April 14, 2022

Dear Legislators,

We the undersigned, representing different sectors of our community, strongly encourage decision makers to fully support and fully fund the early childhood education industry in the State of Connecticut.

As we continue to recover from the pandemic and focus on economic development and reinvigoration, businesses are relying on the early childhood education system to support working parents with high quality and affordable child care that they can depend upon so they can work.

The early childhood industry has been underfunded for years. Over the past seven years, there have been no program funding increases from the state. Meanwhile during that time, the cost of doing business has continued to rise as the minimum wage increases have gone up 61% and other operations-related expenses keep rising.

The industry’s ability to attract and retain high quality employees is difficult, at best. In the last six years, community college enrollments in the Early Childhood Education field are down 60%. These factors individually and combined place our community at risk, as they threaten Connecticut families’ ability to work while knowing their young children are safe and learning.

We applaud your collective efforts to address these challenges in the proposed budget and we urge you to continue to fight for this critical funding. We understand that there are a lot of competing needs that require addressing, but it is time to put our early childhood education system first. We are grateful for the Child Care Stabilization resources provided throughout the pandemic, including this fiscal year, but the challenges facing our communities and our early childhood system of care are greater than ever.

If something is not done IMMEDIATELY to more adequately fund the true cost of high quality, dependable early care and education, the State and businesses will continue to struggle with attracting workers who have young children and no one to take care of them.

Establishing the Infant and Toddler Early Care and Family Support Initiative is one way of addressing chronic problems in this sector and not removing resources from other critically needed areas.

Thank you for your advocacy and support.

Sincerely,

Deb Monahan, Thames Valley Council for Community Action (TVCCA)
Allison Blake, Child & Family Agency of SECT
Susan Radway, Riverfront Children’s Center
Maryam Elahi, Community Foundation of Eastern CT
Katherine Verano, Safe Futures
Regina Moller, Noank Community Support Services
Kathleen Stauffer, The Arc Eastern Connecticut
Jeanne Milstein, Human Services, City of New London
Mayor Michael Passero, City of New London
Jennifer Granger, United Community & Family Services
Marvin Elbaum, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
Anne Miller, TEEG
David Addams, Graustein Memorial Fund
Janée Woods Weber, CT Women’s Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)
Shiela Hayes, NAACP Norwich Branch
Debbie Plourde, Mansfield Discovery Depot
Jennifer Muggeo, Health Improvement Collaborative of Southeastern CT
Lisa Dahn, Community Children’s Center