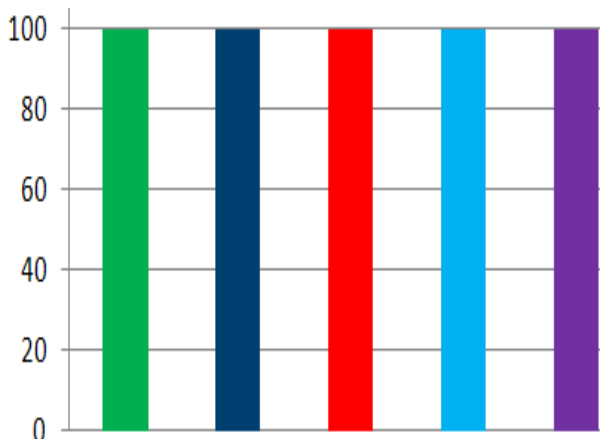


# EDUCATION ALERT: Childhood Lead Poisoning

## *Bridging the Educational Gap*

### 100% of Bridgeport, Connecticut's Early Childhood Educators Overwhelmingly Reported Childhood Lead Poisoning Needs for Educators, Children and Families

**100% of Survey Participants Reported Childhood Lead Poisoning Educational Related Needs**



#### PARTICIPANT SURVEY RESULTS - SECTION A *(Childhood Lead Poisoning Needs Assessment)*

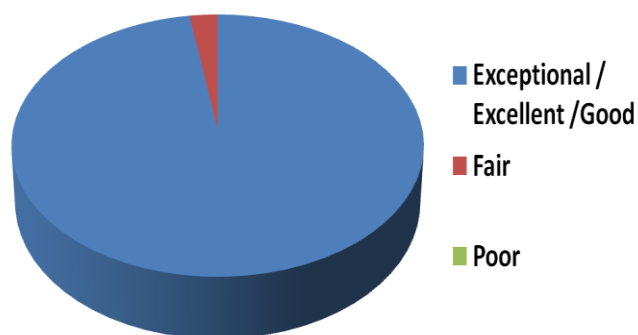
**Bridgeport's Pre-K and Birth to Three System Educators Identified the Following Areas of Need:**

- 1) Need for childhood lead poisoning in-service training for educators, health providers, administrators and parents.
- 2) Need for Birth to Three System and Early Childhood to address early intervention needs of lead impaired children.
- 3) Need for Compliance with Federal Law (I.D.E.A. Parts B and C) for appropriate services for lead poisoned children.
- 4) Need for Preschools, Head Start Facilities, K – 12 Schools and State Buildings to be lead safe.
- 5) Need for the State Department of Education to develop guidelines to ensure that all lead poisoned children receive appropriate early intervention services.

Early childhood educators who took part in Bridgeport's Feb. 9, 2010 district-wide Birth to Three System and Pre-K Professional Development Participant's Survey unanimously reported needs related to early childhood lead poisoning awareness training, interventions and guidelines or policies for Federal Law Compliance for qualifying lead poisoned children, lead safe schools and the need for a seamless process to ensure that qualifying children receive appropriate intervention services. *Refer to information above.*

### 97.5 % of Early Childhood Educators Give High Ratings for Bridgeport Health Education Lead Poisoning Professional Development Session

**Educators' Ratings**



#### PARTICIPANT SURVEY RESULTS - SECTION B *(Quality & Effectiveness of Professional Development Session)*

**SURVEY RATINGS:**

**97.5 % (39 out of 40)** of Bridgeport's February 9, 2010 Pre-K and Birth to 3 System In-Service Participants gave **Exceptional/ Excellent/Good** ratings to all the survey questions below. Only **1 out of 40** gave a **Fair** rating.

**SURVEY QUESTIONS THAT WERE RATED:**

- 1) How would you rate the overall quality and effectiveness of this Professional Development Session?
- 2) To what extent did this training provide information to help you better understand the educational, behavioral, social needs of children who suffer long term effects of childhood lead poisoning?
- 3) How would you rate the overall quality of the presenters?

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 1, 2010**

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## **Bridgeport, Connecticut Schools and Health Department Launch First International On-line **Health Education Lead Poisoning** CEU Credit Course During Landmark Training Session**

### ***Educators Are Helping to Bridge the Education Gap in Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Efforts***

Bridgeport, CT (*March 1, 2010*) – With childhood lead poisoning being listed by the Centers for Disease Control as the most common and devastating environmental health disease affecting young children, Bridgeport, CT educators broke new grounds in community-wide, environmental intervention efforts on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at Skane School. Under the leadership of Superintendent of Bridgeport Public Schools, Dr. J Ramos, the Bridgeport Public Health Department and the Foundation for Educational Advancement, Inc. (FEA), Bridgeport schools launched the first pre-school early childhood program for lead poisoned children in the world to include a cognitive early intervention component with a blended national On-Line Health Education Lead Poisoning Course Series that features internationally renowned researchers and experts in childhood lead poisoning.

The landmark **Health Education Lead Poisoning** (H.E.L.P.) On-Line Course Series provides users the opportunity to earn CEU Credits free of charge while learning strategies to take a proactive / preventive stance in battling childhood lead poisoning, a national pediatric problem that has no socioeconomic or ethnic restrictions. Historically, lead poisoning prevention efforts have focused on housing abatement / renovation and medical issues. The H.E.L.P. Course Series helps bridge the childhood lead poisoning education gap by providing research based professional development and training that focuses on the neurological, developmental, educational and social, implications of childhood lead poisoning. The targeted audience for the H.E.L.P. course includes educators, health professionals, social service professionals and early childhood care providers.

Researchers report that elevated blood lead levels of 10 micrograms per deciliter of blood and greater ( $\geq 10\mu\text{g/dL}$ ) in young children have been associated with permanent brain damage resulting in learning disabilities, developmental delays, concentration / attention deficits, hyperactivity, behavioral problems, delinquency, school dropout and at higher levels, even death. Researchers have also seen adverse neurological effects in children with blood levels as low as  $5\mu\text{g/dL}$ . The newly released CT Department of Public Health Surveillance Report ranks Bridgeport and New Haven as the top two Connecticut cities with the highest percentage of screened children with elevated blood lead levels of  $\geq 10\mu\text{g/dL}$ .

The H.E.L.P. course was developed in collaboration with nationally renowned childhood lead poisoning researchers; Connecticut Network (CT-N); The Foundation for Educational Advancement, Inc. (FEA); CT State Department of Public Health; City of Hartford; CT Health Foundation; F.G.I. Church Media Dept, Moving Pictures, Inc.; Central CT State University; TRAIN.Org.; CT Department of Education; the New Britain School District; the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund and Dwain Starks, Multi-Media and E- Learning Specialist.

This landmark course has been launched nationally through [TRAIN.org \(https://www.train.org\)](https://www.train.org), the web-based learning management system used to increase the training capacity of educators, health professionals, social service providers and childcare professionals and can be accessed on the FEA Web-site by going to (<http://feact.org/training/help.html>). Designed for international use, the course is currently being utilized in Connecticut, Kansas, Kentucky, Nevada, Ohio and the Philippines.

John Didonato, Assistant Superintendent of Youth Development at Bridgeport Public Schools, Glenn A. Cassis, Executive Director of the State of Connecticut African-American Affairs Commission and Jimmy Davila, Connecticut Department of Public Health Lead Poisoning Prevention Program Representative were among over 50 Pre-K and Birth to Three System educators who attended the course launching during the training session. Early childhood education materials were also provided through the professional resources of the Connecticut Commission on Children and the Connecticut State Department of Education.

Ninety-Eight percent (97.5 %) of the 2010 Pre-K and Birth to Three Professional Development Session participants overwhelmingly rated the overall quality and effectiveness of the training as exceptional, excellent and good in providing information to help them better understand the educational, developmental, behavioral and social needs of children who suffer long term effects of childhood lead poisoning.

One-Hundred percent (100%) of survey respondents reported that there are crucial, high or significant needs in the following five areas:

- 1) Providing professional development for educators (*teachers, administrators, health staff, parents, etc.*)
- 2) Birth to Three and Early Childhood Education to address the early intervention educational and related service needs for children who are impaired or at risk due to lead poisoning.
- 3) Federal and state agencies (*i.e., U.S. Office of Special Education Programs, Birth to Three System-CT/DMR, Early Childhood – CT/SDE, etc.*) to develop guidelines or policy for the identification, evaluation and provision of services for children who qualify as “*other health impaired due to lead poisoning*” under the Individuals with Disability Act (IDEA 2004) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Birth to Three through adulthood).
- 4) Preschools, Head Start Facilities, K – 12 Schools and State Buildings to be lead safe
- 5) State Department of Health and the State Department of Education to develop a seamless process to ensure that all lead exposed / poisoned children receive appropriate early intervention services

Dr. Vivian Cross, Executive Director of the Foundation for Educational Advancement, Inc. and Health / Education Consultant for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Centers for Disease Control's Advisory Committee on Childhood Lead Poisoning's National Education Work Group is working collaboratively with Bridgeport Public Health Department and the Bridgeport Public Schools to implement a health / educational lead poisoning prevention program around lead poisoning throughout Bridgeport's schools and communities. Dr. Cross has been involved in the development of childhood lead poisoning educational initiatives since 1995 when she first worked with world renowned health experts to launch a professional development initiative for school district educators that included administrators, classroom teachers, pupil personnel service providers, parents and the community-at-large.

As a pioneer in the nation's childhood lead prevention efforts, Dr. Cross describes Bridgeport's educational system as a key contributor to improving the quality of health and education for the nation's lead poisoned children who qualify for early intervention services under federal law. Lead prevention awareness is crucially needed to empower parents and educators to take proactive preventive measures to eliminate the environmental health lead hazards that put children at risk neurological impairments and even death at higher levels of lead exposure.

Historic action steps are currently being pursued on both the national and state levels. As part of national efforts CDC has established a National Intervention and Assessment Education Work Group to (1) compile existing research, (2) review IDEA Part C and Part B, special education model regulations to provide guidance to state and local governments, and (3) describe specific action steps for parents, clinicians and educators.

On the State Level, Connecticut's Department of Education, State Department of Public Health, Department of Developmental Services, the Foundation for Educational Advancement, Inc. and other key stakeholders will meet on Tuesday, March 2, 2010 to discuss next steps to improve the coordination of educational and health lead poisoning intervention services for CT's children and youth.

The February 9, 2010 Bridgeport Early Childhood Professional Development Session presenters included:

- Dr. Jeanne Zehr, The Assistant Superintendent of Schools for East Allen County Schools in New Haven, Indiana who launched the nation's first preschool program for lead poisoned children in Indiana.
- Dr. Theodore Lidsky, Head of the Laboratory of Electrophysiology; Director of the Center of Trace Element Studies & Environmental Neurotoxicology; and Adjunct Professor at Thomas Jefferson University School of Medicine, Department of Neurology, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- Dr. Vivian Cross, Executive Director of the Foundation for Educational Advancement, Inc. and Health / Education Consultant for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Centers for Disease Control's Advisory Committee on Childhood Lead Poisoning's National Education Work Group.
- Thomas Menditto, District Coordinator of Science, Technology and Applied Education Consolidated School District of New Britain.
- Jimmy Davila, Connecticut Department of Public Health Lead Poisoning Prevention Program Representative.

For more information on the 2010 Health Education Lead Poisoning Initiative Contact:  
Dr. Vivian Cross via email at [vac2007@columbia.edu](mailto:vac2007@columbia.edu) or by phone at (860) 214-6472

**Additional Childhood Lead Poisoning Resources from a Historical Perspective may be found on <http://www.feact.org/> )**

[Click Here to See Video of the Launch of the Health Education Lead Poisoning Course Series at Skane School in Bridgeport, CT \(2/9/2010\)](#)

[2009 EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH EDUCATION LEAD POISONING LEGISLATIVE INFORMATIONAL FORUM - MORNING SESSION \(11/19/2009\)](#)

[2009 EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH EDUCATION LEAD POISONING LEGISLATIVE INFORMATIONAL FORUM - AFTERNOON SESSION \(11/19/2009\)](#)

[CONNECTICUT'S GOVERNOR RELL'S BILL SIGNING CEREMONY FOR CHILD PRODUCT SAFETY ACT \(7/10/2008\)](#)

[2008 LEAD POISONING COMMUNITY & PARENT INFORMATIONAL FORUM \(5/22/2008\)](#)

[LEAD POISONING PREVENTION CONFERENCE FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS & EDUCATORS \(1/31/2008\)](#)

[LEAD POISONING PREVENTION AND CONTROL PROGRAM SEMIANNUAL MEETING \(10/24/2007\)](#)

[CAPITOL NEWS BRIEFING WITH HOUSE SPEAKER ON LEAD POISONING PREVENTION LEGISLATION \(5/31/2007\)](#)

[LEGISLATIVE INFORMATIONAL FORUM ON LEAD POISONING \(3/14/2007\)](#)

[EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING CONFERENCE AT THE LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING \(5/9/2006\)](#)

[ENDING LEAD POISONING FORUM AT THE LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING \(11/17/2005\)](#)