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# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Connecticut Office of  
Early Childhood

David Wilkinson  
*Commissioner*

**Testimony of David Wilkinson, Commissioner,  
Office of Early Childhood  
Before the Education Committee  
Re: HB 5335 – An Act Concerning the Alignment of the Coordinated State-Wide  
Reading Plan with the State’s Two-Generational Initiative  
Thursday, March 8, 2018**

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The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) respectfully submits written testimony concerning HB 5335 – An Act Concerning the Alignment of the Coordinated State-Wide Reading Plan with the State’s Two-Generational Initiative.

The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood advances a family-centered and results-driven approach to support young children and their families. OEC integrates early childhood services by providing a unified vision and institutional structure to support increased coordination between programs. Through our core programs, we support access to high-quality early care and education, evidence-based home visiting services for at-risk young families, health and safety assurances, and early intervention and parenting supports to help families address developmental challenges. OEC’s enabling statute calls on the agency to have a two-generational (2Gen) outlook in pursuing its mission.

This bill aligns the state-wide kindergarten through grade 3 reading initiative with Connecticut’s two-generational initiative. The 2Gen initiative was codified last year in 17b-1121 (b), and the OEC was named the initiative's coordinating agency for the executive branch. The mission of the 2Gen initiative is to achieve long-term success for low-income families by refining and enacting policies and programs that take an integrated, family-centered, results-oriented approach. The 2Gen initiative’s objective is to support early care and education, health, and workforce readiness and self-sufficiency across two generations in the same household.

Research shows that there is a correlation between the literacy level of a mother and the reading success of a child. A 2Gen approach to reading involves working with the parent and child together to support their road to higher literacy levels, and ultimately, better success in school for the child and a higher level of economic self-sufficiency for the parent.

Aligning the state-wide reading initiative with the 2Gen initiative has parallels with the Even Start program administered within the Office of Early Childhood. The Even Start program, a 2Gen model, focuses on creating opportunities for and addressing the needs of both children and adults together. It supports both the child and the family by connecting parents with adult education, improving the adult’s literacy skills, providing the child with quality early care and

education, and providing the parent and child to the opportunity to read together to build their language and literacy skills.

This bill provides an opportunity to infuse a 2Gen lens into the state-wide reading initiative. Thanks to our experience with Even Start, we know that such approaches can be transformative for families in need.

Linking literacy to the Connecticut 2Gen initiative also improves opportunities to attract private and federal resources to the state's efforts. These efforts establish a continuum of literacy intervention strategies to improve outcomes for children and their families.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.