

Stamford School Readiness Council
Health & Wellness Committee Meeting
Monday, March 12, 2012
12:00-1:00 p.m.

William Pitt Child Development Center, 195 Hillandale Avenue

MEETING SUMMARY

Attendees

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| Dr. Madhu Mathur; <i>Chair, Health & Wellness Committee</i> | Director KIDS' FANS Wellness Program; Medical Director, Regional Medical Home Initiative, Southwest CT, Stamford Hospital and Chair, Obesity Task Force, Stamford |
| Elizabeth Anavy | Nurse Practitioner, William Pitt Child Development Center |
| Jody Bishop Pullan | Dental Case Manager, Health Department, City of Stamford |
| Karen Brennan | Stamford Discovery Coordinator, United Way of Western CT |
| Kerri Hagan | Health Educator, Health Department, City of Stamford |
| Patricia Lamothe | Inspector II, Health Department, City of Stamford |
| Pat Malloy | Instructional Coordinator, William Pitt Child Development Center |
| Karina Reininger | Dental Health Care Specialist, CT Dental Health Partnership |
| Dr. Debby Schreiner | Instructional Coordinator, William Pitt Child Guidance Center |
| Dr. Helene Strazza | Pediatric Dentist, All About Kids Pediatric Dentistry |
| Ellen Swan | Early Childhood Consultation, Mid-Fairfield Child Guidance Center |
| Amy Taylor | Community Health Center, Inc. |

Guests

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| Sonja Ahuja | Graustein Memorial Fund Discovery Liaison |
| Tierney Giannotti | University of Connecticut Health Center |

Introductions and Committee Sharing

Dr. Mathur began the meeting by sharing the work of the Obesity Task Force. She has developed two posters which showcase both the work of the task force and the Blueprint. Importantly, one of these posters depicts the work of the Childhood Blueprint and its various health initiatives and the other provides details of the childhood obesity effort in Stamford with the Stamford Health System, Stamford Public Schools, and numerous community partners working together to improve awareness and action around obesity

Kerri Hagan added that the Stamford Public School has included a health education component in next year's budget in order to introduce a systemic health program in its middle schools. The goal is to then bring this program to the elementary schools.

Stamford Oral Health Collaborative: February 7 Event Recognizing Dr. Donald Case

The Oral Health Collaborative hosted a celebration at Government Center on February 7 to honor Dr. Donald Case as the 2012 Stamford Oral Health Champion. Dr. Case has donated countless hours of his time and services to the Stamford community. Amy Taylor reported that the event was well covered by the media and drew a large and excited crowd. In a touching speech, Dr. Case said it was his “duty and privilege to serve the Stamford community.”

Amy added that on March 23 and 24, the annual Mission of Mercy event will be held in Danbury. This free event is sponsored each year by the Connecticut Dental Society. The two day clinic provides free dental care to the underserved and uninsured in Connecticut—those that would otherwise go without dental care

Dr. Debby Schreiner and Pat Malloy, Instructional Coordinators, Stamford Public Schools

Debby and Pat provided a wonderful overview of the work they do to further the Stamford School Readiness mission. By way of background, in 1998, under the leadership of then Mayor Dan Malloy, School Readiness became the focus as a way to close the achievement gap. There are now 18 School Readiness classrooms at the Childcare Learning Centers, all with 17-18 children, a head teacher, an assistant teacher, and an Instructional Coordinator who oversees a cluster of six classrooms.

Instructional Coordinators are master teachers who help bridge early childhood care with the Stamford Public Schools. They coach and model lessons for their teachers, and help them implement and use the CT Frameworks, an established set of benchmarks and assessments for observing children, and planning their work study. Importantly, Instructional Coordinators play a critical role in helping with the Kindergarten transition—meeting with the Kindergarten school teams and making sure children are ready.

Pat and Debby described a typical day in a School Readiness classroom. An average day begins between 7:30 and 9:30 a.m. After arriving and having a hot breakfast, children enjoy free play time before teachers bring the group together for circle time. Following circle time, the children will join their teachers for small group activities, continued exploration in centers. Weather permitting, outdoor play is scheduled daily. At midday, children have lunch. While the children take turns washing their hands, the day’s lunch helpers assist with lunch preparation by setting the table and the teacher leads another brief circle time activity. Mealtimes are seen as an opportunity for learning and conversation. Children practice serving themselves, passing food to their friends, and trying new foods. Lunchtime enhances positive feelings not only for nutritious food, but also for each other. Following lunch, the children brush their teeth and prepare for rest time. The late afternoon period begins with a snack at 3:00 p.m. followed by another outdoor ready for dismissal and pick up by their families by 5:30 p.m.

Tierney Giannotti, University of Connecticut Health Center

Tierney introduced the ACT Early Program to the group, a campaign designed by the CDC to help all children reach their full potential. The program is designed to educate parents on the physical and development milestones their children should be reaching at targeted ages, and to help providers be receptive to parents who bring early warning signs to their attention. The benefit to acting early is to encourage dialogue and help children receive services earlier in their development. Tierney shared a number of resources—materials for parents, early childhood providers, and physicians—that can be ordered free of charge at www.cdc.gov/actearly. All materials are currently offered in both English and Spanish.

Tierney is available to speak at schools and workshops, as well as present at community events (we hope she will have a table at the Early Childhood Fair on May 19). She can be reached at tgiannotti@uchu.edu or (860) 679-1502.

Next Meeting

Our final meeting before the summer will be on Monday, May 14 at Stamford Hospital in the 1st Floor Conference Room. Elaine Gugliemo, Vice President of Human Resources at Stamford Hospital, has been working with bullying in the schools and will speak to us on this topic.