

Testimony of Cynthia Brown
Family School Connection Program
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Public Hearing on the Governor's Proposed Midterm Budget Adjustments

My name is, Cynthia Brown, I am the clinical supervisor for the Family School Connection Program at Madonna Place in Norwich CT. **Please, do not support Governor Malloy's plan to eliminate the funding for Family School Connection.** Family School Connection (FSC) is a prevention program funded by the Children Trust Fund, a division of the Department of Social Services. The program provides comprehensive home visiting and support services for families whose children are frequently absent, truant, have academic or behavioral problems, or often come to school unprepared. In addition the program provides services to parents who are not engaged with the school or attending to their children's educational needs. Our FSC program is housed in Wequonnoc and John M. Moriarty Elementary schools in Norwich. Both of these schools are mandated to have school governance councils and have a dedication to increasing parental involvement. Furthermore, these schools and many families whose children attend need our services. Children whose parents are involved in their education do better in school academically and this in turn helps to close the achievement gap.

In Norwich and over the past four years, the Family School Connection Program has helped over 75 families, which include 117 parents and 142 children. We have helped families in the following areas; parent education, which includes child development information to crisis intervention strategies. Family school connections; we have helped parent and school connect by helping parents be more involved with school through attending parent teacher meetings, homework strategies and increasing parents comfort level in communicating with their child's teacher. Case Management; we help parents obtain food, child care, transportation, employment, behavioral and dental services. Recently, a FSC mother told me "the FSC home visitor has helped me get to meetings to meet with my child's teacher and because of this has helped me have better communication with the teacher."

Cutting funding to this program will leave families without the support to increase their coping strategies that allow them to parent effectively, even when under stress. It also will affect their children's ability to be successful in school. As I stated before, children are most successful when parents are involved in their education. The Family School Connection Program works to help parents meet their quality of life needs so they can be more involved with their children's educational needs. Another quote from a FSC family, "Before Family School Connection got involved, I didn't always get my child to school because she was in K and it was a half day. I didn't see how much my child was missing when she was not in school. The Family School Connection home visitor helped me

understand the importance of getting my child to school and contacting the school when she was absent. I have been working with the program for two years now and my child attends school every day." Please consider maintaining the funds for the Family School Connection Program. Prevention Works and it's an investment in our future.

Thank You.