

For Immediate Release

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RECOGNIZED AS A NATIONAL EVIDENCED-BASED MODEL CHILD FIRST EXPANDS THROUGHOUT CONNECTICUT

Farmington, CT - **Families of young children in Middlesex County, Stamford, and Windham County will soon be able to access Child FIRST services in their communities. Thanks to support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Grossman Family Foundation, training begins today to replicate the Child FIRST model in these three new communities along with New Britain.** Child FIRST is a highly effective home-based intervention designed to decrease emotional disturbances, developmental and learning problems, and child abuse and neglect among young children (prenatal-6 years) living in high-risk environments. The model is delivered in the child's home by a Master's level Mental Health Clinician and a Bachelor's level Care Coordinator.

"Based on the latest scientific research in early brain development, Child FIRST is designed to decrease high environmental or "toxic" stress and facilitate a nurturing parent-child relationship and secure attachment," said developmental pediatrician and Child FIRST founder and executive director, Darcy Lowell, M.D.

The Child FIRST model has been recognized nationally as an evidence-based practice. The success of Child FIRST in producing highly significant and clinically effective outcomes for children and families has been documented through a randomized controlled research trial (the highest level of scientific rigor). Based on strong, positive research outcomes for both children and parents, Child FIRST has been officially designated by the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as one of nine national, "evidence-based home visiting models" for national replication.

Originally developed in Bridgeport in 2001, the Child FIRST model continues to be successfully replicated throughout Connecticut using a Learning Collaborative approach. In 2010, the Connecticut Center for Effective Practice (CCEP) at the Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut (CHDI) worked with Child FIRST leadership to adapt Learning Collaborative methodology to bring Child FIRST to Greater Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, New London County, Norwalk and Waterbury. The goal is to have a Child FIRST program in each of the 15 Connecticut Department of Children and Families Areas. A Learning Collaborative brings four to six participating communities together to learn a new practice or treatment approach.

"A Learning Collaborative is the most successful approach we know of for replicating evidenced-based practice models," said Dr. Bob Franks, Vice President of CHDI and Director of CCEP. "The approach uses multi-modal learning opportunities, ongoing collection of outcome data, and continuous quality improvement strategies to maintain fidelity to the original model."



CAPTION: Judith Meyers, CHDI President and CEO, welcomes Child FIRST Learning Collaborative participants from Middlesex County, Stamford, Windham County and New Britain to the start of training to expand Child FIRST to these four communities. Child FIRST is a highly effective home-based intervention designed to decrease emotional disturbances, developmental and learning problems, and child abuse and neglect among young children (prenatal-6 years) living in high-risk environments.

For more information, see: www.childfirst.net, [CHDI Issue Brief #3: Addressing the Developmental Needs of Infants in CT's Child Welfare System: The Role of Child FIRST](#) and [CHDI Issue Brief #5: The Learning Collaborative Model: An Engine for Change](#).

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