

**Stamford School Readiness Council**  
**Health & Wellness Committee Meeting**  
**Monday, January 9, 2012**  
**12:00-1:15 p.m.**  
**Child Guidance Center, 103 West Broad Street**

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Attendees**

Dr. Madhu Mathur; <i>Chair, Health &amp; Wellness Committee</i>	Director KIDS' FANS Wellness Program; Medical Director, Regional Medical Home Initiative, Southwest CT, Stamford Hospital and Chair, Obesity Task Force, Stamford
Karen Brennan	Stamford Discovery Coordinator, United Way of Western CT
Jennienne Burke	Health Educator, Care to Care (Family Centers)
Angelica Camacho	Behavioral Health Coordinator, Community Health Center, Inc.
Lucia Cook	Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator, Literacy Volunteers Stamford/Greenwich
Kerri Hager	Health Educator, Health Department, City of Stamford
Pat Malloy	Instructional Coordinator, William Pitt Child Development Center
Sherry Perlstein	Executive Director, Child Guidance Center
Dr. Debby Schreiner	Instructional Coordinator, William Pitt Child Guidance Center
Ellen Swan	Early Childhood Consultation, Mid-Fairfield Child Guidance Center

**Guests**

Ellie Hartog	Director, Interagency Collaboratives, Child Guidance Center
Dr. Larry Rosenberg	Director, Child Guidance Center/West Broad Street

**Welcome and Introductions (Dr. Madhu Mathur)**

Dr. Mathur restated the importance of the work the Health and Wellness Committee is doing this year as we focus on the topic of mental health. This is similar to last year's focus on nutrition and obesity.

**Child First Grant News & Next Steps (Sherry Perlstein)**

As the Committee knows, Stamford applied for and received a Child FIRST (Child and Family Interagency Resource, Support and Training) grant. By way of background, in March 2010 it was announced that a \$3.2 million grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation would go towards replicating the Child FIRST program in communities outside of Bridgeport. Child FIRST is a model program to decrease the incidence of serious emotional disturbance, developmental and learning problems, and abuse and neglect among high-risk young children. Child FIRST works with pediatricians, teachers, and other community providers to identify, assess, and intervene with vulnerable children and their families.

Bridget Fox worked closely with Sherry and the Child Guidance Center staff on the application. Next steps include hiring a half time director by February and two full time psychotherapists and two full time care coordinators soon thereafter. Job descriptions will be shared with the Committee.

Importantly, this grant will enable the Child Guidance Center to help families when children are infants (and in some cases help their parents before these children are born), thereby hopefully preventing the need for future services later on. The Child FIRST grant keeps with the Child Guidance philosophy that understanding behaviors are as important as changing behaviors.

**Dr. Larry Rosenberg, Director of West Broad Street Facility, Child Guidance Center**

As part of our continuing efforts to highlight mental health over the course of our year, we invited Dr. Larry Rosenberg and Ellie Hartog from the Child Guidance Center to speak to the Committee on some of the growing trends in mental health.

Dr. Rosenberg spoke about the 0-11 demographic that is gradually increasing in its need for services. Part of this is due to the fact that these children are being exposed to more people who can help and part is due to the fact that there are more early childhood stressors. Stressors include substance abuse, bullying, sexual abuses, stress of immigration, and father absence, to name a few.

The group had a thoughtful discussion around the increasingly academic focus found in Kindergarten classrooms and the inherent stress this puts on children at such a young age.

**Ellie Hartog, Director of Interagency Collaboratives, Child Guidance Center**

Ellie shared a number of current statistics from a number of sources:

- Experts estimate that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthdays.
- 1 in 5 children are sexually solicited while on the Internet.
- Nearly 70% of all reported sexual assaults occur to children ages 17 and under.
- The median age for reported sexual abuse is 9 years old.
- Approximately 20% of the victims of sexual abuse are under age eight.
- Most child victims never report the abuse.
- Sexually abused children who keep it a secret or who “tell” and are not believed are at greater risk for than the general population for psychological, emotional, social, and physical problems, often lasting into adulthood.
- 30-40% of children are abused by family members.
- People who abuse children look and act just like everyone else. In fact, they often go out of their way to appear trustworthy to gain access to children.
- 70-80% of sexual abuse survivors report excessive drug and alcohol use.
- Young girls who are sexually abused are more likely to develop eating disorders as adolescents.

- More than 60% of teen first pregnancies are preceded by experiences of molestation, rape or attempted rape.

The Child Guidance Center is working to train “Discovers” – staff in the community who can learn how best to respond when a student is making a disclosure or when abuse is suspected. Trainings can be set up at anyone’s request.

Ellie shared a number of publications including “7 Steps to Protecting Our Children: From Darkness to Light”. The 7 steps to preventing, recognizing and reacting responsibly to child sexual abuse include:

- Step 1: Learn the facts. Understand the risks.
- Step 2: Minimize opportunity.
- Step 3: Talk about it.
- Step 4: Stay alert.
- Step 5: Make a plan.
- Step 6: Act on suspicions.
- Step 7: Get involved.

Additional information can be found at: [www.darkness2light.org](http://www.darkness2light.org).

### **Next Meeting**

Our next meeting will be on Monday, March 12 at the William Pitt Development Center.