



State of Connecticut  
Department of Developmental Services



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**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES TESTIMONY  
BEFORE THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**H.B. No. 6359 - AN ACT CONCERNING AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM**

**February 15, 2012**

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee. I am Terrence W. Macy, Ph.D., Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), and I thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in support of the Governor's bill H.B. No. 6359 - AN ACT CONCERNING AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM. The impact of this bill for the Department of Developmental Services would be to move the Connecticut Birth to Three System, which is currently under the direction of the Commissioner of Developmental Services, into the new Office of Early Childhood.

As a part of DDS, the Connecticut Birth to Three System has consistently maintained the highest professional standards and has been recognized by the federal government as a high performing early intervention program. The mission of Birth to Three is to strengthen the capacity of Connecticut's families to meet the developmental and health-related needs of infants and toddlers who have delays or disabilities. This program ensures that all Connecticut families have equal access to a coordinated program of comprehensive early intervention services and supports that are family-centered, occur in natural settings, foster collaborative partnerships, and recognize current best practices in early intervention. Although Connecticut births have decreased 9.1% between 1997 and 2011, referrals to Birth to Three have increased 86% over a similar period.

Relocating the Birth to Three System within the Office of Early Childhood will not only allow the state to better identify any gaps in services and make more informed policy decisions, but it will integrate this extremely successful program into an agency whose sole focus is on children from birth to five years of age. This change will make Connecticut a leader in the delivery of early childhood services and supports and the Office of Early Childhood will ensure that families have access to the highest quality early childhood services, preparing children for success in school and in life.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on H.B. No. 6359. I urge your support of this bill. If you have any questions or need any additional information from DDS, please contact Christine Pollio Cooney, Director of Legislative and Executive Affairs, at 860-418-6066.