

February 18, 2009

My name is Jennifer Persaud and I am a home visitor in the Middlesex Hospital's Nurturing Families Network, a program sponsored and supported by the Children's Trust Fund. I would like to emphasize the phrase supported by the Children's Trust Fund because as a worker, I am constantly aware of the support and growth the trust fund provides myself, my coworkers, and my peers throughout the state. The trust fund provides several strength-based trainings, including certifications in Family Development Credential and Parents as Teachers; to all programs members allowing the parent educators to reach out to all first time families in a manner that helps families see their positives and reach their full potential. I know this fact because the trust fund records this data, visually marking the achievements of our programs and the families these programs serve. This data also proves to the public and to its funders that Children's Trust Fund lives up to its mission of preventing child abuse and neglect.

Although I understand the state's intention of retaining the Nurturing Families Network through the Department of Children and Families, I am concerned about the integrity of the Network. As it stands now, the Children's Trust Fund has made the workers' experience and participation a key focus in improvement and growth. Quarterly meetings for each position are held on a statewide level, providing peer support, individual and program growth. Also, all policies and procedures are created by the trust fund are based on every position within the network having a voice and investment in the final decision. Under the Department of Children and Families, I fear that the Network will lose the participation of its members in policy making and the desire to continue raising program quality to meet or exceed the national level.

In these times, I understand the difficulty of believing in a risky investment, to take a chance on the unknown. What is a riskier, more unknown experience than becoming a first time parent? If you ask any parent, they will tell you that the chance they took on that baby, the amount of resources they invested in that child is well worth the cost. As a state, we took a chance 13 years ago with the Children's Trust Fund because we believe these children and families were worth the risk and the investment. As a state, as a community, we need to continue to say to our children you are worth this investment, you are worth this sacrifice, and we will continue to see to it that you grow up in a safe home supported by your community. Everyday, the Children's Trust Fund lives the mission that every Connecticut child deserves a safe home and the best start in life. And our state government lived up to that mission also. Today I stand in front of you, asking to you to continue supporting the promise the state of Connecticut made 13 years ago to our children and families through the Children's Trust Fund.

Thank you

Jennifer Persaud  
18 Farm Hill Rd, Apt 4  
Middletown, CT 06457  
(860) 205-8213