

1. Name:

Jola Borto

2. Email:

3. Town *

Middletown

4. I am a: *

Please select at most 2

☐ Parent

☐ Childcare Provider

☐ Early Childhood Educator

☒ Community Organization

☐ Employer

☒ Advocate

☐ Other

5. Type or paste your Testimony here: *

I am pleased to submit written testimony to the Early Childhood Education Endowment Advisory Board. My name is Jola Borto, and I am a Senior Director for Early Childhood and Family services at Advanced Behavioral Health, Inc. (ABH) in Middletown. ABH is a nonprofit organization that provides behavioral health services across Connecticut and is the developer of the Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP®).

The ECCP® program is a nationally recognized, evidence-based Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) program designed to address the social-emotional needs of young children, birth to age five. ECCP® is listed as an evidenced based model in the national database of evidence-based programs in "What Works Clearinghouse", as well as in the California Evidence Based Clearinghouse (CEBC).

Developed in 2002, the primary goal of the ECCP® Program is to reduce and prevent the incidence of suspension and expulsion of young children. The ECCP® program continues to be managed by ABH and is funded by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Grant funding allows that all licensed early care and education programs across Connecticut are eligible to receive services from master's level ECCP® Consultants. ECCP® Consultants are embedded in local communities and bring mental health expertise directly to ECE programs. ECCP® Consultants work with educators and families to help them learn and implement best practice social-emotional strategies, which in turn help children gain skills regulating emotions, following directions, engaging pro-socially with peers and learning to navigate conflict; all of which help children to be ready to engage in academic instruction.

We are seeing an increase in young children presenting with concerning and challenging behavior. This, coupled with staffing challenges, has resulted in many early childhood education programs experiencing a high degree of burnout and turnover among their staff. By investing in ECCP®, we are investing in promoting the social-emotional development of young children as well as supporting the ECE workforce. For over 22 years, ECCP® has been supporting the ECE workforce with our evidence-based model of IECMHC. In this time, ECCP® Consultants have supported over 19,000 educators and over 66,000 children. Educators who partner with ECCP® regularly remark that the skills they learn from working with their ECCP® Consultant reduces their stress as educators and makes a positive impact in their classroom and the children they are supporting. They also state that they feel they are better prepared to manage similar challenges should they arise again.

ABH is excited that Connecticut passed legislation that created the Early Childhood Endowment. ECE providers in our state are laying the foundation for our state's future success as they care for and support the development of our youngest residents.

ABH is looking forward to exploring how we may be able to partner through the Early Childhood Endowment to increase the capacity of our statewide ECCP® Consultant team, which would allow us to provide more services to ECE providers across our state. Currently we have over 85 referrals for Child-Specific services and over 50 referrals for Core Classroom/Family Childcare Program services waiting to be paired with an ECCP® Consultant. We know that the endowment will create more ECE slots for families, thus bringing more educators to the workforce. We fully anticipate and look forward to receiving even more referrals to the ECCP® program. We are submitting this written testimony to voice our support for the endowment, and our desire to learn more about how funding from the endowment may be used to increase ECCP® capacity so that we will be ready to respond to increased referrals and continue to support ECE programs and thus young children, throughout our state.

Please visit our website to learn more about ECCP, at www.eccpct.com.

Thank you,
Jola Borto, PsyD