



CT FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS

*Family Engagement
Social and Emotional Learning
Child and Family Support*

March 9, 2021

CT Family Resource Center Alliance

Testimony of Cathy Battista, President

To the Appropriations Committee

The best results will be achieved as we leverage existing and/or advance new school-family-community partnership structures. ESSERS II Priorities

Senator McCrory, Representative Felipe, Senator Somers, Senator McCarty and the distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Cathy Battista and I am the president of the Connecticut Family Resource Center Alliance. I want to first thank you for your on-going support. I am here to testify on the urgent need for additional funding for the Family Resource Centers. Increase annual state funding appropriations for the Family Resource Centers respond to the urgent needs of families today and in the future.

Presently we have 57 sites located in 40 School districts. Just 2 years ago, we had 74 sites. Our required grant components wrap around the whole family (see list). We have always done so much with so little, but we are now beyond our breaking point as families reach out to us for help – help that some never thought they would need. Established in 1988, FRCs were part of the national movement to promote the importance of early childhood and its link to school achievement.

We are your 'go-to' organization now, more than ever – because we're a state-wide network, because we offer a broad range of services; because we're the experts in our field (adults and young children), because we do not duplicate services, because we have strong collaborations, because we're easily accessible, and because we have a proven track record. And we connect families to vital services outside of the classroom.

A funding increase of \$15,000 per site would provide:

- additional staff to handle increased service utilization
- robust summer program for adults and children
- programs, trainings and resources for children entering kindergarten in Fall, 2021
- expansion of developmental screening for more children – early prevention
- increased hours/days of operation to increase the number of families served
- cost of living increases – FRC grant does not include this
- funding for resources, software, supplies, computers
- resources needed during the pandemic, during recovery and beyond
- funding for ‘satellite’ FRCs (modified program) at schools that previously housed one (16 sites-see attached)
- implementing early childhood activities during closures

Examples: Summer Family Readiness Program

Family Academy

We have been asked by multiple national and state organizations to collaborate: OEC, DPH, WBDC, National Family Support Network, pediatricians, and others. Last year, in response to the pandemic, the OEC asked us to help develop a network of multiple organizations to address the needs of licensed Family Child Care Providers. It has become a trend.

[CT SDE State Level Priorities-ESSERSII](#)

*Among other opportunities to increase initiatives that engage school, family and community connections, schools should engage “**Family Academy**” programs aimed at providing parents and guardians with the skills to support their children’s academic endeavors, including those skills necessary to support technology use in the home. [CT SDE State Level Priorities-ESSERSII](#)*

Now’s the time for Family Resource Centers to EXPAND, ENHANCE and

Hope to see you at the CT FRC Alliance ‘**Story Time**’ **Advocacy Event** – date TBA.

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