

1. Name:

Mary Cecchinato

2. Email:

3. Town *

Torrington

4. I am a: *

Please select at most 2 options.

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Parent

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Childcare Provider

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Early Childhood Educator

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Community Organization

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Employer

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Other

5. Type or paste your Testimony here: *

TESTIMONY REGARDING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD ENDOWMENT
RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED ON DECEMBER 10, 2025, BY Mary Cecchinato.

Senator Maher, Representative Farrar, Commissioner Trueworthy, and members of the Early Childhood Endowment Advisory Board

My name is Mary Cecchinato and I am the Director of Torrington Child Care Center for over 40 years. I am also a member of the CT Early Childhood Alliance.

I am submitting testimony today to discuss how important the Endowment is to Early Childhood programs and helping to increase quality. Presently at Torrington Child Care Center we have an opening for a teacher, and no one is applying. The endowment will help in

1. Attracting and Retaining Qualified Teachers

- We will be able to pay staff a livable wage and attract qualified staff.
- Better pay reduces staff turnover, which is crucial because young children need stable consistent relationships for healthy development.
- More funding also supports professional development, such as training in child development, behavior support, literacy instruction, and culturally responsive care.

2. Improving Learning Environments

Funds allow for high-quality learning materials, such as:

- books,
- manipulatives,
- science and art supplies,
- safe playground equipment.

3. Expanding Access to Support Services

More funding allows programs to offer:

- developmental screenings,
- speech, occupational, and behavioral therapy,
- family counseling or home-visiting supports,
- mental-health consultants for teachers.

These services help identify and support children with special needs early—when interventions are most effective.

4. Strengthening Family Engagement

Funding helps programs:

- hire family-service staff,
- run workshops for parents,
- provide translation services,
- coordinate parent-teacher meetings and home visits.

When families are involved, outcomes improve across language, social-emotional, and academic domains.

5. Supporting Curriculum and Assessment Quality

With more resources, programs can invest in:

- evidence-based curricula,
- child assessment tools,
- technology for documentation and communication with families.

High-quality curricula guide teachers in purposeful learning experiences, while assessments help identify progress and needs.

6. Ensuring Program Stability and Long-Term Planning

Consistent funding prevents:

- cutbacks,
- staff layoffs,
- elimination of enrichment programs (music, art, outdoor learning).

Stable funding lets programs plan long-term improvements instead of surviving year-to-year.

In closing I want to thank and applaud the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Office of Early Childhood for creating an endowment that will help, families, businesses, and centers in Connecticut.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

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