



**Growing
Stronger
Together**



Welcome to the Collaborative for Colchester's Children (C3)!!

The Collaborative for Colchester's Children (C3) is a partnership of parents, educators, community members, agencies, and businesses working together to provide services and supports to young children and their families. Like in many other [Connecticut communities](#), C3 is a local early childhood council that is a part of the Town of Colchester and not a separate 501(c)3 non-profit.

Our mission is to foster and promote a collaborative system of services and supports to empower young children and families. Our vision is to see **Colchester's children and families thriving within a nurturing community**.

C3 seeks to build a strong, effective, and sustainable collaborative that provides our town's families and youngest citizens with opportunities that promote: (1) healthy development; (2) strong families; and (3) early school success.

History and Accomplishments

Colchester began its town-wide early childhood initiative with a School Readiness grant award in December 2005. School Readiness grants are funded through the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) on an annual basis. Our School Readiness Council oversees the administration of the grant which enables us to provide affordable, high-quality early care and education spaces in our community.

Around the same time, the Graustein Memorial Fund launched the Discovery Initiative and provided multi-year support for local early childhood collaboratives in more than 50 Connecticut communities. Local early childhood collaboratives were designed to address the needs of young children and families, bringing together a diverse set of stakeholders from across the community.

In 2008, Colchester received its first Discovery grant, formed a local early childhood council, and developed its comprehensive Community Plan to benefit families and their young children. This marked the beginning of C3. C3 continues to work with its partners to refine and implement this Plan and to sustain the collaborative beyond the initial investments by Graustein. Support has included local funds from the town and school district, grants and technical assistance from the CT Office of Early Childhood, and other small grants and donations.

Our Community Plan

The Collaborative's [Community Plan](#) works to ensure:

- Physically healthy children and healthy mothers-to-be
- Strong and empowered families
- Mental and behavioral wellness for children and their caregivers
- Children who are ready to learn when entering kindergarten and are successful in their first years of school (K-3)
- A strong, effective, and sustainable collaborative

C3 Partners and Supporters
Colchester Board of Education
Colchester Public Schools
Colchester Board of Selectmen
Colchester Youth and Social Services
Cragin Memorial Library
Colchester Recreation Department
CASTLE and other Early Care and Education Providers
Thames Valley Council for Community Action (TVCCA)
United Community and Family Services (UCFS)
Hartford Healthcare



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Our Work

C3 strengthens and nurtures families by building parental resilience; creating and supporting social connections; developing knowledge of parenting and child development; providing concrete support in times of need; and supporting the social and emotional development of caregivers and children. We offer families the following specific services:

- Subsidized preschool spaces
- Family support groups
- Parent workshops
- Play and Learn groups
- Fun family activities
- Referrals to needed services and supports

C3 and School Readiness Meetings

The Collaborative and School Readiness Council each meets six times per year. Meetings are open to the public, and parents are encouraged to attend and share their concerns and views. The C3 collaborative meets on Friday mornings and the School Readiness Council meets on Thursday evenings. See the [Meeting Information](#) page of our website for additional information on C3 and committee meetings.

C3 Member Roles, Responsibilities and Opportunities

There are many ways to get involved and contribute to our vision of *Colchester's children and families thriving within a nurturing community*. C3 members can:

- Attend Collaborative meetings and contribute your ideas and suggestions.
- Participate on a C3 committee. All parent members are invited to participate on our Parent Council – where parents discuss needs and participate in the implementation of our Community Plan.
- Be a voice in your community – share information about our mission, work, and accomplishments in your community and through your networks.
- Become familiar with our guiding principles (see sidebar) – and work along with all C3 partners to ensure that we are living up to these principles.
- Volunteer, donate, advocate. Our website includes many other ways to [Get Involved](#).

C3 Guiding Principles

- Positive early childhood experiences in the first years of a child's life are foundational for future health and success.
- Children need sensitive and responsive first relationships to grow and thrive.
- All families need a strong network of nurturing relationships.
- Families' cultural differences, diverse languages, values, strengths, and needs are all honored and welcomed.
- Collaborative partnerships, community engagement, sharing of resources, and continuous evaluation create community change.
- Vision and goals are family-centered and family-driven.
- Strategies and actions are based on current best practices, available research, and data.
- Children facing barriers, risks, setbacks, or challenges to their healthy development are sought out and offered quality services.
- Families receive services and supports in an efficient, equitable, coordinated, caring, professional, and effective manner.



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C3 Organizational Chart

