

Testimony of Katherine Getman
Family School Connection Program
Bielefield Elementary School
70 Maynard St
Middletown, CT 06457

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My name is Katherine Getman and I am a home visitor for Family School Connection in Middletown at Bielefield Elementary School. The goal of Family School Connection is prevent child abuse and ensure academic success for all students.

I have the unique position of being based in the school and going into families' homes. This allows me to help bridge potential communication gap between parents and educators. Some families have had negative school experiences in the past, and FSC can help them to overcome and make school positive and ensure achievement for their child.

I am currently working with fifteen families which include forty children, the majority of whom are school aged. I help these families to find community resources but most of all, I help address academic and behavioral concerns. Topics include setting daily routines with meals, homework, and bedtime, test preparation, nurturing parenting, and exploring alternative discipline techniques. If a child's home life is not stable, their academic career will be highly at risk.

One of the families that I visit is a blended family with five active children aged eight to eleven. Two identified concerns with all the boys were that homework was consistently not being turned in that (so grades were suffering) and that they were always getting into fights. Throughout the course of our visits, the family and this home visitor implemented a positive reinforcement system for homework, and provided alternative solutions to conflict besides physical aggression. Currently, are all completing homework on a regular basis, and have raised their grades in school, and also significantly decreased the amount of behavioral referrals.

I ask that you restore funds for the crucially important Family School Connection. Family School Connection is unique in that it is the only preventative, school aged, home based service in the state. As a former parent said, "FSC is more than just a program. It's about helping families and building relationships".

Thank you for your attention and dedication to children and families