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| **Image result for zero to three advocacy** | **EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVOCACY DAY**  #CTECAdvocacy18 |

Tuesday, March 6, 2018

Old Judiciary Room, State Capitol, Hartford

AGENDA

**9:30 am – Arrive**

**10:00 am – Welcome**

Randi McCray**,** New Haven Early Childhood Council

**10:10 am – The Budget for Young Children**

Overview – Lauren Ruth & Nicole Updegrove, CT Voices for Children

Care4Kids – Emmanuel Adero, CT Association for Human Services

Family Resource Centers – Cathy Battista, Meriden

**11:00 am – Child Health & Well-Being**

Child Health and Well-Being – Monica Belyea, Opportunity Knocks for Middletown’s Young Children

**Workforce & Safety**

Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance

**11:15 am – Advocacy Today and Beyond**

Izzi Greenberg, Middlesex Coalition for Children

**11:30 am – Adjourn Main Meeting**

Starting at 11:30 am – Attendees Meet with Their Legislators

**EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVOCACY DAY**

Advocacy Today and Beyond

**TODAY**

Following the program, meet with your legislator or their staff or drop off the Leave Behind materials.

Fill out the Leave Behind with your legislator’s name, your name, and any handwritten message you want to give, such as “please support our youngest children. I can be reached at (your email and/or phone number)”

If you do not have a meeting set up:

* Call your legislator (phone numbers can be found on the back) and find out if they are in the building, ask if you can meet briefly. This might be a very brief meeting in a hallway. That is OK!
* Say hello, tell them your name. Let them know you came to the Capitol for Early Childhood Advocacy Day. Give them the Leave Behind handout. Tell them these are the issues you care about. If you have other issues to mention, tell them those as well.
* Ask for their support.
* Tell them you to call if they have any questions.

If your legislator is not available:

* Ask their aide if you can meet them; they will share your message to the legislator. Do the same as you would with the legislator.

If neither the legislator or the aide is available:

* Drop by the front desk of the caucus office and give your Leave Behind with your legislator’s name on it to the receptionist (caucuses and locations are on the back).

**BEYOND TODAY**

Follow up – Send an email to any legislator you met with to say “thanks for meeting with me.” If you dropped material with an aide or the caucus receptionist, send an email to your legislator that says “Sorry I didn’t get a chance to see you while I was in Hartford, but I dropped off information on early childhood that I hope you will get a chance to review. “

Watch for Action Alerts – The Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance will send Action Alerts when early childhood issues need some additional help, usually asking you to call or email your legislator. Those calls and emails really make a difference. If you do not get our emails, click on “Join the Mailing list” at our website www.earlychildhoodalliance.com

Invite Legislators to your program – Invite legislators to visit your program for a private tour, to read to a class, to a program event, etc. The better they know you and your program, the better they will understand the issues that you face.

Questions? – If you have any questions after today, please contact Merrill Gay, Executive Director of the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance at 860.978.2767.

**PHONE NUMBERS & OFFICE LOCATIONS**

Senate Democrats

Phone: 860-240-8600

Offices: Legislative Office Building, 3rd Floor

Senate Republicans

Phone: 860-240-8800

Offices: Legislative Office Building, 3rd Floor

House Democrats

Phone: 860-240-8500

Offices: Legislative Office Building, 4th Floor

House Republicans

Phone: 860-240-8700

Offices: Legislative Office Building, 4th Floor

**EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVOCACY DAY**

**Thriving Children for a Thriving Connecticut**

TO:

FROM:

MESSAGE:

Here’s what you can do for young children in 2018:

* **SUPPORT A BUDGET THAT SERVES THE NEEDS OF YOUNG CHILDREN**

Maintain programs and supports that ensure young children are on track to grow and thrive. Without these programs too many children are left behind. **We urge you to support: The programs of the Office of Early Childhood (OEC budget), Family Resource Centers (in the SDE budget), Early Childhood Consultation Partnership and Child First (DCF budget), HUSKY (DSS budget)**

* **KEEP CARE4KIDS OPEN**

The 15 month closure of Care4Kids took a toll. Nearly 10,000 fewer children are served, we have almost 1,000 fewer child care providers in the Care4Kids program, and there was a 50% increase in child care center closures. The legislature added funds to Care4Kids in the budget passed last fall and on February 9, 2018, action by Congress means Connecticut will receive an additional $18.4 million for Care4Kids. **We urge you to: maintain FY18 funding for Care4Kids and add the expected $18.4 million in new federal funds to the FY19 budget (New FY19 total $148,435,660)**

* **ADDRESS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NEEDS**

Children as young as infants have mental and behavioral health needs, and the early childhood field is reporting an uptick in behavioral health issues. The legislature banned expulsion and suspension of children under age seven, but it still happens because there is not support for intervention to address behaviors. **We urge the following: an increase in behavioral health screening with support to increase capacity of intervention providers, expansion of Birth-to-Three to include behavioral health delays, increase in Child First funding, increase in funding for Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP).**

* **ELIMINATE LEAD POISONING**

Lead poisoning has serious cognitive and behavioral impacts on children. We know how to prevent lead poisoning, yet 2,156 Connecticut children had blood levels above the Center for Disease Control’s (CDC) threshold in the most recent data report. Black children are twice as likely, and Hispanic children are 1.6 times as likely, to be lead poisoned. **We urge: lower the blood lead threshold to trigger abatement from 20 µg/dL to 5 µg/dL to match the CDC recommendation; create a funding stream to support lead abatement, examine ways to increase the rate of children getting the state required two blood tests before the age of 3.**

MORE ON REVERSE PAGE

* **SUPPORT THE EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE**

Current law requires that by 2021 every classroom in a state funded early care and education program have a teacher with a B.A. degree and by July 2018 half of teachers have a B.A. and half an Associates degree. Neither of these goals will be met. The problem is low pay. Early childhood teachers are among the lowest paid profession in the state. Early childhood teachers often relay on Care4Kids, HUSKY, SNAP and fuel assistance to make ends meet. **To address both of these issues we urge: an increase in the full-day, full-year rate to $10,000 per child for School Readiness and state funded Child Development Centers indexed to any increase in the minimum wage, a higher infant toddler rate in recognition of the much lower staff to child ratio, delaying the B.A. degree deadline, and provide a rate bonus to programs that reach the staff qualification goal so they can retain the staff.**

* **SUPPORT FAMILY FRIENDLY WORKPLACE POLICIES**

For optimal child development, children need a strong bond/attachment and stability. Connecticut lawmakers have 2 proposals before them this year that can promote attachment and stability. **Earned Family Leave will allow parents to have the necessary time to stay home with a newborn or to care for a sick family member, and the Fair Work Week bill will give parents who work in retail, food service, hospitality and nursing care advance notice of their work schedules so they can plan ahead for child care and other family activities.**

* **INCLUDE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS IN EMERGENCY AND SAFETY PREPAREDNESS**

Child care settings in Connecticut are licensed to serve over 118,000 young children - nearly 100,000 in centers, and over 18,000 family child care.  **Any safety and emergency planning and funding should consider and include child care settings.  Support Section 6 of House Bill 5169 to codify the system developed for notification to child care settings of emergency conditions.**