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# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Connecticut Office of  
Early Childhood

Beth Bye  
*Commissioner*

**Testimony of Beth Bye, Commissioner  
Office of Early Childhood  
Before the Appropriations Committee  
Re: HB 7148 – An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending  
June Thirtieth, 2021, and Making Appropriations Therefor  
Wednesday, March 6, 2019**

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Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Formica, Rep. Lavielle and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Beth Bye, Commissioner of the Office of Early Childhood. I am here today to testify before this committee concerning the Governor's FY20-21 proposed budget for the agency.

The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood advances a family-centered approach to support young children and their families. Through our core programs, we support infant and toddler care, preschool, after-school care, child care and youth camp licensing, home visiting, and early intervention to address developmental delays. OEC is working toward better coordinated, cost-effective services that supports Connecticut's youngest children and families.

The Governor's budget proposal delivers a solid investment in high-quality, evidence-based early childhood services administered by the Office of Early Childhood. This budget maintains funding for our core services: Early Care and Education, Smart Start, Nurturing Families Network, Head Start Services, and Child Care Quality Enhancements.

The Governor proposes a Care 4 Kids funding expansion for rate increases and about \$14 million in new federal funding through the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF). The budget allocates a 1.75% increase for the Birth to Three program to cover projected caseload growth. A 1% COLA for Nurturing Families Network and Child Day Care programs is also annualized.

The Care 4 Kids line item allocation looks significantly different because it shows only the state general fund dollars allocated to the program. The federal funding is allocated to a separate agency account. This reallocation does not reduce Care 4 Kids funding. The reallocation of this funding streamlines and enhance federal reporting. It will and provide more accountability and transparency by accurately portraying actual state funding requirements rather than the current method of "gross appropriating" the program.

A fact sheet, attached to my testimony, provides more details about the Care 4 Kids realignment.

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In this budget proposal, Care 4 Kids funding is also increased by \$4.9 million in FY20 and \$9.8 million for planned child care provider rate increases. Additionally, Sec. 26 of the budget bill allocates \$4.9 million in current unexpended funding for child care rate increases for FY20. Child care subsidy rate increases are one of the many requirements under the Child Care Development Fund law. These rate increases are long overdue and are a step to help pay child care workers a more fair wage for the important work they do.

In closing, I want to thank the Appropriations Committee for its long-standing investment in our youngest children and their families.

Thank you for your time and attention. I am happy to answer your questions now and/or at a later date. I am committed to work together – with legislators, the executive branch, providers, advocates and parents - to better serve our families with young children.