

Testimony of Michel Gomez
Family School Connection Middletown Program
Bielefield/Snow Elementary School
70 Maynard St
Middletown, CT 06457

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My name is Michel Gomez and I am a bilingual speaking home visitor for Family School Connection in Middletown at Bielefield and Snow Elementary School. The goal of Family School Connection is to prevent absentees, truancy, academic or behavior problems as well as providing services to parents who are not accurately engaged with the school or attending to their child's educational needs.

As a home visitor my position is to offer as well as conduct weekly home visits to Bielefield and Snow Elementary School families. Through this we are able to bridge the school and the home together. Giving this opportunity it allows parents, school staff, and teachers to stay connected and enforce a healthier communication gap. I have been a home visitor for three years and I have seen that parents were not communicating with teachers for many reasons: one being language barriers and two negative school experiences that they had encountered in the past. Family School Connection is there to show them tools and techniques that allow them to have a positive outcome and overcome any negative school experiences that they have had in the past.

Currently I am working with eighteen families and thirty-eight children, ages ranging from two to fifteen years old. I support the families with weekly home visits services that help families with child development, engage with teachers as well as with their children, access to community resources, parenting skills, community services, and helping families identify their basic, educational, housing and medical needs. I help with academic and behavior concerns that the school and families have. Other topics that as a home visitor I focus on are family's strengths, appropriate community resources, strengthen parent/child relationships, providing support with parents/teacher meetings, basic needs, social-emotional needs of the parent and child(ren). Also, as of November 2015 Family School Connection supervisors and home visitors are now trained and certified to be Triple P providers. Triple P stands for Positive Parenting Program it is one of the most effective evidence based parenting programs in the world. Family School Connection home visitors of Middletown are working with Triple P parent Educators to ensure that each and every family that is in the Triple P program are being provided with simple as well as practical strategies to ensure that each parent can manage their children's behaviors as well as prevent any problems that have been occurring in the home and/or at school. "Triple P is currently used in 25 countries and has been shown to work across cultures, socioeconomic groups and in many different kinds of family structures" (Triple P website).

One of the families that I provide services to is a single mother with five children. Last year mom and children were left homeless. I was able to get her and the children into Columbus house family shelter in Middletown and as her home visitor I was able to get the appropriate community resources that she needed to get her life back on track. Through our hard work together currently mom has a full time job, was able to get an apartment as well as furnish it, get a car, and I was able to help mom get the appropriate medical care for two of her five children. Providing mom with the appropriate basic needs now mom is able to concentrate on her children's educational needs. Mom is success story because in the past she would not attend any of her children's PPT's and/or parent/teacher conferences through

the tools and meeting with her weekly she is now able to get her priorities straight and is meeting not just her basic needs but all the needs her family may have.

I ask that you restore funds for Family School Connection so that families as the one I mentioned have a chance and have that support service that is so greatly needed. FSC is a program that helps reduce stress and help increase parent school involvement.