

Good evening ladies and gentleman. My name is Marissa Hebert, I am currently an Early Interventionist at the Family Center of Washington County. Thank you so much for allowing me the opportunity to speak to you tonight about the importance of the Parent Child Center Network.

I come here tonight to ask for your support to fully fund the Parent Child Centers' essential work with families with young children and **increase base funding for the 8 core services to \$10million over 3 years, \$4 million for this year. Also please support the Parent Child Center Bill.** These 8 core services include: home visits, early childhood services, parent education, playgroups, parent support groups, concrete supports, community development and resource and referral.

During my time at the Family Center I have personally seen the increase in support needed throughout all families we serve. I have worked for the Family Center for 10 years, first as a classroom teacher and now through Children's Integrated Services as an Early Interventionist. Early intervention serves children ages birth to three years old who are experiencing developmental delays or who have a diagnosed condition that has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay. In my current role I support families by providing home visiting, developmental education and provide information and referrals around many different concerns. I can offer concrete supports, diapers and help with food security by having access to the food shelf. Being connected to the Family Center is why I can provide these supports for the families that I serve. Every one of these families access some sort of support that links back to the Parent Child Center's 8 core services. Each of these families has increased their support network. Parents of children with varying disabilities have been able to attend playgroups, parenting classes and create a level of acceptance and understanding that they have not had in other situations. The supports we provide encourage parents to advocate for not only their children but themselves as parents. Families feel comfortable enough to express their needs; like parenting support groups, creating a playgroup for children with autism and other developmental needs. Providing these services and supports to families is what makes Parent Child Centers unique.

Being a parent is hard for many different reasons, but Parent Child Centers create an interwoven village of support that anyone can benefit from. Therefore, I am asking for your support to increase funding so we can continue to support our neighbors and community have the best start they can have.

Thank you for your attention and providing a place that I can attest to the importance of Parent Child Centers and the important work that they do.