

My name is Angie Fortin, I'm the Associate Director of NECKA -Parent Child Center-South. I've worked in the human service and mental health field just under 20 years.

It is both my personal and professional experience that when we invest in parents and their children, and they feel part of the larger community, we grow healthier people within our Communities. Research supports that prevention services work. The 15 Parent Child Center's across the state use family-centered, multi-generational, strength-based approach that both treats and prevents adverse childhood experiences.

We are working with some of the most vulnerable children and families in our communities, to building them up, helping to alleviate the effects of poverty and other risk factors.

These programs work. I am going to read a statement written by April Kelley, a much appreciated and hard-working colleague who could not be here tonight, "case managers are one of the most integral part of the reach-up program "the meat and potatoes" if you will. I have experienced this [...] first hand and see it in the work that I do each day. The reach-up case manager is sometimes the only person [a participants life...] that believe in them, that holds them to a higher standard than what they would hold themselves. I was once a participant of the reach-up program and if it were not for my case manager believing in me I would have never received my bachelor degree, more importantly would have never learned to believe in myself or hold myself accountable for the choices I make. [At Northeast Kingdom Community Action-Parent Child Center...] we serve the most vulnerable populations and these positions are imperative in proving people the HOPE of achieving something greater than they ever believe. It is our goal through programming to provide individuals and families the education to empower themselves and thrive within their communities.

Thank you for your time this evening and hearing why funding is so important to the people we serve in our programs.