

Early Connections: Connecticut Families Deserve Quality Birth-to-Three Services

“ Early Connections enables families to become strong advocates for their children. To eliminate this program would deny many families the dream of seeing their children realize their potential, the very basic desire of any parent. ”

Barbara Carlson

Mother of Two Early Connections Graduates



The Early Connections Birth to Three program was slated for closure earlier this summer under the governor's alternative budget. Since then, state employees have ratified an agreement to save \$1.6 billion for taxpayers. But the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) refuses to re-open admissions to families in need.

The program's professional staff includes teachers and therapists with Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) credentials and special training in Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), sensory integration, and infant mental health. **They want nothing more than to help meet the developmental and health-related needs of infants and toddlers who have delays or disabilities.**

If you are an Early Connections provider or know a family who has benefitted from Birth to Three services, call Governor Dannel P. Malloy. Tell him that **shutting-down this program is unacceptable.**

► Reach Elected Officials

- ▶▶ Call the governor's office using the telephone numbers on the reverse side of this leaflet.
- ▶▶ Send a "tweet" or email to the governor using the addresses on the reverse side.
- ▶▶ Use the talking points and sample message on the reverse side.

► *Contact the Governor*

- ▶▶ Call (860) 566-4840 or toll-free, (800) 406-1527.
- ▶▶ Send a "Tweet" on Twitter to [@GovMalloyOffice](https://twitter.com/GovMalloyOffice).
- ▶▶ Send an email from the governor's webpage at www.governor.ct.gov/malloy/.

► *Key Points*

- ✓ Early Connections is Connecticut's original publicly operated Birth to Three program and has been nationally recognized for the quality of its intervention and school readiness services for more than 30 years.
- ✓ Early Connections is the primary source of intervention and care for children under three years old with delays and special needs, including children with Autism, in local communities across the state.
- ✓ In 2009, the DDS Commissioner testified to the legislature that outsourcing the state's publicly-operated Early Connections program helped drag the agency at least \$9 million deeper in deficit.

► *Sample Message*

My name is _____, and I am a _____ (indicate if your family receives or has received Birth to Three services or if you are an Early Connections provider). I am calling because **the Department of Developmental Services is shutting-down the Early Connections Birth to Three program**. I am concerned about how this will impact infants and toddlers who need specialized early education services.

The agency has stopped accepting new admissions for children with developmental delays. State employees just agreed to save the state 1.6 billion dollars in order to protect vital services exactly like Early Connections.

The bottom line is that **I am concerned about bad care and bad cost decisions that will add unfair burdens to vulnerable children, their families, and our local communities**.

Please act immediately to restore Early Connections services. Hundreds of infants and toddlers -- and their families -- are counting on you.

Thank you for your time.