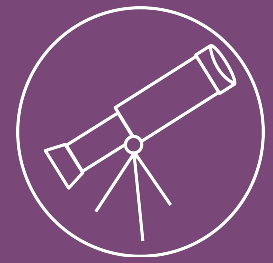




## Early Childhood

Early childhood is a crucial developmental window in a child’s life. Evidence-based knowledge shows that positive interactions between children and their family and neighborhood environments before conception, through birth, and into early childhood shape the architecture of the brain and overall child development. Healthy child development also depends a great deal on having a supportive family that is connected to networks of friends, kin, and institutions that provide needed supports, and that promote trust, self-belief, and a sense of belonging. Meanwhile, there is significant evidence showing that ‘adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)’ are consistently linked to behavior or mental health problems in children and psychiatric disorders in children and adults. Investing in social capital aimed at developing children early is crucial for the City. Patterns in early childhood outcomes in New Haven suggest that the community may not be doing enough to ensure that all children receive the early developmental supports that create this social capital. 79.9% of New Haven children currently enter kindergarten with pre-K experience as four year-olds<sup>2</sup> but children from more-disadvantaged backgrounds are much less likely to enter with adequate school-readiness.<sup>3</sup> For instance, Children from low income households have an almost 600 word vocabulary gap by the time they turn three, compared to children from professional households.<sup>4</sup> Lower income children in urban centers like New Haven are also much more likely to live in neighborhoods and households that generate excessive chronic stress, the negative effects of which can be trans-generational and contribute to the ACEs, thus leading to negative outcomes in adulthood.

An effort is needed to systematically use all available resources to restore the positive interactions between children and their environments – by facilitating conditions for positive attachments between children and caring adults; and supportive relationships between family and community – that will intentionally and systematically promote development in a way that prepares children for successful school, future work, family and community life in this more complex age.



## Vision:

All New Haven children, birth through age 8, will be healthy, safe, thriving in nurturing families, and prepared to be successful, lifelong learners



## 2020 Targets:

### Access to pre-K:

Increase the percentage of New Haven children with pre-K experience from 73.9% to 100%

### Quality teaching:

Increase the percentage of pre-school teachers meeting state credential requirements from 70% to 100%

### Families and caregivers:

Expand parenting education and support efforts to reach 60% of parents of young children

# Strategy Roadmap: Access to Early Childhood Care



**Goal: All children have access to quality early care and education**

		Strategies		
		Make universal early care and preschool available so every family has access to quality child care and early education in their neighborhood	Simplify the enrollment process to make it easier for parents to sign their children up for preschool	Expand licensed, family-based child care to improve access to early care and create jobs
	<b>Need</b>			
<b>Citywide</b>	<p>73.9% of New Haven children enter kindergarten with pre-K experience.</p> <p>In the 2013-2014 school year, 490 children needed pre-school slots.<sup>5</sup> More than 50% of families citywide need licensed infant/toddler care, but there is 1 space for every 11 children.<sup>6</sup></p>	Achieve universal access to early childhood care with 100% of New Haven kindergartners entering with pre-K experience by creating 500 new slots	Unify all pre-school programs in New Haven under a common application and enrollment process	<p>Increase the number of family-based child care slots by 150</p> <p>Expand efforts to recruit and train early childhood educators working with infants/toddlers</p>
<b>Equity Focus</b>	<i>In some low opportunity neighborhoods, there are more pre-K aged students than there are slots available, and many more students eligible for free or subsidized pre-K than there are slots offered.<sup>7</sup></i>	<i>Increase slots in low opportunity neighborhoods where there is a greater discrepancy between need slots and available slots</i>	<i>Target outreach about the new common application enrollment process to parents and caregivers in low opportunity neighborhoods</i>	<i>At least 30% of new slots will be located in low opportunity neighborhoods to help remove barriers to access</i>
<b>2016: First Year Action Steps</b>		<p>Apply for social impact bond feasibility study</p> <p>Create facilities plan within NHPS to facilitate expansion of pre-K</p> <p>Explore other options for pre-K expansion (charters, alternate public funding streams, etc.)</p>	Pilot a common application for preschool programs	<p>Implement Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership expansion</p> <p>Ensure people interested in becoming family-based child care providers have access to training and licensing support</p>

# Strategy Roadmap: Quality Early Childhood Care



## Goal: New Haven has quality early care and education programs

		Strategies		
		Work with local education institutions to offer certification programs for early care/education teachers that meet new credentials	Ensure high-quality teaching in all early care and education programs through classroom observation and coaching	Promote social and emotional wellbeing in all programs that work with young children and their families
<b>Need</b>				
<b>Citywide</b>	30% of pre-school teachers in New Haven School Readiness programs do not currently meet new credential requirements. <sup>8</sup>	<p>Increase the percentage of teachers meeting state credentials to 100%</p> <p>Recruit and support new early childhood education (ECE) teachers</p> <p>Partner with higher education, workforce training, and youth organizations to create more pathways to early care certification</p>	Increase the number of classrooms receiving coaching/consultation on instructional practices and showing improvement on CLASS assessment by 25%	Promote play-based early care and education across all settings (schools, community programs, and family child care) that will support child development along the critical pathways – physical, social-interactive, psycho-emotional, moral-ethical, linguistic, intellectual-cognitive, and executive functioning – from before birth to maturity.
<b>Equity Focus</b>	<i>Parents in low opportunity neighborhoods rely disproportionately on underground networks of unlicensed, in-home, early care for infants and toddlers.</i>	<p><i>Ensure that teachers working in low opportunity neighborhoods reflect those communities and meet state requirements</i></p> <p><i>Connect underground network providers to certification programs and provide support to ensure completion</i></p>	<i>Ensure that classrooms in low opportunity neighborhoods receive coaching/consultation and show improvement on CLASS assessment</i>	<i>Ensure that programs and providers are knowledgeable about the assets within those communities and not just the stressors connected to social and emotional wellbeing</i>
<b>2016: First Year Action Steps</b>		<p>Convene work group to develop plan for local teacher credential program approved by OEC</p> <p>Work with NHPS to offer high school ECE credit courses</p>	<p>Develop a plan to secure NAEYC accreditation for 32 magnet school pre-K classrooms by July 2018</p> <p>Collect and analyze existing data on classroom/program quality</p>	<p>Implement and evaluate the executive functioning pilot currently in 22 pre-K and kindergarten classrooms in 5 schools</p> <p>Explore and map tested strategies for addressing social and emotional wellbeing</p>

# Strategy Roadmap: Families and Caregivers



**Goal: Families and caregivers have the knowledge, skills, and resources to support their children’s basic needs and development**

		Strategies		
		Work with 211 Community Map to make it easier for families to find information, programs, and support for their children	Expand reach and coordination among programs to make sure that families receive support and care during pregnancy and afterwards	Launch a whole-family literacy campaign to encourage parents to read with their kids
	<b>Need</b>			
<b>Citywide</b>	More of New Haven’s vulnerable families need easy access to programs and supports critical for their children’s development. An estimated 300 families are currently visited by the home visiting network. This level of service does not meet the current demand and the programs that exist are not linked.	Increase the number of parents accessing 211 Community Map by 25%	<p>Increase the number of parents receiving parenting education to 5,000 parents</p> <p>Increase the number of families receiving home visits to 5,000 families</p>	<p>Increase the number of families engaged in family literacy programming to 2,500 families</p> <p>Coordinate with Adult Literacy sector to identify the best approach for New Haven families</p>
<b>Equity Focus</b>	The lack of a clearly articulated, centralized registration model for early care and education makes connecting to programs a challenge for many families who may have limited transportation and familiarity with how the current system works.	<i>Target outreach campaign about 211 Community Map to parents and caregivers in low opportunity neighborhoods</i>	<i>Ensure that all teen parents receive parenting education and support services</i>	<i>Focus on closing the “word gap” in children from families in low opportunity neighborhoods</i>
<b>2016: First Year Action Steps</b>		Run publicity campaign for 211 Community Map to raise awareness of new interface	<p>Convene meeting of all home visiting/parenting education programs in New Haven to develop alignment plan and reporting process</p> <p>Collect data on the use of developmental assessments and how information is shared with families among programs</p>	<p>Work with Adult Literacy work group to coordinate adult literacy efforts with whole-family literacy projects</p> <p>Research best practices for promoting whole-family literacy</p>