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Testimony of Ardith Crampton
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Members of the Appropriations Committee:

I would like to comment on the governor's proposed budget, as it affects DSS and the **Children's Trust Fund**.

My particular experience is with the **Nurturing Families Network (NFN)**, which stands to sustain a 30% cut in funding. Thorough research confirms that this program's early prevention/intervention services reduce child maltreatment, improve birth outcomes, improve school readiness, and promote self-sufficiency and positive parenting. **The incidence of child maltreatment in NFN at-risk families is approximately 1-3%, compared with approximately 20-25% in the general at-risk population.**

I want to clarify the misconception that NFN reaches only first-time, at-risk families. Indeed, the intensive home visiting component does so. However, two additional program components are available to all community parents. Nurturing Connections offers regular, supportive telephone calls from trained volunteers, to any new parent. Nurturing Groups offer ten-week parent education classes to all community parents, reaching thousands yearly. In Manchester and Vernon, these services are considered essential and are being woven into the community plans currently under development in each community.

The proposed budget cuts would eliminate services to non-hospital program sites in Hartford and New Haven—two of our most vulnerable cities. These cuts would eliminate important services, but, equally troubling, they would cause our state to **forfeit over \$12,000,000 in federal funding**, if the Children's Trust Fund is budgeted below 95% of its 2010 state appropriation.

The Trust Fund has already sustained a 20% cut and has lost 50% of its staff. Please maintain the Children's Trust Fund and its fine services. Doing so will prevent even greater expenditures down the road in the areas of child protective services, social services, juvenile justice, and the prison system. That is what prevention is all about.