



COLLABORATIVE FOR COLCHESTER'S CHILDREN
September 15, 2025
Leadership Work Group Annual Meeting
Colchester Senior Center
6:30-8:00 PM

Attendance: Cindy Praisner, Jennifer Rummel, Nicole Beauchamp, Nina Bryant, Kaitlin Cassidy, Teresa Messervy, Julia Smith, Sarah Russell, Kate Byroade, Renee Behlman, Rosemary Kelley, Jamie Girvin, Regina Brady

First Selectman Thank You

B Dennler kicked off the meeting by expressing gratitude for the partners and volunteers that assist in making our early childhood initiatives so effective. He then apologized for needing to leave the meeting for a family commitment.

C3 Year in Review Presentation

C. Praisner reviewed C3 programming from the past year. Play & Learn groups, Joyful Noises and Baby & Me continue to draw many new families as well as Stroller Walks on the Airline Trail. Parent Education programs such as Circle of Security, Conscious Discipline, PEP and FLIP IT were offered throughout the year as well. We started Book Clubs this year as well. We'll be kicking off with the Anxious Generation for this school year.

C3 provided professional development to community providers with Bradley Exchange. They presented a workshop on Creating a Compassionate Classroom. Additionally, J Lenares provided a refresher on Circle of Security- Classroom for the CES Teacher Cohort. J Lenares also provided the 3 hour Flip It workshop to Bacon Academy students. Teacher Julia Smith talked about how she supports their implementation of the FLIP It strategy in the classroom.

Parent Council was recognized for their many contributions. They manned booths at community events, held their own event and fundraisers. The fundraisers brought in over \$2000 to C3 to help us pay for childcare for workshops.

C. Praisner recognized past co-chairs and leaders. and changes. Jennifer Rummel and Kaitlin Cassidy served as co-chairs for School Readiness/LWG meetings. Co-chairs are no longer required and C3 will not use them in the coming year. Past chairs of Parent Council Group, Julia Lash and Rosemary Kelley, were thanked for their time and commitment. Additionally, Kate Black and Rosemary Kelley were recognized for their service as Parent Ambassadors.

Early Start Changes

C Praisner reviewed some of the new and exciting changes at the State related to Early Start CT. A Preschool Endowment fund has been established that will fund changes in the system for years to come. C Praisner reviewed changes to our relationship with the OEC. C3 is officially the Early Start CT Local Governance Partner. The town will serve as our Fiscal Agent. C3's Early Childhood Coordinator as the Liaison and the Leadership Work Group as our Community Table. We are in the process of seeking a new Parent Ambassador that will meet the increased expectations for the role. Applications are due on Oct 1.

Budget allocation changes were approved. The Early Start funding will now be used to fund the Early Childhood Coordinator and Parent Ambassador positions only. The total dollar amount of the budget remains that same as the budget approved in June.

Volunteer of the Year

Renee Behlman was named as C3's Volunteer of the Year. Renee has served on Parent Council. For the past two years, she has been secretary supporting events and fundraisers as well as the overall organization of the Parent Council. We are so grateful for her!

Partner Updates

R Brady gave an overview of the Family Bridge program that began serving Colchester families giving birth at Backus as of Sept 1. The home visiting program includes a RN home visit and connection to other resources. Data show a significant decrease in ER visits for families participating in this program nationwide. The RN is able to also identify post-partum depression or anxiety at this early visit.

K Byroade spoke about their accomplishments in achieving Family Place Library recognition last Fall. This is a culmination of support from C3, the Friends of Cragin, and the Cragin Trustees. Their Parent Child workshops are a way to get families in the door in a low-pressure environment. Materials and furniture were purchased as part of the process as well.

Future Dates

C Praisner reviewed our new program line-up for the fall. We need assistance promoting the PEP and Circle of Security classes. TVCCA staff will join us at our Community Baby Shower on October 23rd.

C. Praisner reviewed upcoming meeting dates for the coming year.

C3 LWG/Community Table Tuesdays, 9-10:30 at Cragin Memorial Library	Parent Council Mondays, 6-7:30 PM at CES Conf Room
October 21 December 2 February 10 April 21	Kick Off Meeting September 29th

Submitted by:

Cindy Praisner, Early Childhood Coordinator