

## POSITION IN STATE GOVERNMENT

As part of an agency consolidation during FY 2009, the Connecticut Children's Trust (CCTF) was placed within the state Department of Social Services (DSS). In addition to working closely with other governmental agencies, the Trust continues to be advised by a diverse council of state agency leaders (the Commissioners of the DSS, Children and Families, Public Health, and Education) as well as legislatively appointed parents, child abuse prevention/child development professionals, and representatives of the business community. CCTF has a depth and breadth of experience in child abuse prevention that makes it the ideal lead agency for CBCAP.

## KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Core Services:** In FY 2009, CCTF invested \$13 million in more than 50 community-based, prevention-focused contracts. Direct services to children and families included the Nurturing Families Network (NFN) which provided intensive home visiting to new parents of more than 2000 infants and toddlers at high risk, as well as parent education and support groups; Help Me Grow (access to early identification, prevention, and intervention for potential disabilities); Family Empowerment Initiatives, kinship and respite care through small grants to relative care-givers; the Stranger You Know, a child sexual abuse prevention program; and a Shaken Baby Prevention program that was embedded within hospitals and other health care providers. Criteria for CCTF funding included identification of a population at high risk for child maltreatment and gaps in services.
- **Policy achievements:** CCTF has been instrumental in developing a state-funded, comprehensive, evidence-based home visitation program (NFN) that serves more than 2000 children at risk and their families in 42 sites throughout the state. During FY 2009, CCTF funded two randomized control studies to inform further policy development: one to examine the effectiveness of two shaken baby prevention approaches, and the other to determine the effectiveness of an in-home cognitive behavioral therapy program for depressed mothers. Other policy initiatives include representation on the Early Childhood Cabinet, the Early Care and Consultation Partnership, the Poverty Council and the Legislative Task Force on Fathers. In addition to state policy initiatives, CCTF testified for Congress regarding the benefits of infant home visitation and worked with the mayors of two major CT cities to improve outcomes for children and families at risk.
- **Outreach to Special Populations/Cultural Competence:** CCTF received a grant from the Kellogg Foundation to serve hard-to-reach families. Home visits were made to families without phones or transportation. Family assessments were completed, and connections arranged to appropriate resources. In addition, mothers whose newborns were in the NICU were screened for family risk; prevention services were located in schools with high concentrations of poverty and diverse populations; and program curriculum tailored to diverse cultures was translated into Spanish. CCTF provided a parenting program within prisons for inmates re-entering the community.
- **Parent involvement/leadership:** Three members of the CCTF governing Council were parents. CCTF-funded programs included parents on their Boards. Parent input was an important component of the annual needs assessment, and parent satisfaction surveys were conducted in many funded programs.



Finally, CCTF offered Parent Leadership Training to encourage parent involvement in all aspects of their children's lives.

- Evaluation:** The statewide, evidence-based home visiting program, NFN, was based on assessment and analysis of community needs and identified gaps in services. Outcomes included improved maternal expectations for their children, lower rates of child abuse compared to populations similarly at risk, improvements in education and employment, and high rates of successful referrals to other services. CCTF worked in collaboration with academic institutions to process-evaluate all CCTF-funded programs. These evaluations resulted in reports for each site as well as aggregate reports on all similar programs. In addition to the two randomized control studies mentioned in the policy section above, evaluations examined the outcomes of training for NFN home visitors, the effectiveness of NFN parenting groups, the needs and circumstances of fathers involved in home visiting, and the effect of FDC training on the culture and approach of child abuse prevention agencies.
- Support Training, Technical Assistance, and Evaluation Assistance:** CCTF assisted their funded programs in peer review. Successful strategies from exemplary sites were shared with sites struggling with such matters as engagement, retention, and curriculum supervision. Family Development Training and Credentialing was offered to home visitors in CCTF-funded programs and Community Action Programs, and training in child abuse prevention was provided for a range of professionals including law enforcement and mental health. A parenting curriculum training was presented to hundreds of providers to improve effectiveness of parenting education practices. CCTF trained Health care providers to use the Ages and Stages (ASQ) developmental monitoring tool. CCTF sponsored regular networking meetings for NFN, FSC, Help Me Grow, and Family Empowerment programs. In addition, Child Abuse Prevention Month included a statewide shaken baby syndrome prevention forum and. Quality Improvement Teams worked with several programs to apply research to practice.

Participants receiving direct services	# individuals	14,372	# families	6,580
	# children with disabilities		# parents with disabilities	103
Reach	# local grantees	50		
Spread	# training sessions on evidence-based and best practices		# professionals participating in training	3521



## ESSENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

A public/private, interagency, interdisciplinary Council governed CCTF. It included state officials, parents, child development/child abuse prevention professionals, and representatives of the business community. CCTF also was involved in many other partnerships at the local, state and federal levels. Examples include the Early Childhood Cabinet, the United Way, and the governments of New Haven and Hartford.

### Key partners:

#### Public Sector

- Child welfare
- Differential or alternative response
- Public health/ maternal and child health
- Education and special education
- Early childhood
- Home visiting
- Mental health
- Head Start/ Early Head Start

- Fatherhood programs

#### Private Sector

- Advocacy organizations
- Parent organizations
- Foundations
- Exchange Clubs
- United Way
- Community Action Programs
- Academic research organizations

## SYSTEM CHANGE EFFORTS

- **Early Childhood:** CCTF served on the Early Childhood Cabinet that worked to develop a coordinated system of family support, early care and education. CCTF also served on the Early Care Consultation Partnership. CCTF provided training in the ASQ and shaken baby prevention to Head Start programs.
- **Child and Family Service Reviews/Program Improvement Plan (CFRS/PIP):** Not mentioned, although CCTF did work on a project to encourage use of alternative response that helps service providers engage families on a voluntary basis before they are mandated for child welfare services.
- **Home Visiting:** CCTF helped to develop an evidence-based home visiting program (NFN) that was funded by the state and serves more than 2000 families in 42 locations. This home visiting program worked in collaboration with 29 birthing hospitals. In FY 2009, CCTF brought mental health services into homes of depressed mothers. CCTF introduced state legislation to create male home visiting positions. Although this legislation was not passed, it can provide a foundation and framework for more effective services to fathers in the future.
- **State Interagency Coordinating Council for Part C:** Not mentioned, although services to infants and toddlers with disabilities were offered. For example, screening of families of infants in NICU, and Help Me Grow.
- **Strengthening Families:** CCTF is the state lead agency for Strengthening Families, which was in the early stages of development during FY 2009.



- **Federal efforts:** CCTF worked with members of Congress and national stakeholders on the CBCAP and home visiting legislation.

## FUNDING AND FISCAL LEVERAGING

### ***Fiscal Leveraging***

#### **Innovative funding mechanisms:**

- CCTF blends funds from State and private resources to provide Parent Leadership Training, Child Sexual Abuse Prevention, Child Abuse Prevention Month public awareness, in-home mental health therapy services, shaken baby prevention, and kinship care initiatives.

State Allowable Claims	<b>14,774,011</b>
Population-based Allocations	<b>276,924</b>
Leveraged-Funds-Based Allocations	<b>482,429</b>
<b>Final FY 08 Federal Grant Amount</b>	<b>688,384</b>

## EVIDENCE-BASED AND EVIDENCE-INFORMED PRACTICES

Level per Program Assessment Rating Tool	CBCAP Funding
Programs Lacking Support or Positive Evidence/Undetermined/Harmful	0
Emerging and Evidence-informed Programs and Practices	\$20,000
Promising Programs and Practices	\$196,000
Supported Programs and Practices	0
Well Supported Programs and Practices	0

## TRAINING TOPICS

CCTF provided the Family Development Training and Credentialing program to hundreds of social service workers across the state; it trained health care professionals and Head Start programs in use of the Ages and Stages developmental monitoring tool; it introduced a parenting curriculum statewide to improve parenting programs; it provided child abuse prevention training to law enforcement personnel and mental health professionals; and it sponsored a statewide forum on shaken baby prevention.

### **Administrative and Management Topics**

- collaboration and partnerships for prevention
- fiscal leveraging

### **Programmatic and Service Topics**

- cultural competence



- evaluation and data management
- program monitoring and continuous quality improvement
- grant reporting requirements
- strategic planning
- research on prevention and child maltreatment
- evidence-based and evidence-informed programs and practices
- home visiting
- prevention programs and family support
- promoting protective factors and reducing risk factors
- marketing, messaging and public awareness

## RESOURCES

- [Http://www.ct.gov/ctf/site/default.asp](http://www.ct.gov/ctf/site/default.asp)
- Annual State Profiles: [www.friendsnrc.org/](http://www.friendsnrc.org/)
- [State of Connecticut Portal](#)  
[211/Infoline](#)

