



Ned Lamont  
*Governor*  
Susan Bysiewicz  
*Lt. Governor*

# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Beth Bye  
*Commissioner*

**Testimony of Beth Bye, Commissioner  
Office of Early Childhood  
Before the Appropriations Committee  
H.B. 6896 – An Act Concerning Early Childhood  
H.B. 5264 – An Act Concerning Incentives to Address the Shortage of Child Care Facilities  
Tuesday, March 28, 2023**

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Good morning, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Berthel, Rep. Nuccio, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Elena Trueworthy, Deputy Commissioner of the Office of Early Childhood (OEC). I am here today to testify concerning two bills: **H.B. 6896 – An Act Concerning Early Childhood** and **H.B. 5264 – An Act Concerning Incentives to Address the Shortage of Child Care Facilities**.

The OEC appreciates the intent of both of these bills, which seek to identify the needs for child care facilities, funding incentives for facility expansion, child care supply and demand, and child care staffing compensation. Over the past few years, the OEC has made considerable efforts to examine and release studies and reports addressing these extremely important issues, including an Early Childhood Educator compensation schedule, a narrow cost analysis, financial cost model, supply and demand, and child care deserts. An example of the direct impact this work has had on delivery of child care and evidence-based policy is using what was learned by research done on child care deserts to support the expansion of access to child care in identified areas by directing funding in ways that priorities areas that have been identified as lacking options.

The collection of data and findings to date has been used for OEC's pandemic relief efforts and strategic planning and will inform the work that lies ahead for Governor Lamont's Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care. Governor Lamont announced the establishment of the Blue Ribbon Panel on March 17, 2023, a 21-member panel has been appointed, and work will be undertaken now through the end of December 2023 when the Panel will submit a 5-year comprehensive report to the Governor.

This panel will be responsible for providing the governor with a data-driven, actionable, strategic plan that supports optimal child development, family needs, business needs, and prioritizes equitable access to early care and education. It consists of parents, early childhood education experts, business leaders, higher education officials, public school officials, child care and education providers, and legislators.

HB 5264 addresses funding incentives for businesses to take steps to address the shortage of child care facilities for their employees. Additionally, the Governor has proposed legislation in SB 981 to provide businesses with a corporate tax credit of 25 percent of the cost of any child care subsidies that the business provides to their employees. Under the Governor's proposal, businesses could earn this tax credit by developing on-site child care centers or subsidizing their employees' child care costs in community-based settings. The Governor announced the Blue Ribbon Panel at Boehringer Ingelheim in Danbury to highlight one of the few businesses in the state that provides on-site child care services to its employees. Apple Blossom Children's Learning Center opened in 2006 and enables Boehringer Ingelheim employees to receive care at 20% lower tuition rates than other facilities in the area. Should the Governor's proposal pass, it will create an incentive for other businesses in Connecticut to provide child care subsidies to their employees.

In closing, I want to thank the Appropriations Committee for its long-standing investment in our youngest children and their families. Our agency is committed to work together to better serve young children and their families.

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*The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood advances a two-generation family-centered approach in our pursuit of optimal health, safety, and learning outcomes for young children. Through our core programs, we support infant and toddler care, preschool, after-school care, child care and youth camp licensing, home visiting, and early intervention to address developmental delays. OEC is working toward better-coordinated, cost-effective services that support Connecticut's youngest children and families.*