
Connecticut Early Childhood Funder Collaborative

A project of:



Mission:

To bring the collective voice and resources of philanthropy to build and sustain a comprehensive early childhood system that works for all children, families, communities and the workforce in Connecticut.

Our Vision

Connecticut's early care and education system is child & family-centered, racially & culturally respectful, high quality, accessible, equitable and accountable with ongoing and valued input by families, providers and local communities.

Guiding Principles

- **Aligned, supportive systems:** Children's cognitive, social and emotional development requires integrated, cross sector systems at the state and local levels. This means a fully integrated and responsive birth to age 5 system as well as alignment from early care through Kindergarten to Grade 3.
- **Early investments/big returns:** Early childhood investments are investments in Connecticut's social and economic future. Supporting parents through high quality, accessible childcare and services advances individual and community prosperity and well-being.
- **State-local coordination:** State policies should value and support input from local communities in recognition that local communities are closer to the real needs of children and families.
- **Whole-family approach:** Supporting parents and others involved in caregiving, respecting their different cultures, backgrounds and needs, and incorporating their voice in policies and programs are essential to better child outcomes.
- **High quality:** Investments in our early care and education workforce are needed in recognition of its critical importance to children, families and our state.
- **Accountability:** Strategic, efficient performance measures that are valued and inform program design, delivery and quality.

Progress to date

- **Creation of the CT Office of Early Childhood** including ongoing support for consultation to assist the new office in bringing together staff and programs from five different agencies and developing a multiyear action plan;
- **Launch of the state-local intermediary** (CT Children's Collective) with joint state and philanthropic funding and a governance structure that includes local early care and education (ECE) councils, OEC, SDE and philanthropy;
- **Integrated childcare financing** options developed to address the state's complicated system of childcare with different eligibility, reimbursement and reporting requirements;
- **Organized community input into the state's Every Student Succeeds federal education plan** followed by community pilots to develop models and best practice;
- **Continued state/philanthropic partnership** with CT ECFC the recipient of federal PDG grant dollars to support local ECE collaboratives and development of a common definition and framework for effective family engagement;
- **Support for key ECE partners** including CT Voices for Children and CT Early Childhood Alliance to develop policy briefs and other vehicles for highlighting ECE issues;
- Supporting consultation and information dissemination on best practices in **childcare business management and shared service models**;
- **Deeper connection to national funder networks** such as the Alliance for Early Success and National ECFC

Connecticut Early Childhood Funder Collaborative

A project of:



Work Plan Development

The CT Early Childhood Funder Collaborative (CT ECFC) advances its mission by bringing the knowledge, networks and funding of its 18 members to address key needs and opportunities. The Collaborative is strategic and deliberate in the development and execution of its work plan employing selection criteria that have been tested and reviewed over the ECFC's 8-year existence. These include:

- Readiness or ripeness of the opportunity
- Unique and appropriate for a funder collaborative
- Sufficiently defined to effect change; clear goals
- Feasible given resources, political realities and partner capacity/willingness
- Alignment with individual ECFC members' priorities

2020 Work Plan Components and Context

In 2020, CT ECFC will focus on the following key issues building on its efforts to date:

- 1. State-local coordination: Support for the CT Children's Collective**
 - Reflects ECFC priority for local input in state ECE policy by connecting local communities to each other and state agencies including SDE and OEC
 - Aligns with ECFC criteria of readiness, feasibility, partner willingness and individual funder priorities
- 2. Expanded support and improved alignment for developmental screening**
 - Builds upon ECFC efforts to support innovative uses of state funding based on efforts in other states
 - Aligns with ECFC criteria of readiness given other states' efforts, clearly defined goal and alignment with individual member interests
- 3. Expanding opportunities for parent voice in ECE policy**
 - Builds upon ECFC efforts resulting in CT's Family Engagement definition and framework
 - Aligns with ECFC criteria of readiness with emerging state government interest, commitment of local ECE councils and individual funder priorities
- 4. Creating a stronger ECE advocacy system**
 - Builds upon ECFC investments to date in state wide advocacy partners and growing recognition of need for active philanthropic advocacy
 - Aligns with ECFC criteria of a ripe opportunity and unique role for a funder collaborative
- 5. Expanding funder knowledge**
 - Builds upon core rationale for CT ECFC's establishment and recent efforts to connect to national networks of ECE funders including National ECFC and Alliance for Early Success
 - Supports broader philanthropic thinking on critical issues such as racism, equity and opportunity that impact all of our work