

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

**Prepared for the Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing – March 3, 2015
Public Hearing on the Governor's Proposed Budget**

My name is Christina Mendez. December will be my second year in the Family School Connection Program and I am asking you not to cut funding for this program. I am a single mother of two girls and having the support of my worker and the Family School Connection Program has helped me more than I could ever express. The Family School Connection Program has been able to help me stay connected with the school when there has been lack of communication and also has helped me to achieve goals that I thought I would never accomplish. This program has not only helped me but has helped my children through rough patches that they have had at school as well as at home. For example my youngest, who is in 1st grade, was having trouble speaking up about a bully and my worker helped to show ways that she could handle the situation effectively at school. After learning those skills I noticed that my daughter learned how to speak up for herself respectfully and ended up making a friend out of the student who was bullying her. My worker also attended my oldest, a 7th grader's, parent teacher conference with me and was there with me when the teacher reported her grades falling due to being unorganized as well as slacking on turning in work. I must admit I was very upset about this. My worker talked with my daughter about ways she can stay organized and for me as well. The next visit that we had with our worker she brought back folders, binders, lined paper, and pencils and from there my daughter has stayed organized and enjoys being organized. I can report that my daughter has nothing less than a B average and has been maintaining these grades. I no longer need to ask her where any papers are because she has everything organized. My worker has brought confidence not just to my girls but also to myself. I have always been scared to open bank accounts because of past experience so I would carry all my money around with me. I can report that with the help of my worker I have a proper CT ID and I have opened a bank account where I am saving money for my family. You have no idea what cutting this program would do to so many families including mine. One of the things I love about The Madonna Place besides the support that they give to the whole community, is the fact that they also introduced me to Family School Connection. So please I am begging you. Do not cut funding to this program because so many families, my family included, not only rely on the services from this program but we also need this program. Thank you again for your time and consideration.