

# stamford early childhood blueprint

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

### A Year in Review, September 2010-June 2011

#### 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 acclaimed children's author Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* at the Palace Theater in February. A true collaborative effort, a committee comprised of the Council's Chair Bridget Fox, the Stamford Discovery Coordinator, a parent volunteer, and a Stamford public Schools Curriculum Associate worked together to organize all facets of the event, including online ticket sales, publicity, sponsorship packages, and volunteer recruitment.
- The Council brought all of the 930 students to *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* performance in February. Three classrooms of Head Start children who were unable to attend the February performance were able to attend the Big Apple Circus in June. And thanks to fundraising and donations, the Council was able to purchase a large number of safety harnesses, which are needed to transport our Head Start children on public school buses. We are now in a position to help our children attend more off-site field trips and programs.
- The 4th Annual Early Education Fair Ready by Five was held in May and over 400 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 School Readiness Council's web site was revamped and expanded.

#### HEALTH & WELLNESS

- Chaired by Dr. Madhu Mathur at 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 Health & Wellness Committee hosted two workshops in October for childcare providers and the community at large around the issue of creating nurturing and successful mealtimes. Charlie Slaughter, MPH, RD from the Department of Children and Families, presented a presentation to over 30 childcare providers from across the City and 20 parents. His message of creating structured and nurturing environments for children around mealtimes was very well received.
- In March, the committee revived 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 collaborative plans to meet twice a year.
- In April, the Health Educator from Care to Care (Family Centers) organized a workshop childcare providers, parents, and caregivers in April to introduce people to the State of Connecticut's revised immunization requirements for children 6 months and older who attend day cares and preschools. The workshop was well attended and run by two nurses.
- In May, we hosted a screening of the acclaimed documentary *Two Angry Moms* at the Avon Theatre in Stamford. This movie chronicles what happens when two moms start a grass-roots revolution to bring attention to the need for nutritional food options in schools. Dr. Mathur facilitated a panel discussion after the movie featuring filmmaker/mom Amy Kalafa; licensed psychologist Dr. Dale Atkins; a nutritionist from Columbia University, Dr. Sharon Akabas; and Ken Wolfe, a representative from the Stamford Public Schools/Chartwells Nutrition Services.



## 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.
- In partnership with the Stamford School Readiness Council, Family Centers received a grant in October to work with All Our Kin out of New Haven to train and support licensed family child care providers in Stamford in the Early Learning Guidelines that are now being recognized by the State. This work is now underway.
- SPS convened a Literacy Curriculum Committee in Summer 2010 to write the K-5 Literacy Curriculum, following the Reader's and Writer's Workshop model; curriculum writing continued throughout the 2010-11 school year. There is strong participation from the Education Committee and SPS preschool teachers on this planning.
- The revised Readiness Screening that was put into place in May 2010 and that is aligned to SPS expectations for phonological awareness, letter ID, and mathematics continues to be used.
- Transition folders for preschool aged children who are graduating to Kindergarten that identify which preschool program the child attended and that contain child assessment documents continue to be used successfully.
- The Education Committee examined the Blueprint strategies and streamlined these to include outcomes with identifiable resources. The Committee remains committed to developing and maintaining reporting mechanisms to track progress.

## PARENT OUTREACH

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- The committee was re-established to include the School Readiness Council Chair, the Stamford Discovery Coordinator, the Health Educator from Care to Care (Family Centers), and numerous parent representatives. Co-chaired by two parents, Dr. Deborah List and Keiah Minott, the committee has been meeting regularly since March.
- In June 2011, the Committee hosted a Play and Learn Family Night at the Ferguson Library to provide families with children transitioning to Kindergarten with math and literacy activities to do at home over the summer. 50 children and their parents participated in the event.
- The Parent Outreach Committee will 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.cityofstamford.org](http://www.cityofstamford.org)  
(Quick Links "School Readiness Program")

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