

1. Name:

Shannon Knudsen

2. Email:

3. Town *

New Haven

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: *

Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Shannon Knudsen, and as director of an early child I am here in strong support of the Early Childhood Education Endowment.

Investing in early childhood is one of the most effective and fiscally responsible decisions we can make. High-quality early learning experiences lay the foundation for lifelong success—academically, socially, and economically. Yet too many families still struggle to find or afford safe, enriching care for their young children.

This endowment directly addresses those challenges.

First, it will help families gain reliable access to quality education and care. By expanding availability and reducing financial barriers, more children, regardless of zip code or family income, will be able to enter kindergarten ready to learn.

Second, it supports higher wages for early childhood educators. We cannot expect quality without valuing the people who provide it. Competitive, stable compensation means we can recruit and retain skilled teachers who build strong relationships with children and deliver the level of care families deserve.

Finally, the endowment will improve early learning facilities. Safe, modern, developmentally appropriate environments are essential to children's growth. Facility upgrades not only enhance learning, but also ensure that programs meet health, safety, and licensing standards.

In short, the Early Childhood Education Endowment is a long-term, sustainable solution that strengthens families, supports our workforce, and benefits the broader economy. When we invest in our youngest children, we invest in our state's future.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully urge your support.