



**2008**

# Connecticut's Family Day Experience

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## History and Legislation

In 1997, Senator Crisco proposed legislation to create a statewide event which celebrated families. The legislation passed, and Public Act 97-288 was born. This Public Act established Connecticut's Family Day which is observed every September with activities at the State Capitol and across the state. Senator Crisco has worked closely with DCF in making this event a reality and over the years, numerous other agencies have joined in to plan this huge event. This year will mark the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and we are anticipating extra special events all over the great state of Connecticut.

Connecticut's Family Day's overriding theme: "Valuing Connecticut's Families...It's Everybody's Business" remains the same, reinforcing the message that families are Connecticut's greatest resource and that all sectors of Connecticut's society have the privilege and obligation to honor them. Each Year there is a special theme that supports the overarching one and this year's theme will be "Families - Connecticut's Greatest Resource."

Last year, over 300 events were planned across Connecticut. Many new state agencies and community organizations participated. Family Day 2008 expects even more participation.

## Family Day Committee:

**Current Partners:** Connecticut Clearinghouse, Department of Children and Families, Governor's Prevention Partnership, Office of Protection and Advocacy, Office of Culture and Tourism, Senator Crisco's Office, State Department of Education and UCONN Cooperative Extension.

**Agencies Involved in the Past:** CT Academy of Pediatrics, Department of Information Technology, Department of Social Services, Department of Corrections, Department of Public Health, Connecticut Academy of Pediatrics and the Department of Labor.

*NOTE: throughout this document the words "parents" and "families" will both be used in the broadest sense to mean those adults with primary responsibility for children. We prefer to use "family" instead of parent because not all responsible agents are biological parents, but most consider themselves "family," either by relationship or function. This consideration also applies to all families who are united under the State of Connecticut's Civil Union Laws and also includes all single parent families.*



**2008**

# Connecticut's Family Day Experience (Continued)

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## **Purpose of January 24, 2008, Breakfast**

- To engage, and in some cases to re-engage, people in Family Day
- To expand membership of the Family Day Committee
- To solicit support and funding streams
- To brainstorm about specific family functions
- To recruit municipalities and localities to participate
- To advertise for the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Family Day

## **Did you Know?...**

Connecticut Family Day brings together many state agencies, community service providers and family members with the purpose of emphasizing the importance of families in the lives of children. Family Day is trying to link all those groups that work with and for families so they can share information and identify the gaps and duplication in services. Family Day is working to create a more family-friendly Connecticut.

One of the goals of the Family Day is to share a common definition of "Family Support" to guide planning, policy development and service delivery at the state and local levels.

## **Connecticut's Definition of Family Support**

### **What is Family Support?**

Family Support is a set of beliefs and an approach that acknowledge and build upon the many strengths and resources of all families and their communities

### **Who...**

All families, health, education and human service systems, businesses and other public and private organizations are guided by the families they serve and family support beliefs.

### **What...**

To be more proactive, preventive, empowering, community-based, culturally competent, flexible, family-focused, strength-based and comprehensive

### **Why...**

So all Connecticut children and families can maximize their potential.



# Connecticut's Family Day Experience (Continued)

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## Media / Publicity

- A family Day Banner is hung on the wall across the street from the Bushnell during the week of Family Day, September 14 - 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Posters are distributed through libraries and other partners across the state focusing on distressed towns and priority school districts.
- Press release announcing the Governor's proclamation declaring the date of Family Day
- Radio Interviews
- Website ([www.ctfamilyday.org](http://www.ctfamilyday.org))

## Community Events

Mini-grants of \$200 are awarded through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to assist and encourage localities to produce events. Any organization can apply to receive these funds, via an RFP and any family centered event will be considered. All towns, communities, libraries, museums, family attractions and others are encouraged to apply.

## Theme

The overriding theme is "Valuing Connecticut's Families...It's Everybody's Business." Each Year there is a special theme that supports the overarching one and this year's will be 'Families - Connecticut's Greatest Resource.'

## Timeline

- January - Kick-off breakfast (Begin monthly e-mail alerts)
- February - Develop enhanced website and revise RFP
- March - Launch Poster Contest and website
- April - Child Abuse Prevention Month
- May - RFP Released
- June - Family Day RFP grant applications due
- July - Grant winner's announced
- August - Begin media blitz, radio interviews, press releases
- September - Governor's proclamation, banner hung, local and statewide Family Day events begin. Main event at the LOB with booths / tables displaying state agencies family resources



# Connecticut's Family Day Experience (Continued)

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## Possible Inputs

- Resources for families at main event and throughout the state at local events (e.g., buttons, bookmarks, brochures, pens, bags, gift certificates, giveaways)
- Advertising and publicity of Family Day
- Where to display Family Day posters and what type of e-mails to disseminate
- Representatives to participate on the Family Day Committee
- Other - as decided by each agency.

## Possible Outcomes

- Positive publicity and awareness on families
- Increased awareness of and use of state parks by families
- Increased awareness of resources and support for families
- Increased awareness of job and educational opportunities
- Increased awareness of families needs
- Increased partnerships and collaboration between and among state agencies regarding families and cross collaboration of services
- Increased community cohesiveness and support for families

## Principles to Guide Family Day Programs

Connecticut's Family Day Programs should:

- Respect families as equal partners
- Build on families strengths and respond to the needs of the entire family
- Recognize families as valuable resources to their children, other families, their communities and to the programs that support them.
- Acknowledge the unique cultural and personal identities of families
- Be rooted in communities and help communities to be responsive to all their members
- Be fair, responsive and accountable to the families we serve
- Help families to use and strengthen both formal programs and informal sources of support
- Have the flexibility to respond to changing situations within families and their communities, and
- Model the principles of family support in all they do.



# Connecticut's Family Day Experience (Continued)

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## Family Day Beliefs

- Families are the greatest natural resources to their children. Families have primary responsibility for the well being of their children.
- Family support programs help families to successfully parent their children and should be available to all families who need assistance
- The development of children and their families is influenced by the culture, community and society in which they live.
- Families know their children best and raise them according to their history, beliefs, cultural background and the unique characteristics of their children
- Families are in the best position to know their own strengths and needs. Building on the capacities of families helps them to raise healthy children.
- Then challenges of parenthood change as children grow and family circumstances change. Families may need different supports at difference stages of development
- Families are empowered to make good decisions when they have access to information about services, supports and resource. When families make good choices and take action, they improve the well-being of their children, families and communities.

NOTE: adapted by Family Support Connecticut from *Making the Case for Family Support*, Family Resource Coalition of America, 20 North Wacker Drive, Suite 1100, Chicago. IL 1996