

Memorandum

To: Senator Martin Looney, Senate President Pro Tempore,
Representative Brendan Sharkey, Speaker of the House

From: Commissioner Myra Jones-Taylor, Office of Early Childhood

Re: Report on the Nurturing Families Network

Date: November 30, 2014

I am pleased to submit the *Children's Trust Fund Annual Report* to the Connecticut General Assembly on behalf of the Office of Early Childhood.

The report is being submitted pursuant to Section 17a-50 of the Connecticut General of the Connecticut General Statutes. The report provides highlights on several major activities underway in 2015 and with a description of key programs.

The Office of Early Childhood is glad to have made a contribution to the state's effort to ensure the positive growth and development of its children.

Please contact me or Karen Foley-Schain if you would like any additional information about the evaluation, the Nurturing Families Network or other FSS programs. Karen can be reached at 860-424-5623 or Karen.foley-schain@ct.gov.

Cc: Senator Bob Duff, Senate Majority Leader,
Representative Joe Aresimowicz, House Majority Leader,
Senator Leonard Fasano, Senate Minority Leader,
Representative Themis Klarides, House Minority Leader,
Members of the State Senate
Members of the State House of Representatives
Legislative Library

***Children's Trust Fund Office of Early Childhood
Year End Report – State Fiscal Year 2014- 2015***

Overview

The Children's Trust Fund, established in 1983 by the Connecticut General Assembly, was merged with the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) in 2014. Under the merger the Trust Fund became the Family Support Services division of OEC. Programs under the Trust Fund include several major efforts that prevent child abuse and neglect by helping families and communities to be responsive to children, ensuring their healthy growth and development. In addition, the Trust Fund is responsible for the administration of the Community-Based Program to Prevent Child Abuse (CBCAP), a federal program to support innovative community-based prevention efforts. As part of the CBCAP program the Trust Fund has launched several important initiatives.

Highlights of 2015

Home Visiting: The Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting program was transferred from the Department of Public Health to the Office of Early Childhood this year. This was done as part of the State's effort to consolidate early childhood programs within the OEC. The program offers services in high needs communities across the state using four evidenced based home visiting program models – Parents s Teachers, Child First, Early Head Start and the Nurse Family Partnership. Together these programs provide services to roughly 1,200 families each year. The OEC was awarded \$10.4 million in grants to continue funding for these programs through December 31, 2016.

In-Home Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (IHCBT): Building on the success of a randomized control trial to test IHCBT to treat maternal depression among mothers participating in the Nurturing Families Network (NFN) home visiting program, the OEC has launched a community based initiative to expand and enhance the program. The OEC, in partnership with the University of Connecticut Health Center, is recruiting and training licensed private practice therapists eligible for Medicaid reimbursement to provide the treatment in tandem with NFN services in their communities.

To date roughly twenty therapists have been trained to provide IHCBT and several have begun working with families. This approach allows for the sustainability of the effort, expands the network of mental health providers available to the families participating in NFN, and eliminates the need for duplicative state or grant funding for mental health services.

Other Major Programs and Initiatives for 2015

The Nurturing Families Network: The program provides screening and assessment, group support and intensive home visiting for new parents who are at high risk for child

abuse and neglect. The program focuses on nurturing parenting, child development, and health and community resources. The Nurturing Families Network serves approximately 2,200 families in intensive home visiting and 600 families in Nurturing Parenting groups. It also offers services tailored to the needs of fathers and men, and mothers experiencing perinatal and post-partum depression. The program screens 7,200 and provided supportive services to 1,700.

State allocation: \$10,232,306

Federal allocation - Child Abuse Prevention Grant: \$684,000

Help Me Grow: Program ensures that children and their families have access to a system of early identification, prevention and intervention services. It links child health providers, parents and service providers with existing community resources through a toll-free telephone number (1-800-505-7000). Help Me Grow connected 2,800 children and families to community-based services. It also provided the Ages and Stages Child Monitoring program to 3,000 families.

State allocation: \$331,462

Family School Connection: The program provides intensive home visiting services to families whose children are frequently truant or tardy or otherwise at risk of school failure. These children are often not getting their needs met at home and are at greater risk for child abuse and neglect, developmental, behavioral and health issues. The program is offered in grades K-12 at five elementary schools. Family School Connection provided intensive home visiting services to roughly 200 families.

State Allocation: \$915,934

Family Empowerment Initiatives: Family Empowerment Initiatives include seven nationally recognized prevention programs that assist high-risk groups of parents and others involved in the lives of children. Family Empowerment Initiatives provided home and group based services to roughly 700 parents.

State Allocation: \$191,934

Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome: This initiative assists hospitals and others with embedding shaken baby syndrome prevention program within their organization. The program trains community providers to offer the program to the families they serve. One thousand five hundred parents and students participated in programs to prevent shaken baby syndrome through their schools, hospitals, prisons and community groups. The program has become a regular part of the re-entry program offered through the state's Department of Correction.

Federal allocation – Child Abuse Prevention Grant: \$20,000

Family Development Training and Credentialing Program: Training human services staff to better engage and support families in prevention efforts. Courses are offered to front-line and management staff. Six college course credits and a credential are available to participants that successfully complete the course for frontline staff. Seventy students received credentials through the FDC program.

Federal allocation - Child Abuse Prevention Grant: \$100,000

Triple P – Positive parenting program: Under this program roughly 140 practitioners were trained in Hartford and five communities in northeastern Connecticut. Triple P involves entire communities in efforts to prevent emotional and developmental problems in children by enhancing the knowledge, skills, and confidence of parents. Evaluations of the program have found Triple P to be cost effective and successful in achieving its goals. Triple P provides easy to use information and tips that everyone working with families can use to help parents respond to challenging parenting situations and build positive relationships with their children. The information and tips can make parenting more manageable and enjoyable.

Federal Allocation -Child Abuse Prevention Grant: \$400,000