



**REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT BOARD  
OF HAMPDEN COUNTY, INC.**

*Your Connection to Workforce Development*

## **Early Childhood Workforce Town Hall Meeting**

On Saturday, February 7<sup>th</sup> a group of over 100 educators, family childcare providers, and early childhood stake holders joined at the Early Childhood Centers of Greater Springfield to strengthen early education and care for children through research and communication via an action plan to increase advocacy at all levels of government.

The topic for that morning was compensation and access to higher learning opportunities for the early childhood workforce. The Bessie Tartt Wilson Children's Foundation with assistance from the Cherish Every Child (An initiative of the Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation, The Preschool Enrichment Team, and the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County hosted this one of five state meetings across Massachusetts. The purpose is to discuss the need to improve compensation/salary and access to higher learning opportunities for the early childhood workforce. The current capacity of higher education institutions is insufficient to supply the early educators with education necessary to meet the new demands according to the study done by the Wellesley Centers for Women at Wellesley College in 2005. Child care workers are among the lowest paid workers in the United States.

We understand that there is an economic crisis that challenges our daily existence. However, we believe that during this challenging time we can focus our energy on collecting data, increasing our knowledge, organizing ourselves and positioning the field for advocacy when the economy shifts. Early care and education remains a high priority at the local, state, and national policy-making levels. (Insert PowerPoint)

Five good reasons presented to have this town meeting are:

1. Your voice will join hundreds
2. Data collected from each town
3. Part of a movement
4. Receive the latest updates
5. Make the effort

The following steps on behalf of the Bessie Tartt Foundation are to continue fundraising and hold additional town meetings, in May of 2009 a report will be available with the recommendations of all who participated and an advocacy plan will be developed. For more information please go to the website: [www.tarttsfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:www.tarttsfoundation@gmail.com)