



Community Plan- Successful

Successful- Ready to Learn When Entering K (System Level)

Strategic Area Results:

- All children, birth to age five, will be provided high-quality, affordable early learning opportunities and necessary services to enhance individual school readiness.
- All School Readiness Program sites will be of high quality and meet School Readiness program requirements.

Why is this Important:

- Children who are "ready to learn" will do better in Kindergarten.
- Children's early knowledge of math strongly predicts their later success in math (K. Denton and J. West, Children's Reading and Mathematics Achievement in Kindergarten and First Grade (Washington, D.C., vol. 2002, 2002)
- Success in school depends on more than just cognitive ability. The development of social-emotional skills and other foundational skills for self-regulation such as motivation, impulse control, persistence, and focus are important early skills.
- The National Academy of Sciences reported that 60% of children enter school with the cognitive skills necessary for school success while only 40% have the social-emotional skills required to be successful in kindergarten. Since social-emotional skills can be learned, it is important to identify children with social-emotional needs as early as possible (*Shonkoff, J.P. & Phillips, D.A. (2000). From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press*).
- Many social and economic problems in America— crime, teenage pregnancy, high school drop-out rates, adverse health conditions- can be traced to low levels of social-emotional skills. When social skills are combined at an early age with cognitive skills, they help create more productive and capable citizens (*Heckman, James. (n.d.). The Heckman Equation. [Flyer]*<http://www.heckmanequation.org/content/resource/heckman-equation-flyer>).

- Quality pre-kindergarten programs reduce costly grade retention, special education services, and abuse and neglect. (*Ready Nation. (2012). Savings Now, Savings Later. [Flyer]. Retrieved from http://www.readynation.org/uploads/20120910_ReadyNationSavingsNow.FinalLowRes.pdf*)
- Long term outcomes for quality programs for the individual include higher school achievement, increased wages, delayed birth of first child, and increased home ownership. Returns to society are a reduction in special education costs, decreased welfare costs, less crime, and an increase in income tax. (*Center on the Developing Child. (n.d.) INBRIEF: Early Childhood Program Effectiveness. [Brief]. Retrieved from <http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu>*).

What works:

- A community understanding of the importance of quality early learning experiences.
- A coordinated early care and education system that provides equal access to quality care, education, and support services for all children.
- Active participation of community members in early childhood initiatives.
- School Readiness programs that are in compliance with School Readiness policies.
- All early care and education programs within our community provide high-quality programming aligned with NAEYC program standards.

Current Conditions:

- Affordable childcare is an issue in Colchester.
 - Early Head Start, Head Start, and School Readiness Programs are available in town.
- Many families cannot provide transportation for preschool.
- Covid has created significant disruptions in the childcare industry. Colchester programs have so far weathered the changes and remain open.
- Full-day/full-year early care and education opportunities are limited; especially for infants and toddlers.

Strategies:

- Recommend changes in and advocate for new town, state, and federal policies and programs that are necessary for the development of a coordinated early care and education system that provides equal access to quality care, education, and support services for all children birth through age eight in Colchester.
- Foster partnerships among the providers of services to young children and families including School Readiness programs.
- Encourage public participation of all community members in planning and policy-making for young children.
- Build the community's understanding of the importance and value of early childhood experiences.
- Facilitate the coordination of the delivery of services to children and families, including (1) referral procedures for families with special needs and (2) before-and-after school child care for children attending preschool programs and (3) transition from Birth to Three to Preschool Services.

- Make recommendations to school officials, providers, and families concerning the transition from early care and education, including School Readiness programs, to kindergarten.
- Facilitate participation of pre-K age children in high-quality, affordable early care and education programs within our community.
- Increase capacity of community providers through professional development opportunities that focus on quality, align with State standards and promote the successful transition to K including topics such as curricular content, socio-emotional learning, and classroom interactions.
- Monitor and evaluate School Readiness grant-funded program compliance and performance in accordance with state and NAEYC accreditation requirements and standards.

Selected Actions:

- Hold 6 School Readiness Council Meetings
- Offer free and/or subsidized slots for children from low-income families through School Readiness and Head Start.
 - Place students in 12 Part-Day School Readiness Spaces and 7 School-Day School Readiness Spaces in CECP - Completed
 - Place students in 9 School Day School Readiness Spaces at CASTLE - Completed
 - Coordinate enrollments with Head Start
- Provide Professional Development and Relationship-building opportunities through our Early Care Collaborative.
 - PD ECC: Using Data to Improve Child Outcome
 - PD ECC: Diverse Learners
 - PD ECC: Math Literacy
- Connect families with information about available preschool programming through Semi-Annual Preschool Expo (SY22 virtual again)
- Create a system of early childhood screenings and developmental monitoring to improve early identification of children with special needs.
- Increase awareness of local early care and education providers and enrollment timelines including SR and CECP lottery application periods.
- Maintain online provider list of Colchester programs at www.ColchesterC3.org
- Identify and disseminate existing and prospective resources and services available for young children and families.
- Research and survey early care and education program slot use and demand trends.
- Explore options for subsidized full-day/full-year preschool programs.
- Seek opportunities to provide high-quality materials to early care and education programs.
- Conduct School Readiness Monitoring Visits at CASTLE and CECP (Fall, Winter, Spring)
- Recertify School Readiness Monitor and School Readiness Liaison in Class Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
- Liaison will attend School Readiness Liaison meetings and exchange information with other School Readiness Councils and community organizations serving children and families.
- Complete School Readiness program evaluation required by the Office of Early Childhood.