





CT Voices for Children



First for Kids 2008 Celebration





*Honoring citizens for
effective advocacy
and public leadership
on behalf of all of
Connecticut's children,
youth and families*



December 4, 2008

*The New Haven Lawn Club
193 Whitney Avenue
New Haven, Connecticut*

5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.



*Connecticut Voices for Children
33 Whitney Avenue
New Haven, CT 06510*



*53 Oak Street, Suite 15
Hartford, CT 06106*

About Connecticut Voices for Children

Connecticut Voices for Children is a statewide, research and policy organization that works at the state and federal levels to advance strategic public investment and wise public policies to benefit our state's children, youth and families. We believe that *all* of Connecticut's young people should grow up healthy and safe, have opportunities for successful learning from birth through adulthood, live free from the limiting effects of poverty, prosper under the loving guidance of caring adults, and have the opportunity to give something back to their communities along the way.

Connecticut Voices works on a variety of issues, including early care, K-12 and higher education, children's health and mental health, foster care and juvenile justice, youth development, and state and federal tax and budget. Our research and policy reports are widely cited by the media and other organizations and are published on our Web site at www.ctkidslink.org. Our communications program includes sending E-Notes, an electronic newsletter, to more than 2,000 residents of Connecticut and beyond, as well as maintaining listservs on a variety of topics. We host many informational forums that bring Connecticut and national leaders together to share "best practice" thinking on a variety of policy and budget issues.

A strong supporter of working through coalition, Connecticut Voices for Children is a founding member of the CT Juvenile Justice Alliance, the CT Early Childhood Alliance, and One Connecticut: The Campaign to End Poverty and Build Economic Security. We also coordinate the Covering Connecticut's Kids and Families Coalition. Connecticut Voices continues to be very proud of our role as a founding partner in Camp Totokett, the widely-honored Greater New Haven area summer experience for children whose families are living

with HIV/AIDS. At the national level, Connecticut Voices is a state partner in the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities' State Fiscal Analysis Initiative, the Economic Policy Institute's Economic Analysis and Research Network, the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, and Voices for America's Children. We also serve on the steering committees of a number of these groups.

Connecticut Voices for Children celebrates the accomplishment and service of state and local leaders through our First for Kids Awards. Our internship program attracts talented college and graduate students who desire a range of experiences in policy analysis and advocacy, while our Albert J. Solnit Fellowships offer full-time positions to exceptional recent college graduates with a strong interest in advancing public policy to benefit children and youth. Our innovative partnership with Yale Law School's Legislative Advocacy Clinic provides Connecticut Voices with the able assistance of fourteen to sixteen law students each year. Connecticut Voices, in turn, provides these students with hands-on experience in the legislative process.

And because policy change is often possible only through legislation, Connecticut Voices works closely with our partner lobbying organization, Advocates for Connecticut's Children and Youth, to advance — through the Connecticut General Assembly and state agencies — the sound policy and budget choices necessary for the health and well-being of our youngest residents and their families, and Connecticut's future.

8th Annual
First for Kids
Ceremony

Welcome

State Policy Leader Award

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal

Legislative Leadership Award

Jonathan Harris

Transformational Philanthropy Award

Connecticut Health Foundation

Community Leadership Award

Center for Youth Leadership

Priscilla Canny Research Award

Walter S. Gilliam, Ph.D.

CT Voices for Children Founders' Award

Shelley Geballe

Closing Remarks



STATE POLICY LEADER AWARD

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal

Among State Attorneys General, Richard Blumenthal stands apart in his aggressive advocacy on behalf of Connecticut's children. First elected in 1990, he is serving an unprecedented fifth term as Attorney General. Blumenthal's aggressive law enforcement in the areas of consumer protection, environmental stewardship, labor rights and personal privacy, has helped reshape the role of State Attorneys General nationwide and to recover hundreds of millions of dollars for Connecticut taxpayers and consumers each year. His advocacy has forced reforms in the health insurance industry to assure critical health care coverage and lower pharmaceutical drug prices. He has successfully fought unfair utility rate charges, environmental wrongdoing, and scams and frauds victimizing

Over these many years, Mr. Blumenthal has earned a reputation as a steadfast advocate for Connecticut's children and youth. Often working together with the Office of the Child Advocate, he has conducted studies and issued reports calling for independent licensing and oversight of state-funded facilities, an overhaul of the state's Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program, and better management of the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF). His recommended DCF reforms have included an improved system for the reporting of abuse and mismanagement, checks to guarantee that child abuse and neglect complaints are competently investigated, and the establishment of a long-term planning unit in the Department. He also has acted on behalf of children and youth who are not in state care, including his work on landmark agreements and settlements with state colleges and universities to thwart conflicts of interest in the student financial aid industry.

Attorney General Blumenthal has been an intrepid advocate for children's health programs, fighting consistently for more than thirteen years for greater transparency and accountability in Connecticut's Medicaid managed care system. He recently joined with the State's Child Advocate and the Healthcare Advocate to call on Governor Rell to make changes in the HUSKY program's managed care contracts that would ensure that children and parents have access to enough health care providers.

Attorney General Blumenthal's leadership and advocacy for children has extended beyond Connecticut's borders. He helped lead a coalition

of all 50 states in an effort to better protect children from Internet predators, culminating in an historic agreement with MySpace and other social networking sites. He also helped lead the national fight against Big Tobacco to stop deceptive marketing aimed at children -- a victory that has significantly lowered youth smoking rates, and resulted in a multibillion dollar settlement for Connecticut taxpayers.

He has fought and sued the federal government for failing to follow or enforce environmental laws and energy statutes, and for imposing on local taxpayers unfunded multi-million dollar mandates under the No Child Left Behind law. This year, he led efforts to reverse restrictive rules imposed by the Bush administration that could result in thousands of Connecticut children losing HUSKY health coverage.

Blumenthal has previously served as administrative assistant to U.S. Senator Abraham A. Ribicoff, as a law clerk to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Harry A. Blackmun, and as U.S. Attorney for Connecticut. He also served in the Connecticut House of Representatives and the State Senate. Attorney Blumenthal graduated from Harvard College and Yale Law School, where he was editor of the Yale Law Journal.

For his persistence, and creative leadership in using his Office to protect the well-being of Connecticut's children, Connecticut Voices presents the State Policy Award to Attorney General Richard Blumenthal.



LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP AWARD

Jonathan Harris

Senator Jonathan Harris, after only three years in the General Assembly, has become a leader on issues affecting children and youth in Connecticut. In his role as co-chair of the Human Services Committee, he has championed transparency in the state's HUSKY and Medicaid programs (which serve over 500,000 Connecticut residents, half of whom are children under the age of 21) and wise investments in health care and other services for our children and youth.

In 2007, Senator Harris spoke forcefully on the floor of the Senate about the need for increased legislative oversight of attempts by the Department of Social Services to change the rules governing health care in the Medicaid program. With Senator Harris leading the charge, the legislature took the rare step of overruling the Governor's veto and the oversight requirement became law.

Senator Harris has not been afraid to ask tough (but polite) questions at public hearings, at Medicaid Managed Care Council meetings, and elsewhere about the state's decision to combine HUSKY with the new Charter Oak Health Plan for uninsured adults, and the impact that has had on access to care for kids and families who rely on HUSKY. In taking on these challenges of speaking up for HUSKY families, Senator Harris has not shied away from learning the complicated alphabet soup of Medicaid policy and practice, and from listening to the many stakeholders who care deeply about improving the health and well-being of the state's children.

Jonathan Harris was elected state senator for the 5th District (serving Bloomfield, Burlington, Farmington and West Hartford) in November 2004, and was overwhelmingly re-elected to a second term in November 2006. Senator Harris was originally elected to complete the term of Senator Kevin Sullivan, who took over as lieutenant governor, and started serving a full term in January 2005.

Senator Harris is chairman of the Human Services Committee, vice chairman of the Planning and Development Committee, Ranking Member of the Regulations Review Committee and a member of the Appropriations Committee.

Prior to his election, Senator Harris served as the mayor of West Hartford. He was elected to the West Hartford Town Council in 2001 and was serving his second term as mayor when he was elected to the Senate. During his tenure as mayor, Senator Harris was a leader in the planning and development of the \$150 million Blue Back Square project.

Senator Harris also served as a member of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Property Tax Reform and Smart Growth. He has experienced first hand how over-reliance on the regressive property tax has affected cities and towns.

He has also served as counsel to the Democratic Caucus of the House of Representatives.

Senator Harris has a long record of community service in West Hartford, including serving as a board member with the Senior Jobs Bank, the American School for the Deaf, the Noah Webster House, the Bridge, and the Jewish Federation.

An attorney, Senator Harris grew up in West Hartford, graduating from Hall High School in 1982. He earned a B.A. from Brandeis University in 1986. After working for former Congresswoman Barbara Kennelly, he earned a J.D. from New York University School of Law in 1990.

For his efforts to help improve and sustain the HUSKY health insurance program for children and families, as well as his many other good works on behalf of kids and youth, we are proud to present Senator Jonathan Harris with the Connecticut Voices for Children Legislative Leadership Award.



Pat Baker
President & CEO



Leo Canty
Board Chair

Question: What theme links all of the work of the Connecticut Health Foundation? *Answer:* Making change in critical areas too often overlooked by others. The Connecticut Health Foundation (CT Health), established in July 1999, is the state's largest independent, nonprofit grant-making foundation dedicated to improving the health of the people of Connecticut through systemic change and program innovation. Since it was established, CT Health has awarded grants totaling \$37.5 million. The Foundation is led by President and CEO Pat Baker and Board Chair Leo Canty.

In developing its funding priorities, the Foundation listened to the concerns of state agencies, community leaders and health care professionals and in the process learned about three health areas in need of increased attention: improving access to children's mental health services, reducing racial and ethnic health disparities, and expanding access to and utilization of children's oral health services.

In the area of health disparities, the Foundation quickly recognized that inadequate data made effective problem identification, intervention, and assessment impossible. So it funded a number of initiatives to address this need, including projects to improve state data collection and planning efforts and to develop an innovative Health Equity Index measure. In addition, to help foster a generation of leaders committed to eliminating racial and ethnic health disparities in Connecticut, the Foundation created the Health Leadership Fellows program, which supports up to 20 Connecticut residents each year in increasing their knowledge and skills so they can better advocate for and lead effective intervention strategies.

To help address poor children's urgent need for better

TRANSFORMATIONAL PHILANTHROPY AWARD

Connecticut Health Foundation

access to oral health services, the Foundation used a different strategy, providing support for litigation that resulted in a successful settlement. The agreement will enable thousands of children enrolled in HUSKY to gain access to quality oral health care.

Early in the Foundation's history, it commissioned a CT Voices for Children report on children's mental health that highlighted the desperate need to enhance community-based mental health services for children and youth. The Foundation responded by providing grants to support and enhance Connecticut's local systems of care, parent advocacy efforts, and initiatives to identify and disseminate best practice models of mental health care. More recently, the Foundation has awarded multiple Children's Mental Health Planning Grants to develop comprehensive, community-based systems of early intervention, assessment and brief intervention.

The Foundation's work extends beyond these three topical areas, however. It also fosters discussions about public health issues by convening meetings, conferences, educational briefings, and grantee technical assistance workshops. It invests resources to conduct objective, nonpartisan policy research on issues important to the public health care debate.

And the Foundation's research has results. For example, when a Foundation-sponsored analysis found that a planned increase in HUSKY health insurance premiums for children would result in thousands of children losing coverage, the General Assembly quickly reversed course and dropped the premium increase. More recently, the Foundation's Policy Briefs concerning medical interpretation for persons with limited English proficiency helped pass legislation requiring the provision of medical interpretation in the Medicaid program, and additional funds to cover the expense.

For its strategic and path-breaking leadership in catalyzing change in health care delivery and public health, Connecticut Voices for Children is pleased to present the Connecticut Health Foundation with the Transformational Philanthropy Award.



COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD

Center for Youth Leadership

The Center for Youth Leadership in Norwalk, led by director and founder Bob Kocienda, is entering its 10th year of promoting and supporting youth-led social change with students in the local high schools. The project, initiated through conversations with students, now involves 273 students in four Norwalk high schools. The project is headquartered at Brien McMahon High School. While many high schools have community service programs, few are so complex and far-reaching as that of the Center's, which is comprised of four elements: grant making, public awareness activities, volunteer projects, and social change initiatives.

In the 2008 legislative session, the Center joined Connecticut Voices in an effort to help ensure that education for foster children is not disrupted when they change foster families. The youth spoke to key legislators and generated e-mail campaigns to support a reform bill before the General Assembly. They recently worked successfully to convince the City of Norwalk and the Norwalk Board of Education to change its policies to require background checks for employees and volunteers who work with children.

They are selective, thoughtful and strategic in their choice of social action projects, conducting research and writing summary publications on their priority issues. They limit the number of issues they take on to help ensure that they can have an impact.

In the next legislative session, Center youth will work to convince state legislators to create laws that mandate background checks for employees of summer camps and require that education on teen dating violence be included in the curriculum for middle school and high school students.

They have extended their issue education beyond policy makers to a broader audience through creative public awareness activities. For example, last year they planted 9,000 brown paper lunch bags at the state capitol to represent children abused in Connecticut. Their Balloon Garden, which they plant at public spaces, includes 300 purple balloons demonstrating their support of teen dating violence victims. Their Crayon Garden, planted in support of abused children, includes 192 four-foot inflatable crayons. A street outreach campaign educates teens about dating violence and the state's safe haven program.

The youth also engage in hands-on volunteer work. They are the only group of teens in the state who volunteer every week of the year in child abuse and domestic violence safe houses. They are vigorously involved in supporting local day laborers, visiting a bridge in Norwalk that serves as a day laborer work site, hosting a health fair for workers, and even creating and staffing a wage abuse clinic for these workers.

They extend their influence beyond their own work through "socially engaged philanthropy." To raise money, they have written their own grants, held dances, and hosted a cabaret night. The Center has thus far awarded \$85,000 in grants to organizations that work with children who have experienced and/or witnessed abuse. In addition, the Center helped the Fairfield County Community Foundation to award \$524,000 in grants to youth leadership organizations.

The Center is the recipient of the Governor's Educational Citizenship Award, the Night of the Child Award from Prevent Child Abuse Connecticut, and the Mayor of Stamford's Youth Empowerment Award. To recognize their extraordinary and unique public service, Connecticut Voices for Children joins in the chorus of praise by awarding the Center for Youth Leadership our Community Leadership Award.



PRISCILLA CANNY RESEARCH AWARD

Walter S. Gilliam, Ph.D.

Though Connecticut is rich in research universities, too often what is learned in the ivory tower stays there. Opportunities are missed for that work to inform state and national policy and for troubling policy questions to be answered by the state's research community. Among the Connecticut researchers who best understand the potential of linking the researchers in our colleges and universities to those who make policy is Walter Gilliam.

Walter Gilliam, Ph.D, is an Assistant Professor at the Yale Child Study Center and the Director of its Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy. The Center's mission is to create and disseminate research that can be used to inform legislative and other policy efforts on behalf of children and families and to train future generations working at the intersection of research and policy development. Dr. Gilliam actively provides consultation to state and federal decision-makers, and his comments on early education are sought frequently by national and international news reporters.

Dr. Gilliam's research examines how early childhood policies translate into effective services, ways to improve the quality of pre-kindergarten and child care services, and the impact of early childhood programs on children's school readiness. He was a principal investigator for the National Pre-kindergarten Survey, the first-ever national study of the implementation of state-funded pre-kindergarten programs. His edited volume, *A Vision for Universal Preschool Education*, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2006. He also has written on child and family policy, child care, clinical assessments of infants and toddlers and other topics for widely-used textbooks, including *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry: A Comprehensive Textbook* (4th edition, 2007) and *Nelson Textbook of Pediatrics* (18th edition, 2007).

Dr. Gilliam's 2006 report on preschool expulsions found that pre-kindergarten students were expelled at a rate more than three times that of children in grades K-12. He also found that the likelihood of

expulsion decreased significantly with access to classroom-based behavioral consultants who provide assistance to teachers. The findings received wide media attention and have led to legislative actions in several states.

Through the Zigler Center's training program for fellows, Dr. Gilliam helps to provide young researchers the opportunity to conduct policy-relevant research, learn about current policy issues affecting children and families, gain an understanding of how policy is made, and develop some of the skills necessary to work effectively in the policy arena. In this way, he expands the number of researchers who appreciate the importance of policy-relevant research and research-informed policy.

Additionally, Dr. Gilliam provides clinical supervision in the early childhood section of the Yale Child Study Center (providing developmental evaluations of children birth to 5 years old), and in the Newborn Follow-up Clinic for premature and low birth weight infants. Dr. Gilliam holds a joint appointment with the Psychology Department at Yale University.

For his distinguished efforts to bridge the gap between the worlds of researchers and state and federal policymakers, Connecticut Voices for Children presents Dr. Walter Gilliam with the Priscilla Canny Research Award.



CONNECTICUT VOICES FOR CHILDREN FOUNDERS' AWARD

Shelley Geballe

When policy makers, reporters, advocates, and researchers need advice and expertise on the challenges faced by Connecticut's children and families, Shelley Geballe is among the first they will contact. Her encyclopedic knowledge of public policy has been a major "natural resource" for countless people concerned about improving the welfare of our young residents.

Among her many talents, Shelley has always had the ability to see both the forest and the trees. She is able to delve into the thorniest minutiae of policy issues and state budget documents, supplementing her analysis with an impressive memory for historical detail.

She can be equally focused and eloquent in articulating a positive, big picture vision for the state, consistently pressing for preventive investment, fiscal responsibility, and long-term, strategic planning. While state budget crises have too often resulted in critical programs competing for shrinking slices of a budget pie, Shelley has been a bold advocate for a budget pie that is big enough – sounding budgetary warnings years in advance of fiscal crises, calling for fundamental revenue reform, and critiquing inequities in our state and local tax system.

Her research and writing at CT Voices has focused on state and federal tax and budget policy, family economic security, child welfare, juvenile justice, children's health and mental health, and K-12 education.

She has been a strong advocate for developing the next generation of advocates and policy leaders through Connecticut Voices' policy fellowship program, in which recent college graduates gain diverse experience in research, policy analysis and advocacy. She also co-teaches a legislative advocacy clinic at the Yale Law School, where students get hands-on experience in legislative and administrative advocacy. Dozens of fellows and interns have benefited from her mentoring and expertise.

Shelley was a co-founder of Connecticut Voices and served as its President from its start in 1995 until October 2008. Fortunately, CT Voices and the state will continue to benefit from her skills and experience as she transitions to her new role as Distinguished

Senior Fellow, devoting herself to research and writing on state fiscal and policy matters, without the responsibility of managing day-to-day operations.

We also honor Shelley for her extensive work outside of CT Voices. She is a Lecturer in the Yale Medical School (Department of Epidemiology and Public Health) where she teaches a course in Health Disparities, and a Clinical Visiting Lecturer in Law at Yale Law School. She serves in a number of appointed positions in the state, including the Advisory Committee of the Office of the Child Advocate and the Commission on Child Protection. She has consulted internationally, most recently on non-profit law at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, China, on HIV/AIDS law at the University of Pretoria in South Africa, and on public health law at the Union School of Public Health in Beijing.

Prior to starting CT Voices, she practiced civil rights law, serving as counsel in a number of class action cases, including representing the state's abused and neglected children in a systemic challenge to CT's foster care system and children with HIV/AIDS who were excluded from the New Haven public schools. For her career achievements, she has received awards from dozens of organizations.

Attorney Geballe received her law degree from Yale Law School and her public health degree from Yale Medical School. She is married to Gordon T. Geballe, Associate Dean of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, and they have three sons and three grandchildren.

For her longstanding leadership, exceptional expertise and tireless advocacy on behalf of Connecticut's children and families, we are pleased to present Shelley Geballe with CT Voices' Founders Award.

2006

2005

Legislative Leadership Award
Senate President Pro Tempore
Donald E. Williams, Jr.

Transformational Philanthropy Award
Melville Charitable Trust

Media Award
Michele Jacklin

*Connecticut Voices for Children
Founders' Award*
Dr. Janice Gruendel

Albert J. Solnit Leadership Award
Dr. Roslyn Meyer

Transformational Policy Leadership Award
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

Citizen Advocacy Award
Sherbie Worthen

Scholar Advocate Award
John L. Pottenger, Jr.

*Connecticut Voices for Children
Founders' Award*
Ellen Scalett

2004

*Albert J. Solnit
Leadership Award*
U.S. Senator Christopher Dodd

Legislative Leadership Award
State Representative Toni Walker

Public Service Award
George Coleman, Associate Commissioner,
CT Department of Education

Transformational Philanthropy Award
William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund

Citizen Advocacy Awards
Courtney and Jane Bournes

*Connecticut Voices for Children
Founders' Award*
Judith Solomon, Senior Policy Fellow,
CT Voices for Children

Past *First for Kids* Honorees

2002

Albert J. Solnit Leadership Award
Representative Christel Truglia

Lifetime Achievement Award
Professor Edward Zigler, Yale University

Statenide Child Advocacy Award
Jeanne Milstein and the Office of the Child Advocate

Media Award
Ann Nyberg, Channel 8 News Anchor

Citizen Advocacy Award
Harry Orlick

Community Advocacy Award
Dr. Eric Cooper, President,
National Urban Alliance for Effective Education

Youth Mentor Award
Alan MacKenzie, Director, Our Piece of the Pie

2000

Policy Leadership Award
Lt. Governor M. Jodi Rell

Albert J. Solnit Leadership Award
Senator Toni Harp

Community Advocacy Award
Fernando Betancourt

Citizen Advocacy Awards
Eva Bunnell and Norma Schatz

Vision to Action Awards
Paula Armbruster, Anne Calabresi, Henry Fernandez, III, Matthew
Klein, Roslyn Meyer, and Jerome Meyer, Founders of LEAP—
Leadership, Education, and Athletics in Partnership, Inc.

Connecticut Voices for Children Founders' Award
Priscilla "Penny" Canny

2001

Albert J. Solnit Leadership Award
Senator Kevin B. Sullivan

Media Awards
The Hartford Courant's: Dave Altimari, Dwight Blint, Susan
Campbell, Beth Hamilton, Andrew Julien, Kathy Megan,
Daryl Perch, Colin Poitras, and Eric Weiss

Citizen Advocacy Award
Sheila Amdur

Community Advocacy Awards
Rev. Bonita Grubbs and Marilyn Ondrasik

Youth Mentor Awards
Michael Duggan, Will MacAdams,
and Richard Sugarman

1999

A Special Tribute To
Albert J. Solnit, MD

Albert J. Solnit Leadership Award
Representative John Thompson

Volunteerism Awards
Barbara Colley and Rev. Gary Smith, Camp Totokett

Citizen Advocacy Awards
Marva and Willie Jones, Grandparents

Media Award
Stephen Winters, *Connecticut Post*

Note: There was no First for Kids award
program held in 2003 nor 2007.

Connecticut Voices for Children Staff

Jamey Bell, J.D. Executive Director
Taby Ali Policy Fellow
Linda Deemy Project Associate
Alexandra Dufresne, J.D. Senior Policy Fellow
Shelley Geballe, J.D., M.P.H. Distinguished Senior Fellow
Douglas Hall, Ph.D. Acting Managing Director
Joachim Hero, M.P.H. Research Fellow
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Sharon Langer, M.Ed., J.D. Senior Policy Fellow
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Martha Carlson
Office of State Comptroller

Jeannette De Jesús
Hispanic Health Council, Inc.

Reverend Bonita Grubbs
Christian Community Action

Kica Matos
City of New Haven

Nancy Meyer-Lustman
Yale University Child Study Center
Private Practice

Advocates for Connecticut's Children and Youth (ACCY) Board

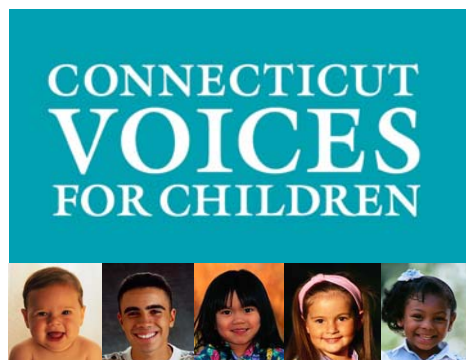
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Note: Organization affiliations listed for identification purposes only.

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Connecticut's kids
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