



## **COLLABORATIVE FOR COLCHESTER'S CHILDREN**

**Oct 21, 2025**

**Leadership Work Group Meeting**

**Cragin Memorial Library**

**9:00-10:30 AM**

**Attendance:** Cindy Praisner, Laurie Buyniski, Kate Byroade, Julia Lash, Rosemary Kelley, Eve Hurley, Sarah Russel, Chelsea Long, Erin Howes, Kaitlin Cassidy, Judy O'Meara, Lindsay Therian, Kristina Swain, Tiffany Quinn, Teresa Messervy

### **Partner Updates**

**Cragin-** Play with Me program begins a new session today, Storytimes are currently running.

**Castle-** Early start spaces are full. Beginning to plan for the 35th Anniversary celebration which will take place in June.

**TVCCA-** Early Head Start/Head Start is 94% full program wide, EHS in Colchester is full. Change of scope helped to fill Head Start spaces, staffing has stabilized and expecting a federal review soon.

Family Bridge program received two referrals from Colchester, nurse/family partnership for home visiting program kick off in training, supporting families prenatal to age 2

**Parks & Recreation-** Trick or Trunk will take place Oct 25th, sensory hour beforehand for families to experience event without bright lights and scary decorations. Parents need to bring candy donations, which ran out last year. Ghost run coming up as well. The Holiday Homecoming event will take place on December 6th.

**CPS Special Education-** supporting families with sensory friendly trick or treating experience to help young students practice skills and connect with other families.

**Parent Council Updates** - Erin Howes and Chelsea Long, Parent Ambassadors for Colchester, were introduced to the group. In their roles, they will be leading the Parent Council.

Parent Council planning C3 trunk, Bluey theme, for Trunk or Treat event.

**C3 General Updates and Events-** Currently running Play & Learn groups, Stroller walks, PEP class and Circle of Security. Hosted Brain Connection workshop. Community Baby Shower will take place on Oct 23rd (15 families registered), The Anxious Generation book club meeting scheduled for Oct 27th.

**McKinney-Vento Homeless Update** - E. Hurley explained in general what the law covers for families, nothing new to report for Colchester.

**OEC/Shine Updates** - Currently waiting for more information, state making a decision on possible \$10k community match. The state will be moving towards a portal for the Early Start finding programs and potentially applying to those programs. As of next year, Colchester

families will apply directly to the program and each program will be making financial hardship decisions. There has been an increase in hardships requests over the past year as the cost of tuition increased. Early Start training for providers will take place today, Castle and CECP planning to attend.

**Budget Review** - Budget is currently on track, \$25k from BOS and \$40k from BOE. Stabilization funds were used to pay for items that are used every year, such as website and registration software. Conscious Discipline online training was purchased for community use, 75 seats are available for administrators, staff, and families. Contact C. Praisner to request access to this training.

The council discussed possible topics for future self-care series and Community cafe events such as nutrition on a budget, household budgeting, etc. Kim Berry from TVCCA and Citizen's Bank Housing Roundtable were suggested as potential resources to address financial hardship.

**Organizational Structure Changes** - The LWG discussed various ways of managing the organizational structure as a result of the end of the School Readiness Council and the establishment of C3 as the Early Start LGP for the Colchester community. The group reviewed the duties on the proposed organizational chart/table. Specifically discussed was whether or not to continue with an Executive Committee and the role of the individuals on that committee. Consensus was that the main body was more involved and that tasks from the Executive Committee could be accomplished within the main body or assigned to an ad hoc team, e.g. hiring new staff or changing job descriptions. The group also agreed to eliminate the co-chair positions, as they were not in practice a functional role. It was noted that the parent voice needs to be added. There was also a discussion of voting blocks and how some roles may be represented by an appointee that need to be addressed in the upcoming bylaw changes. C.Praisner will bring a revised organizational structure without the executive committee to the next meeting. KByroade, TMesservy, JLash, and JO'Meara all offered to serve as an ad hoc group to look at bylaw changes. Further discussion will take place at the next meeting regarding the Leadership Work Group Membership and member agreements as well.

### **Upcoming Meeting Dates for 2025-2026**

**Tuesdays, 9:00-10:30 am- December 2, February 10, April 21**

Submitted by:

Laurie Buyniski, Program Coordinator