

**Testimony of Maridalia Hernandez, Family Support Provider  
Madonna Place, Inc.  
240 Main Street  
Norwich, CT 06360  
Prepared for the Appropriations Committee- Office of Early Childhood  
Public Hearing – February 16, 2016  
Public Hearing on the Governor's Proposed Budget**

Good evening,

My name is Maridalia Hernandez and I am a Family Support Provider for Madonna Place Nurturing Families Network Program. For over 3 years I have been providing home visitation services to communities in both Western and Southeastern Connecticut. I have seen firsthand the positive outcomes this program has had for the families I have been and continue to serve.

In my years as a Family Support Provider, I have seen young mothers share their fears and struggles as first time parents. I have seen them smile and laugh at their kid's accomplishments. I have seen mothers learn skills to be able to advocate for themselves. I have received messages from mothers thanking me and the program for teaching them how to be better for their child as well as how to stick to a goal and achieve it. Nurturing Families Network is not just a program that educates on child development, it is a program that enhances the life of the families we serve wholeheartedly. We work with families to guide them in realizing their full potential as strong, skilled parents. We become a strong support, often joining in celebrating each developmental, social and educational achievement.

Children's Trust Fund, now under the direction of Office of Early Childhood, has collected data for over 10 years. That data confirms that our families, the families of Connecticut participating in Nurturing Families Network have increased knowledge in child development and are forming stronger parent-child bonds. My families, those that have been in the past, and will be in the future, are at a lower risk of child abuse and neglect. I cannot support any budget cuts that will affect the services these families are currently receiving. My job is to advocate for them while teaching them to advocate for themselves; the continued funding of this program is an investment that will yield much more than just fluctuations in numbers and statistics. Continued funding for this program will help empower real children and real families so that they may find a goodness-of-fit amongst our community.

Thank you for your time,

Maridalia Hernandez