



# Press Release

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## Children Feel Pain of Governor's Budget Cuts

With each passing day of the state budget impasse, early care and education programs that serve children throughout Connecticut are being forced to remove children from their rolls or risk financial collapse.

The Governor's budget allotments for July and August have zeroed out some early childhood programs and underfunded others, forcing the closure of many early childhood classrooms and services across the state. Children enrolled in Head Start, School Readiness and Family Resource Center programs have been hit hardest.

In July, Family Resource Centers began closing programs when their funding was zeroed out for the month. Several Head Start classes have closed down, leaving at least 200 children without services, as a result of the zero funding in the latest allotments. And last week, School Readiness programs across the state were underpaid for services already rendered.

"I am deeply concerned about the impact this funding shortage will have on Connecticut's early care and education programs," says Sherry Linton, early care and education policy analyst at the Connecticut Association of Human Services. "Programs like School Readiness, Head Start and Family Resource Centers are the backbone of a system intended to send children to school ready to learn, strengthen families and build a future skilled workforce."

Similarly, parents depend on these programs for their economic stability. When a child care center closes or a parent is unable to send their young child to a center due to lack of funding, a crucial economic activity is threatened.

The Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance, whose members teach and care for over 20,000 Connecticut children, expressed worry about the funding instability created in the absence of a budget.

"Programs don't know if they will be in business next month, and parents don't know if they'll have a place to send their children while they work. Budget stalemate or not, children shouldn't be left in limbo," says Karen Rainville, executive director of CT Association for the Education of Young Children.

Advocates for early childhood programs are holding out hope that an agreement will be reached on a state budget and the children will back in the classroom.

"A budget that continues funding for these important early childhood programs would be a big relief," said Samantha Dynowski, director of advocacy and outreach at the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance.

In an open letter to the Governor and Legislature, the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance asked that early childhood programs be kept whole, whether in a negotiated budget or, in lieu of a budget, in the September monthly allotments and that programs be compensated for services rendered and costs incurred but not reimbursed in July and August.