

Congressman Shays, honorable members of the Subcommittee on Human Resources, distinguished panel members and guests. Thank you for the opportunity to address the Subcommittee on the subject of Early Head Start: Goals and Challenges. I am Elaine Liberto and I am proud to serve as the Director of Head Start and Child Care for ABCD, the Community Action Agency serving a six-town area of Fairfield County, Connecticut. In my capacity as Director, I oversee a program which reaches 700 children and families in and around Bridgeport, Connecticut's largest city.

My testimony will address three key areas. They are:

- 1) the advantages of Early Head Start and Head Start for low-income children and families;
- 2) the need to protect funding for Early Head Start so that low-income infants, toddlers and families in Bridgeport and other areas of Connecticut will benefit; and
- 3) Early Head Start's central position in advancing our knowledge about new finding in the field of child development and translating knowledge into practice.

The Head Start program is unique among the federal initiatives undertaken during the Kennedy-Johnson era and the War on Poverty. From its beginning in the late 1960's, Head Start has been an ambitious program. Over the last 30 years great strides have been made to shape Head Start into a dynamic and comprehensive approach to preparing low-income children and families for school success by getting children off to a better start *before* they entered the formal educational system. From the early days of "Operation Head Start", a summer program, Head Start is now synonymous with school readiness, parent involvement and community partnership.

I will argue that Early Head Start will bring about even greater gains for children and families by providing communities with the opportunity to expand, enhance and create accessible and affordable programs of high-quality child care built on the same solid philosophical and pedagogical base as the Head Start program. Early Head Start will be the most important federal initiative to help low-income parents take advantage of breakthrough research findings on child development such as we are seeing this decade in areas of brain research. Without Early Head Start, poor children will be deprived of the benefits of this research.

The new Head Start Performance Standards enacted this year take a giant step toward creating a seamless transition for infants and toddlers from child care to pre-

school - birth to five years. These Performance Standards set higher goals for families and care-givers alike and offer the kind of guidance to staff which will ensure a higher quality of child care than is usually found in non-Head Start settings. Early Head Start is superior in many ways but particularly admirable is the emphasis on consistency of care, communication and language development, and the building of relationships between child, child-care provider and parent. In addition, private day care programs are unable, unwilling, or cannot afford the cost of dealing with the myriad of social service issues which surround low-income urban families and which are central to the Head Start approach.

While the new Performance Standards address critical child needs such as child health and development, education, nutrition, and safety, they do not neglect the context of the child within the family and the community. Furthermore, the new Performance Standards give clear and concrete direction for the management and governance of the program by requiring written policies that define the roles and responsibilities of all parties.

In order for this nation's welfare reform initiative to succeed, we must make quality child care services available and affordable to parents. Fees for Early Head Start and Head Start can be lower for poorer families due to the sliding scales made possible through federal support. Parents will be relieved to find they can take their infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers to one location rather than shuttle around town to their various child care sites while they work or seek employment and training. In a city and region such as ours where public transportation does not meet the needs of families, many of our parents - often single mothers - must take as many as three local buses to deliver their children to child care - all before the work day begins at 8 or 8:30 AM. Again at the end of the day, the same mother and children will ride three buses before they return home in the evening. By co-locating Early Head Start and Head Start programs, real barriers facing low-income parents who are starting off in the world of work will be reduced.

In an Early Head Start setting, very young babies will find the same child care worker who provides a warm and predictable routine each day, helping the infant cope and adapt to the abrupt separation brought on by a mother's need to work. The development of early coping skills in infants and toddlers is a predictor of later social adaptation and successful learning within the home, school and community. At ABCD, we value the *Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers* being developed by Washington-based "Teaching Strategies" (see sample curriculum in Attachment 2). This set of curriculum is supported by Head Start to bring high quality teacher and staff training and preparation to the Early Head Start program. Even though ABCD has not

yet received an Early Head Start award, we are working to integrate the Early Head Start performance standards into our existing child care program.

Connecticut is the wealthiest state in the country and Fairfield County is the wealthiest county in the state. Yet, one out of three children in Bridgeport is poor and more than 13,000 children were living in families receiving welfare when the state implemented its strict welfare reform legislation in 1996 (Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition, 1997).

In Connecticut, one out of ten children is poor and 102,000 children are living in families receiving welfare. While state-wide 10.7% of all Connecticut children under 18 years are classified as poor, the percentage of poor children of African-American heritage climbs to 28.9% and jumps again to 41.2% for children of Latino heritage (Children's Defense Fund, 1996). According to the US Department of Commerce, Connecticut evidences the widest disparity of income between rich and poor of any state in the nation.

The "two Connecticut" phenomenon evidences itself in the high preponderance of racial and ethnic minorities living in Connecticut's three largest cities of Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport. Bridgeport, the state's largest city, ranks lowest in per capita income in the region and ranks at a low of 167 of the 169 municipalities in the state. For a state with the number one ranking in per capita income in the country, Connecticut ranks a poor 23rd in the nation for low-birthweight births as a percent of all births and 16th in its infant mortality rate (Children's Defense Fund, 1996).

Connecticut mirrors the trend in the United States over the last 20 years toward an increasing birth rate among unmarried teens ages 15 through 19. In Connecticut, the percentage of teen births that were to unmarried teens is nearly as close to that of Washington D.C. (80.6 versus 93.9%) as it is to neighboring Vermont (80.6 versus 70.1%). Of the 35 states that show an increase in adolescent childbearing over the decade between 1980 and 1990, Connecticut is among the top four largest increases at 28.5%. The other largest increases were seen in California (34.1%), District of Columbia (53.5%), Michigan (31.8%) and Rhode Island (35.2%) (Children's Defense Fund, 1996). Recent data shows that in the past five years, Connecticut's teen birth rate has climbed 53%. Over the same period, other negative trends for teens include an increase of 20% in teen deaths by accident, homicide and suicide; and juvenile violent crime arrest rate increased by 53% (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1997).

Clearly, life for many of Connecticut's children is getting worse over the past decade. The negative social indicators for children are correlated closely with the number and circumstances of children living in poverty in the state. Connecticut ranks squarely in the middle of the 50 states in the nation in the percentage of children living in poverty.

Bridgeport's children run a one-in-five chance of being born to a teen mother, twice that for the state as a whole. According to Bridgeport's Department of Health, in 1994, there were 451 babies born to teen mothers, 228 babies born with low birthweight and 47 babies born with very low birthweight - these negative outcomes are all ones addressed by the Early Head Start performance standards.

Welfare and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families

In Bridgeport, there were 18,616 AFDC recipients in 1996. Connecticut now has one of the nation's most stringent plans for reforming Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Time limits for receiving AFDC were implemented in January, 1996, mandating a 21-month limit for employable recipients. Beginning in October 1997, Connecticut's first welfare recipients began losing benefits as their cases came up for renewal. With every month after October, thousands of former-welfare families faced the months ahead without financial security unless they had become employed or entered a recognized training program. All able-bodied adults are expected to find jobs, this, in a region where high skilled technical jobs are plentiful but high skilled workers are not.

The Connecticut Department of Social Services estimated that approximately 25,000 new families receiving public assistance will need child care over the next two years (DSS, 1997).

According to the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition, "studies show that children from low-income families who participate in quality early childhood programs are less likely to repeat a grade, be referred for special education or become teen parents, and more likely to graduate from high school, be employed and have higher incomes than their peers who did not attend such programs." Bridgeport, however, has no Early Head Start programs.

Recent statistics from ABCD's Head Start parent data showed that nearly 70 percent receive some form of public or governmental assistance. Only 24% of ABCD's child care parents were working full-time in 1996. Another 16% were in training, and a full 70% of the unemployed parents were looking for work.

Since the advent of welfare reform, ABCD's staff is observing an increase in stress experienced by parents as they struggle with the requirements of work and child care, particularly among those parents least well equipped to command a living wage. Single mothers are particularly vulnerable. Staff are alert to suicidal ideation and must make rapid referrals for counseling.

Our Family Workers are available and trained to work one-on-one with parents to develop a family plan which helps parents review their options and set personal and family goals. Often, these are the first plans an individual parent has articulated but they are powerful none the less. One single mother recently outlined her welfare-to-work goals for a job, an apartment with a yard, and a car.

School Readiness

A study released in January 1996 entitled "Bridgeport School Readiness", represented a significant review of early childhood education in Bridgeport. The State Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Social Services, the CT Commission on Children, and the Graustein Memorial Fund, formed a partnership to address school readiness in Connecticut. Along with the state's two other largest cities, Hartford and New Haven, Bridgeport was awarded a planning grant to carry out the research. Both the Committee Chair, and Co-Chair served on ABCD's Community Assessment Committee to study Head Start expansion needs.

The final report states that over 50% of Bridgeport kindergarten students do not have preschool experience (Bridgeport School Readiness Task Force, 1996). Fewer Bridgeport children have preschool experience than their suburban or state-wide counterparts. The following table shows that state-wide 68 percent of children have some pre-school experience and in three of Bridgeport's suburban neighboring towns, the percentage jumps to a high of over 90 percent of children with preschool experience.

**Percent of Kindergarten students not attending preschool
(1993/1994)**

Bridgeport	51.6	Monroe	6.1
Fairfield	7.5	Stratford	27.8
Trumbull	7.6	State-wide	32.0

The Bridgeport School Readiness Report gives the following demographics of Bridgeport's children 5 years of age and under:

Age, 1990 Census	# of Children
Under 1 year	2,070
1 and 2 years	5,253
3 and 4 years	4,521
5 years of age	2,169
Total	11,252

Family and home-based child care is available throughout the city of Bridgeport. The Greater Bridgeport Family Day Care Association, an organization comprised primarily of licensed family child care providers, is the largest family day care association in the State of Connecticut. Nearly 600 children are served by its 100 licensed providers. There is, however, a perceived need to improve the quality of the child care provided in order to encourage parents to utilize this service which is clearly a cost effective alternative given that center-based care is in short supply as seen below.

Services and resources available in Bridgeport:

Type of service	Number of slots*
Head Start	700
Day Care	170
School-based	608
Private nursery	<u>1,381</u>
	2,859

(*Source: Bridgeport School Readiness Report, 1994-95 data, not all are licensed slots)

Of the preschool spaces available in Bridgeport, only 336 spaces exist for the more than 7,000 infants and toddlers. Even when infant and toddler care is available, private nursery and day care is costly on an hourly, monthly or yearly basis. The State of Connecticut Board of Education, in its 1996 *Early Childhood Agenda*, estimates that a parent must work 40 hours per week at \$4 per hour to pay for infant/toddler child care and \$2.88 an hour to pay for preschool child care costs alone (CT Department of Education, 1996). One popular private day care center which previously served 62 low-income children closed last year citing inability to meet its operating costs in an area which could not charge market-rate prices because target families could not afford to pay

for the actual cost of services. This is indicative of the difficulty in reaching low-income families with quality services. All Head Start classrooms in Bridgeport have a waiting list.

Child care in Bridgeport costs an average of \$440 per month and can consume as much as one-third of a family's budget representing the single largest expense after housing, food and taxes for working parents (Bridgeport Child advocacy Coalition 1997). The State of Connecticut's Department of Social Services pays a maximum rate of \$140 per month in Southwestern Connecticut even as a Head Start five hour daily program costs the family \$225 per week.

Last year the Connecticut State Legislature allocated new funding for the state's urban areas to expand preschool classes through their priority school districts under an act entitled "Act Concerning School Readiness and Child Day Care." This budget action was partly due to a recent State Supreme Court action (Scheff v O'Neill) mandating steps toward desegregating the state's urban schools. The activity generated by the Bridgeport School Readiness Report was also a factor in bringing attention to the crisis currently existing for low-income families with young children. (See Attachment 1, Connecticut Post articles, June 1, 4 and 5, 1997). Bridgeport was allocated 383 new full-day slots for children ages three to five years through Connecticut's School Readiness initiative.

In Connecticut, licensed day-care facilities have room for 120,354 children. However, 317,237 children need day care, according to the state's Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee (Connecticut Post, 1997). With only 16% of Bridgeport's children in licensed day care, the need is critical for low-income parents facing the 21-month welfare reform time limits which began dropping people from the benefit pool in late 1997.

Clearly, Bridgeport's children and families need both Head Start and Early Head start programs. It is imperative that the \$90 million in anticipated federal funding be maintained for the Early Head Start program. Last year over 650 proposals were received and only 30 grants were awarded. ABCD was one of the applicants that has not yet been able to open its Early Head Start program due to lack of funding. We urge the Subcommittee to support the set-aside for Early Head Start and protect this funding. Nor should we allow the Head Start allocation to be drained to support expansion of Early Head Start since we must stand fast in our commitment to quality child care for all children birth to five - we cannot be asked to choose between the two.

Earlier, I referenced the need for continuity of care for very young children in child care. In order to attract, train and retain well qualified teachers for Head Start and Early Head Start, we must be willing to pay professional salaries. This year ABCD

increased its entry level teachers' wage from \$8 to \$10 per hour. While a great improvement, our entry salary of \$18,300 still lags far behind the \$30,000 starting salary for a teacher hired by the city's Board of Education. Keeping the critical issue of "do no harm" in mind, infants may also be helped by starting them off in Early Head Start on a gradual basis, that is increasing the number of days per week (with their accompanying separation problems) slowly over the course of time. Such a schedule would also be less disruptive to the mother-child relationship. However, these child-centered techniques do cost more money but they are better for the infant and young child.

The new Head Start and Early Head Start Performance Standards place great emphasis on literacy and the importance of reading to a child at least three times a day. At ABCD, we are anxious to expand our very successful Family Literacy Project to the birth-to-three group which would be served in an Early Head Start program. Two of the most pressing problems facing both our nation and our local communities are the high rates of illiteracy in adults, particularly parents of young children, and the deficits in school readiness skills seen in their children (Boyer, 1991). ABCD's Family Literacy Project is a collaborative effort with nearby Fairfield University, is supported by private funding, and uses university students as "literacy tutors" for preschool-age children in their Head Start classrooms and weekly group training workshops for the parents. This project is an integrated approach to "a total literacy environment" through the Head Start experience. During the 1994-1995 and the 1995-1996 project years, the Family Literacy Project reached 780 Head Start preschoolers, and involved 60 Head Start parents, 72 Head Start teachers, and 275 university student tutors. An evaluation of the program after two years provided evidence of the project's short-term success. Parents reported a sense of increased competence and increased self-esteem. They reported increased amounts of time as well as increased "quality" of time spent with their preschoolers engaging in conversation, specific language-enhancing activities, and book sharing. Increases seen in the children's language scores were six months or more greater than those seen in matched controls. Teachers unanimously reported satisfaction with the individualized tutoring being made available to preschoolers in their classrooms and both teachers and parents reported gaining greater motivation for higher education as a result of the positive interaction with the student tutors (Edmonds et al, 1997).

Clearly, no single short-term intervention is enough to combat the tremendous negative impact of illiteracy and poverty but ABCD views this program as a powerful first step. In future months and years, ABCD will expand the family literacy project beyond the classroom boundaries to the homes of children we serve through more lending libraries and home-based literacy activities for the whole family.

Does Head Start have immediate positive effects on children's cognitive ability?

Studies are virtually unanimous in reporting that children show significant immediate gain as a result of Head Start (McKey et al, 1985). Research undertaken in Philadelphia concluded that "the long-term impact of Head Start is in reducing school failure" (Copple et al, 1987). Over the years, other studies have questioned the long-term benefit of Head Start when former Head Start students scored no higher on certain standardized tests than children who had no pre-school experience (Federal Register, 1991). To investigate this so-called "fade-out" effect, HHS sponsored the Head Start/Public School Early Childhood Transition Demonstration Project (Hellerich-Tuttle et al, 1996). This study was one of a number which concludes that students who had made gains as a result of Head Start struggled to maintain those gains as they transitioned to public schools of lower quality (see also Lee and Loeb, 1995).

Bridgeport has no research on the "fade out" effect but it is clear that Bridgeport's urban school children in grades 4, 6, and 8 fall below their peers from more affluent suburbs in mastery test scores as seen in the table below:

Connecticut Mastery Test Overall Results

1994-1995

Percent students at or above state goal

District	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Bridgeport	20.4	16.3	15.0
Fairfield	70.3	49.5	70.0
Monroe	64.0	46.3	60.3
Stratford	61.5	34.4	49.2
Trumbull	72.9	56.1	72.4
State Average	54.0	40.2	50.3

Source: Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition: a parent's guide to the Bridgeport school budget.

The disparity in test achievement evident in the comparison above cannot possibly be explained by "fade-out" when so few of Bridgeport's 17,000 elementary students have ever had the advantage of Head Start and none has enjoyed an Early Head Start experience.

The US Department of Health and Human Services carries out an important function in supporting research into the effects of Head Start on children, families and

communities. Professionals and academics concerned with child care and child development will look forward to new information coming from research on the effects of Early Head Start/Head Start combination for children who are fortunate enough to go through both programs. I would also advocate that greater attention be paid to Head Start's impact on the community. For example, at ABCD a full one-third of our Head Start staff are former or current Head Start parents. The meaningful involvement of Head Start parents in their child's education and setting policy for the program leads many to set and achieve personal goals for themselves which might have been impossible without involvement in the Head Start program. Attached to my written testimony is a brief personal story by ABCD's Assistant Director for Social Services and Parent Involvement, herself a former Head Start parent. Ms. Powell, a well-known and highly respected leader in Bridgeport has been influential in the city-wide movement for parental empowerment. Her efforts and those of women like her have had significant effects on all the major institutions and sectors of the city. Indeed, rather than any "fade-out" of the effects of Head Start on them, these parents have grown more knowledgeable, confident and effective in positively influencing the broader community and inspiring other low-income parents and families to reach higher. I hope you will read her account contained in Attachment 3. I believe the positive effects of parental involvement that many of us have witnessed will, no doubt, hold true for even younger mothers and fathers of Early Head Start infants and toddlers.

I would like to close by pointing to scientific findings on the need to stimulate babies brains. Over the last several years a handful of foundations and charities have begun drawing on research that has found that a child's experiences in the first three years have a deep and lasting effect on how the brain develops and functions (The Chronicle of Philanthropy, 1998). Until recently, it was not widely believed that the brains of human infants could be so active and so complex. Nor did we realize how flexible the brain is. Only 15 years ago, neuroscientists assumed that by the time babies are born, the structure of their brains is genetically determined. They did not recognize that the experiences that fill a baby's first days, months and years have such a decisive impact on the architecture of her brain, or on the nature and extent of her adult capacities. Nor did they appreciate the extent to which young children actively participate in their own brain development by signaling their needs to caregivers and by responding selectively to different kinds of stimulation.

Today, thanks in part to decades of research on brain chemistry and sophisticated new technologies, neuroscience is providing evidence for assertions that would have

been greeted with skepticism - if not outright disbelief - ten or twenty years ago (Shore, 1997 - see summary in Attachment 4).

Policy makers and practitioners in many field will need to deal with the implications of this research in making decisions about resource allocation for early childhood, elementary, secondary and higher education. Instead of talking about children in terms of warehousing, we will need to begin talking about hard wiring. President Clinton's budget proposal for 1999, seeks \$21.4 billion in subsidies and tax breaks for child-care programs. The Head Start Bureau is in a key position to assure that low-income children will receive the intensive care they need to develop emotionally and socially by bringing the fruits of this research into homes, Early Head Start and Head Start centers and classrooms through continually refined performance standards. Most importantly, by involving the whole family, Head Start will guide parents in fulfilling their central role in helping their children reach their full potential for the 21st century.

Thank You.

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School funds win approval

By LINDA CONNER LAMBECK
Staff writer

HARTFORD — With about \$50 million in child-care funds to stem the tide, the General Assembly was preparing Tuesday to give itself five years to respond fully to a court order to improve and desegregate urban public schools.

The House voted 148 to 0 to approve the new funding that over the next two years will also provide more child-care places for children in the state's major urban areas, and offer relief to poor families in other parts of the state.

The bill is headed to the Senate, where passage is expected.

"This is one of the most sound investments this state could make," said Rep. Cameron Staples, D-New Haven, co-chair of the legislature's Education Committee.

"To, me this is what it's all about," said Rep. Lawrence Cafero, R-Norwalk. "From day one, early childhood has been on everyone's list."

The list is the compilation of ideas lawmakers have been debating all session to answer the decision in the landmark 1996 Sheff v. O'Neill desegregation case.

The state Supreme Court ruled that the segregated and poor conditions in Hartford public schools deny students education they are guaranteed under the state constitution.

Hartford schools have the highest dropout rate and the lowest test scores. About 95 percent of Hartford students are minorities. In surrounding suburban school districts, most students are white.

While other Sheff measures were still waiting to be debated late Tuesday, the child-care bill received almost universal praise from lawmakers as "the great equalizer" for sending children to school prepared to learn.

In suburban communities, 90 percent of children go to school with preschool experience while in urban districts, at least one third do not. Numerous studies show

that students with preschool experience do better in school regardless of race or family income.

Under the adopted plan, a combination of new and existing money would be used to offer preschool subsidies to poor families.

Officials aren't sure how many needy 3 and 4 year olds will benefit from the legislation. But supporters said it is a start and Staples said the legislation does more than spend money.

The plan will force the state's departments of Education and Social Services to work together to coordinate, improve and expand services. Such a cooperative venture is already under way among local education and social service agencies in Bridgeport.

In addition, the plan will encourage child-care centers to become full-time, year-round facilities and provide better training for child-care workers. Loans would be provided to help more centers open and public schools would get construction bonuses if they add space for pre-school children.

The state budget approved by the House and Senate Tuesday includes \$40 million next year (on top of \$30 million in child-care funds) toward programs to improve and integrate urban schools. The \$90 million is \$27 million more than Rowland had proposed spending.

Late Tuesday, Rowland threatened to veto the budget.

Another new section in the Sheff proposal would create a five-year-plan to level the playing field among schools in terms of staffing, resources, curriculum and community involvement. A progress report would be made each year to the legislature through 2001.

Rep. Ernest Newton, D-Bridgeport, said the five-year plan is something minority lawmakers wanted because it will ensure the issue is kept on the agenda.

"It says they can't stall, they have to do something," he said.

Staples said the assessment will prove significant if it can tell lawmakers how best to equalize schools longterm.

But Cafero, who spent five

Lawmakers praise child-care package

Far less unanimity is expected when legislators take up debate on other parts of the Sheff package.

Under consideration is a proposal to allow students in Bridgeport and New Haven starting in 1998 to enter a lottery to attend schools outside their home district. Such a program already exists in Hartford. Conversely, special "lighthouse" schools would be developed in urban areas to attract suburban students.

Rep. Edna Garcia, D-Bridgeport, said what's new in the Sheff plan is the level of funding.

months studying the issue as a member of the Governor's Educational Improvement Panel, says the study amounts to passing the buck. "It's time to do something, now, not pass it off again," he said.

Staples said he's not sure if the efforts, if approved, are enough to satisfy either the plaintiffs or court.

Earlier in the session, the General Assembly passed and the governor signed into law a bill to allow the state to assume control of Hartford's public schools.

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EDITORIALS

Response to Sheff a fine initial step

It may not have resolved the budget issues needed to fund the proposals, but the 1997 General Assembly took a commendable and reasonable first step toward meeting the Sheff vs. O'Neill mandate.

Before its adjournment at midnight, state lawmakers completed passage of a \$90 million package of bills aimed at Sheff and other education-related initiatives.

Most important, lawmakers put their stamp on early childhood education and day-care programs as the best way of approaching the problem of segregated public schools in many of the state's urban areas.

Other facets of the package include establishing four regional "lighthouse" schools in Bridgeport, New Haven and Hartford and expanding funding for family resource centers in schools, reading and summer school programs and charter schools.

In addition, the measures set up and require a five-year plan to level the playing field between rich and poor school districts with submission of state Department of Education studies and progress reports to the Assembly each year.

The proposals would cost about \$90 million, about double what Gov. John G. Rowland originally recommended, but most of the bills had bipartisan backing in floor votes which indicates the package is acceptable to him.

The five-year plan was an initiative from the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus in the Legislature and is an excellent tack because it commits the state to a long-term solution to integrating Connecticut's urban schools.

It is the expansion of early childhood programs that is the key to the Sheff response, however. This has been a recurrent theme in the *Connecticut Post's* "Youth At Risk" news series: Children engaged in preschool educational experiences continue to do better in schooling regardless of race or family income.

Groups such as the Bridgeport Children's Advocacy Coalition have urged early childhood education programs for years but until now lawmakers have only appropriated modest funding for such programs.

The Sheff package approved in the Assembly's closing hours greatly expands these efforts.

The package will be held hostage to an ultimate budget resolution for the next two years. However, because of the bipartisan support for the bills we doubt that the package will change.

Overall, the package is a sensible and reasonable response to Sheff. It does not burden state residents with new taxes and it provides a cautious step to the future. It is better to test many of these programs before making large-scale monetary commitments.

The package will not please everyone — some of the Sheff plaintiffs are grouching that it falls far short — but its programs will begin to meet the needs of more of the state's public school children.



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Women find themselves facing the mother of all dilemmas

Who cares for the kids?

Providence, it always has been a place of opportunity and easy access to jobs and decent pay. And now it's the nation's problem-solving center. In an effort to solve the nation's most vexing problem, the Connecticut Post contributes to the solution of the state's most vexing problem, with the aid of helping the community find solutions.



Youth

By MARIAN GAIL BROWN Staff writer

Middleton began to grow when the subject of day care was first discussed. Every day she looks for 2-year-old daughter's need for day care with the members of Connecticut's welfare reform. She has a job. Finding work was the easy part for the 21-year-old single mother and former beauty sal-

on. She's bright, articulate and organized and now works three jobs to pay for \$400-a-month rent and food and clothes for the two boys. She was born in Danbury, a 26-year-old Danbury mother of two, got an education in the child-care field. She's been trying to get two babies into the same licensed day-care facility. She FOR BUSY MOMS on A19

YOUTH AT RISK—FROM PAGE A1

For busy moms, day-care dilemma not child's play

Continued from A1

The busy-looking day-care center in Washington, D.C., is a stark contrast to the one in the suburbs. The center in the city is a stark contrast to the one in the suburbs. The center in the city is a stark contrast to the one in the suburbs.

By the numbers
In Connecticut, almost 40 percent of children, 178,354 children, have day-care arrangements. In Maryland, 117,237 children and 100,000 parents are enrolled in day-care programs. In Washington, D.C., 100,000 children are enrolled in day-care programs.



Children in day-care centers are often young children of parents who work full-time jobs. (AP Photo)

Thinking care
The day-care industry is a complex one. It involves a lot of different people and organizations. The day-care industry is a complex one. It involves a lot of different people and organizations.

Children in day-care centers are often young children of parents who work full-time jobs. (AP Photo)

Washington Day Care is a full-time day-care center in Washington, D.C. It provides care for young children of parents who work full-time jobs.

Day-care dilemma

There are 21,227 children in Connecticut day-care centers. In Maryland, there are 117,237 children in day-care centers. In Washington, D.C., there are 100,000 children in day-care centers.

Washington Day Care is a full-time day-care center in Washington, D.C. It provides care for young children of parents who work full-time jobs. The center is a stark contrast to the one in the suburbs.

Building a safety net

Complaints that to have a job and keep it means parents will need to work longer hours are being heard in many parts of the country. This is a stark contrast to the one in the suburbs.

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A way out of poverty

Why is day care such a hot issue these days? The answer is simple. Day care is a way out of poverty for many families.

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Attachment 2

The Creative Curriculum for Infants & Toddlers



The Creative Curriculum for Infants & Toddlers

Introduction—A Typical Day Caring for Infants and Toddlers

Planning ahead frees you to be flexible and responsive to the individual needs of children and families. (Chapter 5)

Knowing infants and toddlers allows you to meet individual needs. (Chapter 2)

Review your plans for the day.

As you walk into your center or make a cup of coffee before the first family arrives on your doorstep, run through the day in your mind.

- Collect all the ingredients for playdough.
- Plan how you will give your special attention to a child who has seemed especially quiet and withdrawn for the past two days. Make a point of talking with the child's grandmother about what she has noticed at home.

Creating a safe environment gives children a sense of security that frees them to explore the people and things in their world. (Chapter 7)

Creating a welcoming environment with interesting things to see and do encourages children to explore and learn. (Chapter 6)

Check over the environment.

In the quiet of the morning, take a good look at the space.

- Note any toys that need to be repaired or replaced. Remove the broken fire truck with the sharp edge from the shelf.
- Replace a missing outlet cover immediately.
- Hang a mobile over the changing table to give babies something interesting to see that they can touch or kick and make move.
- Put a new picture book out on the shelf to catch toddlers' interest. Remind yourself to sit down, snuggle, and read with children.

Greet children and their families

As children and families begin arriving, welcome each one personally.

- Ask parents questions about what has happened since you were together. "When did she last eat?" "How did she sleep last night?" "What did the physical therapist say?"
- Share some of your plans for the day. "This afternoon we are going to take a walk to the park."
- Smile hello and explain you will be with an arriving family as soon as you finish changing a diaper.
- Encourage a father to have a cup of juice or to read a book with his daughter as she settles in for the day.

Exchanging information with parents forms a bridge for the child between home and child care. (Chapter 3)

Help children and families say goodbye to one another.

Be there to help children and family members separate.

- Encourage parents to say goodbye no matter how tempting it is to sneak out while their child is occupied.
- Suggest a goodbye ritual such as walking with you to the door or waving goodbye from the window.
- Invite a child's grandmother to call later in the day to see how Julio is doing.
- Reassure a toddler that mommy will come back just like she always does. Help her join in an activity you know she will like.
- Be aware that helping with so many goodbyes can stir up deep feelings from your own childhood separation experiences.

Helping parents say goodbye instead of sneaking out promotes trust, thus strengthening the relationship between parents and their children. (Chapter 11)

You build relationships with children by listening and responding to their feelings. (Chapter 1)

Prepare and serve snacks and meals.

Serving nutritious foods will help assure children's good health today—and tomorrow. Food habits begin at birth. (Chapter 8)

Communicating with parents about food will help you work together to build bridges between children's worlds of home and child care. (Chapter 3)

Mealtimes are wonderful learning opportunities for babies and toddlers. (Chapter 13)

Whether you do the cooking yourself or work in a program that has a cook, you can appreciate learning opportunities and nurturing feelings that are associated with food.

- Serve a variety of healthy foods.
- Communicate with parents. Ask about any cultural or dietary considerations. Learn about any allergies children may have, their special nutritional requirements, and food preferences. Post menus so parents know what their children are eating each day.
- Hold an infant on your lap during snack so he can enjoy all the activity. Invite toddlers to help put out plates and napkins, spread apple butter on their crackers, and pour their own juice from small plastic pitchers.
- Sit with children while they eat. Talk about what they are eating and doing. Make mealtime enjoyable and a learning experience.
- Feed babies when they are hungry, not according to a preplanned schedule.

Change diapers and help toddlers learn to use the toilet.

When you change a diaper or help a child use the toilet, try looking through a child's eyes and ask yourself, "What is he or she experiencing?"

- Help children feel good about themselves and their bodies through your language and attitude. "Let's change that diaper so you will be more comfortable." "Accidents happen. Let's find you a pair of dry pants."
- Observe safety practices such as never leaving a child on the changing table unattended and wiping up spills to avoid falls on the hard bathroom floor.
- Wash your hands—and children's—and disinfect the changing table after each diaper change.
- Play "where is your tummy?" as you change a child's diaper.
- Look for signs that indicate a toddler is getting ready to be a toilet-user—e.g., staying dry for long periods of time and saying when she has to urinate or have a bowel movement.

Taking health precautions guards against the spread of disease. (Chapter 8)

Diapering and toileting provide excellent opportunities for one-on-one time with children. (Chapter 12)

Observing helps you recognize when a child is ready to begin working on a new skill, such as using the toilet. (Chapter 5)

Encourage children to take naps.

Naptime can be a nice break from group life for children—and for you.

- Allow children to nap when they feel the need, while you play with those who are awake.
- Play quiet music or dim the lights to tell mobile babies and toddlers that naptime is approaching.
- Individualize rituals to encourage sleep based on children's temperament and preferences. Sit with one child in a rocking chair; place another in his crib and talk quietly to him for a few minutes.
- Observe health and safety precautions. Be sure each child has his or her own space for sleeping and that pillows, heavy blankets, and large stuffed animals are not placed in cribs.

Naptime helps children get the rest they need. (Chapter 14)

Individualizing routines makes children feel valued and respected. (Chapter 5)

A safe, healthy environment allows children to thrive. (Chapters 7 and 8)

Encourage children to explore and play.

Throughout the day, invite children to explore and play.

- Provide materials that encourage infants and toddlers to use all their senses—e.g., rattles, unbreakable mirrors, squeeze toys, texture balls, finger foods to taste and smell, fill and dump toys, simple rhythm instruments, playdough, books, and simple puzzles.
- Give the mobile a gentle push as you change an infant's diaper.
- Surprise children by adding a ribbon to the mobile hanging over the changing table or turning a table into a tent by covering it with a blanket.
- Give a child who uses crutches, the extra time she needs to move to and explore different areas of the room.
- Share your enthusiasm and pleasure in children's discoveries. "You found our new puzzle!"

When children have many opportunities to explore their world they feel competent as learners. (Chapters 10 and 11)

Making changes to the environment keeps it stimulating and challenging. (Chapter 6)

Offer planned activities.

During the day, offer children the opportunity to engage in activities that you plan and introduce.

Individualizing activities ensures that children get the most out of them. (Chapter 5)

Art and music and movement activities can be enjoyable and promote learning. (Chapter 17 and 22)

Sharing activities with families enables them to extend children's learning at home. (Chapter 3)

- Think through activities appropriate to the developmental stages of the children you are caring for. Are the toddlers ready for five-piece puzzles? Is it a good day for fingerpainting?
- Repeat an activity from the day before that children especially liked.
- Choose the right time to introduce an activity. If the morning has been especially loud and hectic, bring out the playdough, and introduce homemade musical instruments.
- Be aware that what children take from an experience may be different from what you had planned. Don't be disappointed if a walk to the corner turns into watching an earthworm right outside your door.
- Share ideas for activities and tips for doing them with parents so they can try planned activities at home. "This is the playdough recipe we made today. The children loved it."

Clean up.

Periodically, put away toys and materials that are not being used.

Clearing away the clutter in the environment helps children see what is there so they can make choices. It also makes your job easier. (Chapter 6)

- Invite children to join you as you put things away.
- Be sure shelves and containers have picture labels so mobile babies and toddlers can help put their toys away.

Take children outdoors.

Take children—even young babies—outdoors every day when weather allows.

- Set aside a shaded grassy area for small babies and quiet activities, an area with a small climber and swings, and an area for riding toys and for sand and water play in your play yard.
- Offer infants the opportunity to sleep, watch what other children are doing and enjoy the fresh air in a carriage, on a blanket, or in a snuggly
- Create safe places for mobile infants to crawl, cruise, climb, run, ride wheel toys, kick and throw balls, garden, and play with sand and water.
- Secure the straps on a stroller and insist that toddlers hold your hand when crossing the street during a neighborhood walk.

Your outdoor environment invites children to use their rapidly developing motor skills and their senses. (Chapter 6)

Encouraging children's explorations, while at the same time ensuring children's safety outdoors, requires your ongoing attention. (Chapter 7)

Guide children's behavior.

By helping children learn how to control their behavior, you encourage inner control and the beginning of self-discipline.

- Guide children's behavior in ways that show respect and help them feel good about themselves. "I am going to help you stop kicking. We'll find something else for you to do."
- Have realistic expectations of children's behavior. An infant is not misbehaving when he cries—he is communicating with you. Toddlers are not being selfish when they fight over the ball—they are not yet ready to share.
- Pay close attention to a child who has a tendency to hit and bite when he gets frustrated. Help him to express his feelings in acceptable ways.
- Use the environment to promote positive behavior: provide duplicates of popular toys; store pencils and other sharp objects up high; use pillows to create a safe space for infants that keeps them out of toddler traffic.

Positive relationships with children allow you to guide their behavior and help them take their first steps toward self-discipline. (Chapter 9)

You can use the environment to help address and prevent potential problems. (Chapter 6)

Observing helps you get to know and respond to each child as a unique individual. Being aware of what you bring to observing will help assure your observations are as objective as possible. (Chapter 5)

Including parents' observations provides you with richer information about each child. (Chapter 3)

Daily observations allow you to evaluate the program and make needed changes. (Chapter 10)

Observe children.

As you watch children throughout the day, ask yourself, "What is each child experiencing?"

- Use a system for recording your observations, such as jotting notes in a notebook or on index cards.
- Observe children every day.
- Conduct both formal and informal observations.
- Talk with your director about a new child who doesn't turn to look at you when you call her name or doesn't respond to loud noises.
- Put away the push toys that children have been ignoring and take out some new toys to attract children's interest.
- Talk regularly with parents about what a child is like at home to help you get a picture of the whole child. "What does he play with at home?"
- Be aware of how your temperament might interfere with objective observations.

Respond to children as individuals.

As you plan activities and make changes in the environment, your challenge is to provide enough variety to meet the needs and interests of each child.

- Give children choices of what to do by offering a variety of developmentally appropriate activities each day.
- Share a book about dogs with a child who was fearful of dogs while on a walk.
- Be sure that each child has a "special" relationship with you—or with another adult in your setting.
- Use your observations and what you have learned from talking with parents to help you better understand each child's needs and interests.
- Plan ways to respond to a child who was born prematurely and with FAS (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome).

Observations give you an objective portrait of a child's development, interests, and needs. They are the basis for individualizing your program. (Chapter 5)

*The Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers***Help children and families reunite and head for home at the end of the day.**

As the end of the day approaches, parents and children may need you to help them say hello to one another and goodbye to you.

- Invite parents to come a few minutes early and spend some time playing with their child before they have to leave.
- Help a parent understand their son's confusing end-of-the-day behavior. When he has a tantrum about putting on his coat, explain he may have saved his deepest feelings for them—the people he loves and trusts most of all.
- Share news of the day with each child's family. "She finished her whole bottle at 3:30." "He helped feed the fish today." "She made it all the way to the top of the climber outside."
- Be available to say goodbye to children and families individually as they leave.

Helping parents look at reuniting through their children's eyes can help build parent-child relationships. Departures are also an important time for building a bond with parents. (Chapter 11)

Reflect on your day.

Take a moment to reflect on your day, what you learned, and to note any changes for the future.

- Think about an activity that went well and who participated.
- Make notes about why the finger painting activity got out of control.
- Review your notes on individual children and think about new experiences you can plan for them.

Evaluation is a critical part of achieving a quality program. (Chapter 10)

Take care of yourself.

Only by taking care of yourself will you have the resources and energy to care for the children and families in your program.

- Learn to lift children by bending your knees to protect your back.
- Hang up artwork or a poster you like where you can see it and enjoy it.
- Eat a nutritious breakfast each day.
- Invite toddlers to join you in a few exercises each afternoon.

You are your most important resource. Taking good care of yourself enables you to do your job. (Chapter 1)

- Talk with a friend during a break or in the evening when something is bothering you.

Meet and talk regularly with colleagues in child care and your community.

Being aware of and using community resources helps to strengthen families and enhances the quality of your program. (Chapter 4)

Remind yourself that caring for babies, toddlers, and families is rewarding and demanding work that is easier and better done with the support of colleagues.

Being a professional means respecting the privacy of children and families, and treating them honestly and ethically. (Chapter 1)

- Think about all the people who could help you with the daily questions and concerns about children and their families. This list might include your director, co-workers, members of your provider association or someone from your Child and Adult Care Food Program, and people from various social service agencies in your community.
- Call on these resources as issues arise. Discuss your concerns about typically developing children and those with special needs, always maintaining confidentiality of individual children and families.
- Figure out ways to talk with colleagues regularly, such as at staff meetings, family child care association meetings, or even monthly pot-luck dinners.
- Be aware that there are times when the best way you can support a family is by referring them to someone with the specific knowledge and skills they may need.

In your program, the order in which activities occur will vary based on the ages of the children you care for and their individual needs on a particular day. Indeed there will be many times when you will be juggling doing two or more of these activities at the same time. There is, however, one important constant: being aware of *why* you do *what* you do will help ensure that the countless decisions you make each day add up to a high quality program. Throughout the book, we will explore the ideas, strategies, and practices introduced here. By putting the *Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers* into action, you can bring quality to the life of each day in your program.

Attachment 3

A Personal Account of Head Start's Impact
Marge Powell

A PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF HEAD START'S IMPACT**Prepared by Marge Powell****ABCD****Bridgeport, Connecticut****February 1998**

I have prepared this personal account for a public hearing held by the Subcommittee on Human Resources in Norwalk, Connecticut on February 19, 1998 to review Early Head Start: Goals and Challenges.

My experience in Head Start began over 23 years ago. A Head Start program began in the South Bronx in New York City when my oldest child was four years old. I knew the person in charge and she enrolled my son in the program. She told me "this is an 'experimental program' for under-privileged children...and it might not last." She explained that there were two major components to this program: one being the child's socialization skills and education to prepare them for kindergarten, and the other to involve parents in the process.

I remember being very excited because as a single parent with little or no knowledge about how to prepare my child for school, I felt this was the best way for me to learn what I needed to do. I attended Head Start parent meetings and was asked to contribute to the discussion. This both pleased and surprised me since I was a very quiet person and had no self-esteem.

I was given the opportunity to help in the classroom. This was a positive experience because I finally realized what I wanted to do with myself. I wanted to be a teacher and work with young children. Yet, I felt that this was a dream that I had...and that was that.

I went for my six-month redetermination for welfare and was told that I had to go to work in order to keep my benefits. This marked a turning point in my life because, at last, someone asked me what I wanted to do and I was able to tell her. She told me that if that was what I wanted to do then she would help me to make my dream come true. I still doubted that I had it in me to go to college and get the education I needed to realize my dream. But, she felt differently.

Whenever I felt defeated, I would return to the Head Start program where I received encouragement to keep my head up and keep on doing my best. I made the Dean's List that semester. I received a four-year degree in Education and I owe that to the people in Head Start who gave me constant encouragement and to a Social Work Supervisor who felt I could do much better than welfare. I worked in daycare for two

years and, even though their philosophy was different than Head Start, I did it the Head Start way by involving parents in their child's preschool experience.

Later, I came to Bridgeport and after a year I found a job in a Head Start program as the Education Coordinator. I had never been involved in developing plans and supervising staff, but again, someone in Head Start saw in me what I didn't see in myself --the ability to do the job. I was the Education Coordinator for six years and when the Director left, I became Director / Parent Involvement Coordinator. This position gave me the opportunity to give back to Head Start what it had given me - my story to parents who did not feel they could do the things they needed to do to reach their professional and personal goals. I became the example that you can do or become all you want to be if you believe in yourself and have support from someone who cares and Head Start people care.

One of the best advantages of Head Start is that we are constantly learning new things. Procedures...skills to do the job more effectively...helping others in advocacy...working with other community organizations to make a difference in the lives of families and community...and involving parents all the way. Head Start was the catalyst that started me on the path to a future in the human-service field and it is Head Start that keeps me here.

Today, now a grandmother and foster mother, I am the Senior Coordinator for Family and Community Services for our Childcare Department at ABCD. I assess training needs of parents and provide parents with the training utilizing community resources. I assist in fostering collaborative relationships with local, state, regional and national organizations. I was co-chair of the 1997 Early Childhood Task Force for the city and current co-chair of a parent action group funded through the Annie E. Casey Foundation. I have served as president or in other board positions with local educational and social service agencies and have won numerous awards because of my community service. Whenever I give thanks, I always give thanks to Head Start first. Head Start has made a risk-taker out of me and I am making risk-takers out of parents. I even threw my hat in the political ring to run as a candidate for the Bridgeport Board of Education. While I didn't get the votes I needed, I tried.

I owe all that I am now and all of what I can yet become in the future to Head Start. Head Start has instilled in me the one thing that I can use whenever I am in doubt, and that is the knowledge that.... "I CAN - BECAUSE I AM ME."

signed Marge Powell

date February 12, 1998

Attachment 4
Rethinking the Brain

Rethinking the Brain

New Insights into Early Development

Families and Work Institute

New insights into brain development suggest that as we care for our youngest children, as we institute policies or practices that affect their day-to-day experience, the stakes are very high. But we can take comfort in the knowledge that there are many ways that we as parents, as caregivers, as citizens, and as policymakers can raise healthy, happy smart children. We can take heart in the knowledge that there are many things that we as a nation can do, starting now, to brighten young children's future and ours.

Research shows that:

- Human development hinges on the interplay between nature and nurture.
- How humans develop and learn depends critically and continually on the interplay between nature (an individual's genetic endowment) and nurture (the nutrition, surroundings, care, stimulation, and teaching that are provided or withheld).
- The impact of environmental factors on the young child's brain development is dramatic and specific, not merely influencing the general direction of development, but actually affecting how the intricate circuitry of the human brain is "wired".

Early care has decisive and long-lasting effects on how people develop and learn, how they cope with stress, and how they regulate their own emotions.

- Babies thrive when they receive warm, responsive early care.
- Warm and responsive care plays a vital role in healthy development.
- Individuals' capacities to control their own emotional states appear to hinge on biological systems shaped by their early experiences and attachments
- A strong, secure attachment to a nurturing adult can have a protective biological function, helping a growing child withstand the ordinary stresses of daily lives.

The human brain has a remarkable capacity to change, but timing is crucial.

- The brain itself can be altered - or helped to compensate for problems - with appropriately timed, intensive intervention. In the first decade of life, the brain's ability to change and compensate is especially remarkable.
- There are optimal periods of opportunity - "prime times" during which the brain is particularly efficient at specific types of learning.

The brain's plasticity also means that there are times when negative experiences or the absence of appropriate stimulation are more likely to have serious and lasting effects.

- Early exposure to nicotine, alcohol, and drugs may have even more harmful and long lasting effects on young children than was previously suspected.
- Many of these risk factors are associated with or exacerbated by poverty. For children growing up in poverty, economic deprivation affects their nutrition, access to medical care, and safety and predictability of their physical environment, the level of family stress, and the quality and continuity of their day-to-day care.

Evidence gathered by neuroscientists and child development experts over the last decade point to the wisdom and efficacy of prevention and early intervention.

- Well designed programs created to promote healthy cognitive, emotional, and social development can improve the prospects - and the quality of life - of many children. The efficacy of early intervention has been demonstrated and replicated in diverse communities across the nation.

Where Do We Go From Here:

- First, do no harm.
- The principle that guides medical practice should also apply to policies and practices that affect children.
- Allow parents to fulfill their all-important role in providing and arranging for sensitive, predictable care for their children. Parents need more information about how the kind of care they provide affects their children's capacities.
- Implement policies that support parents in forming strong, secure attachments with their infants in the early months, and make a concentrated effort to improve the quality of early care and education.

Prevention is best, but when a child needs help, intervene quickly and intensively.

- Warm, responsive care cushions children from the occasional bumps and bruises that are inevitable in everyday life.
- If children are given timely, intensive help, many can overcome a wide range of developmental problems. To have greatest impact, interventions must be timely and must be followed up with appropriate, sustained services and support.

Promote the healthy development and learning of every child of every age, every demographic description, and every risk category.

If we miss opportunities to promote healthy development and learning, later remediation may be more difficult and expensive, and may be less effective.

Implications for Policy and Practice:

Improve health and protection by providing health care coverage for new and expectant parents.

Promote responsible parenthood by expanding proven approaches.

- All parents can benefit from solid information and support as they raise their children; some need more intensive assistance.
- Certain parent education/family support programs promote the healthy development of children, improve the well being of parents and are cost effective.

Safeguard children in early care and education from harm and promote their learning and development.

- The nations youngest children are most likely to be in unsafe, substandard child care.
- More than one third are in situations that can be detrimental to their development, while most of the rest are in settings where minimal learning is taking place.

Enable communities to have the flexibility and the resources they need to mobilize on behalf of young children and their families.

Research taken from: *Rethinking the Brain in - New Insights into Early Development, - Conference Report - Brain in Development in Young Children: New Frontiers for Research, Policy and Practice*, Organized by the Families and Work Institute, June 1996

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