

Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing on the Governor's Proposed Deficit Mitigation Plan and the
Impact of the Governor's Rescissions
Wednesday, December 09, 2009, 2:00 PM, Room 2C

"In my beginning is my end."

T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets

Good morning Madame Chair and members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Candida Flores and I live at 941 Slater Road in New Britain. I am the executive director of Family Life Education, Inc. a social service organization located at 39 Grace St. in Hartford which has been in operation for over 22 years. My testimony today is about Governor Rell's proposed budget cuts which virtually eliminate Connecticut's Children's Trust Fund. The Trust Fund is the lead entity for the state for the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Under the Governor's plan, the Trust Fund's \$13 million state budget would be practically eliminated leaving just \$1.4 million in funding for the next 6 months of the fiscal year. One of the programs funded by the Children's Trust Fund is the Nurturing Families Network Program which is a child abuse prevention program working with first time mothers and pregnant women in 42 sites connected with 29 maternity hospitals. Family Life Education, located at 39 Grace St. in Hartford is one of the NFN sites. A unique and key component of this program is the home visiting services for at risk parents. This program provides intense training and has a series of scientific tools that allow our home visitors to identify serious issues that

put children at risk including depression signs in members of the family, particularly the mother.

Some of you received a letter from me last week where I told you about a situation last Thursday where one of our home visitors who while interacting with one of our moms was able to identify certain signs that raised enough flags to merit further probing. The home visitor was at the home of a 21 year old woman who, as most of our clients, while struggling with depression, family violence, unemployment, etc, wants the best for her child and does the best she can. After a lengthy interaction, the home visitor was able to help the client open up to reveal an elaborate plan to commit suicide. The home visitor brought the young woman to our organization where the program's clinical supervisor got involved. Both the home visitor and the clinical supervisor spent the entire day working with this young woman and her family until they were able to connect her with the proper health care professional. I strongly believe that had it not been for the intervention of the home visitor who was in the right place at the right time, we would have lost this mother and possibly her daughter. Our NFN program staffs are faced with these types of situations on a regular basis and it is not the first time that through our intervention a life is saved.

Based on the governor's proposal, this program will be terminated by the end of the year. What do you think we should tell this young woman and her family?

Would any of you or perhaps the governor come on a home visit with us to let her know that she is out of luck?

In this particular situation our intervention was timely as it relates to saving this client's life, but throughout time, we help many families, particularly young inexperienced mothers, cope with unexpected pregnancies; we help them understand their child's developmental stages; we help them stay in school; establish goals; we teach them how to navigate the various service delivery systems; we provide them with the necessary support when they feel they can't handle the stress; we teach them to be better parents. Children are safer because of the work our NFN program staff does.

Research from the University of Hartford Center for Social Research has shown that family participation in Nurturing Families Network programs dramatically reduces the risk of child abuse and neglect.

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study carried out in Kaiser Permanente's Department of Preventive Medicine, in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is an examination of the relationship between trauma in childhood and the leading causes of mortality and

morbidity in the United States which include depression and other forms of mental health as well as drug and alcohol abuse.

Abused and neglected children are more likely to drop out of school and to become involved in delinquency and crime.

Next year and in the years to come the governor will not see from her suburban home the aftermath of her decision when it comes back to hunt all of us. She will not know about the young woman whom we are not able to save or about the child that ends up in the emergency room with broken bones because no one was there to help him. The cost of CTF programs are just a fraction of the cost of DCF's protective services. Largely when children enter the DCF system it is already too late; the damage has already been done.

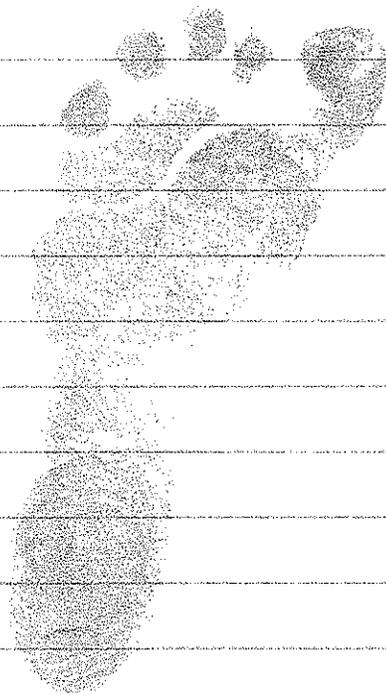
Please do not let the governor balance the budget at the expense of families and children who are already disenfranchised and forgotten. **The governor's previous budget proposals and her proposed budget mitigation plan are clearly an attack on poor families and children. Before you make a decision, find out more about the CTF and the work that's done through all its prevention programs throughout the state.**

12/3/09

Luis E. Berrios - Llebo 6 meses en el programa AFM me ayudan mucho me dan consejo para mis problemas tambien me ayudan con mi hijo me enseñan como ayudar a mi hijo a desarrollarse tambien me ayudan en lo que necesite y estoy bien agradecido con ellos

Luis E. Berrios

12/03/09



12/3/09

367 albany ave Apt 2.

My name is Naomi Vega

I'm writing to let you know that I need this NFN program because they have helped me a lot. When I first started this program they helped me with clothes for my son and supported me with help and showing me videos about the baby's development and with out this program I won't have as much support as I do now.

Att: Naomi Vega



Dear legislators,

My name is Kinysha Castellano and I am 19 years old. I have a son that 3 1/2 years old we have in this program since my son was born. The nurturing families program has help me with my son development. They provide weekly home visits during those visits that had provided me and my son with development activities that I wouldn't know from being a first time mother. My home visitor has helped me prepare my son for when he starts school. I haven't had the best life but this program helps me have and look forward to a better future. I know I could count on them for support. They have help encourage me to enter to college and be more independent. My son could be in the program till he is 5 years old. If this program is taken away from him what else will he have that will provide him with what the program provides for him. They have help me in many ways just like they have help many others families.

Thank you

Kinysha Castellano

Para Lexig's Store
Jonathan Malave

Este programa Nurturing Families
es una ayuda para nuestra familia
y una enseñanza. Ellos me ayudan
con las pampas y más para mis
hijos espero que ustedes los ayuden
a crecer más.

1994 Main St APT 7
Hartford Ct 06120

Para: Registrare.

de:

Fiordaliza Martinez

EL Programa Nurturing Families me ayuda mucho con mis hijos en su educación y es como una ayuda para mi ya que no estoy trabajando ellos me ayudan con los pampers, ropa, comida y hacen mucha actividad para los niños y si ustedes le recuerdan la ayuda no podrán ayudar más a madres que no tienen recursos para comprar lo que necesitan para nuestros hijos este programa me ayuda mucho a mi y a mi familia y a más familia que no tienen recursos. Nurturing Families es un buen programa y es una enseñanza para todas las madres por favor ayuden a que Nurturing Families crezca más, no que de Napaeca ya que ellos son una familia unida. Gracias.

1994 Main Street 2nd Floor Apt 7
Hartford CT 06120.



December 2, 2009

Dear Legislators,

I am a twenty-two year old mother, and my daughter is currently two years and six months old. We have been involved with the Nurturing Families Program for almost two years and three months. The Nurturing Families Program has helped in many ways as well as my family. They provided my family and I with support when it came to filling out paper work to get state assistance and even looking for another job when we got cut on our hours. When I had a problem they are the ones I could call to speak to and help me through. To be more specific when I saw myself in a jam, they came around and provided me with diapers for my daughter as well as they do for the other mothers that are involved with this program. The program helped me out by encouraging me and actually pushing me to go back to school, so thanks to their support I am currently attending college to major in Early Childhood Education plus starting January they are planning to help me sign applications to put my daughter in a school so she can start having the experience and interaction with children her age. Their main concern is not to help the child like every other program but to help the entire family in any ways that they can be helpful to us. They don't just help us solve our problems and walk away they continue to check up on us and ask us to give them an update. When we started the home visits which is once a week, my daughter did the activities but would not communicate in words but it has been almost two months that my daughter began to trust my home visitor completely. My daughter now gets excited when I tell her that my home visitor is on her way and that makes me happy that my daughter enjoys the activities that we have to be involve with as a team. The program is valuable to me and my family and I would like to continue being part of it. Thank you for your time in reading my letter, and hearing my concerns.

Sincerely,



Angelica Rodriguez

70 Harbison Ave

Hartford, CT 06106

(860)869-0674

Dear legislators

I am a 21 year old women from Hartford CT this program helped me find services for domestic violence I really like this program they helped me find a lot of information on pregnancy I really appreciate all the help this program gives me.

Sincerely

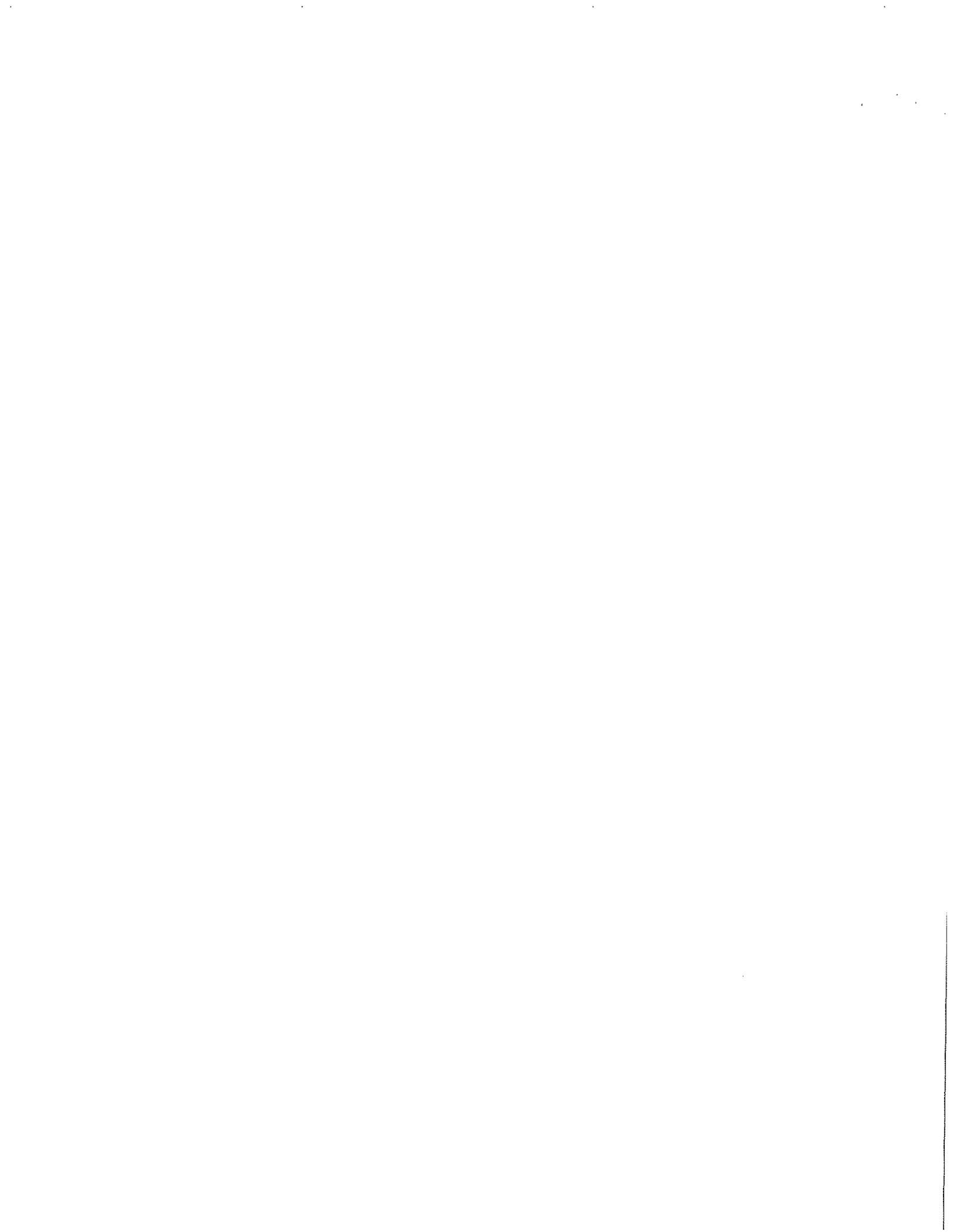
Yuri Morales



Crystal Galarza
159 Campfield Ave 1st Fl
Hartford CT 06114

Hi my name is Crystal Galarza and I've been involved in the program since I was about 4 months pregnant. In my family, I don't really have any support and ever since I've been in the program, it impacted my life a lot. Anytime I need help getting things for my baby or just someone to talk to about my problem family life education was there. I honestly could say I love the program for being a first time parent and not really knowing how to take care of my baby they have taught me a lot by showing me videos, how to play with my baby etc.... I do believe that the program should stay because as well as they helped me they also did for others. Like sometimes I don't have enough diapers and the program is right there. I don't know where me and my baby would be right now if it wasn't for the program. I'll just stop here. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Crystal Galarza.



December/2/09.

Queridos legisladores:

Es mi hija una menor de 16 años de edad y actualmente esta embarazada con 10 meses de gestacion. Desde que tiene 1 mes y medio ella ha tenido la ayuda constante del Programa Nurturing Families. Gracias a este programa mi hija ha tenido el conocimiento de como ser madre, como criar un hijo sin maltrato, desde la gestacion.

Tambien ayuda al padre del bebe a tener muchos conocimientos que los ayuda a manejar las situaciones que vienen más adelante con la llegada del nuevo bebe.

El programa debería continuar ya que es de ayuda para muchas adolescentes embarazadas sin conocimientos, a tener una buena decision al criar bien a sus hijos y así tener más Union familiar

196 Russ st 3f
Hartford CT 06106.

Gracias anticipadas

Sonia Santos

madre de cliente

860-547-0807

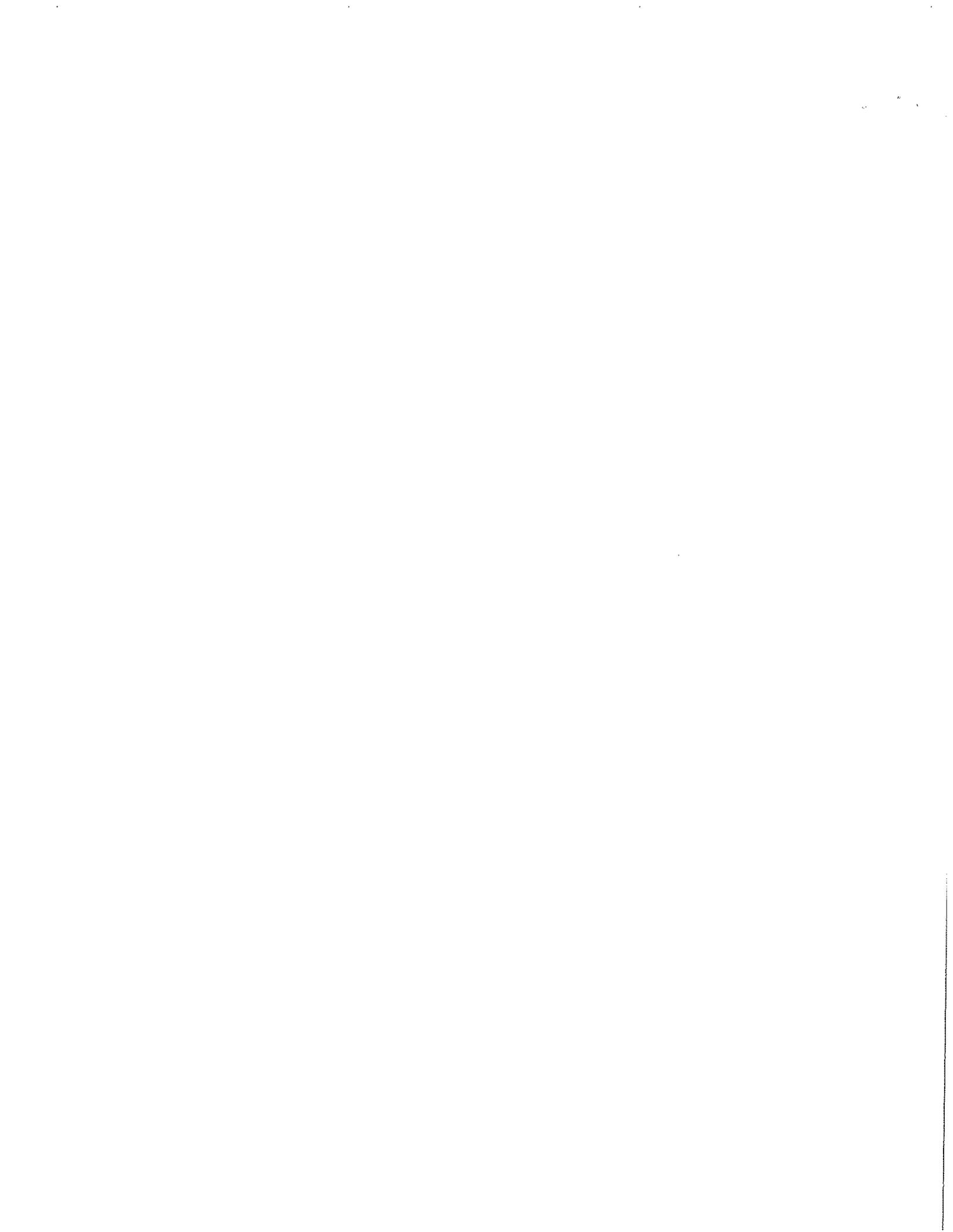


Dear Legislature,

12/2/09

I have been informed by a fellow classmate that the Nurturing Families program is at risk of being eliminated. This program is a prevention program for child abuse. I don't understand why a program that is so important for the safety of children would be taken away. This program helps young mothers with their problems and provides them with a brighter outlook for their families future. These children have built significant relationships with their workers, relationships that they will always remember and that have impacted their lives. Please reconsider this proposal and think about what is best for these children. Thank You for taking the time to read this letter

Eric Farmer

December 2nd, 2009.

Dear Legislatures:

My name is Stephanie Santana, I am 6 months pregnant, and I've been in the program Nurturing Families for 4 months.

This program has helped me in many ways. First of all, it educated me of all that happens during pregnancy, how to take care of a baby, and how to avoid child abuse. It also has helped my boyfriend by preparing him to be a father, and my family by involving them in the visits and learning about child development. The program helps me make goals and look towards the future. I know that if I have any problem, I can count with this program, they have helped me a lot. I am looking forward to continue in this

program as long as I can.
I hope you take this
under consideration, because
I really need this help
and support from this
program.

Stephanie Santana
1916 Russ St. 7rd fl
Hartford, C.T. 06104.
860-547-0807.

12/2/09

Dear Legislatures:

The program Family life have been one of the best program I've ever been in. I am 17 years old mother and thanks to the program Family life I have good parenting skills. The staff there are so helpfull and careing. They have pushed and encouraged me to finish my studies. They also have taken there time to search for new programs that will help me finish school. Family life has also giving me knowledge of how my child should be developing and how to teach him new things. Family life has taken the time to teach me how to cook in a healthy way and how also to do groceries. Family has help me emotionally and has my daily basic needs such as diapers monthly, they also have a donations room

In which we are allowed to ~~tear~~
anything we need. The program
Family Life is very important
to me cause every time I go
it changes my life in the way
I think and how to see things
in a different way. They have
done a big change in my and
my one year old son. Thanks to
family life I know how to
play with him, teach him and
how to punish him without hurting
him. It's very sad to hear
that the program is going to
be shut down because that
program is my only support group.
I'm shore that there are many
other teens the have helped.
Please re Consider

Sincerely

Amenda Cala

12-04-09

Yo soy Lorenza Mendez le doy gracias al programa NEN

Entre al programa desde que estaba embarazada de 2 meses durante ese tiempo ellos me enseñaban como se estaba formando el bebe y como iba a ser el parto, mucha informacion que me ayudara hasta que nacio me empesaron a ayudar con pampers, ropa, juguetes con que se desarrollara el bebe y con la informacion capaz del desarrollo de cada etapa en el que estaba, me enseñaron como darle masaje cuando estaba inquieto, como involucrarse con otros niños de su edad y mucho mas sobre lenguaje, movimientos de su cuerpo. Gracias a ellas veo a mi hijo en su desarrollo y me siento feliz y contenta por lo que hasta hoy e logrado gracias al programa

Porque sin ellas no sabria si mi
hijo esta bien en su desarrollo o en
que esta mal, una gran preocupacion
en pampers cuando no tengo como
comprarlos al igual con la ropa
para mi es una gran ayuda que
recibo del programa

Vivo en Hartford CT.
122 putnam st.

Lorenza Mendez


07/12/09

Soy Gloria Flores

Tengo un Año de estar en este programa de Family
estoy muy agusto de tener mucha alluda Con todos los

Servicios que me ofrecen Cuando tengo problemas

de Hospital de otras cosas ellas me dan Solución

Yo no tengo telefono pero mi trabajadora Con su

telefono me alluda a Conectar Con la persona que

quiera localizar estoy muy agradecida por tener sus

amistades y por tener mucha alluda gracias a ellas.

Como mi trabajadora me visa a la Casa es muy atenta

y a ella le gusta que tengayo todas las cosas necesarias

y sino las tengo me trata de Consequirmelas,

Desde que tengo su amistad me siento feliz

espero que siempre sigan trabajando para que siempre les

brinden amor, Cariño y ternura a quellas todas familias

que estamos Con ellas, y que siempre sigan bisitandonos.

por que sin sue alluda no sabria que hacer

Atentamente

gloria Floria. 27 Henry street