

# stamford early childhood blueprint

## A COMMUNITY PLAN FOR CHILDREN BIRTH TO EIGHT AND THEIR FAMILIES

### A Year in Review, September 2011-June 2012

#### STAMFORD SCHOOL READINESS COUNCIL

- The Stamford School Readiness Council hosted a rock and roll benefit concert featuring the popular children's group the Swingset Mamas at the Ferguson Library in November. All proceeds from the concert were used to fund the \$15 per child ticket cost for each of the 930 preschoolers enrolled in Childcare Learning Centers (CLC) and Sacred Heart School's programs to attend a performance of *Goodnight Moon* at the Palace Theater in December. A true collaborative effort, a committee comprised of the Council's Chair Bridget Fox, the Stamford Discovery Coordinator, the Stamford Public Schools Curriculum Associate, and countless parent volunteers worked together to organize all facets of the event, including online ticket sales, publicity, sponsorship packages, and volunteer recruitment.
- The 5th Annual Early Childhood Education Fair Ready by Five was held in May and over 450 people were in attendance at Cove Island Park. This was a collaborative effort on the part of a number of volunteers representing community agencies throughout the City. While children enjoyed entertainment, activities, face painting, and more, parents were able to learn about preschool programs and resources within the community.
- The Council expanded by welcoming new members from Child FIRST and the Stamford Public Education Foundation.
- The Council's Executive Committee began a strategic planning process focused on revisiting our vision and strengthening the Council. Work is ongoing.

#### HEALTH & WELLNESS

- Chaired by Dr. Madhu Mathur of Stamford Hospital, the School Readiness Council's Health & Wellness Committee represents critical elements of the healthcare field in Stamford: Stamford Hospital pediatricians and nurses, representatives from Child Guidance (mental health), preschool teachers, the City of Stamford's Director of Health, Community Health Centers (oral health), a doctor from Stamford Hospital responsible for asthma initiatives, and parents. The committee continues to address current trends in health of Stamford's young children and their families.
- The committee continued to support the Oral Health Collaborative, a group of oral health professionals dedicated to increasing access to oral health care services. The collaborative also promotes health and health literacy, seeks to eliminate health disparities, and strengthens cooperation between all health providers.
- The Health Educator from Care to Care (Family Centers) organized a number of workshops and trainings for childcare providers, parents, and caregivers throughout the year.
- The committee chose to focus on mental health and invited a number of speakers to attend meetings including the Saint Joseph Parenting Center, Mid-Fairfield Child Guidance Center, Child Guidance Center, Stamford Public Schools, University of Connecticut Health Center, and Stamford Hospital.
- The Child Guidance Center of Southern CT, Inc. in Stamford received a Child FIRST (Child and Family Interagency Research, Support, and Training) grant. The Child FIRST is a model program designed to decrease the incidence of serious emotional disturbance, developmental and learning problems, and abuse and neglect among high-risk young children. Child FIRST works with pediatricians, teachers, and other community providers to identify, assess, and intervene with vulnerable children and their families.



## EDUCATION

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- Chaired by Dr. Anne Farrell from UCONN Stamford, our Education Committee is comprised of a diverse group of individuals representing area preschools, the Stamford Public Schools, the United Way, and higher education. They are thoughtfully guiding our work forward.
- The Education Committee established an early childhood professional development partnership that includes the larger Stamford School Readiness Council, Fairfield County Association for the Education of Young Children (FCAEYC), United Way of Western Connecticut, Norwalk Community College, Norwalk School Readiness Council (SRC), University of Connecticut, Stamford Preschool Director's Group, and Childcare Learning Centers.
- The aforementioned partnership plans to co-sponsor a major professional development program in October 2012; the event will include elements such as supported on-the-job practice and field coaching. A renowned national speaker, Judy Jablon is serving as the inaugural presenter for an annual conference that will support teacher skill within early childhood classrooms. Ms. Jablon will offer two full days of training, in the form of workshops to groups of 200, followed by small afternoon "breakout" sessions led by members of CT early childhood community. Next Steps sessions for leadership professionals will be offered in the early evening.
- The Education Committee is currently supporting a focus group study *Professional Development Needs of Early Childhood Providers: A Focus Group Study* under the leadership of Dr. Farrell. The work that Dr. Farrell and her research team are conducting will enhance the Council's understanding of optimal ways to support early childhood teachers. This effort is an important component of our efforts to ensure quality early education experiences for all children in our community.

## PARENT OUTREACH

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- Co-chaired by two parents, Dr. Deborah List and Keiah Minott, the committee includes the School Readiness Council Chair, the Stamford Discovery Coordinator, the Health Educator from Care to Care (Family Centers), and numerous parent representatives.
- A Kindergarten Information Night was held at the Ferguson Library in early April and was attended by over 100 parents. To increase participation, childcare and Spanish translation were offered.
- The Committee hosted two Play and Learn Family Nights (one at CLC Maple Avenue and one at the Ferguson Library) to provide families with children transitioning to Kindergarten with math and literacy activities to do at home over the summer. Over 50 children and their parents participated in each event.
- The Parent Outreach Committee continues to partner with the United Way and the Stamford School Readiness Council to develop a centralized resource network to ensure parents and caregivers know where to go and who to ask for resources.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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[www.tinyurl.com/stamfordschoolreadiness](http://www.tinyurl.com/stamfordschoolreadiness)

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