

## Population Served

- *Age:* Pregnant women or children birth through five years of age
- *Target Concerns:*
  - Children with behavioral or developmental problems
  - Families with multiple challenges (like extreme poverty, maternal depression, domestic violence, substance use, homelessness, abuse and neglect, and isolation)

## Areas Served

- Danbury
- There are also Child FIRST programs in Bridgeport, Hartford, East Hartford, New Haven, New London County, Norwalk, Middlesex, New Britain, Stamford, Ansonia/Derby, Meriden, Torrington and Waterbury. Please call us for phone contacts at these locations.

## Referral Process

- Call Child FIRST Danbury at **203-240-7227**
  - Child FIRST will email a Referral Form to be completed.
- Send Referral Form:
  - Fax to **203-790-8183** or
  - Mail to:  
Family and Children's Aid  
75 West Street  
Danbury, CT 06810  
Attn: Child FIRST

Child FIRST staff will contact you within 48 hours of your referral.

## For More Information

Please contact:

Dennis Bieber, LCSW

Program Supervisor of Community Based Services

203-240-7227

[Dennis.bieber@fcaweb.org](mailto:Dennis.bieber@fcaweb.org)



## Key Partners



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
Child Health & Development Institute (CHDI)  
Connecticut Department of Children & Families  
Grossman Family Foundation  
Fairfield County Community Foundation  
United Way of Coastal Fairfield County



## Child FIRST Danbury

*Building strong families  
and healthy children*



## Young Children at High Risk

Children that live in environments with multiple challenges (e.g. poverty, maternal depression, domestic violence, substance abuse, and homelessness) stress that is “toxic” to the young, developing brain. Disruption of brain architecture during this critical period leads to major problems in mental health, learning, and physical health throughout the lifespan.

Early, intensive intervention can both decrease this environmental stress and build strong, nurturing relationships that have been proven to **prevent damage** to the growing brain. This promotes healthy emotional, cognitive, and physical development.

## The Child FIRST Model

Child FIRST (Child and Family Interagency Resource, Support, and Training) is a home-based early childhood intervention model that works with the most vulnerable young children and families in Connecticut to decrease:

- serious emotional disturbance,
- developmental and learning problems, and
- abuse and neglect.

## Rooted in Community Collaboration

Child FIRST collaborates with a broad group of child and adult providers throughout the community in an “**early childhood system of care.**” Our partners help identify and refer children growing up in challenging environments or who show the earliest signs of emotional, behavioral, or developmental problems. In turn, Child FIRST refers children and families to these community-based resources to facilitate their health and development.

## Core Program Components

### Intensive home-based intervention:

- Intensive outreach to **engage** hard-to reach families
- **Comprehensive assessment** of the child and all members of the family
- Partnership with the family to develop a well coordinated, comprehensive **family-driven plan of supports and services** for all family members
- **Consultation in the early care and school** settings for children with challenging behaviors
- Home-based **parent guidance and psychotherapeutic intervention** by a team of a Master’s level mental health/developmental clinician and care coordinator, especially for families with multiple challenges like depression, domestic violence, and abuse and neglect

### Care coordination/case management:

- Coordinated, hands-on assistance to connect with community services and supports

### Mental Health Consultation:

- Consultation in early care and education, schools, and family daycare homes for any child with emotional or behavioral problems
- Consultations to other early childhood or adult providers concerned about the emotional development of a young child, already with behavioral problems or living in a very high risk environment

## Child FIRST Effectiveness

The Child FIRST intervention was evaluated by a **randomized controlled trial**, which demonstrated that the Child FIRST Intervention was statistically significant and clinically effective when compared to Usual Care Controls at 12 month follow-up.

- Child FIRST children were *significantly less likely to have language problems and aggressive and defiant behaviors.*
- Child FIRST mothers had significantly lower levels of depression, stress and mental health problems.
- Child FIRST families were significantly less involved with DCF.
- Child FIRST families had a marked increase in access to community-based services and supports.

