



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Connecticut Office of  
Early Childhood

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*Governor*  
Nancy Wyman  
*Lt. Governor*

Myra Jones-Taylor, Ph.D.  
*Commissioner*

**Testimony of Myra Jones-Taylor, Ph.D., Commissioner**  
**Office of Early Childhood**  
**Before the Education Committee**  
**S.B. 942 – An Act Implementing the Budget Recommendations of the**  
**Governor Concerning Education**  
**S.B. 964 – An Act Concerning the Legislative Commissioners’ Recommendations for**  
**Technical Revisions to the Education and Early Childhood Statutes**  
**Wednesday, February 25, 2015**

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Good afternoon Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, and distinguished members of the Education Committee. I am Myra Jones-Taylor, Commissioner of the Office of Early Childhood. I am here today to testify on two bills before this committee:

- S.B. 942 – An Act Implementing the Budget Recommendations of the Governor Concerning Education
- S.B. 964 – An Act Concerning the Legislative Commissioners’ Recommendations for Technical Revisions to the Education and Early Childhood Statutes

S.B. 942 transfers the Birth to Three statutes from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to the Office of Early Childhood (OEC). This aligns with the Governor’s budget proposal to transfer Birth to Three and its staff and a portion of its program funding from DDS to the OEC and another portion of program funding for paying Medicaid claims the Department of Social Services (DSS).

The Office of Early Childhood fully supports the Governor’s proposal and S.B. 942. The Birth to Three program services and goals are closely aligned with our mission and vision. The transfer will be seamless with no disruption of services to families and no changes to Birth to Three provider contracts. Due to lack of available office space at the OEC, staff within Birth to Three will remain housed at DDS through a Memorandum of Agreement until the OEC moves to new office space at 450 Columbus Avenue in late 2016.

Birth to Three has been working closely with the OEC since its inception in June 2013. The acting director attends weekly Leadership Team meetings as a full participant and Birth to Three staff participate in quarterly all-staff meetings as full members. The OEC has also attended the Birth to Three Inter-agency Coordinating Council meetings to share updates and the status of the proposed legislation.

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The majority of Birth to Three funding – nearly \$25 million – is proposed to be transferred to the OEC for staffing and program services. An additional \$7.25 million is proposed to be transferred to the DSS for Medicaid claiming as the 50 percent state portion of Medicaid payments to providers. This means that the amount paid by the DSS to Birth to Three providers for Medicaid-eligible children would be double that amount or \$14.5 million. The federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services has instructed Connecticut that they prefer that the state’s Medicaid agency become the biller of services. This Medicaid claiming change would occur regardless of the agency in which Birth of Three is located.

S.B. 942 also eliminates references to Family Empowerment Initiative Programs, Help Me Grow, and Family School Connection under Section 17b-751d of the general statutes to align with the Governor’s proposal to eliminate these three state-funded programs.

S.B. 964 makes technical statutory changes to the Office of Early Childhood statutes, which we support. I would suggest that under Section 27b-751b the statutory reporting requirement for the Nurturing Families Network be reduced from two times annually to once annually. Given the budget situation and scarce staffing resources, it is cost-effective and efficient to report on this program annually.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and I would be happy to take any questions.