

**Stamford School Readiness Council
Health & Wellness Committee Meeting
Monday, November 14, 2011
12:00-1:00 p.m.**

William Pitt Child Development Center, 195 Hillandale Avenue

MEETING SUMMARY

Attendees

Dr. Madhu Mathur; <i>Chair, Health & 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
Dr. Anne Brewer	Associate Director, Family Practice Program, Stamford Hospital
Jennienne Burke	Health Educator, Care to Care (Family Centers)
Karen Feder	Director of Youth Services, Abilis
Bridget Fox	Chair, Stamford School Readiness Council
Adele Gordon	Director, Fairfield County, Community Health Center, Inc.
Pat Malloy	Instructional Coordinator, William Pitt Child Development Center
Dr. Debby Schreiner	Instructional Coordinator, William Pitt Child Guidance Center
Ellen Swan	Early Childhood Consultation, Mid-Fairfield Child Guidance Center

Guests

Sonja Ahuja	Graustein Memorial Fund Discovery Liaison
Diana Desmoines	Americorps Member, Community Health Center, Inc.

Upcoming Events & News (Dr. Madhu Mathur and Bridget Fox)

Dr. Mathur welcomed everyone and shared the wonderful news that the application she and Bridget wrote to present a poster at the Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP) Conference in February 2012 has been accepted. This year's theme is *Improving Maternal and Child Health Across the Life Span: Acting Today for Healthy Tomorrows*. We are thrilled that Dr. Mathur will be representing us.

Bridget shared the news that Stamford has applied for 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 has worked closely with Sherry Perlstein from the Child Guidance Center on the application and they are partnering with Greenwich as well. Today is the site visit and we are hopeful to learn about the grant awards before the holidays.

Karen Brennan shared news of the Swingset Mamas benefit concert to be held this Friday, November 18 at the Ferguson Library. We have sold out all general performance tickets and have sold four VIP packages. We will have just over 200 people in attendance and all proceeds will go towards defraying costs of the December 8 trip to Goodnight Moon at the Palace Theater, our trip for our School Readiness and Head Start children who attend Childcare Learning Centers and Sacred Heart.

Oral Health Collaborative Meeting (Adele Gordon)

The Oral Health Collaborative held a meeting on October 17 at the Franklin Street Community Health Center. Adele shared their discussion around the needs of the community for specialty services from dentists who are able to perform root canals and extractions and periodontal care. There was significant discussion at the meeting about how to attract specialty dentists in Stamford to perform work on patients in need. There is some reluctance from dentists around getting involved in such ventures as it is a time commitment and can be complicated to work with patients that are not regular patients.

The Collaborative discussed ways to publicly recognize a dentist who has assisted with pro-bono dental work as a means to attract more dentists to follow this example. A small committee agreed to formulate an event in February 2012 (Dental Awareness Month) that would be held at Government Center with the Mayor recognizing the efforts of an exemplary Stamford dentist. The event could garner press and raise awareness within the dental community about the need for specialty services and the particular needs of the community.

Adele Gordon and Jody Bishop-Pullan will be leading the Collaborative going forward.

As part of today's discussion, Dr. Mathur asked that Adele put together some statistics on what Stamford's dental needs are, and how many people are currently being served.

Ellen Swan, Mid-Fairfield Child Guidance Center

As part of our continuing efforts to highlight mental health over the course of our year, we invited Ellen Swan from the Early Childhood Consultation Partnership, Mid-Fairfield Child Guidance Center to speak on the topic of conflict resolution.

The Early Childhood Consultation Partnership is a statewide program funded by the Department of Children and Families and managed by Advanced Behavioral Health, Inc. It is designed to offer Early Childhood educators and families relationship-based consultation services. These services focus upon the healthy social and emotional development of children birth to five. The overall services offered are based upon a continuum from brief phone consultation to center-based consultation to child-specific consultation. Interventions are largely determined by a collaborative effort of directors, teachers, support staff, families and consultants.

The Early Childhood Consultation Partnership collaborates with a number of organizations such as Catholic Charities (Bridgeport, Danbury, Hartford, and Child Guidance Clinics, such as the one Ellen works out of, as well as many others.

Ellen spoke today on conflict resolution and gave a brief snapshot of her work. She shared a number of handouts, including the 6 steps to supporting children in resolving conflicts:

1. Approach the situation calmly. Stop any hurtful or harmful behavior.
2. Acknowledge feelings. Give words for what you see happening.
3. Gather information. Help children identify what they need and hear what others may need.
4. Restate the problem. Help children understand what the problem is.
5. Ask for ideas and possible solutions and choose on together.
6. Give follow-up support as needed.

Importantly, as educators and parents, it is important to help children negotiate conflict, but equally as important to recognize times when you “catch children being good.” Children need to hear positive reinforcement as much as possible and this will set the stage for better behavior as they grow.

Ellen shared a few other helpful nuggets from her work:

- One of her favorite sayings is: “The more you CONNECT – the less you CORRECT!”
- She often refers to the Ten “To Dos” for Discipline (handout included with summary).
- It’s important to remember that the reality of what someone is saying is not always what someone is perceiving. Be aware of your body language and facial expressions when resolving a conflict with someone.
- *Dealing with Disappointment: Helping Kids Cope When Things Don’t Go Their Way*, by Elizabeth Crary, is an excellent resource she highly recommends. The book description: *Learning to cope with disappointment and dissatisfaction is a skill kids have to learn. Without it, how will they handle routine – and serious – obstacles and frustrations throughout life? This easy-to-read guide provides exercises and examples that demonstrate how even toddlers can cope with their emotions, using self-calming techniques and problem-solving tools. Parents too often overwhelmed by frustrated children will appreciate Elizabeth Crary’s straightforward suggestions on surviving emotional meltdowns and preventing future problems.*

Ellen can be reached at (203) 856-7572 or eswan@mfcgc.org if anyone has further questions or wished to know more about the services she provides.

Next Meeting

We will be next meeting on Monday, January 9 at the Family Centers, Palmer’s Hill Road in Stamford.