

Connecticut's Early Childhood Strategy



Elaine Zimmerman

Executive Director



Ready by 5 and Fine by 9: Goals of the Early Childhood and Education Cabinet

- Three goals for all Connecticut children:
 - Reach the appropriate developmental milestones between birth and age 5
 - Begin kindergarten with the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed for success
 - Gain K-3 education experiences that build on the birth-to-5 learning and ensure consistent progress in achieving reading mastery



Elaine Zimmerman
Connecticut Commission on Children



System Difficulties in Reaching Young Children

- ❑ Family may not be connected to the service system
- ❑ Service provider may focus on individual problem instead of causes and multiple needs
- ❑ Services for a family may be fragmented, with agencies working at cross purposes
- ❑ Service goals may not reflect family goals, priorities, and culture
- ❑ Families lack help accessing services



Elaine Zimmerman
Connecticut Commission on Children



A State Partnership with Community Organizations and Families: The Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP)

- Provide preventative and early-intervention mental health services
- Build the capacity of parents, teachers, and care givers
- Support and enhance relationship building
- Promote enduring and optimal mental health outcomes



Elaine Zimmerman
Connecticut Commission on Children



The Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP)

- Consultation services
 - Phone consultation
 - Individual child and family services
 - Classroom and center-wide services
- Service components
 - Assessments before and after
 - In-home and classroom observations
 - Child, classroom, or center action plans
 - Parent-teacher action plan meeting
 - Intervention recommendations
 - Referrals and referral assistance
 - Training and center policy review



Elaine Zimmerman
Connecticut Commission on Children



Help Me Grow: A State Resource and Referral System

- Trains parents, pediatric providers, and others to recognize signs of developmental problems
- Identification of children with developmental risks doubled following training
- Ages & Stages Program
 - In 2006, more than 2,163 families kept track of their children's development
 - Since 2002, participation in the program has increased 63%
 - Child development kits distributed at four-month well baby visits



Elaine Zimmerman
Connecticut Commission on Children



Partnership with Cities and Towns: The Bridgeport Example

- **Child FIRST (Child and Family Interagency Resource, Support and Training)**
 - Based at Bridgeport Hospital
 - Program designed to decrease the incidence of serious emotional disturbance, and developmental and learning problems
 - Provides access to a continuum of mental health, developmental, educational, health and social services

- **Components**
 - Screening
 - Consultation
 - Intensive in-home services



Elaine Zimmerman
Connecticut Commission on Children



www.cga.ct.gov/coc

Ingredients for a Comprehensive, Coordinated System

- ❑ Single point of entry
- ❑ Community networking efforts
- ❑ Staff that perform research, outreach, advocacy
- ❑ Data collection
- ❑ Training and support of child health providers



Elaine Zimmerman
Connecticut Commission on Children

