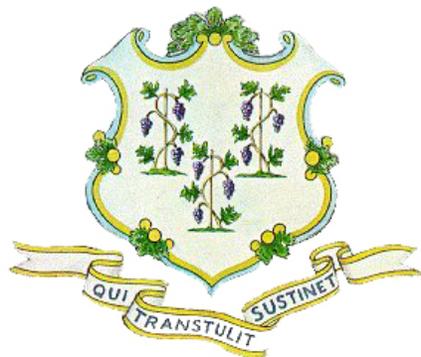




Landmark policy, proven practice, and return on investment

Connecticut Commission on Children

2011 Results-Based Accountability (RBA) Report & Annual Report



Innovation — Integration — Information — Impact — Leadership



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Commission on Children



January, 2012

Appropriations Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
Room 2700
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Members of the Appropriations Committee:

Pursuant to Section 46a-129 of the Connecticut General Statutes, you will find herein the Commission on Children's 2011 Results Based Accountability (RBA) Report Card and Annual Report.

We thank you again for the opportunity to lead in coordination and best practices for children. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at 860.240.0290.

Sincerely,

M. Alex Geertsma, M.D., F.A.A.P.
Chairman

Elaine Zimmerman
Executive Director

cc: Governor Dannel P. Malloy
Clerk of the Senate
Clerk of the House of Representatives
Connecticut State Library
Legislative Library, Connecticut General Assembly

Table of Contents

Opportunities and Challenges for Children: An Overview of 2011.....	7
Result—No Child Lives in Poverty	11
Indicator 1: Child Poverty.....	11
Indicator 2: Child Hunger.....	13
Indicator 3: Employment	14
Indicator 4: Homelessness	15
Result—Parents are engaged and informed about children’s programs and policies.....	17
Indicator 1: Family Civic Engagement.....	17
Indicator 2: Parent Involvement in Schools.....	18
Result—Children are born healthy and remain well and safe	21
Indicator 1: Low Birth Weight Babies	21
Indicator 2: Childhood Obesity.....	22
Indicator 3: Children remain safe in natural and unnatural disasters	23
Result—Children and youth are ready for and succeed in school	25
Indicator 1: Preschool Enrollment	25
Indicator 2: Reading.....	26
Indicator 3: Bullying Prevention: Promoting Positive School Climate	27
Commission on Children Performance Report 2011	29
Commission on Children Board and Staff, 2011	35

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR CHILDREN: AN OVERVIEW OF 2011

The context in challenges. The year was riddled with challenges for children and their families. The economy did not recover from the recession. Poverty remained high, with many parents losing jobs as well as housing. Homelessness and hunger emerged in both low-income and middle class families. The “99ers” stretched their unemployment insurance as far as allowed. But unlike most previous downturns, there were few jobs to be found after nearly two years of job loss. Youth unemployment has remained the highest since the Great Depression.

Connecticut maintained its unwanted distinction of having the largest reading achievement gap in the nation. Meanwhile, new policy issues emerged through lingering natural disasters, particularly a freak October snowstorm that impacted family work patterns, housing, and child care centers.

Bullying became a notable challenge, with several teens and young adults in New England taking their lives after a pattern of public humiliation. One such loss in our state was a female high school student who was the victim of severe cyber-bullying.

The context in opportunities. The federal government invested significant resources in early care and education and home visitation. Philanthropy and the federal government began to recognize the importance of family civics for good child outcomes. The Secretary of Education linked bullying to civil rights, taking a firm leadership role on the need for safety in schools. Awareness of the problematic outcomes and costs of obesity increased with more public will for change in the community, school, and home.

Some of the challenges at a glance: Poverty

- The child poverty rate rose from 11 percent in 2007 to nearly 13 percent in 2010.
- More than 128,000 Connecticut children live in food-insecure households.
- Twenty-eight percent of Connecticut children have parents with no full-time, year-round employment.
- Joblessness for 16- to 24-year-old black males has reached “Great Depression proportions.”
- Nearly 50,000 children have been affected by foreclosure since 2007.



Some of the participants in a January 11 Commission forum, “The State of the Child in 2011.” From front to back: Acting State Department of Education Commissioner George Coleman, Department of Children & Families Commissioner Joette Katz, Child Advocate Jeanne Milstein, Connecticut Voices for Children Executive Director Jamey Bell, Connecticut Health Foundation Executive Director Patricia Baker, Hartford Mayor Pedro Segarra, and Representative Jack Thompson of Manchester. Behind them are Breana Vessichio and Jay Bhagat of 1st District Congressman John Larson’s Youth Cabinet.

Understanding that states would be asked to do more with less led to greater focus on accountability and proven methods of good results. With limited dollars and rising challenges, a systemic response to policy gaps with strong efficiencies was evident. Public understanding and customer input became paramount to inform policy leaders of what works for children.

Funds raised. The Commission on Children has met the challenges of the 2011 with significant gains. We raised nearly \$2.5 million—approximately five times our state budget allocation—through partnerships with the Grossman Family Foundation, the Kellogg Foundation, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, the National League of Cities, the National Zero to Three Initiative, the Liberty Bank Foundation, the Pew Foundation, the United Way of Coastal Fairfield County, and Cronin and Company. These funds were raised from federal, private-sector, and philanthropic sources for: a) integration of home visitation with early care and education, b) reforms in the teaching of reading, c) a pilot project in cost benefit analysis for juvenile justice and incarceration, and d) urban strategies to address low birth weight reduction, obesity reduction, and model parent leadership initiatives. We found key private sector partners, both in media and in business, to develop a Families in Short-Term Crisis Fund for families who’ve lost jobs, are having trouble holding jobs, or need some support to transition to a new job.

Model Policies Envisioned and Enacted. The Commission worked with policy leaders to plan, create, and move legislation for an improved early care and education system, a comprehensive plan for home visitation, and a new assessment method for K-3 literacy skills. We drafted a bill with homeland security officials that ensured evacuation plans for children, particularly young children in early care and education and children in forgotten settings such as interim foster care. Our agency wrote the initial draft for ground-breaking bullying legislation, the blueprint for the model early care and education system, and the reading sections of legislation addressing the achievement gap. All bills passed with significant bipartisan support.

Leadership. The Commission was asked by the governor’s Office of Policy and Management to serve as the bridge between the Child Poverty and Prevention Council and the Children and Recession Task Force. We led the work on child obesity this year in a statewide collaboration with more than 50 state and local participants. We designed the model work on disaster planning for children across agency and community and brought in the expertise of the nationally renowned Save the Children and Mark Shriver to help with best practices in Connecticut.

Our research led to an alternative reading assessment tool designed by Wireless Generation with nearly \$1 million from a private funder to test the work in five diverse school districts: West Haven, Bristol, Waterbury, Norwalk and Naugatuck. We serve on the leadership team for the Governors Cabinet in Early

**Some of the challenges at a glance:
Health**

- The rate of low birth weights in Connecticut has ranged between 8 and 8.1 percent since the 2006-2007 fiscal year.
- Only 25 percent of Connecticut high school students are physically active every day. Meanwhile, obesity-related health problems among adults in this state generate \$856 million medical expenses, annually.
- One in four Connecticut high school students—and 35 percent of the state’s 9th graders—reported having been bullied or harassed at school in the past year.

Care and Education and chair the Cabinet Work Group on Home Visitation and Family Engagement. The Commission continued to guide work on children and the recession, calling attention to youth unemployment and the growing plight of the “99ers,” or those whose federal unemployment insurance has run out.

We brought in federal experts to discuss the impact of federal cuts on children in Connecticut and what the state can do to buffer the impact through prevention programs. Our partnership with Liberty Bank Foundation has led to the creation of a fund for families in short-term crisis during this economic downturn to address immediate obstacles to employment. The Commission on Children is recognized statewide and nationally as an agency with strong policy expertise and networks on children and the recession, bullying, early care and education, literacy and family engagement.

Youth and family civics. In all that we do, we ensure that youth and parents are stakeholders and that consumer input drives policy direction. Our agency partnered with the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus to create School Governance Councils in school districts so that parents can partner on school excellence. We work now on the state management team with the State Department of Education to ensure proper training and implementation in school governance councils. As of November 1, 198 schools were required to implement School Governance Councils.

The Commission co-authored a curriculum on parents and educational excellence with the Center for School Change to ensure that parents know what the components are of a good school and how they can partner with their school for improved child learning outcomes. Six towns are training parents in school leadership with this model. We serve on a team overseeing our states Parent Trust, a model financing system for family civics on the local level. Programs are supported in more than 50 towns.

Youth routinely partner with us. We are an on-going partner with Congressman John Larson’s Youth Advisory Council in the Hartford region and we routinely partner with youth entities such as Norwalk’s Youth Council. We have just been nominated by youth as a finalist in the Sage Award, an award in Norwalk for our statewide work in bullying. The Commission also works with the Mayor’s Office on the Hartford Youth Advisory Council.



Some of the proud Hartford parents receiving their diplomas in June from the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI), a civics initiative of the Commission. In all, more than 160 parents from Bloomfield, Bridgeport, Danbury, East Hartford, Hartford, Meriden, Middletown, Milford, New Haven, New London, Norwalk, Plymouth, and

Waterbury graduated from PLTI. The number of Connecticut communities offering parent leadership training has more than tripled in the last 10 years.

Public Utilization. Our agency is routinely utilized by the public for information. We provide technical assistance to agencies, answer queries of parents and grandparents on children and youth, ensure that fathers are kept engaged by agencies and service providers and link best policies and practices to one another for consumers. We distribute customer-friendly reports, written by our agency on topics such as school readiness, child poverty reduction, children and the recession, health care, literacy and, child obesity. We work with the media in an ongoing partnership, sharing data, stories and opportunities to interview families. In 2011, 24 news stories aired sharing the Commission’s work, 132,000 visits to our website resulted in 100,000 documents being downloaded and 1,400 residents requested our newsletter.

Accountability. The Commission worked with OPM and the legislature’s Appropriations Committee to apply for a grant from the Pew Foundation focused on cost benefit analysis of targeted programs and policies. The aim is to increase information for state policy leaders on which policies bolster good outcomes, increase efficiencies and promote models that are research-based for children, youth and families. We were selected to work with a handful of other states assessing costs and return on investment for programs. The first area of focus is on adult and youth corrections. Called Results First, this initiative is modeled after the successful Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) initiative that has been highlighted by the National Conference of State Legislatures as a best practice. WSIPP is now sharing its cost benefit analysis tools for state government in a pilot with other states. We receive technical assistance from economists and the Pew Foundation as the team masters both the technology and the research. The project is chaired by Representative Toni Walker and OPM Under Secretary Mike Lawlor. The Commission on Children serves as Coordinator.

This Results First initiative, funded by a grant from the Pew Foundation, will help us craft integrated portfolios that when combined, produce strong outcomes based on our state’s unique characteristics. The work is properly linked to results based accountability. A committee of stakeholders includes the Judicial Branch, OPM, Appropriations, the Department of Correction, Southern Connecticut State University Business School and Central Connecticut State University.

National Recognition. The Kellogg Foundation recognized our agency as having created and built one of the few proven models of parent engagement in the states. They offered us \$1.2 million for national replication. We were recognized by NCSL through an invitation to serve as Staff Chair to the 50 states in Human Services and Welfare. The Pew Foundation invited us to serve on their national committee on child hunger and on a multi-state home visitation advisory. These national opportunities, none of which are paid for by state funds, allow us to bring best practices to Connecticut as well as to be on alert for federal resource opportunities.

	<p>Did you know?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> The brain develops to 90 percent of its capacity in the first five years.<input type="checkbox"/> A child who is not reading by the end of the first grade has only a 1 in 8 chance of becoming a proficient reader.<input type="checkbox"/> Connecticut has the greatest achievement gap in reading in the country.
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The Commission on Children is an agency that has an impressive track record of identifying the key issues for children and families, and I believe that is because they ask us – the families – and then work directly with us, gathering research and pulling together the critical players to work through the issues and make a difference for Connecticut’s children.

-Karen Zrenda, parent & volunteer advocate

RESULT—NO CHILD LIVES IN POVERTY

Connecticut has lost 68,000 jobs since the recession began in late 2007. Research indicates that this calamity will affect children and families for decades to come without significant, substantial and well-informed policy and practice. More than 79,000 children in our state had at least one parent who was unemployed in 2010. Youth unemployment is at record highs. Unable to find jobs, large numbers of people are maxing out their unemployment benefits. The impact on families and children is unprecedented. With this backdrop, we reaffirm our commitment to Connecticut’s youngest generation. The Commission on Children continues to promote the health, safety and learning of Connecticut’s children through research and model policy, education and outreach, key partnerships, civic engagement, revenue generation, and leadership.

INDICATOR 1: CHILD POVERTY

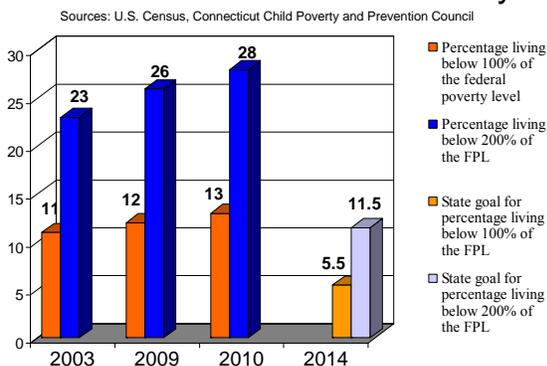
The story behind the baseline

Poverty contributes to poor social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes for children and hinders cognitive development. Although Connecticut’s overall poverty rate is lower than most states, the child poverty rate rose from 11% in 2007 to nearly 13% in 2010. Income disparities impacting urban and minority families continue to be among the largest in the nation, particularly in this economic downturn. The Hispanic poverty rate is third highest in the nation. The labor force is projected to lose over \$1 billion in future productivity for every year that the current number of Connecticut children live in poverty.

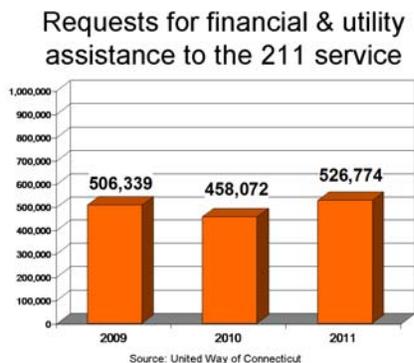
Family stressors are up. More children are left alone while parents work or hunt for jobs. There is an increase in domestic violence. More youth are saying they cannot see their way to college. Some are leaving home to relieve parents of the extra costs.

Many middle class families are just a step away from losing a job or falling into foreclosure. Others have already fallen into a loss of home or job. Youth unemployment is the highest since just after World War II. Youth are competing with adults for the same jobs. This is disheartening to both generations.

Connecticut Children in Poverty



Connecticut is the first state in the nation to declare the recession an emergency for children through state legislation, P.A. 10-133.



What the Commission on Children did about this in 2011:



Worked with Liberty Bank Foundation, CT Council of Family Service Agencies, United Way of CT, 2-1-1 Infoline, the Workforce Investment Boards, CHEFA and other agencies to assess the need for and viability of an emergency loan fund for parents to obtain, maintain or transition to a job.



Worked with Meriden Children First to craft an award-winning \$465,000 federal Promise Neighborhood Grant creating the Meriden Children Zone.



Supported the CT Earned Income Tax Credit which impacted nearly 200,000 low and moderate income families.



Brought in national speaker Bruce Lesley, CEO of First Focus, to present at the state Capitol on the impact of federal budget cuts on the safety net for Connecticut families in stress due to the economy.



Facilitated the oversight of implementation of Public Act 10-133 which: a) streamlines services; b) maximizes federal fund opportunities to include the TANF Emergency Fund that assists families facing unemployment,

a housing crisis, increased debt, and other hardships as well as promotes job training and summer youth employment; c) ensures access to nutritional food for children; d) permits parents on TANF to go to school when the state unemployment rate is 8% or higher; e) creates a leadership team across agencies to address the emergency facing children in a recession; f) delineates specific tasks for each agency to perform in a coordinated manner with public accountability; g) streamlines and integrates public information and access to services including a single point of entry procedure, on-line applications, screening tools and benefit calculators; and h) delivers state services to consumers within a reasonable timeframe.



Worked with the New Haven United Way designing a model seamless system of care and supports for families facing extreme poverty.



Spoke at numerous regional meetings on children and the recession and the impact of child poverty and assisted United Ways in fundraising for such families.



Continued to serve as staff for the Speaker's Task Force on Children and the Recession.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve on child poverty:

- Reorder state priorities to invest strongly in the proven poverty reduction interventions as proposed by national experts for the Connecticut Poverty and Prevention Council and provided with an economic model analysis and template by the Urban Institute. Connecticut can reduce child poverty by 35% if we:

1. provide child care subsidies to families with incomes of less than 50% of the state median income;
2. provide education and training programs that result in associates degrees for half the adults with high school diplomas;
3. help high school dropouts get their GEDs;

4. increase employment by 6% for the unemployed;
5. increase participation in safety net programs by 85% such as food stamps, subsidized housing and LIHEAP; and
6. ensure child support payments.

- Ensure integration of tasks and function of Public Act 10-133 regarding Children and the Recession Task Force with the Poverty and Prevention Council.
- Ensure pursuit of all annual federal funding through the SNAP E&T 50/50 match fund and assist regional collaboratives to most effectively utilize the funds for employment and increased wage opportunities.

INDICATOR 2: CHILD HUNGER

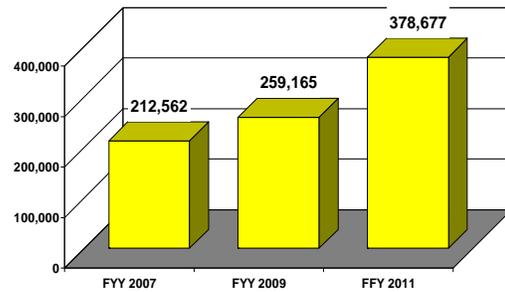
The story behind the baseline

Hunger is a growing issue in our state during these difficult economic times. FRAC shows that 12.7% of Connecticut households were food insecure in 2010, an increase of more than 70% from 2006. More than 128,000 Connecticut children live in food insecure households. Food insecurity affects child development, increases the odds for cognitive, behavioral, and other development delays has implications for educational achievement.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) notes that 378,677 Connecticut residents participated in SNAP on an average monthly basis in FFY 11, an increase of more than 78% since FFY 07.

The federal government pays 100% of SNAP program benefits. Federal and state governments share administrative costs (federal government contributes nearly 50%). Based on USDA research, it is estimated that each dollar in federal SNAP benefits generates nearly twice that in economic activity. Under-participation in SNAP adversely affects not only low-income people who are missing out on benefits, but also communities that could be benefiting from more federal dollars circulating in the local economy.

Connecticut residents participating in SNAP



Source: Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture

What the Commission on Children did about this in 2011:



Monitored compliance of language in Public Act 10-133 that requires the Department of Education to administer, within available appropriations, a child nutrition outreach program to increase (1) participation in the federal School Breakfast Program, federal Summer Food Service Program and federal Child and Adult Care Food Program; and (2) federal reimbursement for such programs.



Spoke publicly on hunger throughout the state, including visits to food pantries with community members, state elected leaders, and the Congressional delegation.



Showed how much money the state was losing by not maximizing SNAP utilization.



Worked to streamline service access so that families could receive food quickly and seamlessly.



Revealed the multi-million dollar loss to the state of low birth weight babies and the inextricable causal link to hunger and poor nutrition during pregnancy.



Appointed by the Pew Foundation to serve on a national Hunger Partnership with food companies, allowing for new resources, best state practice information, and potential business partnerships for Connecticut.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

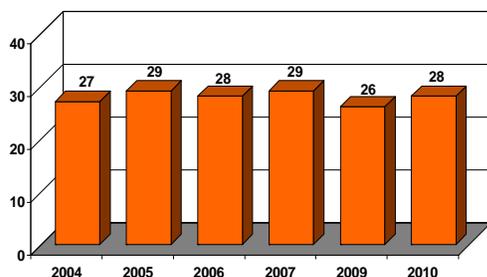
- Launch information campaign through community- and faith-based organizations to increase SNAP participation.
- Enhance partnerships between DSS and local agencies to promote efficiency and speed-up in the application process for food stamps.
- Complete DSS online benefits project that will expedite SNAP enrollment online.
- Streamline, expedite, and simplify points of entry for intake and case management.
- Fully implement federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) funds that would allow support of meals for low-income early care and education professionals; they would eat with the children, modeling healthy eating.
- Work with Wholesome Wave to explore doubling of SNAP coupons at CT farmers markets.

INDICATOR 3: EMPLOYMENT

The story behind the baseline:

With the economic downturn, fully 28 percent of the state’s children have parents with no full-time, year-round employment. The unemployment rate has doubled since 2007, up to 8.4% statewide. Certain sectors are hit harder than others. Construction, manufacturing, finance, and government are industries facing significant cutbacks. Young adults entering the job market and workers over 60 are facing significant roadblocks.

Percent of Connecticut children in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment



Source: Kids Count, Annie E. Casey Foundation

The gap between black and white unemployment had been shrinking for decades, but the current recession has thrown it back to the early-1990s levels. Joblessness for 16- to 24-year-old black males has reached “Great Depression proportions.” Nationally, it was 34.5 percent—more than three times the rate for the general U.S. population.

An ongoing barrier to economic security is lack of education, pertinent job skills, and relevant employment training. High school graduates are seeing fewer opportunities. Low-income families often face other barriers such as transportation, health care and child care – all of which are required in order to succeed in the workplace.

The SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) program is designed to help SNAP recipients obtain the skills they need to succeed in the labor market. SNAP E&T’s 50/50 matching funds enables states to be reimbursed for 50% of non-federal expenditures on employment and training and related support services to SNAP recipients – without a federal cap on the funds received.

What the Commission on Children did about this in 2011:



Focused on youth employment to find opportunities for jobs, internships and summer youth employment. Work in partnership with the Workforce Boards. Looked at best practice models for a comprehensive state youth employment model.



Arranged a new partnership with National Conference of State Legislators to ascertain best state practices and federal opportunities in youth employment.



The initial work the Commission led with Representative Walker on the TANF Emergency Fund, capturing \$39 million last year for job training, job creation and safety net supports, was rewarded with the option to go for more funds which DSS requested.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Ensure all annual federal funds for the SNAP E&T 50/50 match program. The first community SNAP E&T collaborative was added to the CT state plan in August 2011. The Commission will continue to work with DSS, USDA/FNS, and the legislature to increase the number of SNAP E&T collaboratives in the state plan. We should maximize our state's strong and proper utilization of these funds locally.

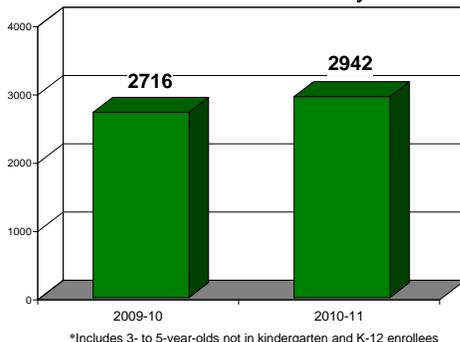
Bring together all regions using the SNAP E&T funds to share strategies in employability as well as methods of increasing family SNAP utilization to address nutrition and bring in more federal dollars.

INDICATOR 4: HOMELESSNESS

The story behind the baseline

Nearly 50,000 children have been affected by foreclosure since 2007. Connecticut has seen more than a 30% increase in homelessness in the rural and suburban sectors. Annually, one of every 365 Connecticut children receives services at an emergency shelter. Homeless children have higher rates of acute health problems, learning disabilities, and socio-emotional problems, coupled with lower rates of participation in early childhood programs, than their peers. Nationally, 20% of school-age homeless children do not attend school. Of those that do attend, 41% change schools during the year. Each school change sets a student back 4-6 months academically.

State Department of Education count of homeless children and youth*



What the Commission on Children did about this in 2011:



In 2010, the Commission worked with the New England states and Senator Dodd to raise funds from Congress for home relief. CT was one of two states to receive additional funds from the Foreclosure Prevention Assistance Program. Over a 6 month period, over one thousand families were assisted by this initiative in CT and were able to avert foreclosure on their homes.



Positioned homeless families who were willing to tell their stories with the media, (newspapers, television, radio), to show that middle and working class families were abruptly falling into homelessness due to the recession and needed immediate supports.



Assessed the impact of homelessness on school attendance and worked with the state and our Congressional delegation to ensure full utilization of the McKinney-Vento Act. This Act written by the late Senator McKinney, ensured proper school and college supports for children and young adults.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Provide quality early care and education to homeless children.
- Provide job training, life skills training, job search assistance, and housing assistance for parents in homeless families.
- Streamline enrollment for services like food stamps, WIC, and HUSKY.
- Increase affordable housing in the state and maintain programs providing housing/rental subsidies.

RESULT—PARENTS ARE ENGAGED AND INFORMED ABOUT CHILDREN’S PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

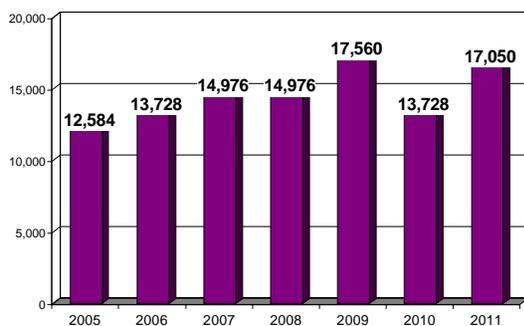
INDICATOR 1: FAMILY CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The story behind the baseline

Connecticut policy recognizes parents as the ultimate consumers of services and programs for children and that parents need to be involved from the onset as partners in public initiatives. Intentional efforts to increase family civic engagement improve public policy and program operation while diversifying the network of involved parents.

The number of communities offering parent leadership training has more than tripled in the last ten years. This trend is largely due to public demand, recognition of the importance of parental involvement in schools and a public and private partnership supporting the Parent Trust Fund. Funds for the Parent Trust were allocated in the 2011-12 state budget, and \$250,000 in matching funds were leveraged from the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund. Additional matching funds were generated at the local level.

Volunteer Hours of PLTI Graduates



What the Commission on Children did about this in 2011:

 Continued the growth of the Commission’s Parent Leadership Training Institute, rated by RMC Research as one of the

strongest parent leadership initiatives in the nation.

 Ensured diverse recruitment, participation and mentoring in PLTI to sustain civic involvement.

 Embedded parent engagement in the Governor’s Early Care and Education Cabinet as one of four core functions of the work.

 Appointed by the State Department of Education to serve on their Family and Community Leadership Transformation Team and the Parent Trust Collaborative Management Team.

 Co-sponsored a parent leader focus group with the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance, the Hartford Family Civics initiative, and African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities to preview the Connecticut Public Television documentary “Education vs. Incarceration” to prepare for community conversations on the documentary.

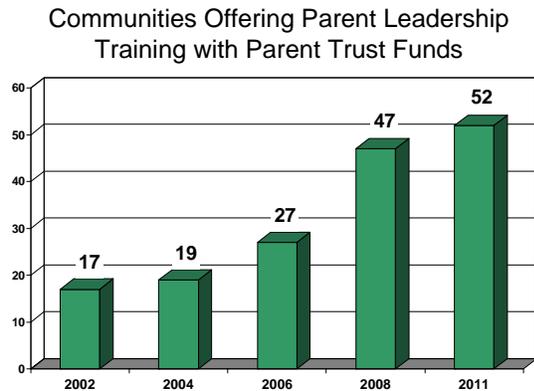
 Participated in the Connecticut Civic Health Advisory Committee convened by the Secretary of State’s Office where PLTI was noted as a statewide best practice in family civic engagement.

 Embedded fatherhood audits in the Parents as Teachers sites in Connecticut, facilitating more attention to the importance of dads in a child’s early years.

 Worked with the Parent Leadership Network and InfoLine to ensure that all parent leadership training programs are listed in the 2-1-1 directory.



Recognized by the Kellogg Foundation as having one of the strongest proven parent engagement models in the states, COC was awarded \$1.2 million in a three year grant, to replicate the Parent Leadership Training Institute nationally and to embed the model in pertinent national organizations.



Two longitudinal evaluations revealed that of the PLTI alumni surveyed:

- 97% "understand how service systems for communities are organized." – a 50% increase
- 93% report "working with people different from themselves." – a 54% increase
- 92% agree that "when problems arise within my community, I do something about them." – a 44% increase
- 99% are "able to access information to better navigate my community." – a 45% increase

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Continue and expand the Parent Trust Fund to embed family civics in Connecticut.
- Continue outreach to increase fathers' engagement in civic leadership roles for their children.
- Train state and local leaders on how to work with parents and bring them in as community assets.

- Bolster opportunities for parents to lead on policy and program, particularly within the current economic context.
- Expand public-private partnerships to increase and embed the family as a true partner in children's policy.
- Ensure the public and private funds are allocated and released through the Parent Trust Fund so communities can offer parent leadership training.

INDICATOR 2: PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS

The story behind the baseline

Research shows that children with parents involved in their learning develop better grades, test scores, long-term academic achievement, attitudes and behaviors. Children do best when families and schools share information and partner in creating quality learning environments. Families, schools and communities have come together to more than triple the number offering Parents Support Educational Excellence (PSEE) training between 2005 and 2011.

What the Commission on Children did about this in 2011:



Facilitated, with a core group of state and national leaders, the doubling of Title I dollars for parent engagement from 1 to 2 %.



Worked with the federal Department of Education through hearings and forums on the importance of parent engagement in school reform.



Co-led the growth and implementation of Parents Supporting Educational Excellence (Parents SEE), which the Commission envisioned, designed and co-authored with the Connecticut Center for School Change.



Joined with SDE, and a broad committee developed on School Governance

Councils, to assure proper implementation and training.



Designed curriculum for parents and school leaders on School Governance Councils being piloted in Danbury and Greenwich.

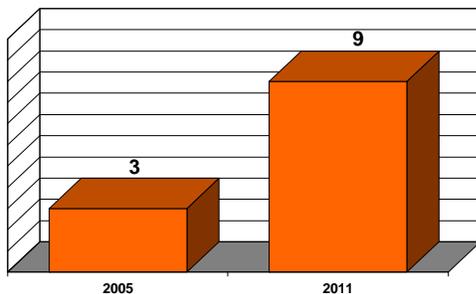


Worked with National Head Start on the need to prepare a transition for parent support and leadership as parents leave with their preschool children and enter the formal school setting with their kindergartners.

“The Liberty Bank Foundation supports PLTI because it reaps so many rewards. We are bankers looking to invest and get a good return. This has been a good investment.”

-- Sue Murphy, Executive Director, Liberty Bank Foundation

Number of Parent SEE Communities



Outcome data reveals the following for Parent SEE graduates:

- 84% agreed they "know how federal and state education policies affect my school and school district." – a 65% increase
- 74% agreed they "know how school budgets are decided by leaders." – up from 26%
- 89% "know how a Board of Education functions, including what board members are supposed to do." - up from 25%
- 87% "know how to read state testing data and how to interpret that information." – up from 19%
- 88% "know how to use Strategic School Profiles to identify successful school practices and those that need improvement." – up from 17%

RESULT—CHILDREN ARE BORN HEALTHY AND REMAIN WELL AND SAFE

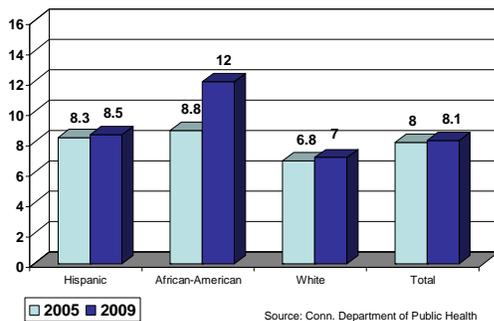
INDICATOR 1: LOW BIRTH WEIGHT BABIES

The story behind the baseline

Low birth weight (LBW) babies are those born weighing less than 5 pounds 8 ounces. Impacts of LBW include infant death, cerebral palsy, vision impairments, cognitive deficiencies, developmental and learning disabilities, poor educational performance and behavioral problems.

In Connecticut, the rate of LBW births has ranged between 8.0 and 8.1% since State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2006. The national *Healthy People 2010* target for LBW babies is 5% or less. In Connecticut racial disparities abound. In SFY2009, 7% of White births were LBW in comparison to 8.5% of Hispanic births and 12% of Black births. Adequate prenatal care and social/emotional supports are key to healthy pregnancies and healthy newborns. Eleven percent of LBW births in our state are to mothers who received late care and 26% are to mothers who received no prenatal care.

Percent of babies with low birth weights
By race and ethnicity



LBW newborns accounted for \$183,964,519 in preventable hospitalization charges in 2008 and had the highest average charge per stay (\$70,837) of all preventable hospitalization health conditions. From 2004 to 2008, Medicaid preventable hospitalization charges grew by over

50%. LBW newborns accounted for two-fifths of this growth with an increase of \$30 million.

What the Commission on Children did about this in 2011:



Was appointed by the Governor's Early Care and Education Cabinet to represent the Cabinet with DPH on a Home Visitation Advisory. This advisory would guide and apply for federal HRSA dollars in home situation to design a comprehensive high quality early childhood system that promotes maternal, infant and early childhood health, safety and development as well as strong parent-child relationships.



We researched which towns were most vulnerable in at-risk pregnancy and infancy and selected five towns - Ansonia, Derby, New Britain, New London and Windham - to receive \$832,070 in grants for best practices home visitation models.



Co-Chaired the Governor's Early Care and Education Cabinet Workgroup in Home Visitation and Parent Engagement and brought parents, agencies and policy leaders together on practices in early literacy, cultural competence, fatherhood engagement and systems development in home visitation.



Worked with HRSA to get Connecticut's Child First model of home visitation approved as a best practice in the nation. This was awarded to our state and will likely help us with federal funds in the future.



Raised \$150,000 from Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, partly to address LBW in Hartford. Commission on Children has secured grant funding for two year start-up costs of Hartford pilot. Subsequent costs will be paid

by insurance, in the same way as traditional prenatal care is covered.



Brought Centering Health Institute together with a collaborative of Hartford agencies to implement a multi-site Centering Pregnancy model to Hartford. This is a group model care shown to improve pre-natal health and the health of pregnant women, and reduce LBW. First training will be in winter 2012.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve

- Maximize WIC enrollment and co-enrollment with Medicaid for all eligible women. Studies show enrollment in WIC at least 12 weeks prior to delivery decreases probability of delivering LBW infant by 31%.
- Pursue federal grants to fund increased outreach and referrals for prenatal care, such as \$6 million grant awarded to the state Department of Education (SDE) and partners for supporting pregnant and parenting teens.
- Implement the proven Centering Pregnancy model statewide.
- Increase activities around male involvement, including use of curriculum developed by Real Dads Forever.
- Increase public information on the benefits of WIC and how to enroll in WIC.

INDICATOR 2: CHILDHOOD OBESITY

The story behind the baseline

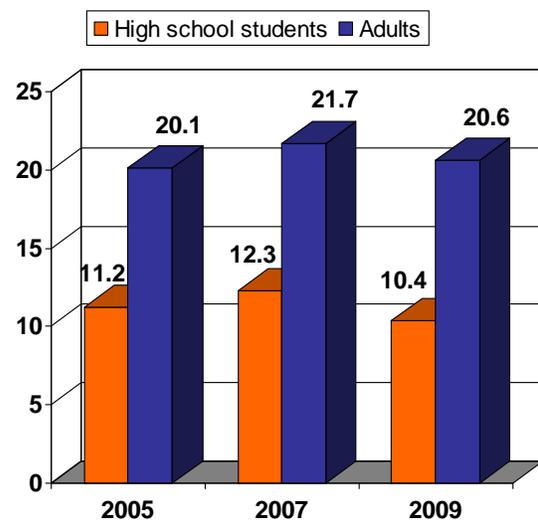
Obesity is one of the most serious public health concerns facing our state. It reduces the productivity of our state's economy, places an unsustainable burden on our health care system, and disables workers. Obesity-related health problems in Connecticut adults generate \$856 million in annual medical expenses.

Obese children and adolescents are at risk for health problems during their youth and as adults. For example, during their youth, obese children and adolescents are more likely to have risk factors associated with cardiovascular disease

(such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and Type 2 diabetes) than are other children and adolescents. Obese children and adolescents are more likely to become obese as adults. The current generation may be on track to have a shorter lifespan than their parents, an anomaly to generational improvements.

Unhealthy food choices, poor eating behaviors, and reduced activity levels are major factors contributing to overweight and obesity. Only 25 percent of Connecticut high school students are physically active every day; and only 21 percent eat the recommended 5 or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables.

Percent of Connecticut high school students and adults who are obese



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

What the Commission on Children did about this in 2011:



Established new statewide partnership on childhood obesity – the Connecticut Childhood Obesity Policy Work Group – and held first meeting of 65 stakeholders to develop policy agenda. Served as Work Group coordinator, and co-led steering committee planning meetings.

 Researched best practices as part of Work Group to develop a proposed 12-point agenda for obesity prevention policy in 2012.

 Joined Work Group members in meeting with legislators to lay groundwork for policy change in 2012.

 Worked with Hartford community leaders to develop obesity prevention strategies on access to healthy food and family engagement. Established working relationship with Wholesome Wave, an innovative national nonprofit focused on maximizing the value of federal food benefits.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Schedule 20 minutes of physical activity in grades K-5.
- Limit beverages to healthy options for children in child care.
- Add food and wellness indicators to strategic school profiles.
- Implement a coordinated approach to school health in every school district.
- Establish a permanent council on childhood obesity, as recommended by COC and the Sustinet Obesity Task Force.
- Set screen time limits for children in child care.
- Expand joint use of school athletic facilities by communities.

INDICATOR 3: CHILDREN REMAIN SAFE IN NATURAL AND UNNATURAL DISASTERS

The story behind the baseline:

The United States remains seriously unprepared to protect children during major disasters. There are 67 million children in American schools and child care facilities at any given point on a weekday, separated from their families and dependent on school officials and caregivers to

provide protection. If a disaster strikes, it's crucial that children are in a safe place and are able to quickly reunite with their parents.

Most parents expect that when they drop their children off at school or at a child care facility, they will be protected if disaster strikes. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Save the Children's U.S. Programs Report Card graded all 50 states and the District of Columbia on whether they meet four criteria of preparedness:

- (1) the state requires all licensed child care facilities to have a written plan for evacuating and moving all kids to a safe location for multiple disasters;
- (2) the state requires all licensed child care facilities to have a written plan to reunify families after a disaster;
- (3) the state requires all licensed child care facilities to have a written plan that accounts for all children with special needs during a disaster, and;
- (4) the state requires all schools to have a disaster plan that accounts for multiple hazards.

In 2010, Connecticut met only the last of these four criteria; in 2011 Connecticut met all four.

What the Commission on Children did about this in 2011:

 Worked with the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) on children and disaster planning. With DSS, brought in Save the Children to create a plan that will help child care centers meet national recommendations for an evacuation plan. The funds for this came from the federal Child Care Development Block Grant.

 Drafted legislation mandating that all school and licensed and regulated child day care services have written multi-hazard disaster response plans. Led outreach for support to legislators, Save the Children, state agencies, emergency management, and care providers.

This bill became law, Public Act No. 11-66, An Act Concerning Children Affected by Disaster and Terrorism.



Co-Chaired the Child Care Crisis Subcommittee on Evacuation Planning and Standards Development with DSS and DPH.



Worked with the National Commission on Children and Disasters to ascertain all necessary policy directions to protect children in the face of unnatural disaster such as plant explosions and workplace shootings, or natural disasters such as tornadoes.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Partner across agencies through the Child Emergency Planning Committee at DEMHS, which meets quarterly to explore disaster-related gaps vis-à-vis children, and potential solutions including emergency planning and federal and private funding. Co-chair Committee.
- Continue to participate on the FEMA's Children's Working Group to ensure that a federal disaster response meets the unique needs of children.

RESULT—CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE READY FOR AND SUCCEED IN SCHOOL

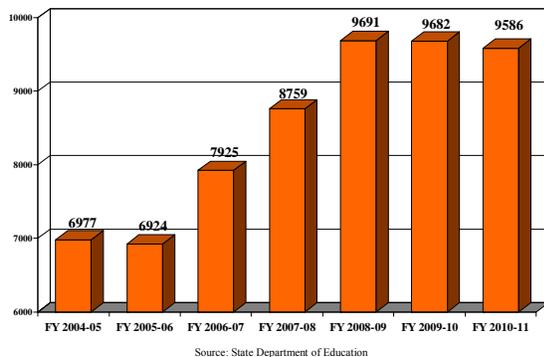
INDICATOR 1: PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT

The story behind the baseline

The brain develops to 90% of its capacity in the first five years. A child’s ego, self esteem and learning patterns are developing and linked together before a child reaches kindergarten. Quality preschool is proven to assist in these important years with cognition, social and emotional skills, gross motor skills and language and numeracy development. Poor quality care or no early care is often the starter fuel for inequities in educational achievement.

The chart below shows that the number of children utilizing preschool slots grew nearly four-fold between 1998, when preschool was made available for 3- and 4-year-olds, and 2009. While the number dipped slightly in 2010, the overall increase should continue if we are to close the gap for children who can’t attend preschool due to lack of supply, limited access, or family working hours.

Preschool Slots in Priority School Districts



What the Commission on Children did about this in 2011:



Drafted a bill with Senator Bye to achieve a coordinated early care and education system and a plan of implementation for such a system. This bill, An Act Concerning Early Childhood Education and the Establishment of a

Coordinated System of Early Care and Education and Child Development, became law as passed in Public Act 11-181.



Garnered federal funds, with the Cabinet Leadership Team, to hire a state coordinator for the Governor’s Early Care and Education Cabinet. This coordinator now oversees the Cabinet functions of data collection, professional development, standards and parent engagement to assure quality preschool and infant and toddler care.



Served on a state committee, in partnership with philanthropy, to address the need for preschool facilities in towns where there is a shortage of space and/or where facilities need construction for compliance factors or growth.



Served on a national committee under LISC to address preschool quality and facilities need in the states, with attention to best practices and opportunities in the federal government.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve

- Maintain investment in child care and school readiness programs to meet demand.
- Invest in child care workforce through scholarship and increased wages.
- Align standards and financing for the early childhood education system across departments. This would increase supply, align reimbursements and promote a stronger system.
- Expand infant and toddler programs to address our current shortage.
- Develop integrated for birth-to-five programming rather than separate and fragmented services for infants, toddlers, birth to three and preschool.
- Bolster the Early Care and Education Cabinet and give it budgetary authority to improve and

solidify an integrated early care and education system.

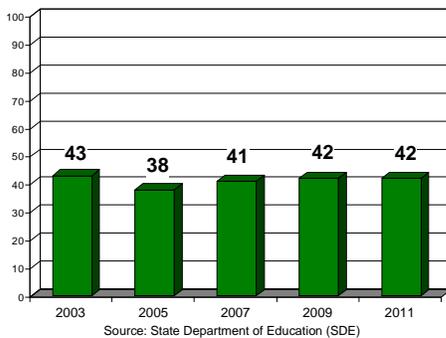
- Integrate home visitation with the early care and education system to ensure a prenatal through preschool system of care, family education and school readiness planning.
- Improve training on literacy for early care and education providers and in home visitation staff to maximize early language acquisition.

INDICATOR 2: READING

The story behind the baseline

A child who is not reading by the end of first grade has a one in eight chance of ever becoming a proficient reader. The impact of low literacy is seen at many levels including school retention, special education, drop outs, unemployment and crime. Connecticut has the greatest achievement gap in reading in the country.

Percentage of Grade 4 students at or above reading proficiency on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)



Our Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) results reveal strong differences in performance between low and moderate income children and middle class children. Similarly, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test above shows white students significantly outperforming Black and Hispanic students. Since 95 % of all children can be taught to read, the achievement gap in reading calls for critical review.

Where Connecticut ranks in the nation on selected school performance gaps

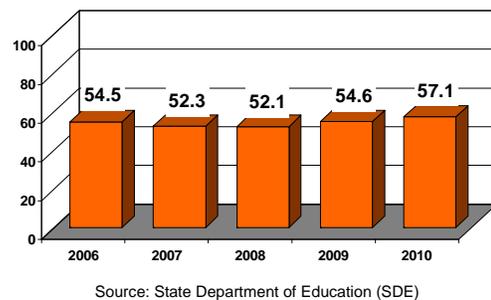
(First means largest, second means second-largest, etc.)

	MATH		READING	
	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 4	Grade 8
Between white & black students	4th	9th	1st	5th
Between white & Hispanic students	1st	1st	1st	2nd
Between students eligible for the Nat'l School Lunch Program & all others	1st	1st	1st	5th

Source: 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

Teachers who know the current research and are trained in the science of reading can help every child read. Yet, not all teachers know how children learn to read. They have not been taught assessment and intervention. So when a child is not catching on, they do not know how to assist and succeed in a timely manner. Not all higher education institutions teach their pre-service teachers the science of teaching reading. This is both a national and Connecticut challenge.

Percent of Grade 4 children at or above goal in reading on the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT)



What the Commission on Children did about this in 2011:

 Began a strategy to teach parents, both English and Spanish speaking, the importance of reading and how to partner in K-3 on reading achievement.

 Designed curriculum, in partnership with Literacy How, to help parents understand what their children should know about reading at each level of early care and early schooling.



Held a major forum on the science of reading in partnership with Ralph Smith from the national Casey Foundation and the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. Brought in a national reading expert Marilyn Adams from Brown University and a member of the National Reading Panel, to discuss assessment, teacher quality and policy recommendations. Brought in teachers and families to discuss literacy experiences in school throughout the state.



Wrote a working paper about children with learning disabilities and reading for the Governor. This research was done in partnership with Literacy How and was funded by the Tremaine Foundation.



Worked with the Black and Latino Caucus to assess which reading assessment tools would promote optimal teacher-friendly reading interventions with efficiency and a reduction in the achievement gap. After extensive research, partnered with Wireless Generation.



Raised \$880,000 through the Grossman Family Fund to pilot this alternative reading assessment tool designed by Wireless Generation in five school districts - Waterbury, Norwalk, Bristol, Naugatuck and West Haven.



Created materials so parents can see how their children are doing in reading year-long through charts, discussion with their child's teacher and activities at home.



Designed a civic canopy of resources on literacy in five school districts to bring the community in on literacy goals, along with the school. This includes museums, grocery stores and libraries.



Partnered with children's librarians on the science of teaching reading. Created a class for librarians in how the brain works and the science of reading so that the children's librarians could more intentionally partner with parents and the school on literacy.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Provide external mentors for current teachers in kindergarten through grade three in the science of reading.
- Require teachers teaching K-3 to take the Fundamentals in Literacy exam as is now required of new teachers just graduating from college. If they do not pass, offer continuing ed classes to assure the information is available for them.
- Ascertain what skills are not adequately taught in higher education, utilizing the findings from the preservice test in reading and improve higher education course options to meet reading goals.
- Inform parents, particularly low-income parents, how children learn to read and what they can do at home while partnering with the schools in grades kindergarten through grade three, to improve reading scores.
- Bolster family literacy and parent child reading programs for families with infants and toddlers.
- Ensure literacy opportunities in early care and education settings with well-trained providers who understand the rudiments of oral language and pre-literacy skills development.
- Utilize technology and improved assessment tools to reduce the number of hours teachers are assessing children's literacy skills and to improve interventions for children as early as possible.

INDICATOR 3: BULLYING PREVENTION: PROMOTING POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

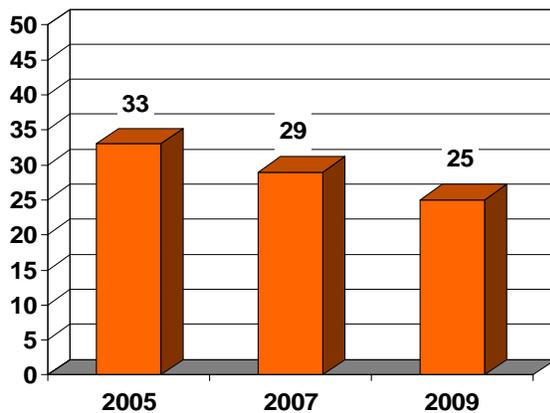
The story behind the baseline:

Bullying interferes with student health, safety and achievement at all grade levels. Connecticut high school students who report being bullied are more likely to get less sleep, be depressed, miss school because they feel unsafe, have property stolen at school, carry a weapon to school, be depressed and attempt suicide.

At the extreme, students who have been bullied become suicidal and sometimes turn from self-abuse to externalized violence. The majority of school shootings in the nation involved shooters students who had been bullied as students.

One in four Connecticut high school students—and 35 percent of the state’s 9th graders—reported having been bullied or harassed at school in the past year. Bullying also occurs off school property. Cyberbullying is emerging as a particularly harmful form of bullying, with more than 900,000 U.S. high school students reporting being cyber-bullied in one year.

Percent of Conn. high school students who reported being bullied on school property in the previous year



Source: Connecticut School Health Survey, Department of Public Health (DPH)

What the Commission on Children did about this in 2011:

Following COC bullying forum in late 2010, worked with legislators to develop and enact legislation to speed school response to bullying, expand staff training, make all school employees mandated reporters of bullying, require schools to address cyberbullying and off-campus harassment, and launch statewide school climate assessments.

Furthered alliance with Governor’s Prevention Partnership to develop widespread training of school personnel and parents on how to prevent bullying in their schools. Trained parents and teachers in public schools around the state on the new bullying law and best practices.

The Commission was named Network Coordinator in the legislation to inform the public and schools about best practices and research.

Trained the school district leadership team of Groton and helped them plan for systemic implementation of a research-based anti-bullying strategy.

Served as keynote speaker at forum for young people, *Bullying and How to Prevent It*, at Stepping Stones Museum for Children.

Educated the public about the 2011 bullying law through television and radio appearances, speaking at public events and written materials prepared by COC.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Ensure that the 2011 bullying law is fully implemented.
- Train schools in evidence-based bullying reduction strategies.
- Help school districts understand what they must do to prevent bullying and establish positive school climate.
- Establish a decrease in bullying as a performance measure in school improvement plans.
- Create a website on bullying for parents, schools and the public.

Commission on Children Performance Report 2011

Approach 1: Research and Model Policy

The Commission on Children performs pertinent research on current trends impacting children and families and share the research findings with the Legislature and the public.

Eight Major Papers and Reports

Right from the Start: Love and Learn - a resource guide prepared for the Department of Children and Families

2nd Report of House Speaker Donovan's Task Force on Children in the Recession

The Achievement Gap and Preschool, Reading and Institutional Racism

Saving Connecticut Students from Dropping Out - in collaboration with the United Way of Coastal Fairfield County

Connecticut's Disaster Planning Must Now Address the Safety of Children - a Summary of Public Act 11-66

Connecticut's 99ers - Long-term Unemployment in CT

"Commission on Children," a report included in the book "Big Ideas," published by First Focus of Washington, D.C.

Four Major Policies

AAC Early Childhood Education and the Establishment of a Coordinated System of Early Care and Education and Child Development, PA 11-181

AAC Closing the Achievement Gap, PA 11-85

AAC The Strengthening of School Bullying Laws, PA 11-232

AAC Children Affected by Disaster and Terrorism, PA 11-66

Approach 2: Education and Outreach

The Commission on Children educates the public on child development and public policy issues in the areas of child health and safety, learning, economic self-sufficiency and equal access, family strength, and overall social health.

139,220	Public information requests fulfilled
132,000	COC website visitors
100,000	Documents downloaded through the COC website
1,395	Subscribers to the COC newsletter (excluding legislators and staff)
7	Meetings televised on the Connecticut Network (CT-N)
24	News reports highlighting the Commission's work
7	Newsletters issued
8	News Releases
375	Facebook Followers
203	Twitter Followers

Approach 3: Partnership Development

The Commission on Children performs its functions through substantive partnerships with educators, families, city and town officials, youth leaders, scholars, the elderly, the business sector, the news media, the religious community, and health and public safety professionals.

9	Public forums and panel discussions, held to assess state and local needs and to craft solutions: 1/11: "The State of the Child in 2011" 3/8: "The Opportunities & Challenges Facing Connecticut's Children & Families" 4/5: "Reading: The Engine for School Success" (co-host) 4/12: "Home Visitation: New Opportunity in Federal Funding" 5/10: "Emergency Preparedness and Family Safety in Connecticut" 5/2: "Connecticut's '99'ers": How Many Workers Will Lose Unemployment Benefits?" (on behalf of the Speaker's Task Force on Children in the Recession) 9/13: "Connecticut Child Trends: The Ups and Downs" 9/15: "Losing Three Decades of Progress: Federal Budget Cuts and Children" (on behalf of the Speaker's Task Force on Children in the Recession) 11/15: "Big Hopes, Big Challenges: Connecticut Children and the 2012 Legislative Session"
179	Partnerships with national, state, and community organizations, forged to achieve specific policy or civic outcomes
469	Information and strategy meetings with parents, providers, elected officials on information policy, civic engagement

Approach 4: Family Civic Engagement

The Commission on Children performs its functions within a civic framework ensuring that families understand, participate and lead on children’s issues in Connecticut. Outcome data reviewed annually from the two extensive family civics initiatives created by the Commission on Children to increase family civics and family leaders for children, the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) and Parent Supporting Educational Excellence (PSEE). The outcomes include a) increased technical skills, b) increased civic involvement and confidence, c) increased community involvement and d) increased parental input at decision-making tables. Both initiatives have been evaluated by national researchers for their civic impact.

18 Communities	Offering the Parent Leadership Training Institute or Parents Supporting Educational Excellence training
52 Communities	Offering parent leadership training with Parent Trust Funds
60 Communities	Offered training and technical support to promote family civic engagement

Approach 5: Revenue Generation

The Commission on Children finds additional resources for children through comprehensive revenue generation efforts including identifying federal funds maximization opportunities and opportunities to generate private funds as well.

In 2011, the Commission on Children raised roughly 5 times its total annual state budget allocation in outside revenue.

Revenue Generated	
\$1,200,000	W. K. Kellogg Foundation
\$880,000	Grossman Family Foundation
\$150,000	Pew Foundation
\$107,500	W. K. Kellogg and Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
\$20,000	National Zero to Three Initiative
\$50,000	Cronin and Liberty Bank Foundation
\$25,000	William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund
\$17,500	National League of Cities
\$35,000	Liberty Bank Foundation
\$2,200	Donations
\$2,489,700	Total

Population Results

Children are healthy and safe.
No child lives in poverty or suffers from discrimination.
Children and youth succeed in school.

Population Indicators

Low Birth Weight Babies	Preschool Enrollment	Child Poverty Rate
Employment Rate	Childhood Obesity Rate	
Homelessness	Youth Leadership	Reading Scores
Racial & Gender Inequities	Family Civic Engagement	Parent Involvement in Schools

Foundational Strategies

Model Policy Development	Leadership Development	Public Awareness
Legislative Action	Community Capacity-Building	Civic Engagement
Systems-Building	Research-based prevention	Return-on-Investment
	Federal Funds Maximization	

Key Partnerships

Business	Parents	State Agencies
Philanthropy	Community Civic Leaders	Congress
Community-Based Organizations	Faith-Based Organizations	Universities
School Leaders	Judicial Branch	Youth
National League of Cities	National Conference of State Legislatures	

Organization Core Values

Innovation	Integration	Information	Impact	Leadership
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Create innovative strategies to overcome barriers.
Focus on outcomes with impact.
Promote racial and economic equity.
Work across sectors.
Continue to lead for children.

Commission on Children Board and Staff, 2011

Voting board members (asterisk indicates Executive Committee member)



M. Alex Geertsma, M.D.,
F.A.A.P,
*Chair**



George A. Coleman
*Vice Chair**



Mary Grace Reed
*Secretary**



James P. Cordier
*Treasurer**



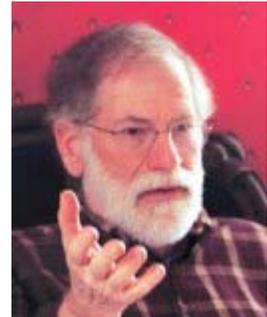
Laura Lee Simon *Chair
Emerita**



Mary K. Fox



Robert Francis



Andrew Gibson, Ph.D



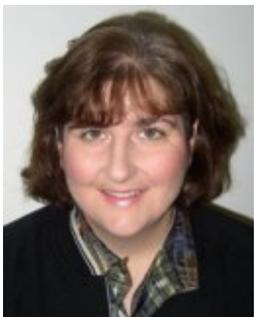
Donald R. Green



Jordan E. Grossman, Ed.D



Alison Hilding



Josh Piteo



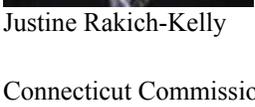
Justine Rakich-Kelly



Barbara J. Ruhe



Ron D. Ward, J.D.



Valeri Whitmer

Commission on Children Board and Staff, 2011 (cont.)

Non-voting board members

Department of Children and Families

Commissioner: Joette Katz

Designee: Dr. Brett Rayfor

Department of Correction

Commissioner: Leo Arnone

Designee: Jazmin Molina

Department of Developmental Services

Commissioner: Terrence W. Macy

Designee: Rod O'Connor

Department of Education

Commissioner: Stefan Pryor

Designee: Harriet Feldlaufer

Department of Public Health

Commissioner: Dr. Jewel Mullen

Designee: Rosa M. Biaggi

Department of Social Services

Commissioner: Roderick L. Bremby

Designee: Sylvia Gafford-Alexander

Office of Policy & Management

Secretary: Benjamin Barnes

Designee: Anne Foley

Attorney General

George C. Jepsen

Designee: Susan Pearlman

Chief Court Administrator

The Honorable Barbara M. Quinn

Commission staff

Elaine Zimmerman

Executive Director

Thomas Brooks

Director of Policy & Research Analysis

Dawn Homer-Bouthiette

Director of Family Strength & Parent Leadership

Mary Kate Lowndes

Director of Development

Kevin Flood

Public Information Officer & Webmaster

Edie Luciano

Senior Legislative Secretary/PLTI



To learn more about the Commission on Children
or order our publications:

- visit our website at www.cga.ct.gov/coc, or;
- call us at (860) 240-0290





“Whatever the issue may be, the Commission seeks out the authoritative information, identifies the knowledgeable leaders in the field and defines the best practices. In doing so, the Commission informs the legislative process and the general public on those policies that have proven effective in advancing the health and well being of children. If we didn’t have the Commission, we would have to invent it.”

Peter Libassi
Former General Counsel,
U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare