Testimony 5/13/09 (Continued)

Carla Horwitz, Calvin Hill Day Care, Inc.

Discussed sliding scale fees, the benefits of and how crucial the Accreditation Facilitation Project and Education Consultants are to the field. She asked that the Quality Enhancement funds not just be used for slots.

Cyd Oppenheimer, CT Voices for Children

Discussed a CT Voices for Children brief and All Our Kin, as well as the Child Care pay rates and the base of the 2001 Market Rate survey. How does this compare to the 75th ile of the current market rate. She questioned how the rates are sufficient. She discussed the lasting effect of the one-time investment of Quality funding for Infants/Toddlers and Family Day Care licensing support, professional development, resources and services, turnover rates, expanding supply of FDCH in providing I/T care. She expressed concern with the C4K restriction on working families struggling to make it.

Denise Duclos, New Haven Early Child Council & School Readiness Office

Asked for clarification in the plan for funding used for Quality Enhancement and School Readiness and recommended including a budget narrative. She discusses the need for these finds to ensure resources for programs and support of Education Consultants. She agreed with the comments made by Marge Weiner. She discussed the benefits of the All Our Kin toolkits, FDCH licensing and that a small amount of QE funding has a large impact. She suggested that the School Readiness accountability by programs be presented differently to better show the programs, activities and money spent. She would hold C4K comments until that discussion.

Jessica Sager, All Our Kin & CDC Council

She was pleased to see so many advocates, parents and providers. She said that licensed FDCHs and second and 3rd shift neighbor care need to be included in the planning as they play a key roll in after school care, infant/toddler and preschool services. Programs are closing at an alarming rate. Over 50% of I/T care is home-based. She discussed the initiatives in NY, RI and MA state governments and sustainability of best practices. She suggested that the one-time ARRA funding be used for licensing FDCHs, professional consultation/coaching. She stated that 77% of kids in FDCH receive C4K. She asked that the program remain open, as to not put I/T slots at risk.

Jennifer Butler, Life Haven Child Care Center (submitted written testimony)

She requested that the Children in Shelters program be reinstated for next year. She echoed Marge Weiners comments about quality enhancement funding and described the difference that consultation, professional development and ACES workshops had made for the staff and at the center. Cuts to Care 4 kids would impact homeless families who are in upsetting and complex situations, with difficulty in trying to find and maintain housing. The loss of Care4Kids would undo other gains in life and the safe and secure environment for kids in child care and 'knock them right back down.'

Frankie White, St. Mark's Day Care Center

Stated that the Care 4 Kids alert was a 'deadly announcement'. She expressed concern for no new applications, enrollment process, movement of kids between programs, waiting lists, ineligibility of working families. She said that 90% of the kids are from low-moderate income working families or are in school. C4K is critical to maintaining employment or staying in school. She discussed the importance of and dependence on quality enhancement and school

Notes of Public Testimony 5/13/09 (Continued)

readiness resources for in-service training, CPR, outreach, staff and family supports as well as the cost of soft supports and small equipment, literacy materials for families. She mentioned the coordination and referrals to and from programs, Family Resource Centers, diaper banks, food pantries, adult training, FDCHs, mental health resources and mentors. She talked about prioritizing families and balancing the needs of teen parents in high school, homeless families, parents in alcohol or drug rehabilitation, etc.

Patty O'Hanlon, Westville Community Nursery Schools

Discussed the ability to achieve and maintain NAEYC Accreditation because of the support from the AFP and Education Consultants and the importance to keep that resource for programs.

Gwen Samuel, State of Black CT Alliance

She state that the C4K changes repeat the 2001/2002 concerns. Look at values and concern with the limited number of Infant/Toddler slots. She discussed accountability and auditing and asked who the decision makers are for the final plan. She talked about fairness to consumers – the announcement hit providers by storm and did not take into account the families. The ARRA funds are to help stabilize economies. She expressed concern that 10 year old children (siblings) will be taking care of children C4Ks is not available. She recommended revisiting the application receipt window. The timing and manner was a disservice to families. In order to ensure that children are not at risk, there is a lot of work to be done.

Reggie Hayes, Kiddie Korner Day Care Center

Explained that the center was working with families on C4Ks applications last night and not aware of the closing until after. Parents were waiting for additional documentation before they could submit and it was too late. Felt it was appalling.

Alberto Harry

Translated from Spanish – Concern with Care4Kids changes, the program works, why create a crisis when there is already a crisis in the state. If funds are cut, it cuts parents access and they lose their work. Many are working at fast food restaurants and their incomes are low. Please increase funding to this program that works and can help the economy maintain and create jobs in the state & nation. Discussed kids separation anxieties before school and the importance of the Head Start transition. Stated that many more parents would have been at the meeting to discuss issues but the information had such a short advance.

George Hensinger

Discussed a legislative bill to continue /extend services for unemployed persons. The bill is still moving forward and anticipated using the ARRA stimulus funds to support child care subsidies for unemployed.

Theo Freeman, Peace Early Childhood Center

Discussed the impact on the most vulnerable population and the need to maintain C4ks. He recommended looking into NY and MA programs as examples.

Notes of Public Testimony 5/13/09 (Continued)

Georgia Goldbum - Hope Child Development Center

She received letters from parents expressing the same concerns mentioned. Devastating news and the manner showed a lack of respect for parents – when parents are required to meet many time requirements, etc. from Care4Kids, it was not reflective of what is asked of parents to work within the system or partnership. Even a one week notice. Parents and providers who had applications ready but did not know of the midnight deadline – now not able to apply. She understands about lack of funding but questioned the manner in which the cut off occurred. She was concerned for families who were making progress but lose child care will no longer be stable financially. Centers and providers may end up closing if parents pull kids out because they can not afford the care, which would reduce choice and slot availability. Such a change creates many unintended consequences.

At 5:20 PM the formal part of the Public Hearing was closed and the hearing was opened up for informal discussion.

Christine Fahey discussed concern for the draft state budget eliminating School Readiness funds for the 19 communities. It was not clear if the budget passed if QE funds would be taken from the ARRA funding.

Denise Duclos asked if funding for AFP and CT Charts-A-Course are included in the plan as part of the QE funding.

Peter Palermino explained that the child care budget will reflect the requirements outlined in the state budget and legislative directives, once it is finalized. In order to receive Federal Stimulus funding, all states are required to maintain quality and other program components at the level of funding that was in place on February 17, 2009 The CCDF planning documents guides the priorities and activities. He walked through the funding details shown in the plan on page 18. In years past the quality enhancement funds helped support CT Charts-a-Course, AFP, and 211. The federal ARRA one-time funding for quality expansion is more flexible funding. 4% or approximately \$2.7 million is in the budget for QE. Connecticut historically spends more than the \$2.7 million on quality enhancement.

There was discussion regarding the Market Rate Survey and if it was current in 2007. The UCONN survey was done in 2001 and United Way in 2007.

There was discussion regarding current year funding for Care4Kids, cost projections and if payment rates would remain as is.

Frustration and angst was expressed regarding the Care4Kids changes and the implementation of a waitlist.

Alma Ramos, Family Day Care Home provider

Translated for a parent whose child was in her care. The parent expressed concern if she no longer received Care4 Kids as she works at McDonalds, her income is low and she would not be able to bring her son the day care is she could not afford it. She also expressed the need to continue the support of programs that help with CDA and supporting and licensing FDCHs.

Notes of Public Testimony 5/13/09 (Continued)

Milagros Will, West Haven Parent

Very concerned id Care 4 Kids closes as families are balancing living expenses, food, child care etc. Families will need additional help if child care cost increase.

There was discussion regarding movement between providers. If a family is in Care4Kids they may change providers. The slot that opened in the old provider – may not end up with a Care4Kids family. Care 4 Kids is provided to the family, so if another child is born, or school age children require more hours, the child care certificate follows the whole family not just one child. If earnings exceed 50% the family becomes ineligible, unless the family had already been in the category between 50%-75% - they are grandfathered until they reach 75% or otherwise become ineligible. Applications should still be submitted, if families are TFA or former TFA – and if not they will be waitlisted.

A recommendation was made that Infant/Toddler funding be more direct and competitive for individual sites/providers to apply.

Christina Moreni, Parent

Discussed the key role that Care4Kids has played in supporting her while she works. It helps provide a safe place with good care for her school age child and her baby. She was extremely concerned if Care 4 Kids was no longer available.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM/

Submitted by Julie A. Bisi, CT Department of Social Services, Family Services Division

Child Care Services in CT – CCDF Plan
Public Hearing
Notes of Public Testimony
Southeast Mental Health Authority
5/18/09, 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Norwich, CT

Public Hearing Convened at 4:10 p.m.

Hearing Administrators: Peter Palermino- DSS, Devon Conover – DPH, Robin Maillett-DSS

Testimony

Deb Poirier, TVCCA - (testimony attached, #1) C4K's closing devastating to parents & centers, will cause financial hardship.

Deb Monahan, TVCCA - (testimony attached, #2) Draft plan is good for kids. Concern for the working poor who struggle to keep kids in quality, safe environments. Loss of C4K's funding compromises CDC's ability to repay CHEFA loans. Need C4K's reopened.

Susan Corrice, Riverfront Children's Center - C4K's cuts limit access to quality care settings. Plan is good, however funding is not enough. The number of state funded slots will be reduced because of funding loss. Closing C4K's counter productive to center's attempt to bring money in for quality when the slots aren't paid in full as is. Closing C4K's could topple CDC's.

Kimberly Dole, Riverfront Children's Center - Parents are sharing their concerns about unemployment & their ability to pay fees for child care and basic needs.

Gwen Lakowsky, Child & Family Agency - Parents frightened they won't be able to pay for quality child care. They need support for basic needs.

Hearing adjourned 4:35 p.m.

Submitted by Robin Maillett, CT Department of Social Services, Family Services Division

I attended the Public Hearing on the Child Care Plan on May 18, 2009 in Norwich representing the Child Day Care Council. Five individuals gave testimony during the formal part of the hearing. The comments focused on the impact of the closure of the Care 4 Kids program. Some presenters felt that current services should be maintained before expansion in some areas is considered. During the informal discussion period, Peter Palermino discussed the plan and the use of federal stimulus funds. I reminded participants to visit the DPH Child Day Care Licensing Web page frequently to see "What's New".

Submitted by Devon A. Conover, Chief

Community Based Regulation Section, Child Day Care and Youth Camp Licensing Programs
CT Department of Public Health

Child Care Services in CT - CCDF Plan
Public Hearing
Notes of Public Testimony
Research and Education Center for the Hospital for Special Care
5/20/09, 1:00 p.m.- 3:00 p.m.
New Haven, CT

Public Hearing Convened at 1:00 p.m.

Hearing Administrators: Peter Palermino- DSS, Linda Ball – DPH, Julie Bisi-DSS, Robin Maillett - DSS, Wanda Hawley – DSS, and Don Beltrame – DSS.

Printed Documents available for the public: CCDF Plan, First Words First Steps Summary, Child Care Annual Report Summary, Care 4 Kids Press release.

Peter Palermino, Child Care Administrator, Connecticut Department of Social Services - gave an overview of the two year Child Care plan and funding information. This hearing also includes the one-time \$13.6 million in Stimulus funding provided for child care. The document contains details regarding how Connecticut used federal CCDF funding in the past and areas that are to be focused on. The plan includes potential uses where the state may spend the Stimulus funding, and outlines the three categorical areas required – Quality Expansion, Quality Infant/Toddler and Child Care Services. ARRA requires special reporting and tracking, separate accounts and is short-term. Until the state budget is finalized, the CCDF funding will be in draft format. The public hearing invites ideas and suggestions as to how to spend the funding and plan for early care and education services in the state. Mr. Palermino also gave an overview of changes to the Care 4 Kids program that became effective on May 13, 2009, limiting new applications to families with TFA or formerly TFA, and with incomes below 50% of the SMI.

Testimony:

Verbal Testimony and Comments was received from: Sherry Linton, CT Association for Human Services; Mary Burnham – The Children’s Center of New Milford; Mark Pasquariello, New Britain-Berlin YMCA; Judy Goldfarb, Hartford Area Child Care Collaborative, Kathy Queen, Wallingford Community Day Care; Tiffany Murasso, Catholic Family Charities, Marie Monahan, CAEYC and St. Mary’s Hospital Child Development Center, Barbara Tacchi, Waterbury School Readiness, Eda diBiccari, SEIU – Service Employees International Union, Betsy Morgan, Middlesex Coalition for Children.

Questions and comments pertained to the following:

Will the plan and application that is submitted to ACF be more specific in regard to priorities and budget? Want to see more detail. Language regarding increasing activities.

What is different in the Market Rate Survey and reimbursement rates? Will the market rate be reflected in the reimbursement rate? How does the federal requirements impact market rate/reimbursement. How often is the rate survey done?

Did the closing of Care4Kids have an impact on what was written in the draft CCDF plan?

Statement made regarding contradictions in increasing capacity and closing categories in Care 4 Kids.

Notes of Public Testimony 5/20/09 (Continued)

Has the policy on Child Support changed?

Comments regarding center actions in a “timely fashion”

What does Kindergarten – 3 and educational experience mean? (pages 10 & 14). Mention of the ECE Investment Plan.

Question and discussion on the language re: C4K closed/shut down, plans for parents, and help for providers in interpreting and explaining the changes to parents.

Care 4 Kid changes were discussed in detail. SFY 2009 budget for C4K = \$93 million, anticipated cost of \$104 million. Plans to use ARRA Stimulus funds to offset deficit. Access to teens parents and TFA clients remains the same.

Question if DSS tracks how many families will go off C4K with recent changes? Comments regarding potential increase/surge to TFA and unemployment and administrative legislation

Discussion regarding provider certificates. Need to spend wisely, strategically identify priorities, and to move the planning regarding infants and toddlers to implementation of programs and activities.

Discussion regarding quality enhancement, AFP, CT Charts-A-Course scholarships, resource and referral, C4K and licensing staff as well as federal drawdown, federal law, allowable expenditures, access to caregivers and consumers.

Question regarding the feasibility for expansion of child care. With limits in current funding it is difficult to request additional from the legislature. Programs already adjusting their own budgets with loss of funding, inability of parents to pay full fees and reduction in C4K will make it tougher.

Concern with unfunded mandates for credentialing and education levels, cost of services go up and even more so if salaries are increased.

Concern for maintaining level of quality and accreditation without adequate funding. Programs may be gone/close doors in the next few years because of financial impacts and economic state. Staff is paid low wages, the cost of supplies increase, cost of accreditation & quality.

Comment that they were please to see quality enhancement funding as part of the plan. It is helpful for family, friend & neighbor care. It is also important for Infant Toddler coursework & training, education assistance, CDA and Bachelor degree requirements, expand child care occupational programs. CT Charts-A-Course and AFP scholarships are not enough to cover training for all staff – there is a need for more trainings and scholarships. Home-visiting networks are important in helping providers learn actions & additional skills. Does DSS anticipate changes to scholarship priority areas?

Comments regarding the plan goals and objectives being broad and the federal funding being limited. Difficulty in encouraging child care as an occupation if the staff won't be eligible for Care4Kids, they will not be able to cover their own child care needs with the low compensation.

Notes of Public Testimony 5/20/09 (Continued)

Discussion regarding Early Childhood blueprints in communities to align with state level initiatives, priorities and plans. Move initiatives forward, leverage additional funding, coordinate local plans with state initiatives. Funds are insufficient to support state level planning at this time

Comment regarding a survey done with questions not including pay and health care – providers want more training, CPR/ bi-lingual support in FDCHs & Kith & Kin provider support.

A question was directed to DPH regarding substantiation of complaints and the differences between DCF and DPH substantiation. If unsubstantiated it still shows as a breach of requirements and may impact the centers NAEYC accreditation and funding, putting programs in jeopardy. An example was given and discussion regarding information gathered and differing requirements of DCF and DPH. Providers have the right to Dispute with the Investigator. The mandate to report the citation even if it is reversed – may be too late.

Discussion regarding monthly &/or quarterly payments to providers by SDE and DSS.

Support for Birth to Three.

Question as to the level of funding required to not close Care 4 Kids categories. Is someone doing analysis of the impact on the structure of the entire child care industry in the state? Who is responsible for studying the impact of Care4Kids changes?

Discussion regarding if constant or large growth of the program and if assumes payment rates remain unchanged. Discussion regarding budgets balancing with other state human service needs, priorities and individuals and family needs.

There were questions and discussion regarding the revised DPH Child Care regulations including total coverage while children are sleeping/nap time in room vs. in building; child vs. provider, job descriptions, background, regulated program, health, safety, cost of implementing new requirements for providers

There were over 50 people in attendance.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 PM

Submitted by Julie A. Bisi, CT Department of Social Services, Family Services Division

WRITTEN COMMENTS
RECEIVED BY DSS ON OR BEFORE JUNE 8, 2009
REGARDING THE
CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND PLAN
FOR CONNECTICUT
FFYs 2010 &2011

From: DUPRE, LORRAINE
Sent: Friday, May 01, 2009 11:59 AM
To: Bisi, Julie
Subject: Child Care Plan

Good morning, Julie.

Please notify me when the draft version of the child care plan is available online.

Thank you.

Sent: Sunday, May 03, 2009 8:56 PM

To: Bisi, Julie

Dear Ms. Julie,

I am asking to be notified about the draft pertaining to the child care plan.

I own my own small home day-care and am very concerned about what this draft may mean to my parents and children that I work for and what it may mean for my business. I know Mrs. Rell has a large responsibility to the people of Connecticut, I just hope we don't lose sight of our priority's to the children in this great state of Connecticut. Thank you for your time on this matter.

Respectfully,
April Wojcik

Sent: Monday, May 11, 2009 11:39 AM

To: Bisi, Julie

Subject: Child Care Plan

Good morning,

I would like to be alerted when the child care plan is ready and on the DSS Web site. Thank you!

Jessica Ciparelli

CT Early Childhood Alliance

May 11, 2009

RC@PT 5/11/09

To whom it may concern,

We the parents and staff of Life Haven Childcare Center urge you to do everything in your power to continue funding Life Haven's Childcare Center and to stop the proposed budget cuts to Care For Kids and the School Readiness Quality Enhancement Program. Hundreds of women and children that come through our shelter every year and utilize the childcare center will be severely impacted if the cuts are implemented. Our families utilize the childcare to allow them to secure housing and look for or maintain employment. Without the funding for the childcare, this process would become an impossible hurdle for them to manage and take even longer to get their lives back on track. Our current and future Infant and Toddler families would not have access to childcare without Care For Kids funding. Also, if the Care For Kids cuts are passed, only allowing TFA families to utilize it, almost all of our childcare families (childcare staff included) here at the shelter will not be able to afford childcare, thus preventing them further from securing employment or maintaining employment. In this economic climate, we need to assist our families in any way possible to help them maintain and secure employment. Our Childcare Center must receive the funding to remain open for a faster and more successful re-housing of our families.

The Quality Enhancement funds must continue to be implemented through the School Readiness Program. Since joining hands with School Readiness last year, we have seen a dramatic change in our Preschool classroom. This past year, we have seen the Multi-Disciplinary Team's speech pathologist, behavioral specialist, and ECAT team representatives come through the center to make classroom observations. When a need arises, they are responsive and provide the much needed assistance to our staff. We have seen the School Readiness Consultant through the year, assisting us in improving our classroom quality and with program accreditation. The program staff also receive professional development trainings through workshops at ACES provided to them free of charge. The staff return to the center well-informed and more confident in their teaching with the population we service.

These funds must stay secure. We have seen the lives of many of our families changed and back on track because of the availability of our childcare center. We have seen children living in unstable, transitional settings through their young lives experience consistency, compassion, and stability with our center. We have seen only growth in our staff and childcare center because of the impact of these Quality Enhancement funds. If these funds and the program were cut, our center would not have another direct source of regular quality improvements. Our staff would have a difficult time securing workshops that they could afford. For our childcare center and unique population that we service, we need to continue the momentum we have established for improving the quality of care and teaching direction for the children.

These cuts would directly affect every single woman and child and staff member that is a part of our shelter and childcare center. Please use your power and influence to stop these proposed cuts.

Signed,

The Parents and Staff of Life Haven Childcare Center

35 SIGNATURES.

-----Original Message-----

From: DUCLOS, DENISE [mailto:denise.duclos@new-haven.k12.ct.us]

Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2009 9:03 AM

To: Bisi, Julie

Subject:

Julie: I looked on the website just now and can't find the plan. The meeting in New Haven is tomorrow. Will we see a plan in time to review it and comment on it by Wednesday? Thanks.

Denise Duclos

New Haven School Readiness

New Haven Public Schools

Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2009 9:50 AM

To: Bisi, Julie

Subject: Ct. Draft Plan

I just wanted to say that with all the budget cuts across the state I feel the effect mostly on educating my teachers in order to meet accreditation (NAEYC) requirements. We used to be able to access our classes through ECETI until the budget cuts interrupted this. We do receive scholarship money from Charts-A-Course which has been a life saver as well as being able to take classes through Education Connection and the FAP. It is hard trying to keep up with what NAEYC requires and even harder finding ways to fund raise because quite frankly parents don't have the extra resources available anymore either. If the state could work more closely with facilities and families alike by adding incentives that would meet certain qualifications I think everyone would benefit. I have been in this field for over 16 years and have always strived to move forward and build but I find it a little taxing at this point in time. I will attend the New Haven meeting to get a better understanding of the federal funds and how they are going to be allocated.

Thank you,

Anne Evans

Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2009 11:15 AM

To: Bisi, Julie

Subject: ATTN: Child Care Division

ATTN: Child Care Division- CCDF Plan Department of Social Services 25 Sigourney street
Hartford, CT 06106

To whom it may concern,

As a resident of _____ CT- and a mother of three children ages ____ ____ _____. I cannot say enough about how important early childhood education has been for our family. I am also a Care4Kids recipient. I thank God for that service. Without Care4Kids I would not be able to afford to pay for daycare. The salary I earn working for a quasi-governmental agency here in CT would not be enough to support my bills as well as my children's daycare costs.

My youngest child has shown difficulty with behavior at home. While in daycare/preschool he exhibits control, focus and growth. These are skills that I could not offer my son. He needs to be in that structured environment in order to get ready for school in two years. Without the help of his teachers at preschool I would have seen further decline in his attention span and behavior. _____ has been a lifesaver for us. My son will be ready for school, he will most likely not need extra services to help him through because he is getting everything he needs to prepare him for school now.

I cannot stress how important early childhood education and Care4Kids is in the lives of so many here in Connecticut.

Thank you,

Sent: Tuesday, May 12, 2009 5:26 PM

To: Bisi, Julie

Subject: CHILD CARE PLAN

I AM A MOTHER OF A SPECIAL NEEDS 6 YEARS OLD BOY LIVING IN _____ I READ THE PLAN AND I DIDN'T SEE ONE SINGLE WORD (MAYBE I MISSED IT) TOWARDS CHILD CARE AND/OR SERVICES FOR OUR SPECIAL CHILDREN. WE ALREADY HAVE THOUSANDS OF CHILD CARE, SCHOOLS, RECREATION, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND SO ON FOR TYPICAL CHILDREN, BUT WE HAVE NOTHING AFFORDABLE FOR SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN.

TODAY I WAS IN A MEETING WITH ALL KIND OF AGENCIES...DCF, CHILD GUIDANCE, BOARD OF EDUCATION AND ETC...THEY ALL HAVE THE SAME PROBLEM...THEY CAN'T DO THEIR WORK RIGHT IF THERE ARE NO SERVICES OUT THERE. FEEL FREE TO CONTACT ME, I AM TRYING TO GET MORE SERVICES FOR THESE CHILDREN SO, A SINGLE MOTHER LIKE ME CAN WORK LONGER HOURS AND BE OUT OF WELFARE AND FOOD ASSISTANCE.

THANK YOU !!!

From: Sherry Linton
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2009 2:41 PM
Subject: [ecefinfo] Care 4 Kids Hearings Talking Points

In collaboration with our early care partners, we have developed the talking points below,

Late yesterday afternoon, information began to circulate that the Department of Social Services would be closing the Care4Kids program to some groups. We are actively seeking facts about this closure, and will share them as soon as we have them.

In light of this development it is more important than ever that the early care and education community speak out and that we speak out with one voice. Opportunities to speak out begin immediately with the public hearings that DSS will hold regarding the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) plan for the state of Connecticut (May 13 in New Haven, May 18 in Norwich, May 20 in New Britain). Please plan to attend one of these hearings or submit in writing your testimony to julie.bisi@ct.gov.

What should we say?

1) We should begin every conversation with our vision of what early care and education should look like in Connecticut: All children born in Connecticut will enter kindergarten healthy, eager to learn, and ready for school success, and we want their families to become, if they are not already, economically self-sufficient.

2) We should comment on the CCDBG plan: CCDBG funding (including the one-time stimulus dollars) should specifically work towards the vision stated above. The CCDBG for Connecticut totals over \$65 million - \$51,394,837 in CCDBG funds and \$13,685,624 in stimulus (ARRA) funds. The plan distributed by DSS was broad and unspecific. Specific recommendations:

Child care assistance (Care4Kids)

- Build in increases for provider reimbursement rates for the Care4Kids program. With planned increases, providers can be compensated fairly and the number of children served can remain steady. To date, the consideration of rate increases has drawn the threat of cuts. Thoughtful planning should allow for provider rate increases without compromising the number of families served. Provider reimbursement rates in the Care4Kids program have not been raised since 2001 and are far below the federal recommendation of the seventy-fifth percentile of current market rates. This means that licensed centers are struggling to keep programs open and the choices for families in the Care4Kids program continue to be severely limited. Families are not able to access at least seventy-five percent of programs under the current reimbursement.

Quality improvement

The DSS plan proposes \$2,782,915 for Quality Services. Programs are committed to improving quality, but have found current systems to be rigid and inflexible when compared to the realities of professionals in the field. Long-term quality will not improve without addressing the issue of compensation for providers. Nationally recognized accreditation standards should be the goal.

- Increase access to higher education, training and accreditation by expanding scholarships, the number of programs available, time and location programs are offered, and diversify the modality of training, including distance learning opportunities.

- Enhance quality in family child care programs. More than 50% of infants and toddlers are cared for in family child care and kith-and-kin. Use the federal CCDBG money to help license family care providers and provide them with technical assistance and professional development.

3) We should speak out about our immediate concern about Care4Kids: This week, information was circulated that DSS will close enrollment for certain income groups (details are still coming out). Care4Kids is a vital foothold for working parents who are struggling to climb towards self-sufficiency. In this economy, this program is especially important as a work support for low-wage families. Closing enrollment in any way is in direct opposition to a plan to improve outcomes in early childhood and has cascading effects that begin with the child, and quickly envelope families, child care programs and entire centers. Such a change can put all parties in a child care network at grave financial risk.

Early Care and Education Policy Analyst
Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS)
110 Bartholomew Ave, Suite 4030
Hartford, CT 06106
(860) 951-2212 x233
slinton@cahs.org

Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2009 3:21 PM
To: Bisi, Julie
Subject: Written Comments on CCDF Paln

Julie:

Attached are Charter Oak State College's comments on the CCDF plan. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Shirley M. Adams

Shirley M. Adams, Ph.D.
Provost
Charter Oak State College

Charter Oak State College supports Connecticut's Draft Plan for the Federal Child Care and Development Fund for 2010 and 2011 and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Child Care Stimulus Funds for 2009-2010. Charter Oak has been involved in early child care initiatives for a number of years through its administration of the CT Director's Credential, offering examinations that lead to the CDA, offering concentrations in child studies and after school education at the bachelor degree level, the development and administration of the credential in after school education and certificate in infant toddler education, an alternate route to teacher education certification in early childhood education, and its administration of the ECERS-R program for SDE. In addition members of the staff are involved at the state, regional, and national level in early childhood and after school organizations and advocacy.

The DSS plan builds on the work of the Early Childhood Cabinet and gets at the heart of what is needed in early childhood-- ensuring that child care programs are of high quality, providing access for families who can't afford child care, and offering scholarships for those in the field to improve their skills and to help them meet the proposed 2015 educational level requirements for early childhood teachers, and continuing to conduct research on best practices.

The plan speaks to "quality". Under "Enhance Quality and School Readiness Services" it states as one of the strategies "to continue to support quality enhancements for the priority school communities as defined in the state's school readiness legislation in collaboration with the State Department of Education". What seems to be missing is how the quality is going to be assessed. We would encourage DSS to build into their plan an assessment component that continues to support and expand upon the work already done this past year that was funded by SDE and the ECE Cabinet.

The plan speaks to the need for all the state agencies involved in early childhood to collaborate. We applaud and encourage that effort to reduce duplication of services. We also want to express the need for this collaboration to continue to involve the institutions of higher education so that working together we can develop educational programs and standards to ensure that Connecticut continues to have highly trained early childhood teachers, thus increasing the educational level of young children which will mean that more children will be ready for kindergarten, decrease the drop out rate, and translate into a better educated citizenry and workforce in the future.

Thank you for allowing Charter Oak State College to provide comments.

Sincerely,

Shirley M. Adams, Provost
Charter Oak State College
55 Paul J. Manafort Dr.
New Britain, CT 06053
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Kathy Wilby
Coord., ECERS Early Childhood Project
kwilby@charteroak.edu

From: Barbara Garvin-Kester
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2009 3:40 PM
To: Bisi, Julie
Subject: Testimony

Dear Julie:
Please see attached our written testimony regarding changes to Care4Kids and DSS reimbursements.
Regards,
Barbara

Barbara Garvin-Kester
Executive Director
CLC - Childcare Learning Centers, Inc.
64 Palmer's Hill Road
Stamford, CT 06902
(203) 653-1326 Phone
(203) 327-1271 Fax
BarbaraGarvinKester@clcstamford.org

"No one of us is as smart as all of us" -- K. Blanchard.



CHILDCARE LEARNING CENTERS

**Testimony on Child Care Services in Connecticut
In Response to the Department of Social Services 2009 Child Care and Development Block
Grant Plan (CCDBG)**

We would like to thank the Department of Social Services for the opportunity to present testimony in response to the CCDBG Plan. Specifically, we want to address in the Department of Social Services budget, The Childcare Assistance Program, Care4Kids. The Childcare Learning Centers (CLC) is dedicated to providing an early childhood education and care program for all families, the majority of whom earn less than 75% of the state median income. We currently serve approximately 950 children and their families and the Child Care Assistance Program is vital to ensuring these families have access to affordable child care and the ability to work. It is imperative to continue the Care4Kids program so that our families can continue to work and not join the increasing unemployment ranks in Connecticut.

Closing the Care4Kids program to new applicants at this time of year is particularly damaging. Many children are leaving our child care program to enter the public school system. The families of new children are being enrolled who will not have access to the Care 4Kinds program, unless they had previously received assistance. The closing of the program to new applicants not only affects families, it has a devastating impact on our agency as well. Although the Department of Social Services complies with Federal regulations by conducting surveys for the market rate, these rates are based on 2001 market rates and do not reflect the current market rates in Connecticut. The Department of Social Service has recommended the use of Care4Kids funds to offset the deficit created by the DSS reimbursement rate and the actual cost of quality care (\$17,000/child/yr.). Restricting access to these Care4Kids funds places significant pressure on our financial structures that may force our agency to discontinue offering state-funded, early childhood education and care.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant Plan speaks to a “Connecticut Child Care and Early Education system that will offer families a broad range of accessible, affordable, comprehensive and quality child care services.” This decision to block the assistance program and made with no advanced notice to providers will result in hundreds of families not having the ability to afford quality child care and to remain actively employed.

For more information please contact:

Barbara Garvin- Kester
Executive Director
(203) 653-1326

Carol Sargent
Child Development Director
(203) 653-1330

Sincerely,
Barbara Garvin-Kester
Executive Director

Carol Sargent
Child Development Director

Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2009 9:33 PM

To: Bisi, Julie

Subject: Care 4 Kids system closing

Dear Julie,

I'm speaking on behalf of my center and families. We will sign a list. I am a daycare in Stratford, CT -- 99% of my clients receive the Care 4 Kids subsidy. I employ people according to this subsidy. I'm writing to inform you that there will be people out of jobs due to not being able to fill slots that are not occupied by the Care 4 Kids subsidy.

Please take this into consideration for the new budget.

Alice Williams

Director

Affordable & Loving ChildCare

Stratford, CT 06615

Sent: Thursday, May 14, 2009 3:33 PM

To: Palermino, Peter J.; Bisi, Julie

Subject: Seeking clarification

Hi Peter and Julie,

I'm seeking clarification about Care4Kids eligibility. The DSS handout I've seen says that current recipients earning above 50% of SMI will be ineligible at re-determination. But I heard from one of the attendees at last night's hearing that after I left, you indicated that might not be the case-- that current recipients might be "grandfathered in." Can you clarify this for me? It is obviously a burning question for our providers and parents.

Best,
Jessica

Jessica Sager
Executive Director
All Our Kin, Inc.

Sent: Monday, May 18, 2009 1:34 PM
To: Palermino, Peter J.
Subject: Care 4 Kids

Hi Peter,

Just letting you know that I need Care 4 Kids. I was laid off in November 2008, I am STILL looking for work. I am creating my OWN work but I am limited to what I can do because I have no childcare and I cannot afford to pay for it without HELP. Like many mothers, I am a single parent and primary caregiver and provider for my home. Unfortunately, my children's father is incarcerated and is not contributing. I cannot afford childcare without Care 4 Kids and I cannot work without childcare. Please, re-open and FIX this program. WE NEED IT.

Good Afternoon. My name is Deborah Monahan and I am the executive director of the Thames Valley Council for Community Action. TVCCA has been operating child development/child care centers since the mid 1960's.

I am here this afternoon to comment on the draft plan for the federal Child Care and Development Funds and the ARRA child care stimulus funds.

The stated purpose of the Child Care and development fund is to provide low-income families with the financial resources to find and afford quality child care for their children. Connecticut and DSS should be applauded for their support and assistance in achieving this purpose.

The stated purpose of the ARRA for the child care stimulus funds are to assist those most impacted by the recession through the provision of funds to expand services to additional children and families facing difficult economic circumstances.

Key to these activities is the child care subsidies know in Connecticut as Care4Kids.

In these difficult economic times it is critical that organizations and states face challenges with critical, thoughtful and sometimes difficult decision-making. "Business as usual" is not necessarily the mode of operation any of us should follow.

While the current plan outlines a vision for Connecticut early care and education that would have all our children enter kindergarten healthy, eager to learn and ready for school success, we also want families to become and remain economically self-sufficient.

This plan specifically works towards that vision, giving parents choice and ability to choose the quality setting for their children that meets the families' needs. We applaud that outcome.

Of deep concern is the recent closing of the Care4Kids program. Care4Kids is a vital linchpin for working parents, especially low-wage parents, who are struggling to make ends meet and working hard to maintain or achieve self-sufficiency. Closing the program simply shuts them out and will ultimately impact the child should they no longer be able to afford quality child care. If they can not afford child care, they may not be able to keep their jobs or end up placing their child in less than desirable situations. Clearly the vision of school readiness begins to be compromised.

Providers rely upon the revenue stream of the Care4Kids program. Closing the program will result in a decrease in revenues to the providers. Over the months ahead this will have a very significant impact and can put all parties in the child care network at grave financial risk.

I would encourage the State and the Department of Social Services to look closely at the funding categories outlined in the plan and make the difficult decision to fund those categories that maintain and preserve what we have now, paying providers adequately and allowing families to participate in the Care4Kids program. Anything else could in these challenging times be delayed or postponed for implementation.

RCD 5/18/09@Public Hg. #1
Norwich Deb Poirier

Good afternoon, my name is Debra Poirier and I am the director of TVCCA's Early Care and Education Program.

The recent decision made by the Department of Social Services (DSS) to close the Care 4 Kids program will dramatically undermine CT parent's ability to provide continuous, affordable care for their young children. Care 4 Kids child care subsidy allows thousands of parents with young children to afford essential early care programs. Now more than ever, both working parents, as well as parents who have been recently laid off and are searching for employment, desperately need the long-term stability and peace of mind that comes from knowing our young children are cared for in a trusted environment. Care4Kids also allows child care providers to offer services to young parents at affordable rates.

Care4Kids is a vital foothold for working parents who are struggling to climb toward self-sufficiency. Closing enrollment in any way is in direct opposition to a plan to improve outcomes in early childhood and has cascading effects that begin with the child, and quickly envelope families, child care programs and entire early care and education centers. Care 4 Kids subsidies are a core piece in the funding stream that keep center-based care operating. Such a change can put all parties in a child care network at grave financial risk. Forcing "UNWISE" decisions concerning child care choices while parents WORK, thus putting CT's children more at Risk during this Crisis !!

Children who participate in quality childcare programs are better prepared for school than their peers and therefore have a greater chance at success later in life. While our economy struggles, families depend on quality Early Education services more than ever. Access to high-quality and affordable child care also supports children's readiness for school, as well as parents' ability to maintain stable and productive employment. For low-income working families, child care is often the second highest or the highest cost in the family budget. With out the child care assistance program many families are left with limited income to afford rent, food, clothing and other basic necessities.

The continued funding of the Care 4 Kids program is extremely important as the current economic situation means that a growing number of families will qualify for and need childcare assistance in order to maintain stable employment.

From: Barbara Edinberg [mailto:barbarae@bcacct.org]

Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2009 12:50 PM

To: Bisi, Julie

Subject: testimony on CCDBG and ARRA draft plan

Attached is testimony for the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition regarding DSS draft CCDBG and ARRA plan. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Thank you,

Barbara

Barbara Edinberg

Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition



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Assistant Director

COMMENTS
OF THE
BRIDGEPORT CHILD ADVOCACY COALITION
ON
CONNECTICUT'S DRAFT PLAN
FOR THE
FEDERAL CHILD CARE AND
DEVELOPMENT FUND
FEDERAL FISCAL YEARS 2010 & 2011
AND
AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT
CHILD CARE STIMULUS FUNDS
FEDERAL FISCAL YEARS 2010-11

MAY 20, 2009

This testimony is presented on behalf of the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition (BCAC). We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the federal Child Care and Development Fund Plan and child care issues in Bridgeport.

BCAC is an active member of BAYC, Bridgeport Alliance for Young Children. BAYC is the process of writing its community plan for young children. Our vision is that, "All Bridgeport children, birth to age 8, will be safe, healthy and ready to fulfill their potential."

Quality early care and education is critical for children to be able to reach their potential. The Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funding and the one-time federal stimulus dollars through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) can be used to help ensure that we achieve our vision.

We know the state budget is tight this year but the draft CCDBG plan as presented by the Department of Social Services (DSS) fell short. It is much too broad and unspecific. CCDBG funding totals over \$65 million, including \$13.7 million in ARRA funds. These funds can provide the state with the opportunity it needs to increase access to quality early care and education for Connecticut's youngest residents.

At midnight on May 13th, *with no notice*, Care4Kids closed to new low-income parents unless they are on TANF or are teen parents. In addition, at redetermination, low-income families whose earnings rise to 75% of state median income from 50% when they originally qualified for the program will lose their benefits.

Now, more than ever, Care4Kids is critically needed. In this economic downturn, low-income parents are struggling to keep their jobs and their heads above water. Lack of affordable, quality child care is one of the biggest barriers preventing low-income families from getting and keeping a job. In Bridgeport, licensed child care can cost over \$12,300 for infants and toddlers, and more than \$10,500 for preschoolers. Without support, child care will be out of reach for many low-income families. Many parents will be forced to put their children in unlicensed, and potentially unsafe, child care.

Other parents may lose the jobs they have if they cannot afford to pay for child care and cannot find anyone to care for their children. The ultimate irony is that these very same parents who lose their jobs because they cannot afford child care may end up receiving cash welfare benefits. Then they will be eligible for Care4Kids.

Closing Care4Kids has other economic costs. Without Care4Kids as a source of revenue, existing child care centers and licensed family day care will be at high risk of closing. Providers will enter the ranks of the unemployed.

But the consequences of closing Care4Kids are the greatest for young children. Early education programs provide a stable environment for children, especially during these turbulent economic times. Research clearly demonstrates that quality early education programming is critically important to provide children with the strong start they need. Without Care4Kids, parents will not be able to afford quality child care and their children will not benefit from an early learning experience. These children will not enter school ready to learn.

BCAC strongly urges using CCDBG and AARA funds to keep Care4Kids open to low-income working parents. Do not let state budget cuts fall unfairly on the backs of vulnerable, low-income families.

In addition to re-opening Care4Kids, we urge the following:

- Increasing reimbursement rates for providers participating in Care4Kids. Reimbursement rates have not increased since 2001 and are far below the federal recommendation of 75% of current market rates. Child care providers must be compensated fairly so that providers stay in business and more enter the field. Thoughtful planning can allow for increases in reimbursement without compromising the number of families served.
- Increasing access to higher education, training and accreditation for child care workers by expanding scholarships and training opportunities, including distance learning. Not only will education and training help enhance the quality of care, but it can be a powerful incentive to encourage providers to stay in the field.
- Enhancing the quality of informal child care and licensed family day care by increasing funding for training. Last year in Bridgeport, more than 1,300 children, or 46% of those receiving Care4Kids subsidies, were being cared for in informal, unlicensed child care arrangements by a relative, a neighbor or friend – “kith and kin.”

Eight years ago, BCAC developed an exciting initiative with the city’s four family resource centers and the Bridgeport Parent Center. We provided education and training to kith and kin providers in the neighborhoods where they lived. The family resource centers still work with kith and kin, albeit at a smaller scale. This initiative demonstrated that kith and kin, many of whom lack formal education, are eager for training, but learn best in small group settings and with individual attention. The program had multiple benefits, not only enhancing the skill level of kith and kin providers but also bringing them out of isolation and connecting them to the larger community. Efforts like these that improve the quality of unlicensed child care show real promise of success. These programs need to be supported.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer comments on Connecticut’s 2009 and 2010 Child Care and Development Fund Plan and funding under ARRA.

Barbara Edinberg
Assistant Director
Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition

The Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition, BCAC, is a coalition of 80 member organizations. Our members represent a broad range of organizations, including parent groups, community centers, counseling organizations, early childhood programs, health centers, hospitals, churches and synagogues, and civic organizations. Through a program combining research, community planning, advocacy, community education and mobilization, we work to ensure that children grow up healthy and safe, and receive the education and skills to reach their full potential.

Sent: Wed 5/20/2009 4:30 PM

To: Bisi, Julie

Subject: testimony regarding the CT State Plan for CCDF and ARRA funding

Dear Ms. Bisi, please accept the attached testimony which I am submitted to the Department of Social Services in response to its proposed draft for CCDF and ARRA funds. Thanks very much.

[Join the CAHS group on Facebook](#)

Jude Carroll

Connecticut Kids Count Director

Connecticut Association for Human Services

CAHS

Connecticut Association for Human Services
110 Bartholomew Avenue - Suite 4030
Hartford, Connecticut 06106
www.cahs.org

Michael S. Rohde, President
James P. Horan, Executive Director
860.951.2212
860.951.6511 fax

Child Care and Development Fund 2009 Connecticut State Plan

*Testimony Submitted by Jude Carroll,
Director, Connecticut Kids Count Project*

*To the Connecticut Department of Social Services, Child Care Team
and Connecticut Child Day Care Council*

May 20, 1009

CAHS is a statewide nonprofit organization that works to end poverty and to engage, equip, and empower all families in Connecticut to build a secure future. Thank you for this opportunity to comment on Connecticut's CCDF draft proposal for Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2010-2012 and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, child Care Stimulus Funds for FFY 2009-2010.

The Connecticut draft plan highlights goals and objectives that have been in existence for several years and were developed when Connecticut was in much better fiscal shape. Descriptively, as presented, there is little new or specific in the draft. The CCDF plan "presents the strategies and direction for Connecticut to strive toward high quality early care and education programs and services for all children, from birth through their school-age years. The goal is for Connecticut families to be able to select from a wide range of programs designed to meet their unique needs while children receive the critical foundation they need for healthy development and lifelong learning." While these are lofty goals, it appears that Connecticut has quite a way to go before they are achieved.

CAHS is particularly concerned about the changes in income eligibility for Care 4 Kids, the state's child care subsidy program. Child care subsidies keep parents employed and, when done right, can be part of a package that helps prepare children for school. While the state of Connecticut is experiencing difficult fiscal times, so are working parents, particularly those at the lowest income levels. To eliminate eligibility for those currently receiving child care assistance whose income rises from below 50% to above 50% means that the program is cutting the employment prospects of parents who are earning barely enough to meet their families' basic needs.

Let's remember how the program has been cut in the past when the budget needed balancing. In SFY 2002, Connecticut invested \$122 million in Care 4 Kids (from all sources), understanding it to be a critical component of the early care system. This funding was reduced to \$99 million in SFY 03 and plummeted to less than \$60 million in SFY 05. On average, 48% (13,520 per month on average) fewer children received the help of the child care subsidy per month in 2005 than in 2002 (from 28,175 to 14,655 children served per month on average). While program funding has risen since that time, we are nowhere near the SFY 2002 level—a time when the state was just beginning to recover from the economic downturn that marked the late 1990s and early 2000s.

On page 19 of the draft plan, the Department states “[W]e do not propose any changes to the Care 4 Kids eligibility and payment program provisions.” Obviously, this statement will have to be changed to reflect the directive released by the state on May 13, 2009.

Presently, the subsidy reimbursement rates are based on the 2001 market survey. In 2005, only five other states base their reimbursement rates on market rate surveys older than 2001. The subsidy paid to child care providers should be at a rate that enables access to high quality early care and education. The per-child payment rates should be tied to the 85th percentile of a biennial market survey. Also in need of editing is the last bullet under Attachment 5 which states: “payment rates will be sufficient to ensure equal access for eligible children to comparable child care services in the state that are provided to children whose parents are not eligible to receive assistance under this program or under any other Federal or State child care assistance programs,” clearly a false statement given the outdated payment levels that state maintains.

The May 13th proposal and maintaining payment rates at such a deflated level both follow a pattern consistent with the Governor's budget—that is, choosing to balance the state's budget on the backs of those who have the least to give. In 2008, Connecticut had the third highest median family and household income of the country. Are we proud that we cut programs which serve low-income working parents who are attempting to do the right thing rather than considering revenue proposals that would share the pain equitably?

Over the past several years, many sectors have called on Connecticut policymakers to think more broadly when seeking answers to issues the state faces. Effective public policies are needed to support the early education of children, help their parents work, and simultaneously prepare both for their roles in the workforce.

Thank you again for the chance to comment on the State's CCDF and ARRA draft plan.

Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2009 11:48 AM
To: Palermino, Peter J.
Subject: CCDBG submission for July 2009

Good Morning Peter,

Question:

When will DSS have the completed CCDBG grant available for public review "prior" to submission for July 1st of 2009 including the "current" Market Rate Survey?

Thank you .

Best Regards

Gwen

(Equal Justice 1966)

From: Sherry Linton [SLinton@cahs.org]

Sent: Thursday, May 21, 2009 2:11 PM

To: Bisi, Julie

Subject: CCDBG Testimony

Attachments: CCDBG 2009 Testimony.doc

Good afternoon Julie,

Attached please find my written testimony in response to the Draft Child Care and Development Block Grant plan presented by the Department. While I did have the opportunity to verbally testify at the May 20th hearing, I think it is important for my documented testimony to be on record.

Thank you,

Sherry Linton

Early Care and Education Policy Analyst

Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS)

110 Bartholomew Ave, Suite 4030

Hartford, CT 06106

(860) 951-2212 x233

slinton@cahs.org



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Michael S. Rohde, President
James P. Horan, Executive Director
860.951.2212
860.951.6511 fax

**Testimony on Child Care Services in Connecticut
In Response to the Department of Social Services
2009 Child Care and Development Block Grant Plan (CCDBG)
Submitted by Sherry Linton, Early Care and Education Policy Analyst**

The Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS) would like to thank the Department of Social Services, Child Care Team and the Child Day Care Council for the opportunity to submit testimony in response to the CCDBG Plan, specifically to address the Child Care Assistance Program, Care 4 Kids. CAHS is dedicated to ending poverty and engaging, equipping, and empowering all families in Connecticut to build a secure future. The Child Care Assistance Program is vital to families' access to quality and affordable child care, ability to work and overall earnings outcomes. In these economic times, increased investment in the Program is imperative in order to have individuals be more job-ready and to keep them working.

First, I would like to provide an immediate response to the Draft Plan.

- *The recent decision to limit the enrollment of families into the Care 4 Kids program contradicts the guiding principles, objectives, and strategies outlined in the Draft Plan.*
- *It is ironic that on the heels of a discussion about ongoing plans for federal funding to our state's child care system, we are forced to concurrently think about the disparaging impact that limiting child care assistance will have on children, families, the business of early care providers, and our communities.*
- *With Guiding Principles that include, "A Connecticut Child Care and Early Education system [that] will offer families a broad range of accessible, affordable, comprehensive and quality child care services," the Draft Plan represents a contradiction to the reality of early care in Connecticut.*
- *Likewise, the first objective in the Plan is to, "increase child care capacity." How will that be possible when closing the child care assistance program to a family of three earning \$39,404 (50% of the state median income)? This indicates the opposite outcome of what the Plan outlines.*
- *The presented Draft Plan for the Child Care and Development Fund do not provide SMART objectives (3.) The objectives are not specific, measurable, achievable, relevant or time-framed. The objectives are not stated in numbers, percentages, frequency, reach or scientific outcome. Most apparent by the recent changes to the Care 4 Kids Program is that the objectives are not achievable. The credibility of the Plan is in question when the Department of Social Services speaks of plans to expand child care capacity, with the forerunner being an act which limits enrollment to the child care assistance program.*
- *Finally, it is a reasonable observation that the Plan implies Child Care Development Funds will be used to expand the early care system, not just maintain a skeleton of a child care assistance program. The Plan intentionally uses the term, "increase" in bold print to outline its objectives, which is contrary to the reality of the current and ongoing Care 4 Kids Program status. The objectives are therefore, vague and misleading.*

- *How can, “the objectives remain essentially the same as included in the prior two-year federal plan,” as stated on page 9 of your plan, when the reality and the landscape of funding early care assistance has shifted so dramatically in recent days? It is our hope what the plan will be amended to reflect more reality-based objectives.*

As the convener of early care providers, CAHS acknowledges the existing consensus among those in the early care community that, A Plan to “Increase Child Care Capacity” must take the following into consideration.

The priorities for eligibility need to be expanded. Low-income families attempting to gain higher education should be eligible for child care assistance.

- *Higher education is directly linked to improved earnings outcomes and reduction of dependence on public assistance. Consequently, higher education is a route to long-term self-sufficiency. Nearly two out of three, (63%), of the 18.9 million jobs that will be created between 2004 and 2014 are projected to be filled by individuals with at least a bachelor’s degree. 90% of the fastest growing jobs in the United States require some level of secondary education or training. (1)*
- *According to the American Economic Review, earnings increase 6-16% annually for every year of education and 4-7% in hourly wages with additional years of college. As the State is well into its timeline of reducing child poverty by 2014, it is vital that we increase families’ access to the tools necessary for greater earning power. (2)*

Those earning up to 85% of the state median income should be eligible for child care assistance.

- *With the current regulations allowing only those earning less than 50% of the state median income access to child care assistance, too many families are left with only the alternative of unemployment.*
- *More families need to be able to access child care assistance in order to get more families working.*

In accordance with federal recommendations, the state should update market rate surveys to ensure that the data is purposeful in setting reimbursement rates, as intended by the federal mandate.

- *Connecticut has continued to reimburse Care 4 Kids providers using the market rates established from 2001, under the guise that the 60th percentile is sufficient to provide equal access to care. The use of the outdated market rates have been justified by the rationale that increase utilization of care directly correlates with equal access, when in fact increased utilization is an outcome of increased demand for families to be working.*
- *Second, I would like to stress the overdue positive impact that raising the reimbursement rates will have on increasing access of working families to quality care. With the rising costs of living, providers have been consistently forced to absorb the expenses of providing services to an extent that have been jeopardizing their existence. Low reimbursements place adverse pressures on child care providers. The financial burdens are often shifted to the employees of these agencies in the form of increased cost of benefits, decreasing number of children served, etc. Increased rates will assist providers to adequately provide child care services and more readily accept those that need their services.*

For more information: Sherry Linton (860)-951-2212 ext. 233, slinton@cahs.org

1. Center for Women Policy Studies, citing US Department of Commerce, the Census Bureau. (2001) Years of school completed by people 25 years old and over, by age, household relationship and poverty status: 2000. Current Population Survey, March Supplement, <http://www.census.gov/hhes>.
2. Center for Women Policy Studies, citing the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2002). Median usual weekly earnings of full-time salaried workers 25 years and over by sex, race, Hispanic origin, and educational attainment, annual averages 1979-2001. Current Population Survey.

3. March of Dimes Hawaii Chapter, July 2005, retrieved from, http://marchofdimes.com/files/HI_Smartobjectives.pdf, May 19, 2009.



ALL OUR KIN INC.

A SAFE AND LOVING PLACE WHERE PARENTS AND CHILDREN CAN LEARN.

May 26, 2009

Peter Palermino
Connecticut Department of Social Services
25 Sigourney Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5033

Dear Mr. Palermino:

I write on behalf of All Our Kin, Inc., to propose that a portion of Connecticut's ARRA funds mandated to improve quality for infant and toddler care be used to replicate All Our Kin's highly successful Family Child Care Toolkit Licensing Project.

All Our Kin currently serves the greater New Haven area. We propose to serve fifty additional providers, in two additional high-need communities, over the next two years. The projected outcome: 50 licensed family child care providers, with a combined ability to serve 300 full-time and 150 before- and after-school children.

Connecticut Voices for Children's recent publication, "Using Federal Stimulus Dollars to Improve Infant and Toddler Care," makes a compelling case for investing in licensing and training for home-based child care providers:

The majority of Connecticut's low-income infants and toddlers are currently cared for in family child care or unlicensed settings, and are *not* in center based care. As of December 2008, 21% of infants and toddlers receiving Care4Kids (Connecticut's child care subsidy) were in family child care (home-based settings serving not more than 9 children at one time) and 31% were in "kith-and-kin," or relative, care in unlicensed settings. Accordingly, it makes sense to devote quality-improvement resources to the smaller settings where the infants and toddlers are located.

Connecticut should allocate a portion of its infant/toddler quality improvement dollars to help license family child care providers and provide them with technical assistance and professional development. Both of these investments meet the ARRA's stated goal of achieving long-term benefits without incurring continuing financial commitments; the former would expand the state's supply of licensed family child care, with the license providing a guarantee of at least a certain level of quality, while the latter would further enhance the quality of care and reduce the turnover rate among this group of providers.¹

Family child care programs play an essential role in the child care system. Family child care providers make it possible for many of Connecticut's families to go to work every

day. Family child care is conveniently located in the neighborhoods where parents live and work. Family child care is usually more affordable than center-based care; in New Haven county, for example, the average cost of care for a child under two in a family child care program is \$163 per week, compared to \$215 in a child care center.² Family child care offers flexible hours, including evening and weekend care. Because family child care serves multi-age groups of children, siblings can attend together. Providers are a diverse group, who mirror the culture, language, and mores of the families they serve. And the small size and intimate nature of family child care makes it a good choice for infants and toddlers. There are 2,663 licensed family child care programs in Connecticut, with the capacity to care for 15,897 children ages 0-5.³

Yet, despite the pressing need for care, licensed family child care programs are closing at an alarming rate throughout Connecticut, and new businesses are not opening quickly enough to close the gap. Between 2000 and 2007, the number of licensed family child care programs statewide dropped from 4,026 to 2,773. In other words, the state lost nearly 7,500 child care slots in licensed family child care programs.⁴

All Our Kin's Toolkit Licensing Project is a proven model for expanding the supply of licensed family child care. In 2003, All Our Kin launched its Family Child Care Toolkit Licensing Project, an initiative designed to help unlicensed caregivers meet health and safety standards, complete state licensing requirements, and become part of a professional community of child care providers. The Project reaches out to unlicensed caregivers, and then provides them with consultation as well as a series of boxes (the "toolkit"), each containing a specific set of paperwork and supplies that provide a step-by-step guide through the licensing process. Since its inception, this Project has helped a total of 140 caregivers become licensed. While the number of licensed providers statewide decreased by more than 32% from 2000 to 2007, that number **increased by nearly 27% in New Haven.**⁵ This trend is clear: New Haven's figures rose steadily every year while the statewide figures declined every year, due to All Our Kin's programs. And 90% of those licensed through the Toolkit Project since 2003 are still in business today.

The Toolkit Licensing Project improves the quality of infant and toddler care. The act of becoming licensed in and of itself provides a measure of quality assurance, ensuring that, at a minimum, health and safety standards are being met. But the Toolkit Project goes a step beyond: the final box in the series, provided after a license has been awarded, contains an array of developmentally appropriate curricular materials, including books and toys, and newly licensed providers are educated about further professional development opportunities and encouraged to pursue them.

The Family Child Care Toolkit Licensing Project will continue to benefit infants and toddlers even after federal stimulus funds have been expended. If federal funds are devoted to replicate the Toolkit Project in two additional high-need communities over two years, it is reasonable to expect that approximately 50 caregivers will become licensed and trained, significantly expanding these communities' supply of high-quality infant and toddler family child care. This long-term benefit persists whether or not the program continues beyond the two year period.

The Family Child Care Toolkit Licensing Project is “shovel-ready.” The Toolkit and Network models are fully designed. And All Our Kin has already had conversations with possible community partners in Hartford, Bridgeport, New Britain, and Stamford, among others, who are eager to replicate the programs in their communities.

And, as the recent report by Connecticut Voices makes clear, the Family Child Care Toolkit Licensing Project promotes workforce development:

While one of the goals of the ARRA is improving the quality of child care, a separate goal is workforce development, as illustrated by the \$3.95 billion the ARRA devotes to Workforce Investment Act programs. Using a portion of the CCDBG funds for projects supporting licensing and continued professional development has the enviable benefit of killing both of these birds with one stone. Moreover, projects like these which target family child care providers reach a segment of the population who are particularly in need of workforce development, and who are particularly hard to reach: mainly women with low levels of education, many of whom are immigrants and/or for whom English is a second language.⁶

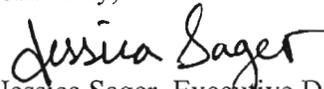
Project Budget: July 1, 2009-June 30, 2011

Item	Details	Cost
Toolkit Boxes	50 sets of boxes at \$650 per set	\$32,500
Staffing	One FTE staffperson, 24 months	\$100,000
AOK overhead	Calculated at 15%; includes supervision and mentorship for participating communities	\$19,875
Total		\$152,375

Total cost: \$152,375 over two years.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Jessica Sager, Executive Director
All Our Kin, Inc.

¹ Cyd Oppenheimer, “Using Federal Stimulus Dollars to Improve Infant and Toddler Care,” CT Voices for Children, April 2009.

² Child Care Infoline, “Fee Analysis of Child Care Facilities in the South Central Region - November 5, 2007,” <http://www.211childcare.org/professionals/FeeSCRegion.asp>.

³ State of Connecticut Department of Public Health, “Licensed Family Day Care Homes as of April 1, 2008.” http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/daycare/pdf/F_Monthly.pdf.

⁴ Peg Oliveira, “Beyond Child Care Centers: The Essential Role of Home-Based Child Care in Connecticut’s Early Care and Education System,” CT Voices for Children, June 2007.

⁵ Id.

⁶ Cyd Oppenheimer, “Using Federal Stimulus Dollars to Improve Infant and Toddler Care,” CT Voices for Children, April 2009.



Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health

Concerned with the Healthy Social Emotional Development
of Infants and Young Children

May 27, 2009

Governor M. Jodi Rell
Office of the Governor
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Rell:

I am writing this letter as president of the Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health, Inc (CT-AIMH). As one of 18 associations in the United States, we are dedicated to promoting the social emotional well being of infants and young children throughout Connecticut. One of our initiatives is to enhance the capacity, knowledge and skills of the infant/toddler workforce in order to strengthen the quality of early relationships of young children and to guide their positive emotional regulation and development. We passionately believe that early warm, sensitive and responsive relationships are the foundation of learning for all young children.

To accomplish this workforce effort we are introducing in Connecticut the Competency Guidelines for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship Focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health® that were developed by the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health (MI-AIMH). The Competencies that lead to an Endorsement are being used in nine other states.

We understand that there is ARRA “federal stimulus” money coming to the Department of Social Services for quality enhancement of infant/toddler care. We are requesting \$50,000 of this money to provide training for those working with infants and toddlers to meet the Competencies, to establish an endorsement for infant mental health in Connecticut, and to partially support an endorsement coordinator. We are dedicated to supporting and enhancing the Infant-Toddler workforce in Connecticut.

The CT AIMH recently was invited to present our Competency Planning activities at *New Initiatives That Help Connecticut Babies and Toddlers Grow and Develop* sponsored by the Department of Social Services and the Head Start Collaboration Office. The response was extremely positive.

In January at our technical assistance meeting with MI-AIMH we were overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and response of those attending a stakeholders meeting to hear an introduction of the Competencies. We expected fifty people and more than 80 attended. We are dedicated to supporting and enhancing the Infant-Toddler workforce in Connecticut.

Please let me know if you have any questions and need more details. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Margaret C. Holmberg, PhD
President, CT AIMH

Cc: Commissioner Starkouski
xPeter Palermino

516 Mohegan Parkway, Quaker Hill, CT 06375
Phone: (860) 443-7192
WWW.CT-AIMH.ORG

From: Carla Horwitz [mailto:carla.horwitz@yale.edu]

Sent: Thursday, June 04, 2009 3:56 PM

To: Bisi, Julie

Subject: Testimony for DSS

Attached please find written testimony in response to the Public Hearing in New Haven, CT 5/13/09 from the New Haven Association for the Education of Young Children Board

New Haven Association for the Education of Young Children Written Testimony Submitted to Department of Social Services

**Read 5/13/09 –PUBLIC HEARING AT LULAC HEAD START, NEW
HAVEN**

**Prepared by Marjorie Weiner, Director, Gateway Community College Early Learning
Center and the Board of Directors, New Haven Association for the Education of Young
Children**

Connecticut's Comprehensive Childcare Plan needs to reinstate School Readiness Quality Enhancement Funds, and expand, not decrease the Care for Kids Program.

Funding School Readiness slots without subsidizing professional development, consultation services, and other supports precludes programs maintaining and attaining quality components, as defined by NAEYC Accreditation standards. Specifically, programs need educational consultants, the Multidisciplinary(consultation)Team, the Teacher Resource Center at Blake St., the Accreditation Facilitation Project, and Connecticut-Charts-A Course. The AFP has made it possible for the large number of New Haven programs to achieve NAEYC Accreditation under the new, rigorous standards. Subsidies for professional development have enabled early childhood professionals to meet candidacy and continuing education requirements. The Multidisciplinary Team and educational consultants support teachers in identifying and addressing special needs in children prior to kindergarten, so that they can be remediated and "Ready by Five."

Many New Haven early childhood programs have been re-accredited under the new standards since July, 2007. This would not have been possible without the intensive coaching of the AFP consultants, consultant workshops, and career pathway growth through Connecticut Charts a Course. Children, families, and teachers benefitted from the quality program improvements, and an important collaborative model was established for continuous improvement.

The Care For Kids Program is a necessity for families in these precarious economic times. Families beginning to better themselves need help as well as those on state aid (who fall 50% below the state median income). Those who lost jobs and are seeking jobs need childcare during their job search. Parents who are students, training or re-training for employment marketability need subsidy. Subsidy for costly infant-toddler care is totally dependent on Care 4 Kids.

Parents who have enrolled for the new year in many early childhood programs are counting on Care 4 Kids eligibility. Many are applying for the first time, and are working and going to school. Those who live outside of New Haven or have children under age three are ineligible for School Readiness. These parents cannot work and go to school without childcare, and are in danger of becoming another foreclosure or homeless family statistic. In conclusion, School Readiness Quality Enhancement must be funded and Care 4 Kids expanded, so that the state initiative "Ready by Five, Fine by Nine" can be fully realized. We owe it to our families and to the next generation.

Sent: Friday, June 05, 2009 11:20 AM

To: Bisi, Julie

Subject: CCDF Plan: New Haven Early Childhood Council's written statement

Attachments: DSS Draft Childcare Plan written statement-1.doc

Dear Ms. Bisi

On behalf of the New Haven Early Childhood Council's (NHECC) I have attached a written statement in response to the Department of Social Services Draft Plan for the Federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF).

Again the NHECC urges DSS to maintain Care 4 Kids funding and continue to provide Quality Enhancement funding to priority school districts so that we can directly support efforts to improve quality and strengthen New Haven's early care and education system.

Sincerely,

Pam Hansen

New Haven Early Childhood Council Coordinator

New Haven Early Childhood Council

...Creating Universal Access to Quality, Affordable Early Care and Education

June 1, 2009

Department of Social Services
25 Sigourney Street
Hartford, CT 06106

ATTN: DSS Child Care Plan – CCDF Plan

Dear Mr. Palermo,

This written testimony, submitted by the New Haven Early Childhood Council (NHECC), is in response to the recently released *DRAFT Plan for the Federal Child Care and Development Fund*.

The NHECC would like to state for the record, that although we support all of the critical objectives, as outlined in CT's Draft Plan, we strongly endorse two critical components within: 1) **increase financial assistance** to families in order to make child care affordable, (also known as Care 4 Kids) and 2) **enhanced quality and school readiness services** – (Quality Enhancement). Both of these components are central to New Haven's Early Childhood Plan, essential to an improved statewide early care and educational system and help address the fiscal and programmatic needs of family and center-based childcare programs at the local level across Connecticut.

Care 4 Kids: The New Haven Early Childhood Council strongly urges DSS to continue providing “*child care financial assistance opportunities for low-income working families*”. Care 4 Kids is an essential component for family's transitioning from home to work., It eases the financial burden of childcare and helps make quality childcare more accessible for working families. Care 4 Kids is also critically important for family and center-based programs. Without the revenue generated from Care 4 Kids, many family and center-based programs will become fiscally unstable and are at-risk of going out of business and /or becoming less diverse as they shift to serving non-subsidized families. It is anticipated that cuts in Care 4 Kids will result in approximately \$600,000 – \$1,000,000 less revenue for New Haven's early care programs, including family childcare, where approximately 72% of the providers serve a child enrolled in Care 4 Kids. Without Care 4 Kids, there will be a reduction in family and center-based slots and fewer child care options, as families least likely to afford quality family or center-based childcare will seek alternative, more affordable care, from unlicensed, casual family, friends and neighbors.

Quality Enhancement: The NHECC continues to work with centers and family childcare programs to deliver high-quality services. The Council's goal is to ensure that all children come to kindergarten with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed and a quality preschool experience is central to this mission. In FY 09, Quality Enhancement

New Haven Early Childhood Council

...Creating Universal Access to Quality, Affordable Early Care and Education

dollars funded the following: 1) additional NAEYC accreditation support; 2) two early childhood college courses for family day care providers and center-based staff through Gateway Community College; 3) The Early Childhood Resource Center, including classroom resources, books and workshops for family and center-based teachers; 4) the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT), which provides support to family and center-based programs; 6) All Our Kin: Licensed Family Childcare Toolkits; 7) New Haven's Children's Museum/Arts Infusion Professional Development Workshops for teachers; and 8) two part-time Educational Consultants working to improve the quality of program instruction in School Readiness programs.

The Council is committed to ensuring that all New Haven children birth through eight are healthy, safe, thriving in nurturing families and prepared to be successful lifelong learners. To remain faithful to this commitment, the Council and its fiscal and community partners will need to continue investing in Connecticut's early childhood system of care. We urge DSS to maintain Care 4 Kids funding and continue to provide Quality Enhancement funding to priority school districts so that we can directly support efforts to improve quality and strengthen New Haven's early care and education system. Now is not the time to dismantle Connecticut's early care and education system, but rather to be creative, redirect funds and support efforts to deliver accessible, quality, early care programs to all of Connecticut's children.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Heath

Robert Windom, M.D.

Jennifer Heath

Robert Windom

Co-Chairs
New Haven Early Childhood Council

From: Eda diBiccari
Sent: Friday, June 05, 2009 4:26 PM
To: Bisi, Julie
Subject: RE: DSS draft plan for CCDF

Attachments: DSS written testimony.doc

Dear Ms. Bisi,

Attached are my comments on the draft plan.

Eda diBiccari

From: Eda diBiccari [mailto:edibiccari@csea760.com]
Sent: Tuesday, June 02, 2009 12:26 PM
To: Bisi, Julie
Subject: DSS draft plan for CCDF

Dear Ms. Bisi:

Can you tell me if there have been any written comments submitted on the Draft Plan for the Federal Child Care and Development Fund and if so, how might I have access to these?
Thank-you in advance for your assistance.

Eda diBiccari

Eda diBiccari
Lead Organizer
SEIU Local 2001/760
(860)951-8816

My name is Eda diBiccari and I work with the Service Employees International Union Local 2001. We represent daycare center employees in New Britain, Hartford, Danbury, Naugatuck and we also represent family based daycare providers.

We know that there is no better investment to improve the total quality of life in our communities than the investment in early childhood development. Every dollar spent on childcare stimulates as much as \$1.49 in regional economic activity. (ccw.org./pubs/workforce-stimaterreport.pdf) The Department's draft goals: "to expand child care financial assistance opportunities for low-income working families" and to improve the quality of infant and toddler care are two goals we strongly support so it is a major concern for us to see these goals threatened by state budget decisions. The childcare subsidy program should remain open and as soon as possible expanded so that families making up to 85% of the state median income can be eligible for the subsidy.

While both center-based and home based settings need continued funding to maintain self-sustaining families, most low-income families in the state rely on family based daycare for infant and toddler care. Families with second shift workers are also more likely to use family day care. With the cost of infant care averaging \$192 a week, our concern is, "where are these families going to turn for infant and toddler care?" Will they quit their jobs? Will they turn to unregulated care?

Connecticut's budget decisions risk reversing our goal to "increase the number of families transitioning from public cash assistance to work". A case in point is the parent who called a family daycare provider in Hartford last week. This mother said that with Care 4 Kids not accepting new applications, she will have to quit her job. She currently works full-time and makes \$8 an hour. She will have to seek out food stamps, rental assistance, any kind of public assistance she can to support her kids. This is the exact opposite of what Connecticut needs right now to get our economy moving again.

I spoke with another family daycare provider in New Haven. One of her parents had just succeeded in getting a slot in her home based care but she is close to the 75% percentile. She now risks losing her subsidy if her income inches just a little over what it is now.

Connecticut has yet to devote adequate attention to quality enhancements for our kith and kin daycare providers who currently receive subsidies that are below the minimum wage and who are minimally regulated.

In regards to family daycare, the choice of most low-income families, we recommend the Department:

- Not only keep eligible those families making 75% of the SMI but increase that to 85%.
- Bring the subsidy reimbursement rates in line with the federal recommendation of 75th % of actual market rates.
- Improve access to training and makes these trainings bilingual and offered at times when home based providers can attend them. Training was the number one issue identified (after low pay) from providers who responded to a survey we did three years ago.
- Provide more training and assistance to kith and kin providers – much like the project currently run by All Our Kin in New Haven.
- Provide a voluntary professional development program with scholarship assistance
- Continue assistance and offer incentives to kith and kin providers to obtain their licenses
- Institute direct deposit and electronic invoicing as an option in the subsidy program.

Sent: Friday, June 05, 2009 12:21 PM

To: Bisi, Julie

Subject: testimony on CCDF plan

Dear Julie:

Please accept Connecticut Voices for Children's testimony on Connecticut's Draft Plan for the Federal Child Care and Development Fund (attached). Thank you so much.

Best,
Cyd

Cyd Oppenheimer, J.D.
Senior Policy Fellow
Connecticut Voices For Children



33 Whitney Avenue
New Haven, CT 06510
Voice: 203-498-4240
Fax: 203-498-4242
www.ctkidslink.org

Testimony Regarding Connecticut's Draft Plan for the Federal Child Care and Development Fund 2010-2011 and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Child Care Stimulus Funds 2009-2010

Cyd Oppenheimer, J.D.

June 5, 2009

Please accept this testimony on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children, a statewide, independent, citizen-based organization dedicated to speaking up for children and youth in the policymaking process that has such a great impact on their lives.

First, we feel that the strategies proposed to increase child care capacity and increase financial assistance to families (p.11 of 27) do not adequately reflect the actual strategies Connecticut is planning to employ in federal fiscal years 2010 and 2011. Although we *strongly support* expanding programs and spaces for children under age 13 through Connecticut's state child day care center program and School Readiness programs, as well as expanding child care financial assistance opportunities to working families with earnings up to 75% of the state median income, we do not believe that the state is planning to pursue these strategies within the next two fiscal years and we feel it would be disingenuous to imply otherwise in the Child Care and Development Fund Plan which is submitted to federal authorities.

Second, we are concerned about the state's certification (Attachment 5, p.26 of 27) that payment rates are sufficient "to ensure equal access for eligible children to comparable child care services in the state that are provided to children whose parents are not eligible to receive assistance under this program or under any other Federal or state child care assistance programs." In order to ensure equal access, the federal government recommends that payment rates be set equal to the seventy-fifth percentile of current market rates. Connecticut's payment rates are set at the sixtieth percentile of 2001 market rates – well below the fiftieth percentile of current market rates. In other words, children receiving Care4Kids subsidies can access less than one out of every two child care providers. In what sense is this access equal?

Third, we strongly recommend that a portion of the federal stimulus funds which are earmarked for infant-toddler care quality improvement be devoted to helping license family child care providers and providing them with technical assistance and professional development. Family child care providers serve a significant proportion of infants and toddlers receiving Care4Kids; however, until this point, these providers have not received a proportionate share of resources for quality improvement. There is already evidence that there is demand from family child care providers for help with the licensing project, and that a project providing such help (such as New Haven-based non-profit All Our Kin's Toolkit Project) can be successful in increasing the number of licensed providers. There is further evidence that there is demand from family child care providers for

support and consultation, and that a project providing such support (such as All Our Kin's Network or 211 Child Care's Family Child Care Support Project) can be successful in enhancing quality of care. We believe that devoting funds to expanding or replicating these types of project state-wide will have long-term beneficial effects for infants and toddlers (increasing both the quality and supply of licensed family child care), even if the expansion or replication cannot be maintained after the expiration of federal stimulus funding.

Fourth, we strongly recommend that a portion of the regular CCDF funds earmarked for quality improvement continue to be devoted to School Readiness programs, the Accreditation Facilitation Project, and Connecticut Charts-A-Course. Preschool programs need financial and technical assistance not only to meet the accreditation requirements necessary to participate in Connecticut's School Readiness program, but also so that they may provide truly high quality services to Connecticut's three and four year olds in order to prepare these children for kindergarten and beyond.

Finally, we take this opportunity to again express our concern at the recent eligibility restrictions imposed on the Care4Kids program. These restrictions are, in effect, an "anti-stimulus" program, disincentivizing, or, in some cases, simply preventing, parents from working. We especially note our concern regarding the "cliff" that current Care4Kids recipients earning under 50% of the state median income now face when they reach that fifty-percent mark. The previous regulations required a moderated increase in parent fees with an increase in income. The "cliff" means that many parents will not be able to continue working at all. Relatedly, we are concerned that the eligibility changes will lead to costs in other areas of government, particularly increases in participation in the Temporary Family Assistance program and increased involvement with the Department of Children and Families (due to working parents leaving their children home unsupervised).

From: Judith Goldfarb
Sent: Friday, June 05, 2009 4:41 PM
To: Palermino, Peter J.

ATTACHMENT

June 5, 2009

Edits to the CCDF plan:

- P. 15 add a link to private philanthropy engaged in early childhood (Early Childhood Affinity group part of the CT Council for Philanthropy)
- P. 15 add Commission on Children to partnerships with sister agencies, et al
- Stronger language could be added for developmental surveillance

Use of funds

- Infant / Toddler CDA offerings at the community colleges in both English and Spanish to support the Head Start requirement for infant / toddler teachers for 2010
- Developmental surveillance—funding capacity to collect ASQ survey information for families with feedback given to centers to support families
- Family child care networks to support infant / toddler practice in family child care homes and to help kith and kin providers become licensed.
- Child Care Health Consultants to support health practices in family child care homes (especially those serving infant and toddlers)
- Cohort classes of teachers who are at close to achieving an associate or bachelor degree. Instead of just contract classes, it would be good to bring groups of teachers together to support each other in achieving their degrees.
- Career counselors who could support child care directors in creating individual academic plans for teachers who will achieve a bachelor degree by 2015 (and hopefully the regulation will change to allow for associate degree teachers) but also to help put together those cohorts of teachers along a continuum of course completion to attain their degrees.
- Child Care Director Succession planning which will help organizations: 1) reduce the risk of unplanned leadership transition; 2) help programs understand how succession planning builds organizational capacity and the different roles that the executive director, board and staff play in succession planning; and 3) put plans in place to aid in successful transitions