First Exploration: Federal Spending in Children’s Programs

**Rationale:**

No matter what the future bears for the federal budget picture, we must do all we can to ensure that we make the most of every precious resource. Now more than ever, a stakeholder discussion is needed to explore where spending realignment and increased regulatory flexibility might hold the potential to enhance the value of every currently appropriated federal dollar.

Our exploration begins with the very youngest of American citizens, who are also the most vulnerable to missed opportunities to make every dollar appropriated on their behalf count. In the Administration for Children & Families own words, “Federal laws have a significant impact on how States fund and deliver child protection, child welfare, and adoption programs and services.” In this exploration, we will look at federal laws that impact how states fund and deliver children’s health and education programs as well as the juvenile justice system.

Exploring where potential opportunities exist for realignment of federal funds and flexibility in program design for children’s programs may hold the potential to advance the implementation of evidence-based interventions that increases accountability and provides services in the right place, at the right time to produce healthier outcomes for children and youth and ultimately, families. This discussion will help enable elected officials and other key policy makers on every level of government to lead the way into a territory where every precious and finite resources expended by government is better aligned to meet its targeted goal.

***INCREASING VALUE:* AN EXPLORATORY DISCUSSION TO IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO REALIGN FEDERAL FUNDS TO MAKE THE MOST OF EVERY DOLLAR CURRENTLY ALLOCATED TO ENSURE THE HEALTH & WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN**

**Friday, August 10, 2012, 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

**Riverfront Boathouse, 20 Liebert Road, Hartford**

**Agenda**

**10:30 a.m. Registration and Coffee/tea out on the Boathouse porch**

**10: 45 a.m.** Press Availability-Boathouse (closed to press after 11 a.m.)

**11:00 a.m.** Welcome/Introduction of Congressman Larson

**Karen Foley-Schain, Connecticut Children’s Trust Fund**

The Importance of the Discussion

**Congressman Larson**

Connecticut’s Hope for Children

**Governor Dannel Malloy**

**11:20 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Jonathan Greenblatt, Social Innovation & Civic Participation,**

**The White House**

**11:30-11:40 a.m. George Sheldon, Assistant Secretary, Administration for Children & Families, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services**

**11: 40 a.m.-11:45 a.m.** Guidance for the exploration   
**Discussion Moderator:** **Roderick Bremby, Connecticut Department of Social Services**

**11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.** Three Policy Discussions

**Economic perspective: why the issue matters to the states - the cost of poor childhood outcomes on state economies**  
  
**·** **Dr. Dennis Embry, Paxis Institute, Inc.** This presentation will make the critical connection between child development and the health of economy.

**Children’s policy: how shifting child welfare policy and other federal spending to support better outcomes for children**  
·        **Laurie Davis, MSW, LISW Partner Advance Consulting, LLC** This presentation will make the case for realigning federal funding streams and opportunities that come with reform.

**Cost effectiveness: what changes will lead the best return on investment**

·         **Ron Haskins, Ph.D. Co-Director of the Center on Children and Families, Brookings Institute** This presentation will focus on shifting federal spending to methods and strategies that have the highest return on investment.

**12:30 p.m. Break**

**Stakeholder Lunch Discussion**

**12:45 p.m. Open discussion moderated by Commissioner Bremby**

Here participants engage in a planning and problem solving discussion facilitated by the Commissioner. The discussion would examine the pros and cons of shifting federal dollars, probe the effectiveness of the current funding streams, how they could be put to better use to improve child development outcomes, build on family strengths, and reduce child abuse and neglect.

**1:50-3:00 p.m. Next Steps/Wrap up by Congressman Larson and other Members of the CT Delegation (to be specifically named once participation is confirmed)**

**Objective for Event:**

*This exploration will focus on identifying where flexibility and realignment of existing federal appropriations might exist in order to better support efforts to improve outcomes for children and families, thus shifting program delivery to a proactive, strength-based model rather than the costly, reactive model that perpetuates a cycle of poverty, abuse, health and educational gaps, unemployment…failure.*