

Testimony of Nancy W. Gentes, Executive Director  
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**Prepared for the Appropriations Committee-  
Public Hearing – February 11, 2016  
Public Hearing on the Governor's Proposed Budget- DCF Triple P and Fatherhood  
Funding Impact**

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My testimony is in opposition to the proposal to the creation of a combined block grant agency operation accounts fund throughout the proposed midterm budget. This type of budgeting creates a lack of transparency and accountability to the legislature and the public. It leaves it up to the State Department/Executive Branch to decide what their priorities are and without any current tried system or data in place to make these decisions, despite a new mandate to do so based on program results and performance. To make matters worse, there is a call for a 5.75% reduction in these agency accounts. These reductions come after years of previous cuts or no increases and expectations to continue providing high quality services often without an adjustment in the expectation of the number of clients to be served.

**Specifically, we are concerned with how these budget structural changes and reductions will impact programs for families and young children funded by the Department of Children and Families. There are many valuable programs which are already categorized into large line items which will run the risk of losing all identity and accountability when grouped into an agency operation fund. This new proposed operating fund is very large and consists of the following consolidated line items::** Personal Services, Other Expenses, Workers' Compensation Claims, Family Support Services, Homeless Youth, Differential Response System, Regional Behavioral Health Consultation, Health Assessment and Consultation, Grants for Psychiatric Clinics for Children, Day Treatment Centers for Children, Juvenile Justice Outreach Services, Child Abuse and Neglect Intervention, Community Based Prevention Programs, Family Violence Outreach and Counseling, Supportive Housing, Family Preservation Services, Substance Abuse Treatment, Child Welfare Support Services, Community KidCare, and Covenant to Care.

At Madonna Place, our families and children would be impacted by potential losses of program services which fall under the Child Abuse and Neglect Intervention line. These include the Triple P program and the Fatherhood Initiative Program.

The Positive Parenting Program is an in-home, evidenced based program that helps parents become independent, resourceful problem solvers. Parents learn how to create a positive and safe home learning environments that promotes their children's emotional, behavioral, and cognitive strengths. Families receive a thorough assessment of parent-

child interaction. Parents are taught using a parenting skills curriculum that is used to target a broad range of behaviors. The parent/caregiver chooses the target behavior(s) to be addressed. The teen program actively engages the adolescent in learning coping skills and problem solving skills while also improving the parent/caretaker-teen relationship. This program serves families that are active with the Department of Children and Families or with community assessment staff, and families from the community. The Triple P program serves parents/caretakers of children 0-18 years of age.

A specialized fatherhood initiative program has been designed for fathers from Region 3, which provides case management and specialized parenting education group services using fatherhood curriculum to father's involved with the Department. It is a unique program that helps fathers to become fully responsible and positively involved in their children's lives.

We hope that you will consider the impact of these cuts and consolidation of line items as well as the concern over further reductions in grant funding for valuable and successful programs. Thank you for your consideration.