

**Testimony before the Appropriations and Human Services Committees  
Andrea Barton Reeves Commissioner, Department of Social Services  
Beth Bye, Commissioner, Office of Early Childhood**

**Section 1915(b)(4) Selective Provider Contracting Waiver Renewal for  
Early Intervention Services (Birth to Three)**

**June 20, 2025**

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Good morning co-chairs, ranking members, and members of the Appropriations and Human Services Committees. I am Andrea Barton Reeves, Commissioner of the Department of Social Services (DSS). In partnership, the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) together request that your Committees approve our request pursuant to section 17b-8 of the Connecticut General Statutes to submit the proposed Section 1915(b)(4) Selective Provider Contracting Waiver Renewal for Early Intervention Services (also known as Birth to Three in Connecticut) to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

OEC is the lead agency that administers the Birth to Three system in Connecticut pursuant to Part C of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). DSS is Connecticut's single state Medicaid agency and administers the state's Medicaid program, including covering Birth to Three services for children who are Medicaid members. This Medicaid waiver renewal will allow OEC to continue managing the number of Early Intervention Service (EIS) programs in each community.

I am pleased to be here today with Beth Bye, Commissioner of the Office of Early Childhood, to assist with answering any questions you may have. I will now turn it over to Commissioner Bye to provide details on the waiver renewal.

Families in Connecticut have benefitted from services provided by comprehensive, coordinated Birth to Three programs in their communities for more than 25 years. This waiver renewal preserves that approach. OEC carefully monitors access to services to ensure there are enough Birth to Three providers in each community who provide high-quality and timely services and can respond quickly when needs are identified.

Most children transition quickly from Birth to Three to their public school's early childhood special education program at age 3. The working relationship between the staff at the school districts and the EIS practitioners is enhanced when the EIS programs that schools work with are consistent and the number of EIS programs is managed appropriately. Additionally, if the family opts into the program, the system supports children who have summer birthdays (starting in May through the start of the school year), working closely with public schools in providing EIS over age 3 from the child's birthday to the start of the school year. These positive working relationships help families experience a smoother transition at a challenging time in their lives.

This waiver is also necessary to ensure that each Birth to Three provider has a sufficient caseload to maintain and remain current and compliant with the many requirements for properly providing EIS while increasing efficiency, expertise, and high-quality services.

Managing the number of EIS programs in each community enables OEC to properly and efficiently monitor the quality of services provided in accordance with federal requirements at a lower administrative cost as compared to if no waiver were in effect. Specifically, as required by Section 616(a)(2) of IDEA, each state's Early Intervention Services program (including Connecticut's Birth to Three system) must have procedures for the lead agency (OEC) to supervise and monitor providers' implementation of IDEA requirements.

In particular, the lead agency's supervision must include:

- targeted technical assistance and professional development
- effective dispute resolution
- integrated monitoring activities, including correction, incentives, and sanctions
- public reporting of annual compliance and results data by program
- annual local program IDEA determinations, and
- fiscal management

The only purpose of this waiver renewal is to continue enabling OEC to manage the number of Birth to Three providers in each community. The waiver must be renewed every two years. This waiver renewal does not change Medicaid coverage or payment for Birth to Three services, which are detailed in the federally approved Medicaid State Plan. DSS and OEC published notice for a 30-day comment period on this waiver renewal and did not receive any comments. In addition, DSS distributed the materials to representatives of the two federally recognized tribes in Connecticut. This waiver does not have a unique or particular impact on tribal members.

We respectfully request that the Appropriations and Human Services Committees approve the request to enable DSS and OEC to submit this Selective Provider Contracting Waiver Renewal to CMS.

Both DSS and OEC are happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for your consideration.