

**Testimony of Rebecca Santana  
Family School Connection Program  
Madonna Place, Inc.  
240 Main Street  
Norwich, CT 06360**

**Prepared for the Appropriations Committee  
Public Hearing – February 17, 2012  
Public Hearing on the Governor's Proposed Midterm Budget Adjustments**

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**Please do not support Governor Malloy's plan to cut Family School Connection Programs.** My name is Rebecca Santana. I am a bilingual home visitor for the Family School Connection Program in Norwich. Family School Connection (FSC) is a prevention program funded by the Connecticut Children's Trust Fund, a division of the Department of Social Services. Our program provides comprehensive home visiting and support services for families whose children are frequently absent, truant, have academic or behavior problems, or often come to school unprepared. In addition, the program provides services to parents who are not adequately engaged with the school or attending to their child's educational needs. Children who are not getting their needs met are at greater risk for developmental, behavioral and health issues – issues that too often lead to school failure.

As a home visitor, my primary role is to support parents in learning to cope with every day stressors which can impede their ability to effectively support their children in their education. We use evidence based curricula and strength based techniques to support parents in becoming powerful advocates for themselves and their children and to strengthen their connection with school personnel. The majority of families that I have worked with have reported an increased confidence level in communicating with their children's school in a positive and effective manner. This improvement in communication between families and the schools that support them is directly linked to reducing the educational achievement gap.

I understand that you are all faced with a trying decision; that of allocating funds to Connecticut's most needed programs. **I strongly believe that the wisest investment in our state and in our future lies in funding programs that support our children and surely their academic achievement.** Time and time again we have seen the proof that prevention is the most cost effective way of supporting our families. I urge you to invest in prevention services like Family School Connection Program, in turn investing in CT's future! Thank you for your careful consideration of this request.

**Rebecca Santana – Bi Lingual Home Visitor-Madonna Place, Inc. Norwich, CT**