



CT Early Childhood Alliance Names Bye, Fleischmann as 2016 Children's Champions Recipients

The Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance is recognizing 29 state legislators as 2016 "Children's Champions," including two local legislators, Sen. Beth Bye and Rep. Andrew Fleischmann.

Every year, the Alliance recognizes legislators for their leadership on issues that impact the well-being of Connecticut's young children in the areas of healthy development, early care and education, nutrition, and safety.

"We were pleased with the bi-partisan support that early childhood received during this legislative session," said Merrill Gay, Executive Director of the CT Early Childhood Alliance. "Some very important early childhood issues were raised, and some good legislation did pass."

Among the items passed this year: Repeal of the sales tax on diapers, which was included in the budget implementer and is set to take effect July 1, 2018; and House Bill 5466, which requires background checks and notice of convictions for any household member in a family child care home or group child care home. Important issues raised included paid family and medical leave, childhood obesity prevention, increased access to early childhood programs for homeless children, and recruitment and retention of the early childhood workforce.

"As a supporter and fan of the CT Childhood Early Alliance, I am honored to receive their 2016 Children's Champion Award," Rep. Fleischmann said. "Working in concert with the Alliance and great colleagues like Beth Bye, I've fought to secure state support to expand access to family resource centers and early childhood education programs – and to strengthen the quality of these programs as well. It's a pleasure to work with the Alliance to help Connecticut's young children and families flourish, and I look forward to our continued collaborations."

"I'm honored to be recognized by the CT Early Childhood Alliance for my work on behalf of all of Connecticut's kids," Sen. Bye said. "It's especially rewarding to be standing here in the new Family Resource Center at Charter Oak, surrounded by all these parents and children, and to know that we have a community that values and fights for education. West Hartford is a shining example of that phrase, 'Every kid, every time,' and I'm proud to be a part of that community."

Founded in 2002, the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance is a statewide organization committed to improving outcomes in the areas of learning, health, safety, and economic security for children ages birth to eight.

This year's honorees are:

Legislator of the Year: Rep. Kelly Luxenberg

Representatives: Cathy Abercrombie (D), Tim Ackert (R), Juan Candelaria (D), Michelle Cook (D), Jeff Currey (D), Andrew Fleischmann (D), Noreen Kokoruda (R), Gail Lavielle (R), Matt Lesser (D), Kelly Luxenberg (D), Patricia Billie Miller (D), Gayle Mulligan (R), Robyn Porter (D), Christine Randall (D), Bobby Sanchez (D), Diana Urban (D), Toni Walker (D).

Senators: Dante Bartolomeo (D), Toni Boucher (R), Beth Bye (D), Len Fasano (R), Mae Flexer (D), Terry Gerratana (D) Ed Gomes (D), Art Linares (R), Martin Looney (D), Marilyn Moore (D), Gail Slossberg (D), Gary Winfield (D).