

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Chair of Early Childhood Collaborative of Southington Wins 2016 CACFP Mini-Grant for Breastfeeding Support**

*Michelle Slimak of Apple Valley Family Child Care is only Connecticut Awardee*

**Southington, Conn., July 15, 2016** – The Chair of the Early Childhood Collaborative of Southington (ECCS), Michelle Slimak, was recently awarded a mini-grant by the T&L Foundation for Child Care Information (T&L Foundation). A total of 15 mini-grants totaling \$3,920 to address health and wellness in child care were awarded to child care providers and supporters across the country. Slimak was the only Connecticut recipient.

T&L Foundation received 1,116 applications, requesting just over \$349,500. The mini-grants are intended for Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) family child care providers and CACFP sponsoring organizations. These are individuals and organizations already committed to quality child care, school readiness, healthy children, food insecurity solutions and childhood obesity prevention.

The T&L Foundation mini-grant projects funded focus on one of four objectives:

- Overall quality of health and wellness in child care settings
- Enhancing nutrition and healthy eating habits in child care settings
- Enhancing physical activity in child care settings
- Engaging parents in education of health and wellness via child care provider relationships

Slimak has been a Family Child Care provider in Plantsville for eight years. She is committed to high-quality early childhood education, and is an advocate for local and state providers through her work as the Chair of the Early Childhood Collaborative of Southington and the Regional Representative of the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC). She has completed the Let's Move Child Care! certificate, which supports five goals to reduce childhood obesity and increase childhood health: nurture healthy eaters, provide healthy beverages, get kids moving, reduce screen time, and support breastfeeding.

It is the last initiative that led Slimak to apply for, and receive, a grant from the T&L Foundation for Child Care Information. Slimak said “I support the choices families make about whether to breastfeed or formula feed their infants, and I wanted to offer Family Child Care families a relaxing place to breastfeed their infants in my program.”

Joanne Kelleher, Director of the Early Childhood Collaborative, said “We congratulate Michelle on receiving this grant and being pro-active about improving her own child care program. The ECCS, through workshops and outreach, provides all Southington child care providers and parents with opportunities to learn more about the development and health of young children.”

**About T&L Foundation for Child Care Information**

T&L Foundation for Child Care Information is a nonprofit organization focused on strengthening quality child care and early education through participation in and education of health and wellness initiatives. We see a future full of healthy and bright adults because their child care environment was set up to impact the whole child; an environment that helps young children flourish through physical and mental wellbeing. Visit [www.tlfcci.org](http://www.tlfcci.org) and follow us @tlfcci for more information.

**About The Early Childhood Collaborative of Southington**

The Early Childhood Collaborative of Southington is a group of committed educators, community leaders, parents, healthcare providers, childcare providers and members of the community who are deeply invested in the growth, development and academic success of young children in Southington. The Collaborative's mission is that "all Southington children will enter school ready to learn." ECCS is dedicated to three goals: 1) Advocating for high quality preschool and childcare; 2) Empowering parents and families through workshops and educational programs; and 3) Being a wide ranging resource for community members on the subject of early childhood care and education. For more information, and to review the Community Plan for Southington's Young Children, visit [www.southingtonearlychildhood.org](http://www.southingtonearlychildhood.org). Visit ECCS on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ECCSouthington/>.