

1. Name:

Lushanna TThompson

2. Email:

3. Town *

Hamden

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: *

Public Testimony Early Childhood Education Endowment Advisory Board Hearing
Presenter: Lushanna Thompson
Owner, Every Child Ahead LLC
Hamden, Connecticut

Good afternoon,

My name is Lushanna Thompson, and I'm the owner of Every Child Ahead LLC in Hamden, Connecticut. I've been in early childhood education for nearly two decades, and I'm here today because this work is not just my business; it's my life's work.

I want to be very clear: childcare providers are tired, but we are still standing. We are still opening our doors every morning. We are still feeding children, educating them, loving on them, protecting them, and preparing them for school and life, even when the systems meant to support us feel shaky.

Every Child Ahead has survived recessions, a pandemic, staffing crises, policy changes, and rising costs that hit us from every angle. Food costs are up. Supplies are up. Insurance is up. Rent, utilities, everything is up. But our tuition can only go so high, because the families we serve are already stretched.

And yet, providers are still expected to perform at the highest level with the lowest level of stability. That is not sustainable.

At the same time, families are also struggling to access help. Right now, Care4Kids still has over 4,000 families and more than 6,000 children on the waiting list.

That means thousands of parents want to work, want to be stable, but cannot secure affordable childcare. Providers want to serve those families, but without funding support, our hands are tied. This waiting list is not just a number. It represents real parents, real children, and real lost opportunities every single day.

The Early Childhood Education Endowment matters because it represents something we rarely get in this field: long-term security. Not temporary relief. Not a

quick fix. But real investment in the future of early learning and the people who make it possible.

Let me say this plainly:

You cannot keep asking providers to pour from an empty cup.

We cannot keep losing talented educators because they can't afford to stay.

We cannot keep saying children are our future while underpaying the people shaping that future every day.

This Endowment has the power to:

- Stabilize programs like mine
- Support wages that reflect the real value of this work
- Keep providers from closing their doors
- Expand access for families who desperately need care
- And help reduce the Care4Kids waiting list so families can actually move forward

I serve infants through Pre-K. I work with hardworking families, doing their best, and just trying to keep their households together. When childcare is stable, families are stable. When childcare is unstable, everything else starts to crumble.

Early childhood education is not a convenience; it is infrastructure. Parents cannot work without us. Children cannot thrive without us. And communities cannot grow without us.

I am asking this Board to continue protecting, growing, and strengthening this Endowment, with providers at the center of every decision. Make sure small programs like mine are not left behind. Make sure the workforce is not treated as an afterthought. Make sure sustainability is not a slogan, but a reality.

When you invest in early childhood, you are not just funding a program; you are shaping lives, families, and futures.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your continued commitment to early learning in Connecticut.

Respectfully,

Lushanna Thompson

Owner, Every Child Ahead LLC

Hamden, Connecticut