

The Connecticut Children's Collective: Building a Strong Local-State Early Childhood System

2023 Data Report

An initiative of the:





Vision

Every child grows up safe, healthy, happy, educated, connected, and employable.

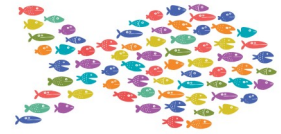
Mission

The Connecticut Children's Collective helps people work together locally to improve the lives of children and families.

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The Connecticut Children’s Collective: Building a Strong Local-State Early Childhood System 1 | Executive Summary

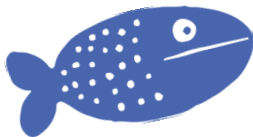


The Connecticut Children’s Collective, an initiative of the Connecticut Network for Children and Youth, is the state’s intermediary organization that connects local early childhood collaboratives (local collaboratives) to the work of the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood and the Connecticut State Department of Education. Together, they create positive outcomes for the state’s children and families. Local collaboratives know their communities. They forge relationships not only with children and families, but with their public schools, school readiness councils, local businesses, local childcare providers, and local elected officials. The Collective, in collaboration with these state and local partners, is co-creating an effective early childhood system that:

- **Involves** parents, providers, schools, city/town government, health, and social/human services in governance & planning for services used by local families
- **Connects** families quickly to the services they need
- **Acts** as the resource hub & community “glue” building trust and relationships between parents/caregivers, and providers
- **Identifies** specific gaps in services needed in their community, and works to fill the gaps
- **Engages** the public, especially parents and caregivers, about local priorities and how best to meet them
- **Supports** quality improvements in services through professional development and relationship building
- **Distributes** funding and resources to best fit local needs and priorities
- **Provides** accountability for local results to state agencies

This second annual data report demonstrates the progress made collectively over the year. Perhaps the most significant finding is that, through a mix of in-person and virtual meetings, **local collaboratives connected directly with 4,538 people, three times the number of connections made in 2022.** Other qualitative stories are highlighted throughout to demonstrate the significant impact even one of these interactions can have. The quantitative sources of the data in this report are from the Office of Early Childhood, State Department of Education, Department of Public Health, Sparkler, the United Way of Connecticut, Infoline 2-1-1, and the local collaboratives. Towns are shown in aggregate rather than individually, comparing data for the Collective communities versus those that are not served currently. In addition, a survey of local collaborative leaders provided important information about the groups’ activities, reach and funding.

The Connecticut Children’s Collective, together with its local collaboratives and state partners, has steadily and consistently proven to be an integral part of the early childhood landscape in Connecticut for the 52% of children born in communities that have such services. The Collective is growing to help meet this unmet need; this year they have welcomed three more local collaboratives (data from these three collaboratives will be shown in the 2024 report). The Collective plans to continue its expansion by working with local stakeholders to build the connections and collaborations that enable Connecticut communities to better meet the needs of children and families.



Connecticut Children’s Collective The Connecticut Children’s Collective is an initiative of the Connecticut Network for Children and Youth, formed in late 2018 to develop three components of a statewide early childhood system: formalizing a network of local collaboratives; creating a statewide intermediary management agency; and designing supports for the local collaboratives within the Office of Early Childhood and other child-serving government.

The Benefits of a Strong Local-State Early Childhood System

- Aligned:** Agreed upon goals get more buy-in and improve accountability
- Effective:** Better coordination of services leads to better results for kids and families
- Efficient:** Focus resources where the needs are, less duplication, less under-utilization
- Equitable:** Parent input & leadership promotes culturally sensitive solutions
- Leveraged:** Local collaboratives raise funding from other, non-OEC sources
- Informed:** Two-way feedback loops leads to better policy development and implementation
- Independent:** Less subject to political changes in city or district leadership
- Strategic:** Supports OEC’s strategic goals of building partnerships and family-driven systems

2 | Connecticut Children's Collective At-A-Glance

Measures	Examples
Parent Engagement	
<p>In 2023 the Collective engaged three times the number of parents and guardians from last year. Local Collaboratives Directly engaged 4,538 parents, guardians, and family members through a mix of in-person and virtual meetings</p>	<p>Waterbury: Hosted the region 5 parent cabinet meetings twice, and completed a successful 6 week book club regarding Parent Nation.</p> <p>Vernon: Recruited two parent ambassadors who led the planning of Vernon's Better Together Parent events and cafes, and assisted in updating the Community Resource Directory.</p>
Community Reach	
<p>34 organizations reach 59 cities/towns covering 1,962,326 people:</p> <p>54% of CT's total population and 60% of CT's births</p> <p>944 people participated in local governance/committees</p> <p>85,879 unique visitors to websites and 23,753 social media followers</p>	<p>Naugatuck: Participation of 259 families in the Gathering Information Survey for the Office of Early Childhood to inform the Blue Ribbon Panel.</p> <p>Stamford: Amplifying the communication and availability of the school district's information and resources regarding the change in Kindergarten entrance age.</p>
Kindergarten Readiness	
<p>20 local collaboratives lead their school readiness council</p> <p>8 local collaboratives have a school readiness council member as part of the local collaborative</p> <p>2 local collaboratives do not have a school readiness council</p>	<p>Bloomfield: Host monthly preschool director meetings, provide communications to incoming families for open houses and tours.</p> <p>Wethersfield: Participation of 80 families in Summer Successful Transition to Kindergarten program.</p>
Children's Development	
<p>31% higher use of Sparkler app in Collective communities, resulting in:</p> <p>28% more screenings using ASQ-2SE Behavioral Health Screening Tool</p> <p>36% more screenings using ASQ-3 Developmental Screening Tool</p>	<p>Enfield: Created a "Dine and DIscuss" series for center and home providers in their community. This resulted in a Sparkler presentation and potential centers wanting to bring Sparkler to their families.</p> <p>Hartford: Collect Ages & Stages Questionnaire data monthly from funded programs. They are piloting Connecticut Family Stars with the University of Connecticut.</p>
Basic Human Needs/ Emergency Support	
<p>90% of local early childhood collaboratives are key hubs in their communities, distributing food, clothing, school supplies, holiday food and gifts, diapers, formula, and hygiene products.</p>	<p>Bloomfield: Provides a diaper bank for infants, toddlers, medically fragile children and adult incontinence products; a clothing closet for school uniforms, clothes, and winter wear.</p> <p>Naugatuck: Provides new coats, hats, gloves, pajamas, books, and socks to 230 children; distributed 50 Thanksgiving meals to families they serve through their food pantry and diaper bank.</p>
Child Care Enrollment	
<p>Collective Community's child care centers and family child care centers have 16% greater capacity for school age programs, 17% greater capacity for preschool programs.</p> <p>Capacity for infant/toddler programs was evenly split at 50% for both Collective and non-Collective towns</p> <p>Family child care centers providers in Collective communities have an average 38% more capacity than that of non-Collective communities statewide</p>	<p>Manchester: Held a town-wide baby shower, 35 expectant families had one-on-one conversations with 12 local providers and received resources to support their family when born. Joined Manchester Health Department's Baby Box Initiative.</p> <p>Southington: Working to educate families about the change to the Kindergarten entrance age. Will continue working with families, centers, nursery schools, and the school district.</p>

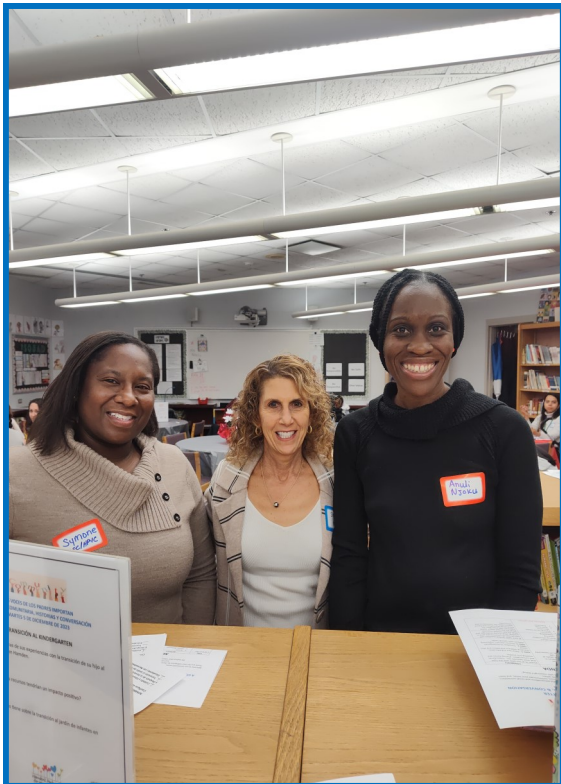
The Connecticut Children’s Collective: Building a Strong Local-State Early Childhood System 3| Introduction



Local collaboratives are the coming together of local stakeholders to identify needs and coordinate services. While the scope, size, and origins of the local collaboratives vary, they all have one thing in common: they understand that the best way to ensure services for children and families are available and utilized is through connecting, convening, and collaborating at the local level.

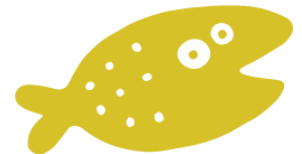
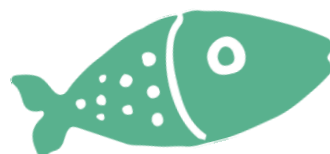
Local collaboratives have always encouraged parents and caregivers to be at the forefront of what they do; no one understands children’s needs better. By listening to the children, parents, and caregivers they serve, they are forming lasting, meaningful relationships. These relationships, built on trust, are how local collaboratives are able to learn about the needs and the service gaps in their communities.

However, an individual local collaborative is less effective if operated in a silo; working together across towns and regions builds synergy that makes each part more effective locally, as well as enabling collective action on behalf of the state’s children and families.

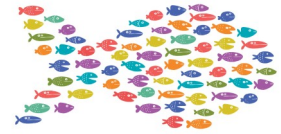


The purpose of the Connecticut Children’s Collective is to convene local and regional collaborative leaders to improve cross-sector collaboration, support parent engagement, and promote equity and inclusion. They promote bi-directional communication between state agencies and local groups, and facilitate collective action that brings them together, especially as they strive to expand this model of effective community voice to every part of the state.

The Collective’s goal is to create a more collaborative and intentionally designed state-local early childhood system that will provide better outcomes for children and families across the state. For this reason, this report focuses on the types of measures that meet two criteria: the data is collected by town, and relevant to the types of work that a majority of local collaboratives are currently undertaking.



The Connecticut Children's Collective: Building a Strong Local-State Early Childhood System 4| Local & Parent Voice



It is well documented that organizations—whether governments, nonprofits or businesses—function better when they are responsive to the needs and feedback of the people they serve. Connecticut early childhood services are no different, and the state is making strides toward building a system that provides opportunities for parents and caregivers to raise their voices and clearly be heard. Local collaboratives, as the place where parents, caregivers, and other local stakeholders come together to discuss local needs, are best positioned to know the needs of the families and children in their communities. The Connecticut Children's Collective is helping this effort by building a system that supports and lifts up the work being done in local communities, supporting local parent engagement; and building avenues of communication between parents.

Local Collaboratives are the place for parents to be heard, respected, and supported. In 2023, through a mix of in-person and virtual meetings, local collaboratives directly connected with 4,538 people – that's three times the number of people reached in 2022. Their intentional focus on building connections with parents post pandemic is showing strong growth that we expect will only continue to improve.

Local collaboratives, with the Collective's backbone support, have recruited and continuously provided training and leadership opportunities to their Parent Ambassadors, the local parent leaders who are actively working as "trusted messengers" within their communities. The collaboration with the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood's Parent Cabinet has been the catalyst for the development of the Parent Ambassador program within the local collaboratives.

To support this effort, the Collective is providing ongoing training to Parent Cabinet Members, Parent Ambassadors, and local collaborative staff. For example, this year parents and staff have learned how to organize and host a Community Cafe, an event that brings parents and other community members together to talk about the needs of their local communities, and in turn, decide which actions to take to fill the need.

Local collaboratives provide numerous volunteer opportunities for parents and caregivers, which promotes parent leadership opportunities that are inclusive of and responsive to the communities served. Through the support of the Collective, their work with Parent Ambassadors is creating a momentum that is transforming an early childhood and educational system that once created programs and services for families, to one that creates programs and services with families. As a result, families and communities are regaining a sense of hope that they can in fact be their own change-agents.

**Waterbury
Parents +
Caregivers
Meet & Greet**

North End Rec Center
Wednesday, November 16th
5:30 PM - 6:30 PM

JOIN THE PARENTS OF WATERBURY COLLABORATIVE ACTION FOR OUR FIRST MEET & GREET AND LISTENING SESSION. LIGHT REFRESHMENTS & CHILDCARE WILL BE PROVIDED.

Register today: bit.ly/POWMG2022

SCAN ME [QR CODE]

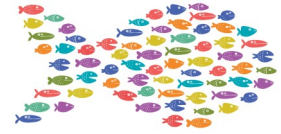
Bridge of Success PWER
Community Partnership Parents of Waterbury

WWW.WATERBURYBRIDGETOSUCCESS.ORG

Northeast Early Childhood Council
**Community
Cafe**

November 2, 2023

The Connecticut Children’s Collective:
Building a Strong Local-State Early Childhood System
5| Connecticut’s Towns with Local Collaboratives



Andover, Hebron, Marlborough

[AHM Youth & Family Services](#)

Bloomfield

[Alliance for Bloomfield’s Children \(ABC\)](#)

Bridgeport

[Bridgeport Prospers](#)

Bristol

[Bristol Early Childhood Alliance](#)

Colchester

[Collaborative for Colchester’s Children](#)

Danbury, Bethel, Litchfield, Torrington

[EdAdvance Early Childhood & Family Programs](#)

**Danbury, Bridgewater, Kent, New Milford, Roxbury,
Sherman, Warren, Washington**

[Cora’s Kids: Early Childhood Care & Education](#)

East Haven

[East Haven School Readiness Council](#)

Enfield

[Enfield KITE \(Key Initiatives to Early Education\)](#)

Haddam, Killingworth

[Youth & Family Services of Haddam-Killingworth](#)

Hamden

[Hamden’s Partnership for Young Children](#)

Hartford

[Department of Families, Youth, and Recreation](#)

Killingly, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Plainfield, Putnam,

Sterling, Thompson

[Northeast Early Childhood Council \(NECC\)](#)

Manchester

[Manchester Early Childhood Collaborative](#)

**Middletown, Clinton, Cromwell, Old Saybrook,
Portland, Westbrook**

[Middletown Early Childhood Network](#)

Naugatuck, Beacon Falls

[Connecticut Partnership for Children](#)

New Britain

[Coalition for New Britain’s Youth](#)

New Haven

[New Haven Early Childhood Council](#)

New London

[LEARN— Young Children and Families Department](#)

Norwalk

[Norwalk ACTS Early Childhood Council](#)

Norwich, Groton, Ledyard

[LEARN— Young Children and Families Department](#)

Plymouth

[EdAdvance– Plymouth Family Resource Center](#)

Old Saybrook

[Old Saybrook Early Childhood Council](#)

Southington

[Early Childhood Collaborative of Southington](#)

Stamford

[Stamford STRIVE Cradle to Career](#)

Torrington, North Canaan, Winchester

[Northwest Regional Early Childhood Alliance](#)

Vernon

[Vernon School Readiness Council](#)

Waterbury

[Waterbury Bridge to Success](#)

West Hartford

[The Bridge Family Center](#)

West Haven

[West Haven Child Development Center](#)

Westbrook

[Westbrook Early Childhood Council](#)

Wethersfield

[Wethersfield Early Childhood Collaborative](#)

Windham

[Windham School Readiness Council](#)

Windsor

[Windsor Family and Community Partnership](#)

The Connecticut Children's Collective:
Building a Strong Local-State Early Childhood System
6 | Map of Local Collaboratives & School Readiness Councils

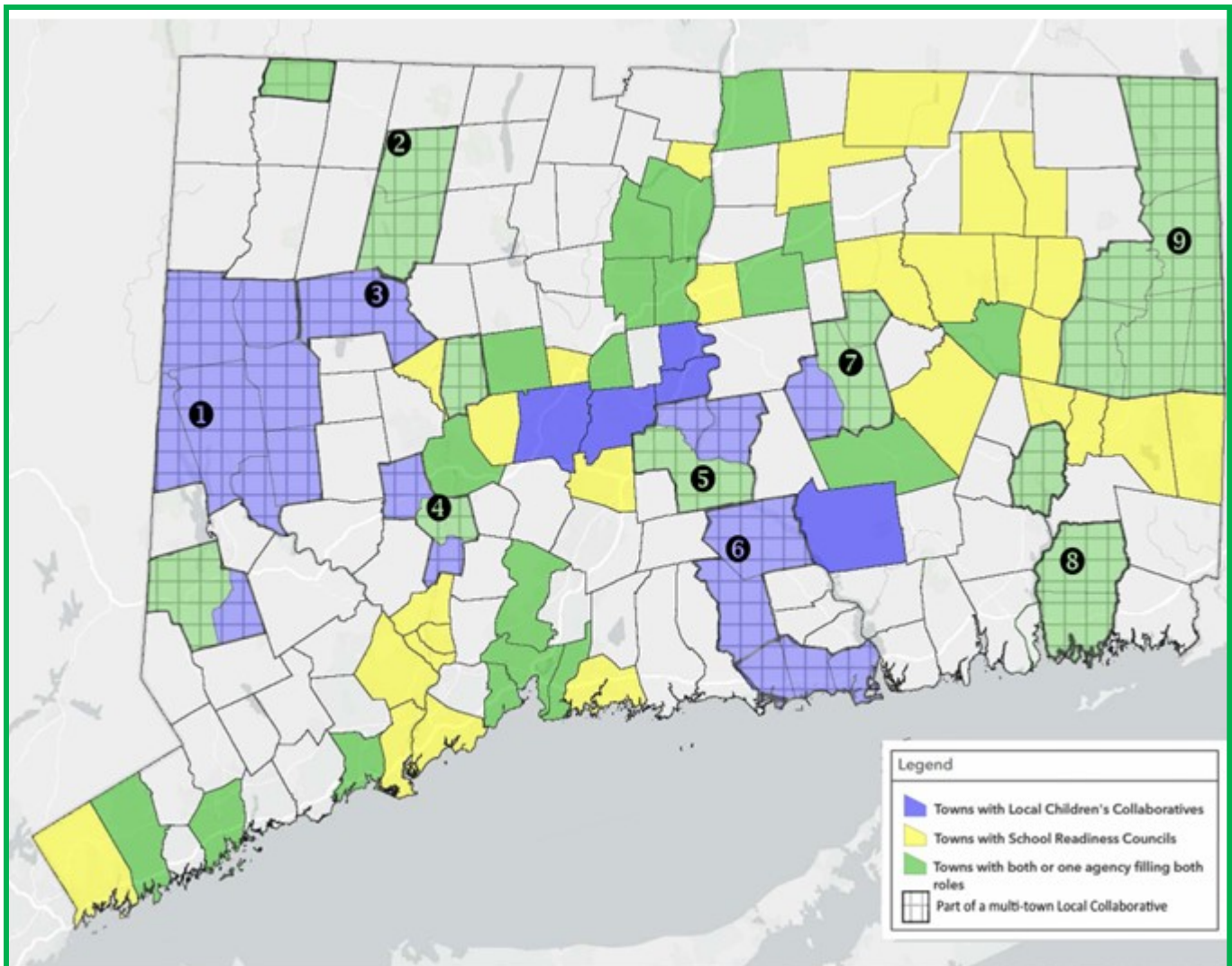


As of October 2023, there are 37 Local Early Childhood Collaboratives (LECC) that cover 63 towns and cities. Nine collaboratives are regional, covering more than a single town as noted on the map below by numbers 1 to 9.

There are also 50 School Readiness Liaisons that cover 67 towns. Thirteen liaisons work for more than one town/city. In 39 of these towns (shown in green below) either the Local Early Childhood Collaborative and the School Readiness Council (SRC) are one and the same, or the town is served by both types of councils that coordinate their work.

All total there are 91 towns or cities which have either an LECC or an SRC or both, and 78 which have neither. While those with neither type of council are primarily rural and/or wealthier towns, the population distribution shows that 46% of all births in 2021 are to residents in these 78 towns with neither an LECC nor an SRC.

Multi-town local collaboratives: 1- Cora's Kids (United Way of Western CT), 2- Northwest Regional Early Childhood Alliance, 3- EdAdvance Early Childhood and Family Programs, 4- Connecticut Partnership for Children, 5- Middletown Early Childhood Network, 6- Youth & Family Services of Haddam-Killingworth, 7- AHM Youth & Family Services, 8- LEARN Young Children and Families Department, and 9- Northeast Early Childhood Council (NECC).





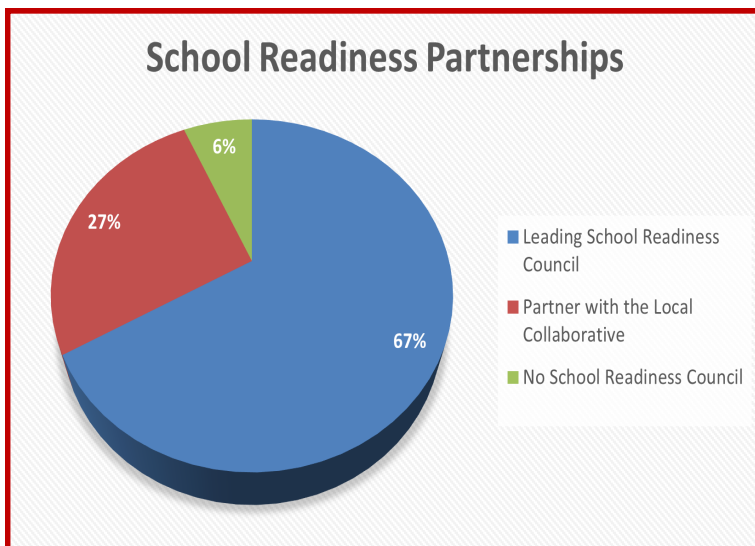
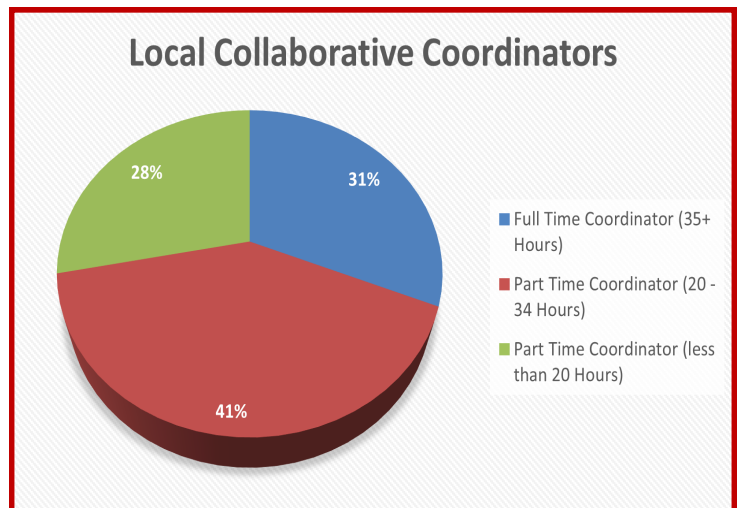
The Collective’s 2023 data report was built upon measures available by town, and reflected the areas of impact where local collaboratives are making a difference. This report is the second annual volume from which the Collective can measure future progress, and will continue to craft a data development agenda that will help to measure the impact the Collective is having in the lives of local families.

The quantitative sources of the data in this report are from the Office of early Childhood, State Department of Education, Department of Public Health, Sparkler, the United Way of Connecticut, Infoline 2-1-1, and the local early childhood collaboratives statewide. Towns are shown in aggregate rather than individually, comparing data for the Collective municipalities versus those that are not served currently.

In addition, a survey of thirty local collaborative leaders provided important information about the groups’ activities, reach and funding. The data findings are broken into eight sections: Collaborative Information, Community Reach, Kindergarten Readiness, Children’s Development, Parent Engagement, Basic Human Needs/Emergency Response, and Funding Sources.

Collaborative Information

Local collaboratives vary in size from a single staff person working 10 hours a week, to a director in a municipal or school office setting, to a stand-alone non profit with 28 employees. Different organizations have developed over time, and the size and scope of their work depends on the community, capacity, and local needs. Of the 30 communities answering the survey, 10 towns have a full-time coordinator that works 35 hours or more, 13 towns have a part-time staff person who works between 20 and 34 hours, and 9 respondents indicated that there is a part-time coordinator that works fewer than 20 hours per week. Additionally, there are 85 other paid staff positions. However, within local collaboratives, 13 have one additional person beyond the coordinator, 4 only have a coordinator.



In addition to staff, local collaboratives depend a great deal on volunteers, and partners in their communities. An important part of this equation are parents themselves who connect with local collaboratives in a variety of ways. For example, over 60 parent ambassadors are actively engaged in supporting and advising local work. There is significant overlap and synergy between the work of school readiness councils, which focus specifically on that funding source, and the broader, more holistic efforts focused on by local collaboratives. Twenty local collaboratives describe themselves as leading their school readiness council, in eight, the school readiness council is a member of the local collaborative, two do not have a school readiness council.

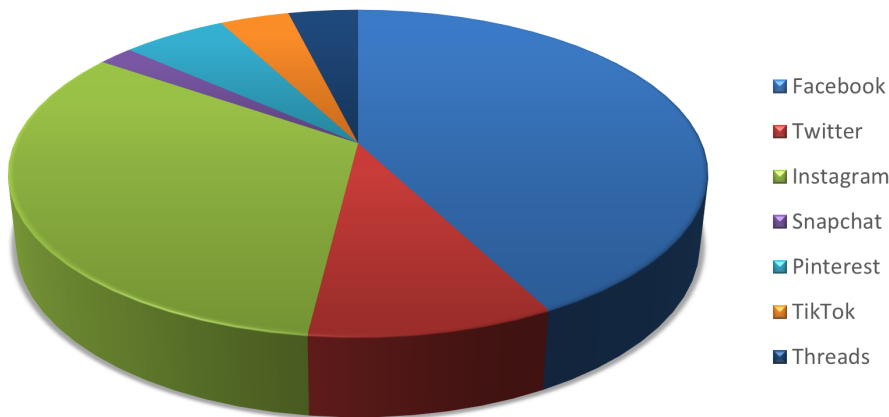
Community Reach

It's important to understand the extent of the community participation of the local collaboratives. Community participation includes internal governance structures, planning events, advisory committees, and websites and social media. With regard to outreach and community involvement, local collaboratives reported a total of 944 people who are participating in governance or committees within their collaborative. These may include community members, community partners, parents, or business leaders. Many local collaboratives have websites that helped extend their reach. In all, twenty-seven local collaboratives have their own website, while three respondents did not have a dedicated site. By combining email and mailing lists, Collective communities reached 25, 219 people. However, regarding unique visitors to web pages, local collaboratives logged 84, 579 people.

Locally: Manchester

“Manchester Early Childhood Collaborative has a monthly newsletter, annual Early Childhood Fair, monthly early childhood professional committee meetings, regular regional networking group meetings, and parent advocacy opportunities, as well as invitations to local officials and our town mayor for local activities.”

Local Collaborative Social Media



Local collaboratives tend to use two primary social media applications: Facebook (27) and Instagram (12). Other well-known apps were also mentioned, including Twitter (3), LinkedIn (4), YouTube (4), Google (2), as well as Vimeo, Eventbrite, TikTok, and What's App (1). Together, local collaboratives estimated approximately 23, 160 followers/subscribers across social media platforms.



Locally: Bloomfield

“The Alliance for Bloomfield’s Children (ABC), had a booth at our town’s annual Trunk or Treat event. Over 300 children attended. We had snacks to give out as well as interactions with parents, guardians, and children.”



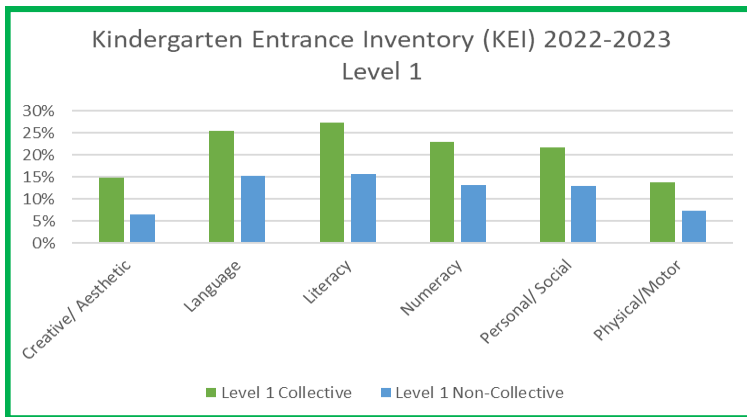
Kindergarten Readiness

The Fall Kindergarten Entrance Inventory was designed to provide a statewide snapshot of the skills students demonstrate based on teachers' observations at the beginning of the kindergarten year. This instrument requires each teacher, by domain, to classify each of the students in his/her class into one of three performance levels:

- 1– Substantial Instructional Support is needed,
- 2– Some Support is needed, and
- 3– Minimal Support is needed.

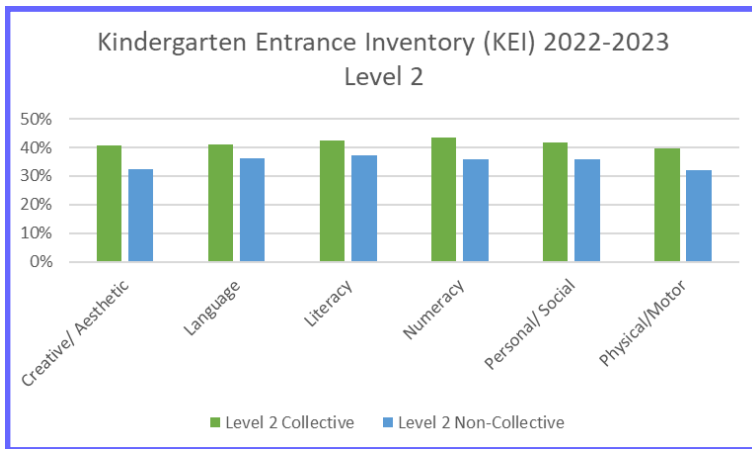
The domains of the tool include Creative/Aesthetic, Language, Literacy, Numeracy, Personal/Social, and Physical/Motor.

In addition, the Fall Kindergarten Entrance Inventory provides kindergarten teachers with information about the level of skills and behaviors that students demonstrate at the beginning of kindergarten.



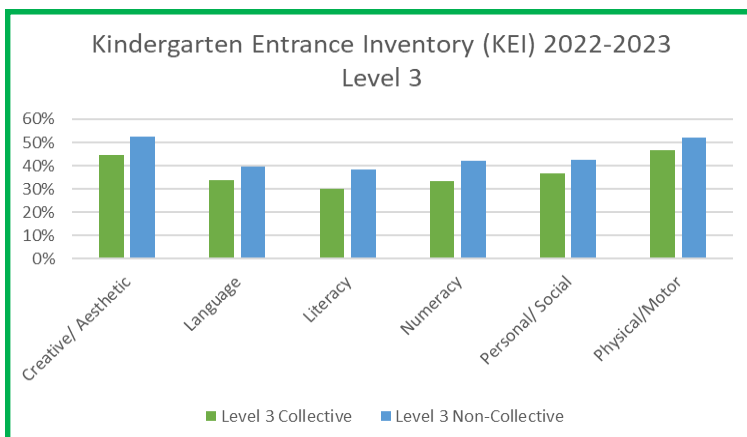
When compared to a statewide data set for 2022-2023, Collective Communities showed higher needs overall with Level 1 and Level 2, and were lower than non-Collective communities in all Level 3 measures.

These findings were consistent across all domains with between a 5% to 12% difference with greater need for kindergarten support in the first two levels, and between 5% to 9% lower in Level 3 for Collective communities.



Locally: Bristol

“Bristol Early Childhood Council, in partnership with our school readiness council conducted an informational session with families in Bristol’s Subsidized Housing Complex. Preschool Learning Kits, filled with books and educational toys, were given to families whose children did not have access through a preschool experience.”

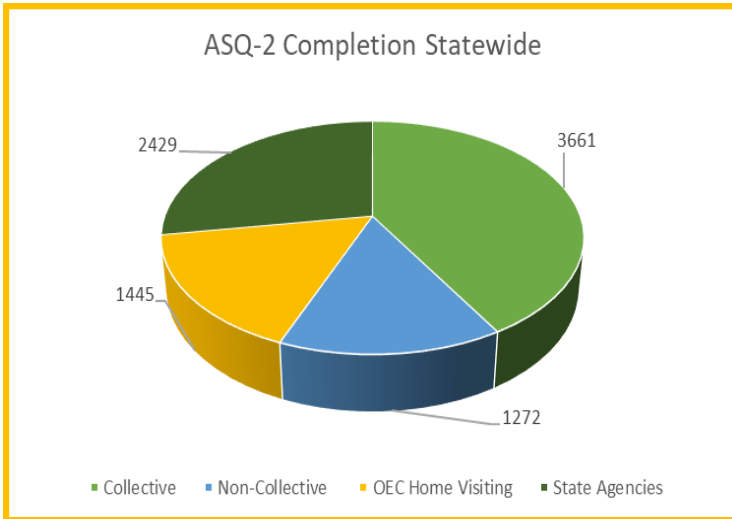


Regionally: Northwest

The Northwest Regional Early Childhood Alliance has three parent coordinators that have been selected by their three partnering School Readiness Councils: North Canaan, Winchester, and Torrington, to lead or co-lead parent engagement activities within their respective community to foster strong parent, school, and community relationships.

Children's Development

Providing a level playing field for children starts in the early years. Developmental screening tools such as the Ages & Stages Questionnaires provide insight, as it relates to the individual child, into the area of communication, gross-motor skills, fine-motor skills, problem solving, and personal/social skills. Results from these assessments can help families and caregivers identify strengths and needs, and are used to identify children who would benefit from further in-depth evaluation for developmental delays.

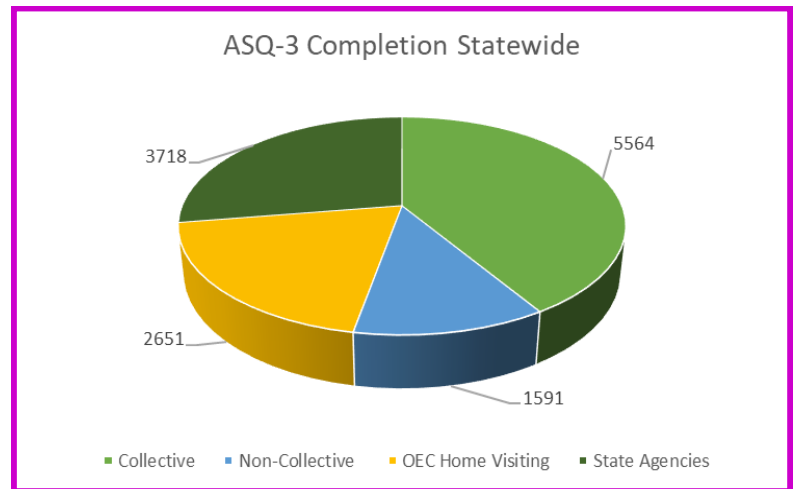
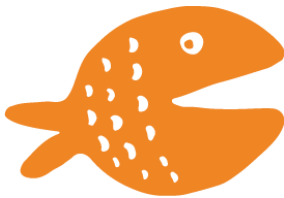


The Ages & Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional (ASQ-SE2), is focused on social-emotional development and behavioral challenges of young children.

The Ages & Stages Questionnaire, Third Edition (ASQ-3), is a developmental screening tool that pinpoints developmental progress in children between the ages of one month and 5 1/2 years.

Locally: Hartford

“Sparkler is in everything we do. We collect ASQ data monthly from funded programs. We are piloting Connecticut Family Stars with UCONN.”



Applications such as Sparkler can reinforce learning at home to foster positive child experiences by allowing families to access developmentally appropriate lessons they can do with their child. Likewise, home visiting programs that use the Sparkler App with families can be a valuable resource to get families involved and engaged in their child's learning and development.

Sparkler App use is 31 % higher in Connecticut Children's Collective communities compared to non-Collective communities. This translates into families having access to information to help them understand and navigate the various developmental stages of their children.

Sparkler App Data (n=towns)	Column1
Statewide Total (n=160)	19,579 users
Connecticut Children's Collective (n=47)	7,976 users (41%)
Statewide Agencies* (n=3)	7,748 users (40%)
Statewide(non-Collective/home Visiting n=65)	2,241 users (14%)
OEC Home Visiting** (n=45)	1,603 users (8%)

Parent Engagement

A particular focus of the Collective’s Work and technical assistance has been to help local collaboratives expand parent engagement. In the survey, respondents were asked to identify how many people they connected with directly over the course of the past year. This included how many parents and guardians participated in programs, parent education classes, parent advisory meetings, or strategic planning meetings, and parent leadership programs like parent ambassadors.

Through a mix of in-person and virtual meetings, local collaboratives connected directly with 4,538 people — a 32% increase from 2022.

ALICE in Connecticut	Pop.	Perce
Connecticut	1,397,324	39%
Collective Communities	742,189	37%
Non-Collective Communities	617,391	29%



Basic Human Needs/Emergency Response

Over the past year local collaboratives were able to refer families to services that they continued to play a central coordinating role, providing basic human needs, like food and diapers. Many of the families that our local collaboratives work with are having financial challenges. More than a third are ALICE families. ALICE is an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed – representing the growing number of single adults and families who earn less than the basic costs of living (Below the ALICE Threshold). ALICE families live paycheck-to-paycheck, struggling to make ends meet. Every hour of every day, they must choose between keeping food on the table, paying rent, clothing their children or affording the high cost of needed medications. Despite working hard at the jobs available to them, they cannot always afford life’s most basic necessities. (UW of CT, 2023). Most collaboratives (27 out of 30 respondents) were able to serve as a key local network or resource that families could rely on to provide food, clothing, hygiene products, heating assistance, and many other necessities. Being responsive to the needs of the communities is a hallmark of a strong local-state early childhood system.



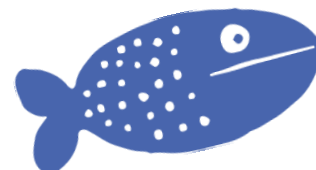
Locally: Bridgeport

“We continue to engage with parents at the Optimus Community Health Center’s and Southwest Community Health Center’s WIC Departments, promoting the Sparkler App by providing branded items and developmental resources.” - Bridgeport Prospers

Locally: Naugatuck

“Our Helping Hands, Warming Hearts program provided new coats, hats, gloves, PJ’s, books, and socks to 230 children, and we distributed 50 Thanksgiving meals to families we serve through our food pantry and diaper bank.”

- Connecticut Partnership for Children



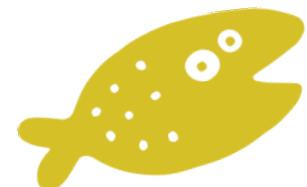
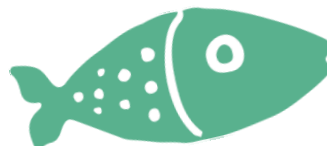
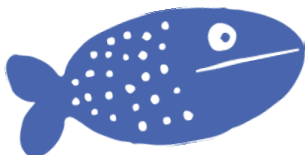
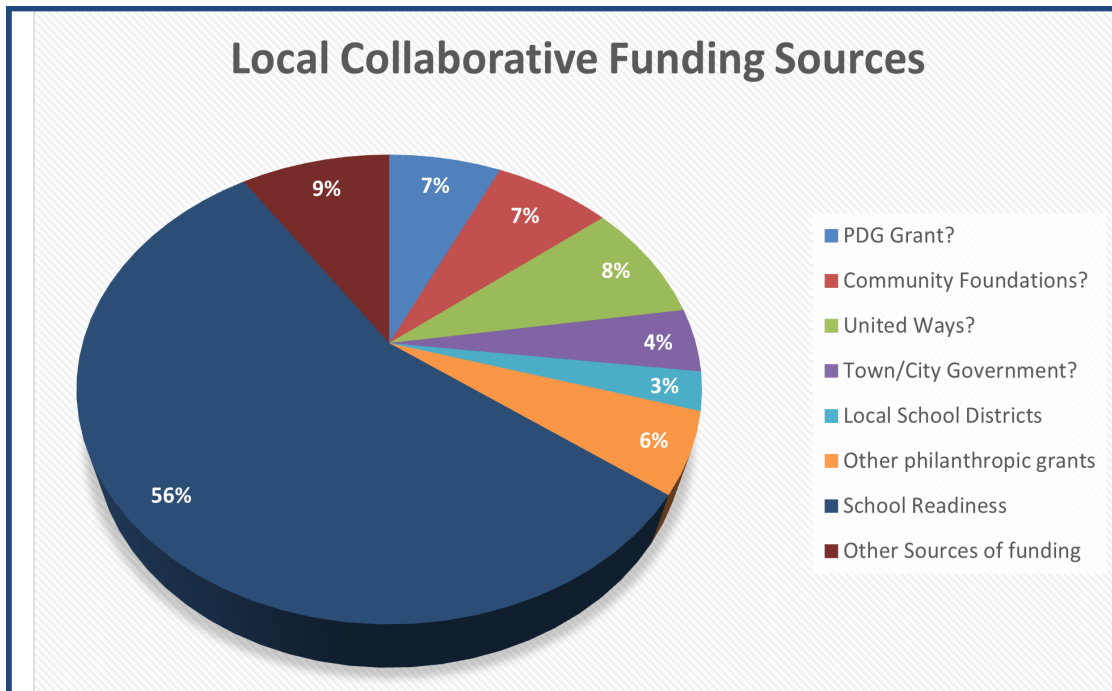
Funding Sources

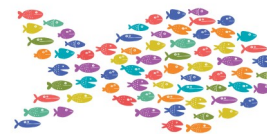
Funding varies tremendously between local collaboratives, with annual budgets varying from a low of \$2,000 with all in-kind staffing, to a high of over \$1.5 million. Some also manage their city's school readiness dollars, which greatly increases their overall budget; not including these funds would show that most budgets are between \$20,000 and \$120,000. The work of a collaborative requires dedicated staff to build the partnerships, call the meetings, run the programs, coordinate the services, communicate with parents, and generally act as the community glue that holds it all together. Maintaining adequate staffing levels for local collaboratives, and in many cases expanding staffing to include at least a full-time staff person, is a primary focus of their sustainability efforts.

The Collective is at an inflection point as it looks to secure on going funding for core staff functions, and to expand the number of regional collaboratives made up of small, rural communities. Core staffing and further reach will enable the Collective to support local collaboratives across the state, contributing to a strong, local-state early childhood system for all of Connecticut.

From the thirty local collaboratives that responded to the survey, the Collective was able to provide a snapshot of the overall current funding: the total aggregate funding for all thirty groups comes to \$7,418,177 million. Most significantly the Collective was able to determine the extent to which local collaboratives are able to leverage the investment of state agencies by securing funding from many different sources (see chart below).

Number of Local Collaboratives	Budget Amount
3	Greater than 1 Million
11	Greater than \$100,000
12	Less than \$100,000
1	Less than \$10,000
3	Data not provided





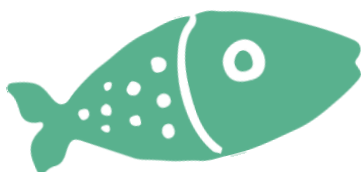
The local collaboratives that make up the Connecticut Children's Collective are key to an effective, equitable, and efficient early childhood system. They ensure that parent and community voices are heard. They provide essential feedback to state agencies setting policy priorities, and support quality improvement efforts. They help break down the silos that for so many decades early childhood and community-based programs have worked within.

Connecticut is at a crossroads as it continues to reform and rebuild systems. Never before have so many understood the essential nature of the early child care system in terms of child development, workforce support, and the need for family & community involvement. Public support for systemic improvements is high. The work over the past year of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care to provide a roadmap for this systems change effort has been extensive, and the Collective's local collaboratives encouraged their members, and especially their parents, share their knowledge of resources and services that families need to thrive with the Panel.

An early child care redesign should include systemic improvements, with built-in infrastructure funding to provide sustainable funding for core staffing to local collaboratives along with adequate support to expand regional collaboratives in rural areas that are significantly underserved. The Collective, in collaboration with state and local partners, is looking ahead to co-creating an effective early childhood system that:

- **Involves** parents, providers, schools, city/town government, health, and social/human services in governance & planning for services used by local families
- **Connects** families quickly to the services they need
- **Acts** as the resource hub & community "glue" building trust and relationships between parents/caregivers, and providers
- **Identifies** specific gaps in services needed in their community, and works to fill the gaps
- **Engages** the public, especially parents and caregivers, about local priorities and how best to meet them
- **Supports** quality improvements in services through professional development and relationship building
- **Distributes** funding and resources to best fit local needs and priorities
- **Provides** accountability for local results to state agencies

Of these, involving parents and building trusting relationships with them, is the key to success. As Connecticut strengthens and formalizes its local-state early childhood systems, it must invest in the capacity of local groups to involve parents in meaningful ways. Together we can all work to increase children's well-being and academic success, ensure supports for mental and physical health, and provide opportunities for parents and caregivers to become strong, capable leaders.



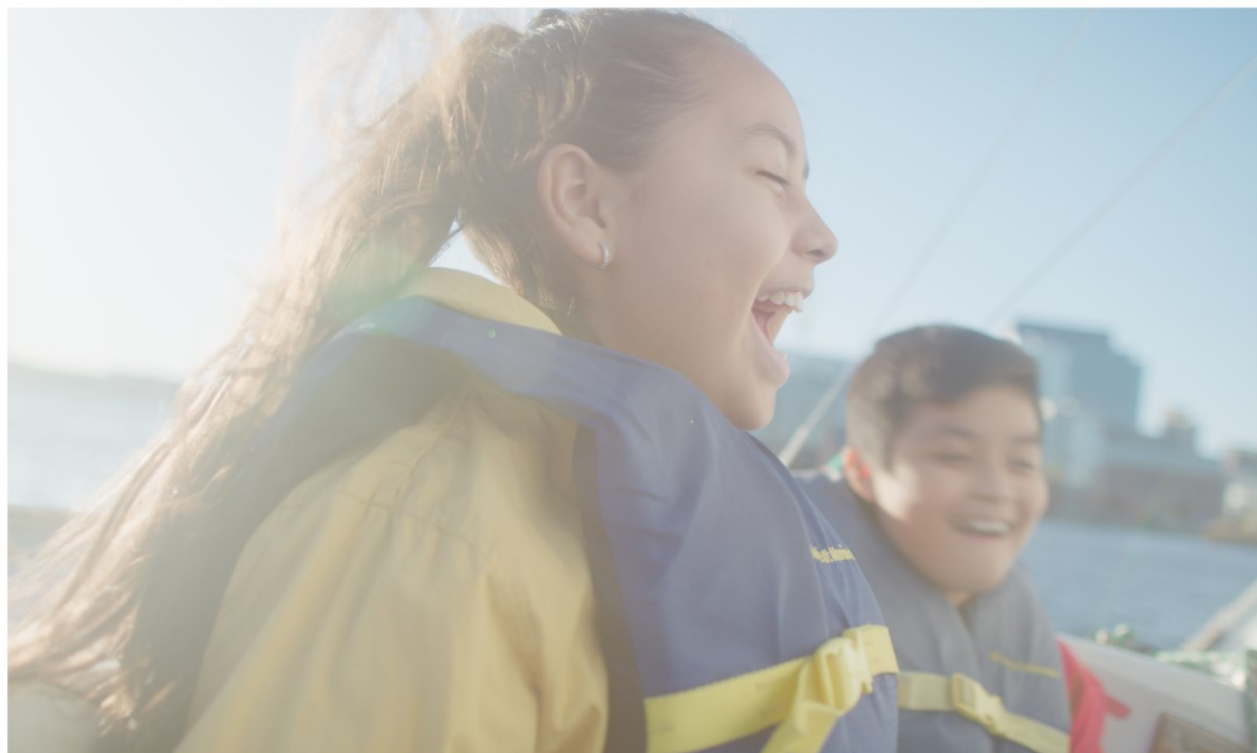
"Parents are the architects of their children's brains and thus also the architects of society's future. It is only when we create a movement to support parents on their journey that we as a society can support the needs of early childhood. Loving mothers and fathers do not need a PhD or expensive gadgets to do an excellent job at supporting early brain development and building our future citizens. They need easily acquired, basic knowledge about how best to foster critical neural connections. They need time with their children to nurture those connections. They need high-quality childcare that compliments their efforts. They need to be able to provide children with stress-free homes. And they need support for this formative endeavor from employees, from communities, and from policy makers."

Dana Suskind, MD
Excerpt from her novel, Parent Nation


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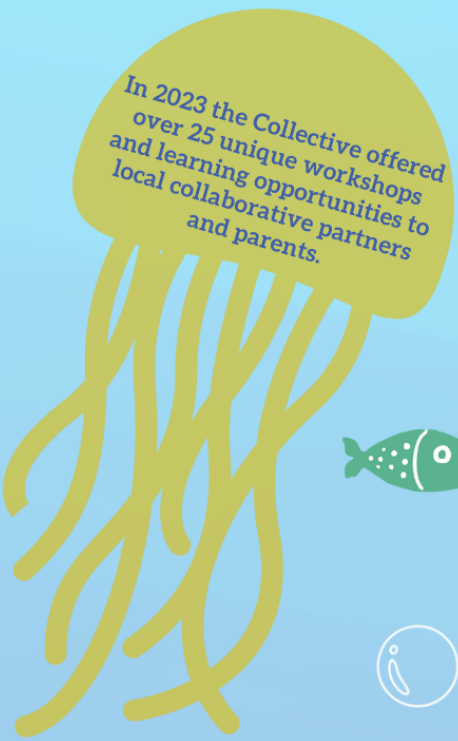
Website: ctncy.org



In 2023 local collaboratives reached 25,219 community members throughout Connecticut.



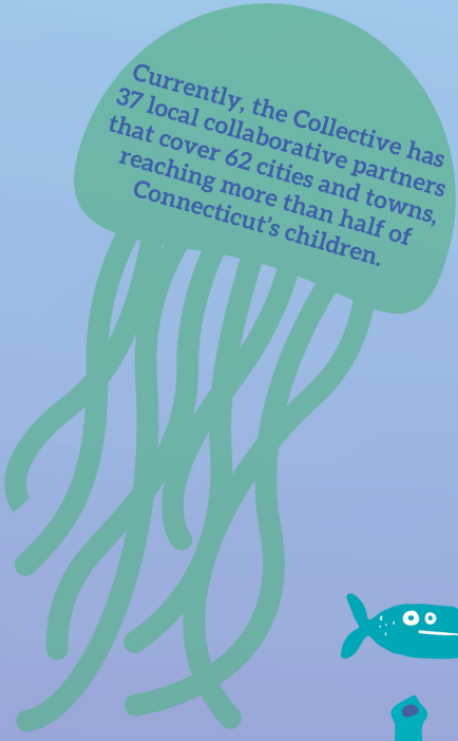
Local collaboratives reported 944 people served on their boards and committees in 2023.



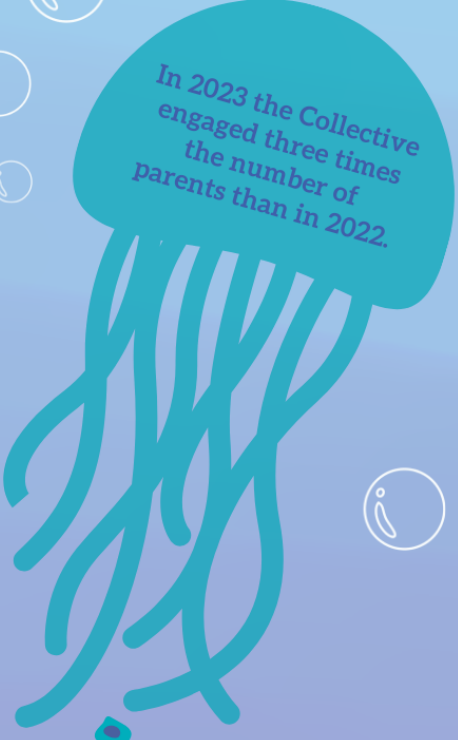
In 2023 the Collective offered over 25 unique workshops and learning opportunities to local collaborative partners and parents.



Through a mix of in-person and virtual events, local collaboratives are directly connected with 4,538 people.



Currently, the Collective has 37 local collaborative partners that cover 62 cities and towns, reaching more than half of Connecticut's children.



In 2023 the Collective engaged three times the number of parents than in 2022.