

*Hartford***Hartford Parents Make Case for Affordable Child Care****Politics***Submitted by CT Early Childhood Alliance on 2010-04-20.*

Child care can be one of the most expensive items in a parent's budget, but it is also one of the most important. Not only does child care allow parents to go to work, but a high-quality early learning environment can contribute enormously to the healthy development - language, behavioral, academic and social development - of young children.

Connecticut's Care4Kids program, a child care subsidy for working parents, helps parents with the cost of child care, but the state budget crisis has many parents and child care programs worried about possible cuts.

On April 14, Hartford parents and child care providers spoke with the most influential member of Connecticut's House of Representatives, Speaker of the House Chris Donovan, and members of the legislature about the topic of child care. Donovan, Rep. Diana Urban, Rep. Cathy Abercrombie and Rep. Beth Bye traveled to the Women's League Child Development Center on Main Street in Hartford to hear their concerns.



Samantha Dynowski, CT Early Childhood Alliance

House Speaker Chris Donovan and Rep. Cathy Abercrombie listen as Della Fouthergill talks about the importance of the Care4Kids program.

Parent Della Fouthergill, who relies on Care4Kids to help subsidize the cost of child care, and coincidentally, also works for the Care4Kids program, urged Donovan and the other legislators in attendance to keep the program funded.

"When the program closed for six months last year due to lack of funds, I was one of the people answering the phones," Fouthergill said. "Parents were forced to leave their jobs because they could not afford child care. It was heartbreaking."

"What happens when there is fickle, unsteady funding for early childhood education?" asked Iris Rich, director of the center. "Programs close. Parents cannot work. Children are left with unqualified caregivers. Teachers become unemployed."

Donovan once worked in child care. The experience of working closely with young children, he said, showed him first-hand how important the early childhood years are to building a strong foundation for a child's future success. His concern for children led him to create the Task Force on Children in the Recession, co-chaired by Rep. Urban, and to make time in his schedule to hear from parents.

Visit [www.CTCare4Kids.com](http://www.CTCare4Kids.com) for more information.