

DRAFT – 4/20/09
For Public Review & Input
Community Feedback due May 11, 2009

**Torrington's Birth through 8
3 Year Plan
June 2009 - June 2012**

Please note: This is the full report. Once updates are received, a final condensed version will be available to the public.

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Members/Partners

Birth Through Eight Planning Committee Co-Chairs:
Cheryl Kloczko, Superintendent Designee & Kathleen Wilmes, Parent

Mother's Education Committee

Name	Title	Agency
Carrie Lurix, Chairperson	High School Diploma Program and GED Instructor	EDUCATION CONNECTION
Barbara Morris	Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher	Torrington High School
Cheryl Peterson	Parent Participant	Parent
Judy Saverine	Assistant Regional Director of Foothills Adult & Continuing Education	Education Connection
Roberta Willis	Representative D-64	State Legislature
Kathleen Wilmes	B-8 Planning Committee Chair	Parent

Maternal Health Committee

Name	Title	Agency
Michelle Cook	State Rep. D-65	State Legislation
Jackey Dieli, Co-Chair	Director	Family Strides
Virgina Doherty R.N., B.S.N., Co-Chair	Clinical Manager, Maternity & Pediatric Services	Charlotte Hungerford Hospital
Nancy Riley	Preschool Teacher	Torrington Childcare
Bonnie Wilkes	Operations Manager	Dept Social Services
Karla Woodworth	PEP Facilitator Public Awareness Co-Chair	TECC Parent Committee Member

Child Development Committee

Name	Title	Agency
Michelle Anderson	Coordinator	Family Resource Center
Laura Baird, Psy.D.	Primary Prevention Services Coordinator	Children's Trust Fund
Dr. Stephanie Fowler	Family Medicine	Parent
Jan Hebert, R.N.	Nurse Care Coordinator	Litchfield County Pediatrics
Kevin Knox	Program Supervisor	Department of Children & Families
Cara Manegal	TECC Parent Committee Co-Chair	Parent

Preschool/School Readiness Committee

Name	Title	Agency
Michelle Anderson	Coordinator	Family Resource Center
Mary Cecchinato	Director	Torrington Childcare Center
Rick Dalla Valle	City Councilman	City of Torrington
Lucille Fines	Kindergarten Teacher	Vogel-Wetmore Elementary
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Brandy Grant	Kindergarten Teacher	Torrington Elementary
Elaine Hanscom	Parent	TECC Secretary
Cheryl Kloczko, Co-Chair	Administrator for Special Programs	Torrington Public Schools
Heather Kosmulski, Co-Chair	TECC Executive & Parent Committee Co-Chair	TECC Co-Chair Parent & Executive Committee
Deb Muhlbaier	Director	Future Foundations Preschool
Paula Romanelli	Child Development Manager	Head Start
Jan Sosnicki	Director	Hilltop Nursery
Sue Vivian	School Readiness Liaison	EDUCATION CONNECTION
Kathleen Wilmes	Parent	TECC Executive Committee Co-chair

Acquisition of Literacy Skills Committee

Name	Title	Agency
Doreen Deary	Executive Director	La Via Latina
Sheryl Dorie, Co-Chair	Second Grade Teacher Torrington Elementary	Torrington Elementary
Andrea Drewry	Reading Consultant at Southwest	Torrington Public Schools
Jessica Hodorski	Program Coordinator	Torrington Library
Marilyn Hoitt	Media Specialist	Forbes Elementary
Cheryl Kloczko	Administrator of Special Programs	Torrington Public Schools
Sandy Mangan, Co-Chair	First Grade Teacher Torrington Elementary	Torrington Elementary

Other Contributors/Partners, The William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, The Governor's Early Childhood Education Cabinet, City of Torrington, Torrington Board of Education, EDUCATION CONNECTION, Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, Waterbury Republican American Newspaper, Register Citizen Newspaper, Sullivan Senior Center, Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce, Mike Salius, Salius Communications, LLC, Torrington Rosary Club, Torrington Area Health District, Torrington Library, Torrington Fire Department, Torrington Police Department, St Paul's Lutheran Church and The Torrington Rotary Club

Supports: Project Manager Laura Downs, Bennett Pudlin, Ron Schack - Charter Oak Group, Bob Francis - Asset-Based Community Development Institute, Doreen Breen - Asset Mapping Consultant, Interaction Associates, Center for the Study of Social Policy, Child Health & Development Institute of CT, Inc, Early Childhood Data CONNECTIONS, Cindy Gurreri - Liaison Graustein Memorial Fund, Plan Coordinator Donna Labbe, Plan Process Consultant, Paul Vivian

Executive Summary

“Eighty-five percent of a person’s intellect, personality and social skills are developed by age 5. Ninety-five percent of public investment in education occurs after age 5, when the most critical learning years have passed.” Purvey, Body & Brain

History:

In January 2008, Torrington was chosen as the recipient of a public/private partnership grant from the Graustein Memorial Fund and the Governor’s Early Childhood Education Cabinet along with twenty-two other communities in a competitive grant process. This \$42,500 grant for the funding period of January 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009 was used to complete a comprehensive community-wide plan for young children from birth through age eight that encompasses early care and education, social emotional, behavioral and physical health and family supports.

This plan, which is a living document meant to constantly be updated and “not sit on a shelf”, has been crafted by Torrington community members. The first step was the development of a plain-language statement about the quality of life we desire for all young children in Torrington. This is the result we are trying to achieve and around which our plan is organized. Torrington’s result statement is as follows:

“All of Torrington’s children from birth through age 8 are healthy and ready to be successful learners”

How are we doing in achieving the result?

Indicators that were chosen to help report to the community on how we are doing in achieving the result:

- ❖ Births to mother’s who have not completed high school
- ❖ Percentage of mothers residing in Torrington receiving inadequate prenatal care
- ❖ Referrals and those identified to be eligible for services, to Birth to 3 services and Torrington Public Schools’ Special Education department regarding developmental progress of preschool age children
- ❖ Performance on the Kindergarten Entrance Inventory
- ❖ Percent of students rated at goal on third grade Connecticut Mastery Test Reading

Outreach/Community Involvement/Strategic Areas of Focus

In the early planning months, under the guidance of the Torrington Early Childhood Collaborative (TECC), five committees were convened with representation from a cross-section of Torrington community members focused on the major dimensions of wellbeing encompassed by Torrington’s result. The five areas of strategic focus are: **Mother’s Education, Maternal Health, Child Growth & Development, School Readiness/Preschool and Acquisition of Literacy Skills.**

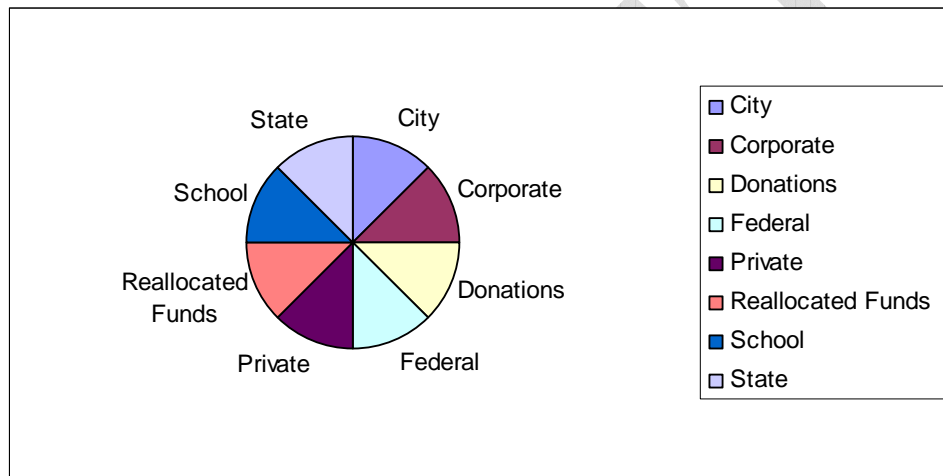
These committees created strategies to continue what Torrington is doing well in addition to strategies that will help fill gaps in services to ensure Torrington’s birth through eight result is achieved. Several local and state data reports and surveys conducted and gathered by TECC were used to identify key indicators outlined above that will help measure if the plan is working. Over 15 focus groups, eight key stakeholder interviews, 100 surveys, and continuous community feedback loops through City Council and Board of Education meetings along with media coverage helped to gather important information needed to craft the plan and offer transparency in the work of the committees.

Staffing of the work:

While the plan has received tremendous community support in over 600 hours of volunteer time, in order to move this work forward, long-term committees will need to be convened and a staff position will be needed to help implement and coordinate this on-going work with an emphasis on data collection and systems development to help connect efforts for services of families with young children in order to achieve Torrington's result statement.

Menu of Opportunities to Contribute (Funding):

The plan allows for a variety of ways to contribute. There is opportunity for low cost in-kind donations, volunteer time as well as resources to help fund the work. TECC hopes to create a diversified portfolio as outlined below where multiple local, state and private resources can be used to help support the work of the plan. In order to ensure changes are systemic and support long-term enhancements for many generations to come, the plan includes strategies that are focused on policy changes.



“If properly funded and managed, investments in early childhood development yield an extraordinary return far exceeding the return on most investments, private or public.”

A. Rolnick and R Grunewald

How can you help?

After reviewing strategies in an area you would like to help with either financially or by volunteering, contact TECC Coordinator, Donna Labbe at labbedonna@yahoo.com or 860-806-1410 to find out how you can help Torrington achieve its result for young children. The Finance plan is currently being crafted – the more help and support the better this plan will be.

“The Perry Pre-School Longitudinal Study cites a \$17 to \$1 return on investment in early childhood education primarily because of a large reduction in crime among those who receive early childhood education”

Mother's Education

What do we want for all young children in Torrington?

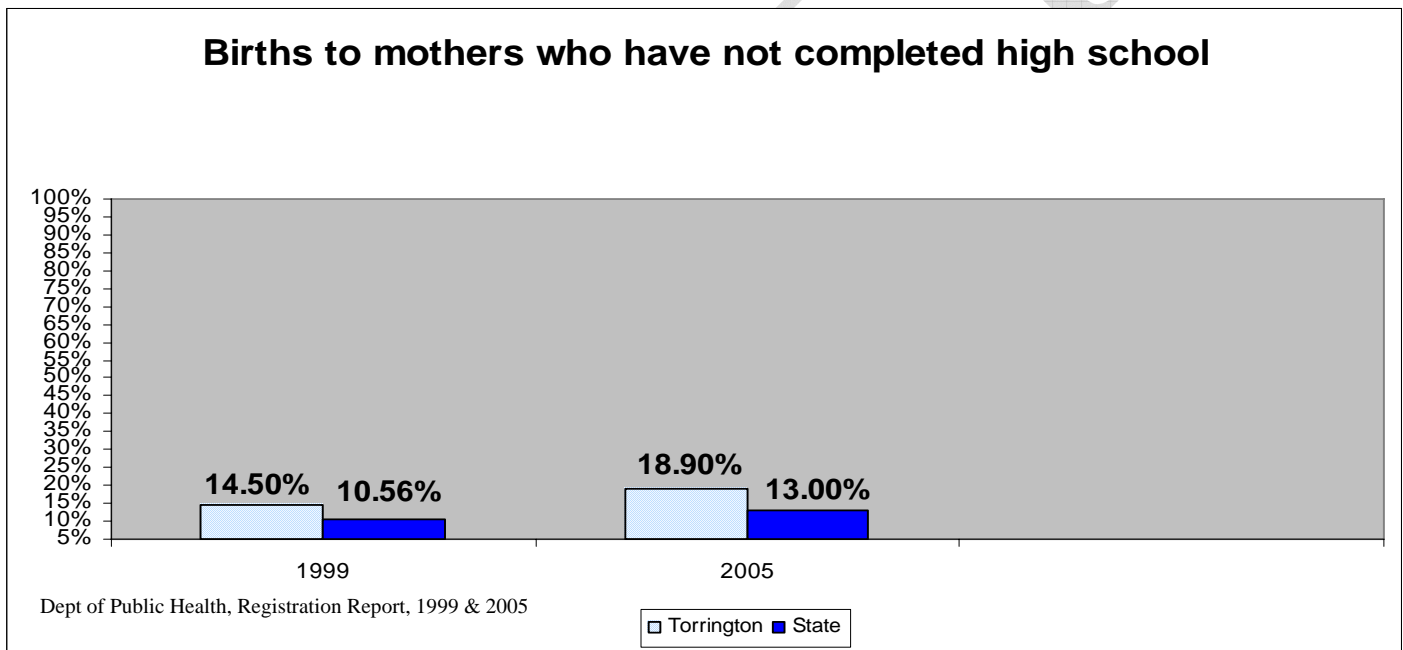
“All of Torrington’s children from birth through age 8 are healthy and ready to be successful learners.”

Strategic Statement

Partner with families, the Torrington Board of Education, Community Adult Education providers, English Language Learner Outreach supports, and local institutions of higher education to ensure that all women have the knowledge of and realization of the importance of earning a high school diploma and pursuit of higher education opportunities and have access to them.

How are we doing?

Key Indicator Births to mothers who have not completed high school



What do we know about the indicator and why is it important?

The likelihood of a child graduating high school when his or her mother has not graduated is in direct correlation. While a father’s education can influence the outcomes of a child’s educational success, studies have focused on mother’s education due to its higher impact. In 2005, there were 18.9% of mothers in Torrington who did not receive a high school diploma. This translates into one out of every five Torrington kindergartners has a mother who had not completed high school in 2005 – therefore, in class of 20 kindergartners, four of those students had a mother who had not graduated high school. This impacts the entire population with regards to societal outcomes and needed supports.

Studies have shown that educational level highly with employment and potential earnings. The classic study shows that children whose mothers lack a high school diploma are far behind their peers by age three in language development. Programs have long used checklists of risk factors that are generally correlated with dropping out and the ways that the average dropout differs from the average graduate (Wells et al. 1989). Decades of research have yielded a huge list of such characteristics, including (Rumberger 2004, Gleason and Dynarski 2002) which states:

Family factors: “Students who come from single parent families, have a mother who dropped out of high school, have parents who provide less oversight and support for learning, and who have older siblings who did not complete school are more likely to drop out.”

The plan will address mother’s education in a multi-faceted approach that will help prevent young women from dropping out high school. While the plan hopes to decrease the number of young mothers that do not complete their high school education, the plan will provide opportunities for mothers who do not graduate to receive their GED or High School Equivalency by making classes and course work more accessible.

What do we need to know? Data development agenda items:

- ? Percent of women who become pregnant and drop out of school
- ? Percent of women who have already dropped out and then became pregnant
- ? Percent of immigrant women who do not have a high school diploma or equivalency & what countries they are from and what languages they speak
- ? Percent of undocumented women who do not have a high school diploma or a High School Equivalency

What will we do to make it better?

1. Prevention

- Establish an early identification program for students who may be at risk for not completing their high school education.
 - ❖ Partner with Elementary School Teachers and Administration. to develop a criteria of risk factors (secondary indicators) ie. Attendance records, economic factors, grades, etc . . .
- Develop an on-site mentoring program with at risk students where positive female role models would be matched to at risk students.
 - ❖ Research existing best practices
 - ❖ Hire a mentoring coordinator
 - ❖ Recruit mentors
- Conduct a series of focus groups targeting students who have dropped out to access information on what might have been helpful to keep in them in school.
- Create a multi-media presentation that will describe the correlation between mother’s school success and her child’s school success.

- Develop a plan based on research of best practices of programs to keep young women in school and avoiding pregnancy in order to effectively communicate the importance of a high school degree and also speaks to the at-risk population's self-interest. Presented by those who have been affected.

2. Support

- Establish an education supportive system for young women who become pregnant in school and wish to complete their high school diploma.
- Develop in partnership with the Torrington Board of Education a policy to keep pregnant students in school.
 - ❖ Create a childcare program at Torrington High School to support mothers wishing to complete their high school education.

3. Access

- Removal of barriers to attend Adult Education classes
 - ❖ Develop a transportation system for students wishing to attend Adult Education classes
 - ❖ Centralize an Adult Education program that offers all classes necessary for completion
 - ❖ Update current Adult Education Policies to accommodate flexible schedules with regards to attendance
- Partner with the Latino Community Based Organization La Via Latina and other English Language Learner (ELL) community supports to assess the immigrant population's educational needs.
 - ❖ Research existing supports for ELL students
 - ❖ Develop an ELL outreach program to communicate the importance of obtaining a high school diploma and the impact it has on their children
 - ❖ Research best practices (Even Start) to develop or work in concert with existing efforts to provide services
 - ❖ Work with ASPIRA on Americorps Program for the prevention of dropping out of high school
- Ensure TECC's resource guide currently being developed has information regarding Adult Education services.
 - ❖ Inventory existing Adult Education programs
 - ❖ Highlight Adult Education programs
 - ❖ Distribute to a wide audience targeting mothers who have not completed high school
 - ❖ Ensure the guide includes ELL parenting supports such as APEX, Americorps and other programs from La Via Latina

How will we know if our actions are working?



Program Measures:

- Number of identified at risk students
- Percentage of at risk students identified
- Number of students matched with the mentor

- Number of focus groups
- Percentage of Focus Group Attendees
- Number of female elementary school students who received these services who stayed in school

- Number of supports (ie staff, counselors, childcare spots, mentors, transportation)
- Percentage of pregnant young mothers who remained students
- Number of pregnant young mothers who completed their high school education

- Number of Adult Education GED or High School Equivalency classes offered
- Percentage of mothers of young children who attended Adult Education GED or High School Equivalency courses (yearly comparison)
- Number of mothers of young children who have passed their GED or received their high school diploma

- Number of English Language Learners (ELL) GED or high school equivalency classes offered
- Percentage of ELL mothers of young children who attended Adult Education GED or high School Equivalency (yearly comparison)
- Number of ELL mothers who received their GED or high school equivalency

- Number of stops along the bus line to local Adult Ed sites
- Percentage of students that had successful attendance
- Number of mothers of young children attending Adult Ed that used public transportation and received their GED and high school diploma

- How many resource guides printed
- Percentage of households that received it
- Number of people referred to a service through the resources guide

System Measure – Database on where people are finding out about resources

Maternal Health

What do we want for all young children in Torrington?

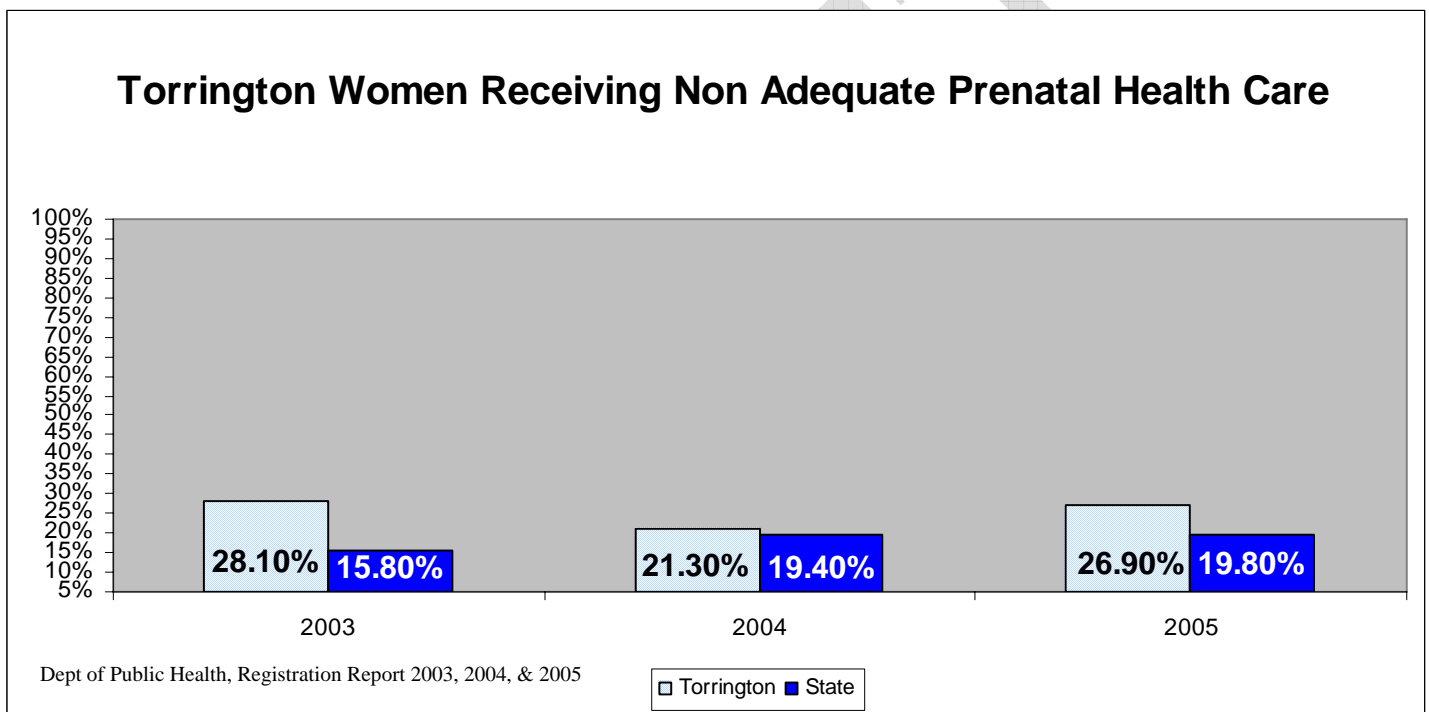
“All of Torrington’s children from birth through age 8 are healthy and ready to be successful learners.”

Strategic Statement

Partner with families, community early childhood providers, local health care providers, including immigrant outreach supports and state social and health services to ensure mother’s awareness of the importance of prenatal care, expansion of access, and increase the number of mothers getting adequate care.

How are we doing?

Key Indicator Percentage of mothers residing in Torrington receiving non-adequate prenatal care



What do we need to know - Data development agenda item:

? Percentage of mothers delivering outside of Torrington

What do we know about the indicator and why is it important?

From the statistics listed above, we know that nearly one out of three Torrington women in 2005 did not receive adequate prenatal health care. We also know that statistics from Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, Torrington’s local hospital, nearly every pregnant woman who delivered there in 2005 received adequate prenatal health care. This data suggests that the women going elsewhere to deliver their children are not receiving adequate prenatal care prior to their delivery. This may be due to the fact that they have to travel out of town to receive their prenatal care and the mere fact of this travel is lending itself to the lack of adequate care.

Studies show that children born to mothers who did not receive adequate health care are more likely to be low birth weight and that this is a primary indicator to a whole range of childhood health disorders.

Research is needed to find out why this is happening. Are these women that are not receiving adequate prenatal care uninsured and unaware that they can access care through the HUSKY program? Are the women not receiving adequate care aware of the importance of receiving such care or may be undocumented and afraid to access prenatal healthcare? All of these questions need to be addressed in order for Torrington to offer its children the healthiest possible start in life.

What will we do to make it better?

1. Educate the public on the importance of prenatal health care

- Publish listings of Medical Care Providers that participate in HUSKY & Medicaid in TECC's resource guide.
 - ❖ Partner with Early Childhood Care Providers, Birth to Three, Early Head Start, Head Start & Family Strides to help disseminate information to expecting mothers on the importance of maternal health (publications will be available in culturally appropriate languages)
 - ❖ Partner with La Via Latina to offer Comenzando Bien a program that teaches prenatal classes with an outreach component to pregnant and women new mothers.
- Develop a prenatal health unit as part of the existing health curriculum for high school students.
 - ❖ Research existing curriculum that focuses on the importance of prenatal health care.

2. Access

- Ensure that expecting mothers get prenatal care
 - ❖ Create a network of providers and community resources including churches and La Via Latina to connect expecting mothers to services
- Raise the awareness of available prenatal health care resources.
(publications will be available in culturally appropriate languages)
- Partner with pediatricians to educate second time mothers
- Support Universal Healthcare policies for all Americans that allow for flexibility in patient choice of providers and ensures timely medical attention.
 - ❖ Universal healthcare - Get representation from "Healthcare4Everyone" to help with this process
- Institute wellness centers in schools that have vulnerable populations.
 - ❖ Research other communities that offer this service
- Increase the number of dentist that accepts HUSKY for expecting mothers.

- ❖ Partner with existing advocacy groups for higher reimbursement rates for dental coverage to help encourage more dentists to participate in the HUSKY program.
- Increase funding to expand the Nurturing Families Program.
 - ❖ Advocate with area legislators regarding the importance of the expansion of the state funded Nurturing Families Program
- Review policies for HUSKY coverage for undocumented women.
- Research current policies and nationwide coverage for non-emergency prenatal care for undocumented women.
- Expand the Parent as Teachers Program to serve all populations.
 - ❖ Hire bilingual home visitors – Parents as teachers programs, healthy families (first time parents only). Expand to second time parents as well.
- Establish policy that supports expecting students to remain in high school through child care, transportation and other necessary services.
- Recruit and educate mentors to provide supports for expecting young mothers

How will we know if our actions are working?



Program Measures:

- Number of resource guides distributed
- Percentage of expecting mother who receive the resource guide
- Percentage of expecting mothers who received adequate prenatal healthcare including dental
- Number of students receiving prenatal health care information as part of their curriculum
- Percentage of students who have increased knowledge of adequate prenatal healthcare
- Percentage of women receiving adequate prenatal health care

System Measure:

- Number of prenatal services/programs that are available to expecting mothers
- Percentage of expecting mothers who received services through one of these programs
- Number of women who received adequate prenatal

Child Growth & Development

What do we want for all young children in Torrington?

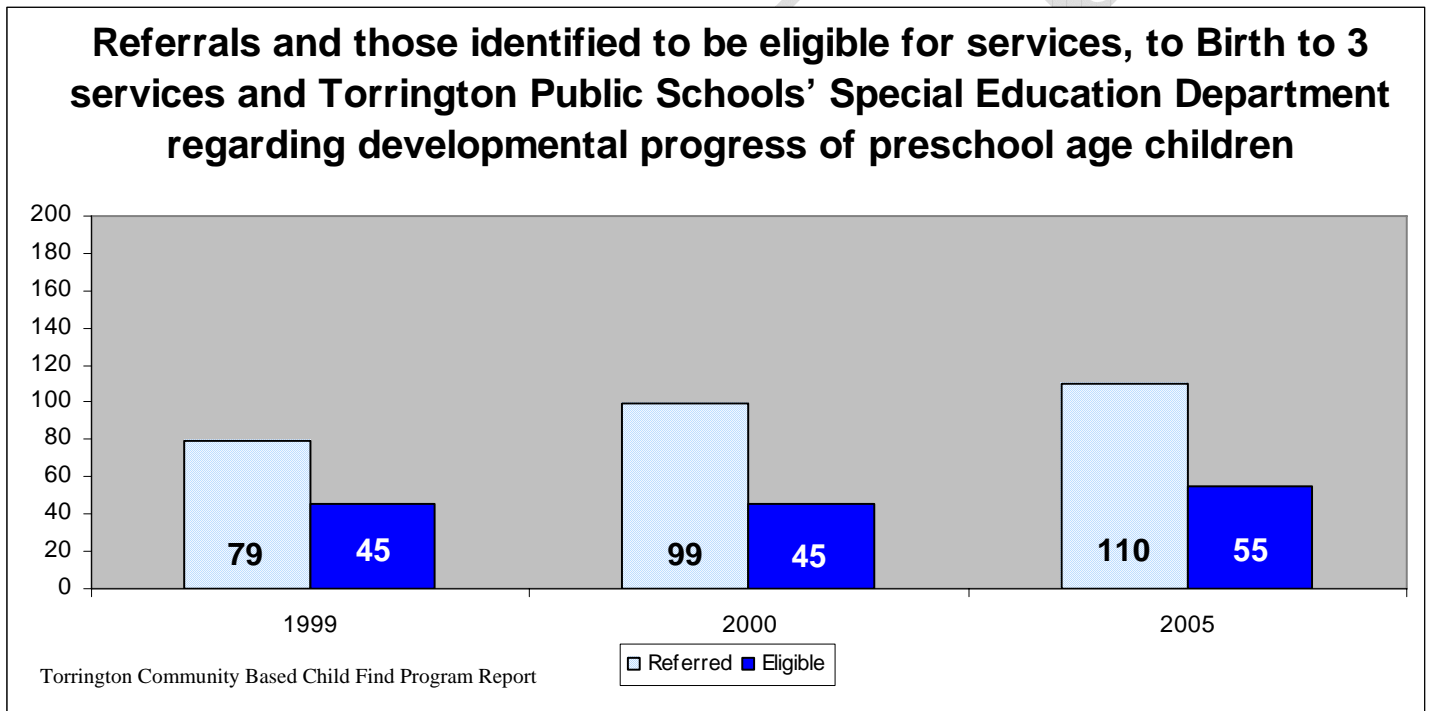
“All of Torrington’s children from birth through age 8 are healthy and ready to be successful learners.”

Strategic Statement

Partner with families, Torrington Board of Education, community and state health care providers, community providers including immigrant outreach supports and services to ensure that all children, birth through age 8 meet age appropriate growth and developmental milestones and receive needed services/resources to support them.

How are we doing?

Key Indicator: Referrals and those identified to be eligible for services, to Birth to 3 services and Torrington Public Schools’ Special Education department regarding developmental progress of preschool age children



What do we need to know - Data development agenda item:

? Percent of children birth through five being treated for developmental delays

What do we know about the indicator and why is it important?

In 2007, the Torrington Early Childhood Collaborative (TECC) conducted a Connecticut Parent Power One on One Listening Campaign with over 50 community members. Five trained “listeners” met with individuals to hear if they could wave a magic wand over Torrington what would they change. The campaign results reported a common theme with the need for more mental health resources for children and their caregivers. In 2008, city-wide Birth through Eight Planning focus groups identified child growth and

development as a top concern. Out of 451 births in Torrington in 2007, 100 were referred to Birth to 3 and 100 were served. As of June 2008, 103 preschoolers were referred for evaluation for special education. Forty-eight were found to be eligible and 28 were still in process. The majority of 27 preschoolers deemed ineligible, were found to have behavior problems. Developmental disorders (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Attention Deficit Disorder, developmental delay not elsewhere classified, developmental speech or language disorder, pervasive developmental disorder, autism, problems with learning), behavioral disorders (behavioral problems NEC (not elsewhere classified), oppositional defiant disorder) and other mental health diagnoses (bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder NOS (not otherwise specified), and major depression NOS are currently among the most common pediatric diagnoses of children served by the Medical Home Initiative in Litchfield county. The earlier the delays are identified, the easier it is to help create a positive outcome in treatment.

According to the Torrington Area Health District, 87% of children born in 2005 were properly immunized by age 2, indicating that those children were keeping up with their well child visits. In Torrington, three pediatricians and two family physicians have utilized the Education Practices in the Community (EPIC) program which educates physicians on early detection of pediatric developmental and health problems. Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP) provides services to Litchfield county children ages five and under with social and emotional problems. They supply caregivers with strategies to support the children and refer to other services if necessary. From January 1, 2003 to the present, the partnership has served 231 boys, 181 girls, 63 teachers, and 64 assistant teachers.

After implementing these strategies below, TECC hopes to have more children with developmental delays identified and supported at an earlier age and less children entering school with behavioral problems.

What will we do to make it better?

1. Early Identification of Behavioral and Developmental Disorders

Educate

- Provide parent workshops
- Create parent resource guide
- Convene providers, parents, physicians together to discuss screening tools
- Implement the Education Practices in the Community (EPIC) program in as many practices as possible
- Work with providers to increase the 87% immunization rate and make sure all children are receiving the appropriate number of well-child visits, during which developmental screening and behavior discussions with parents takes place.
- Child find screening day with Torrington Public Schools
- Public awareness campaign on childhood screening
- Implement Ages and Stages, Parents Evaluations of Developmental Status (PEDs) or other approved developmental screening tool in all pediatric and family medicine practices.

- Implement classes which teach high school students child development and related parenting topics.
- Continue to conduct transitional Planning and Placement Teams for students receiving support services

2. Accurate Diagnoses of Developmental and Behavioral Disorders

Raise Awareness of Current Services

- Develop and offer workshops for childcare providers and physicians to educate them of the services of the Early Childhood Consultation Partnership, Torrington Public Schools and other community supports.

3. Support/Access

- Children with behavioral or developmental problems will be identified earlier by enhancing or creating the following:
 - ❖ A network system throughout early childhood providers where every child is screened and those identified are connected to resources
- Establish a parent mentoring program
 - ❖ Offer workshops that teach parents skills of how to effectively address various behavior and developmental issues and on English Language Learners supports.
- Offer parenting classes at McCall Foundation sponsored by Department of Children and Families and the United Way.
- Provide support for grandparents raising grandchildren and other foster parents
- Hire a Neuropsychologist
- Advocate for an increase in funding for the Early Childhood Consultation Partnership
- Research best practices to create a more affordable and timely evaluation system for children.

How will we know if our actions are working?



Program Measure:

- Number of workshops offered
- Percentage of providers attending
- Number of providers using standard assessment tool

System Measures:

- Number of programs/workshops/communications that outline the signs for developmental delays
- Percentage of participants who have an increased knowledge of developmental delays
- Number of children screened
- Number of children screened
- Percentage of children screened before age three
- Number of children identified as eligible and successfully referred to services
- Number of children with developmental delays receiving services
- Percentage of children receiving services for developmental delays
- Number of children receiving services who no longer need them by the time they enter Kindergarten

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Preschool/School Readiness

What do we want for all young children in Torrington?

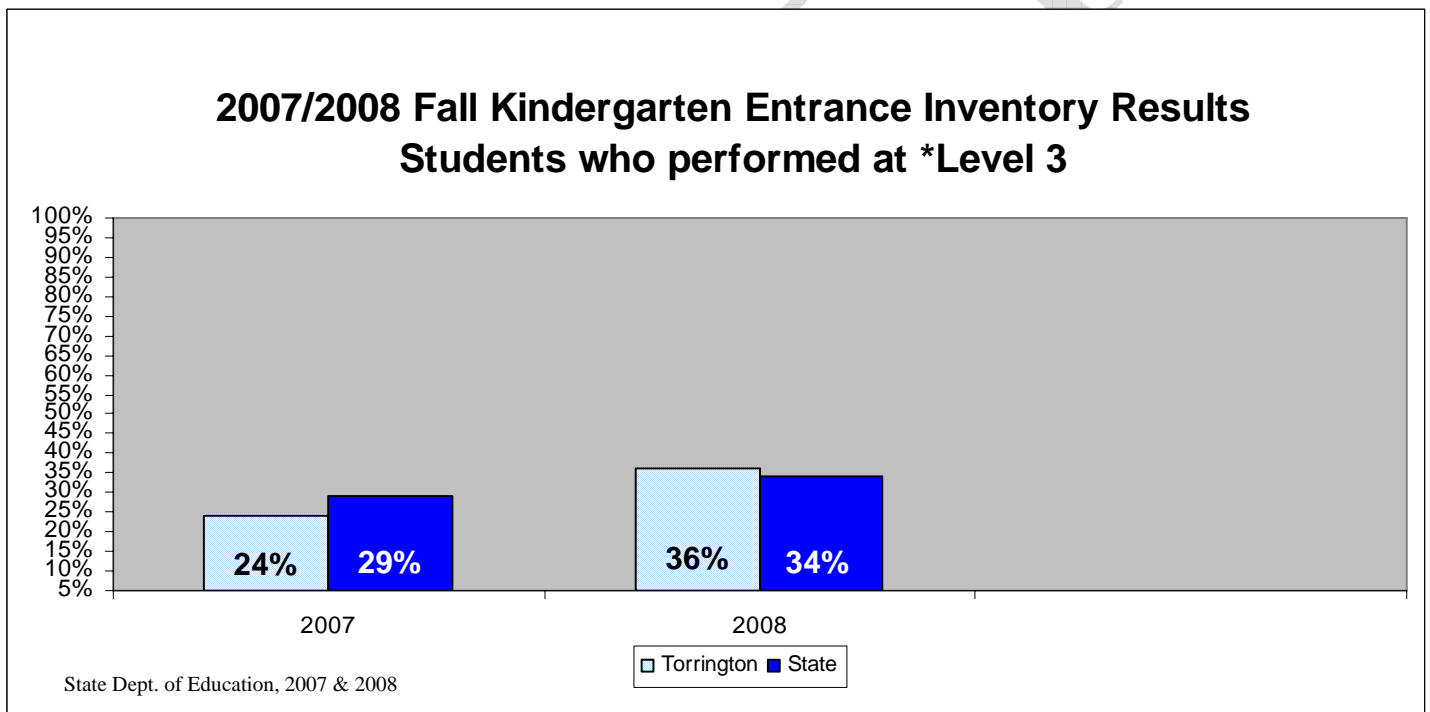
“All of Torrington’s children from birth through age 8 are healthy and ready to be successful learners.”

Strategic Statement

Partner with families, Torrington Board of Education, community and state health care providers and services, community providers including immigrant outreach supports and private and public preschools to ensure that all children, birth through age 8 have access to and receive quality preschool and early care experiences and before and after school care.

How are we doing?

Key Indicator Performance on the Kindergarten Entrance Inventory



*Performance Level 3 – Generally, students at this level consistently demonstrate the skills in the specified domain and require minimal additional instructional support.

What we know about the indicator and why is it important

Torrington’s kindergarten children have made remarkable strides in the past few years in terms of the percentage of students improving on the Fall Kindergarten Entrance Inventory, an assessment of kindergartners in the areas of Language, Literacy, Numeracy, Physical/Motor, Creative/Aesthetic and Personal/Social Skills. However, even with these gains, in 2007, there were 64% of kindergarten students who at a minimum needed some additional instructional supports in order to be successful learners.

Factors that can help to tell the story behind the data are as follows: As of 2007, 76% of Torrington children have participated in some preschool experience. Although this seems promising, this figure does not identify which program and if it was a quality program that aligns its curriculum with the schools kindergarten curriculum. Economic indicators have also been noted as a contributor in early school success. According to the Strategic School Profiles posted on the State Department of Education web site, the percentage of Torrington students K-6 eligible for free/reduced price meals has increased from 31.3% in 2004-05 to 33.3% in 2007-08. Students residing in a Non-English speaking home rose from 6.8% in 2001-02 to 8.6% in 2007-08. While this data only tells a piece of the story – there are a variety of factors that the plan has identified and hopes to address. The community, with TECC at the forefront, has targeted this issue as something that needs to remain an area of continuous community focus. The school system, especially its kindergarten teachers in partnership with early childhood educators and care providers, have been the guiding force with their steadfast efforts to increase the percentage of Torrington students ready to be successful learners. This plan builds upon these past successes. By implementing the following strategies and actions, TECC believes, the amount of children entering kindergarten ready to be successful learners will increase. Torrington's youngest citizens can not wait.

What will we do to make better?

1. Raise Awareness of the importance of a smooth Kindergarten transition process

- Kindergarten Readiness Fair
 - ❖ Offer an opportunity for preschool children and their families to meet teachers and learn what the kindergarten expectations are, targeting low income families.
 - ❖ Hands on kindergarten stations to show parents and children numeracy, literacy and writing activities that will help prepare them for kindergarten
 - ❖ Educate parents about the registration process and timelines
- Kindergarten Transition Supports
 - ❖ Public announcements in local media on Kindergarten Fair and registration process and outreach to summer lunch program at Coe Park
 - ❖ EDUCATION CONNECTION & Head Start convening a meet and greet with kindergarten parents and kindergarten teachers
 - ❖ TECC oversight of kindergarten transition supports
 - ❖ Charlotte Hungerford Hospital literacy bags and parent tips handed out to parents
 - ❖ Kindergarten visitation day along with bus ride for incoming kindergartners
 - ❖ Home visits by bilingual teachers
 - ❖ Family Resource Center Playgroups
 - ❖ Library Story groups
 - ❖ Current kindergarten mentors visit some preschools to talk about kindergarten
 - ❖ Curriculum night for kindergarten parents
 - ❖ Identify perspective kindergarten students by researching current student's siblings
 - ❖ School communications to current students about kindergarten registration for younger siblings
 - ❖ Kindergarten Screening in Spring
 - ❖ Head Start home visits with transition booklet
 - ❖ TECC Kindergarten Registration Process Parent Survey
 - ❖ Continue to support TECC's Back to School Free Clothing & School Supply Event

➤ **Preschool Site Visits**

- ❖ Educate Preschool staff regarding the State Dept of Education Preschool Curriculum Frameworks.
- ❖ Partner with Early Care Educators & Providers including the Family Resource Center to outreach families regarding what to look for in a quality preschool using National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) criteria, and to empower parents with tools to help prepare their children for Kindergarten.

2. Access to Quality Programs

- Increase the number of children with a quality preschool experience
 - ❖ Research private investment opportunities to support preschool slots
- Increase the number of School Readiness slots for competitive school communities
 - ❖ Educate parents on the benefits of “School Readiness for All”
- Advocate with local legislators to help increase slots for School Readiness
 - ❖ Empower parents with advocacy skills by offering People Empower People and Aspira Parents for Excellence courses (APEX)

3. Supports

- Provide services for identified students who transition from Birth to three to the public school system.
- Partner with Torrington’s Community Based Organization LaVia Latina, EDUCATION CONNECTION, Childcare Centers, Preschools, Home Day Cares and Torrington Public Schools to identify and support English Language Learner preschoolers.
- Offer trainings for early childhood educators, providers, Kindergarten teachers and parents on school readiness topics.
 - ❖ Survey needs for early childhood educators, providers, kindergarten teachers and parents on training needs
 - ❖ Identify trainers for topic areas, sites and funding streams to support these efforts.
 - ❖ Educate the whole community on the topic that “School Readiness is Everyone’s Business”
 - ❖ Conduct a series of trainings for early childhood educators, providers, Kindergarten teachers and parents with an ongoing mentoring component to help reinforce training content areas

- Develop a training program for licensed preschool providers, Kith and Kin & home day care providers on the Preschool Curriculum Frameworks
 - ❖ Collect data on which community preschools and home daycare providers are using the CT Preschool Curriculum Frameworks.
 - ❖ Conduct an assessment of all licensed preschools and home daycare providers of who are using the preschool curriculum frameworks.
 - ❖ Facilitate roundtable discussions with Preschool and Kindergarten teachers for curriculum alignment.
 - ❖ Conduct facilitated conversations on the benefits of utilizing the CT preschool curriculum frameworks with preschool and childcare providers, Kith and Kin providers, home day care providers, Kindergarten teachers and EDUCATION CONNECTION.
 - ❖ Provide a series of trainings tailored to accommodate various participant schedules, identify sites and funding streams to help support this initiative.
- Develop a strategic funding plan to encourage local organizations to provide financial as well as in-kind support of early childhood supports
 - ❖ Facilitate conversations with TECC members & local organizations to involve the community in ways to support **Early Childhood Education** through a variety of levels of engagement including in-kind, space to convene, supplies and other supports.
- Establish a Family Resource Center (FRC) in every school
 - ❖ Research best practices from communities that have successfully expanded the availability of Family Resource Centers
- Partner with the Department of Health to create a policy to support licensed childcare/preschools/home day care providers to attend preschool curriculum frameworks trainings.
 - ❖ Work with local and state representatives and the Department of Health to help create policy that would support and encourage licensed childcare/preschools/home childcare programs to attend preschool curriculum frameworks trainings.
- Partner with local and state representatives and the Department of Health to help create policy that would support and encourage licensed childcare/preschools/home childcare programs to attend preschool curriculum frameworks trainings.
- Through a series of focus groups, conduct a needs assessment prioritizing the seven components of the State Department of Education model.
- Research funding opportunities to support the expansion of the FRC based on local organization support including in-kind, low cost and long term policy.
- Create a policy to increase preschool teacher salaries in licensed centers
 - ❖ Partner with local/state representatives to conduct national research on legislation regarding that increased in salary of preschool teachers.
 - ❖ Identify plans of action that states took to achieve an expansion of Family Resource Centers.

How will we know if our actions are working?



Program Measures:

- How many incoming kindergarteners attended
- Percentage of incoming Kindergarteners who attended
- How many incoming kindergartners registered for Kindergarten in the spring

- How many Preschools were visited
- Percentage of Preschool Staff who participated in site visits
- Number of preschools who are aligning their preschool curriculum with the school system's

- Number of parents reached
- Percentage of pre-school parents served
- Number of parents requesting NAEYC accreditation in preschools

- Number of local businesses contacted to help provide financial support for preschool slots
- Percentage of businesses visited
- Number of businesses investing in funding for a quality preschool slots

- Number of presentations on "School Readiness for All"
- Percentage of parents who attended presentations and advocate for more School Readiness Slots
- Number of slots increased in Competitive Districts

- Number of Preschool Curriculum Framework trainings offered
- Percentage of Early Childhood Providers (including home daycare providers) and Educators that attend trainings
- Number of Early Childhood Providers (including home daycare providers) and Educators that complete trainings

- Number of conversations held with TECC members and local organizations
- Percentage of TECC members and local organizations that attend these conversations
- Number of supports that are offered (in-kind, space to convene, supplies, etc.)

- Number of training sessions held
- Percentage of licensed childcare/preschools/home day care providers who attend training sessions
- Number of licensed childcare/preschools/home day care providers who successfully complete training sessions

- Number of focus groups held
- Percentage of parents advocating for FRC's
- Number of new FRC in community

- Number of meetings held with state representatives regarding salaries of preschool teachers
- Percentage of preschool teachers who receive an increase in salary
- Number of preschool teachers who receive an increase in salary

- Number of training sessions held
- Percentage of licensed childcare/preschools/home day care providers who attend training sessions
- Number of licensed childcare/preschools/home day care providers who implement training concepts

System Measure:

- Number of incoming kindergarten families reached
- Percentage of incoming kindergartners that participated in any of the above events
- Number of incoming kindergartner families who identified one of the above strategies as a support in transitioning to kindergarten

DRAFT

Acquisition of Literacy Skills, Concepts and Strategies by age 9 for all children

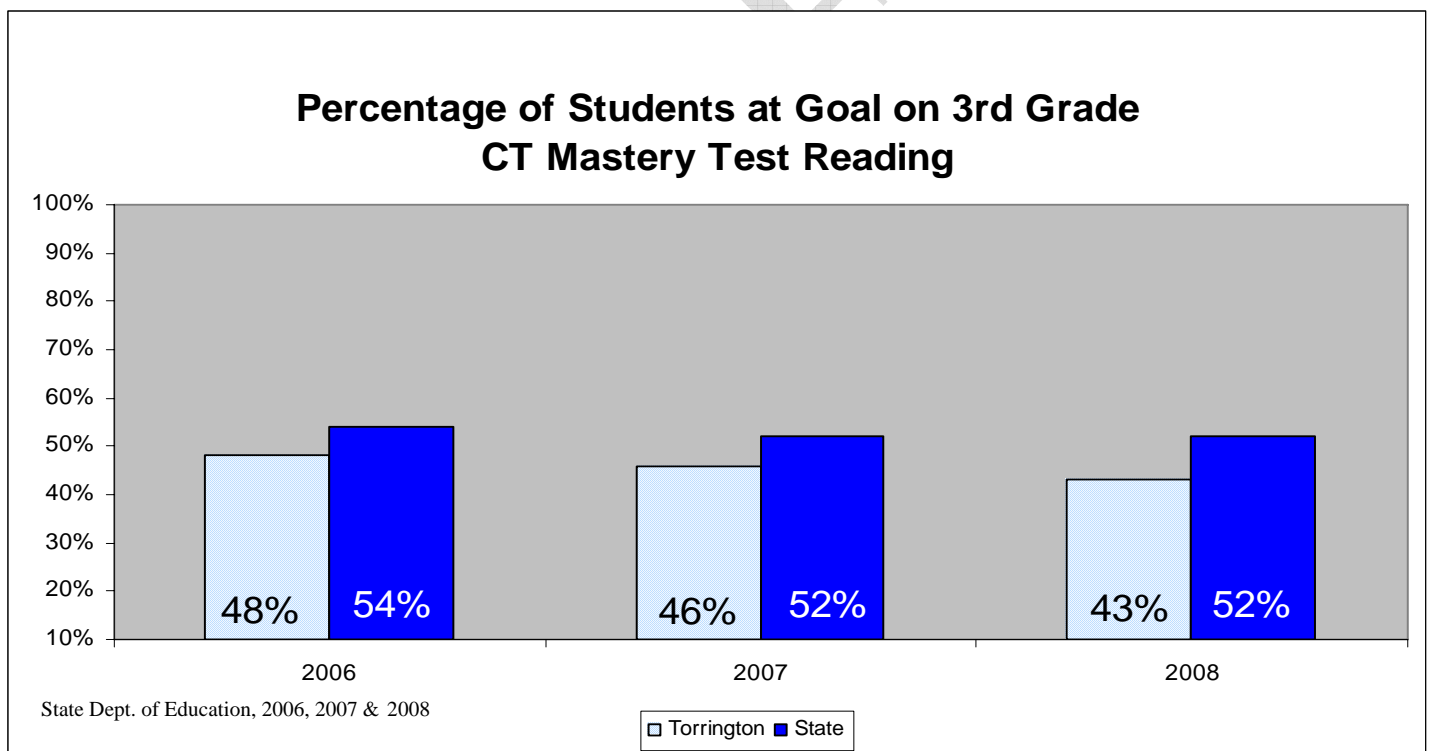
What do we want for all young children in Torrington?

“All of Torrington’s children from birth through age 8 are healthy and ready to be successful learners.”

Strategic Statement

Partner with families, Torrington Public Schools, Torrington Library, community and state services, private and public preschools, child care centers, state department of education, community providers including immigrant outreach supports and health care providers to ensure that all children, birth through age 8 have access to and receive quality literacy education and services that support the whole child in becoming a successful learner. Families will have knowledge of the importance and access to resources that will help them through the process of their children becoming readers and learners.

How are we doing? Key Indicator: Percent of students rated at goal on third grade Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) Reading



What do we know about the indicator and why is it important?

Over the last three years, the state has seen its CT Mastery Test Reading scores decrease 2 points while Torrington’s have gone down 9 points with respect to achieving reading at goal. This translates into less than half of Torrington students that were tested in third grade were reading at goal level. While English Language Learners as well as Torrington’s students eligible for free/reduced lunch populations have been on the rise, there are other contributors to the story behind the data for this whole population, including both parents working and developmental delays.

Parent engagement is one area of focus that will help to increase Torrington's 3rd grade CMT reading scores. Studies show there are benefits when parents take a more active role in their child's education by participating in school activities and demonstrating an eagerness to gain new capabilities to help their families. The plan strives to raise parent's awareness of available resources, such as libraries and classes so they are better able to "model" for their children, and encourage language skills and reading acquisition, thereby emphasizing the importance of reading and writing, as it affects their family's quality of life.

The following strategies focus on families of first graders in an effort to reinforce the importance of reading and to impact their Connecticut Mastery Test scores which they will take two years later. The following plan includes a multifaceted approach to address the needs that involves raising the awareness around the importance of early literacy, creating a variety of programming to address the range of barriers to early reading success and implanting the supports needed to ensure ongoing success in children's reading capabilities.

What will we do to make it better?

1. Raise Awareness of the Importance of Literacy

- Increase the number of children using the library by partnering with the "Torrington Library Doorway to Learning Initiative"
 - ❖ Develop a system where all first graders receive a library card
 - ❖ Create a Literacy team comprised of first grade teachers, library staff and parents to establish the protocol for students accessing library cards
 - ❖ Library staff would visit every first grade
 - ❖ Each first grader would be given a library card
 - ❖ Every second grade classroom would visit the public library at least once during the school year
 - ❖ Offer a series of family programs at the library to engage parents and involved them in early literacy activities
 - ❖ Create a tutoring program for ELL children
 - ❖ Develop a volunteer bank of interpreters
- Develop a literacy social marketing communications campaign
 - ❖ Literacy Committee partners with service clubs, city departments and others to create a series of banners to be prominently displayed downtown as one part of a multi-pronged social marketing communications campaign
- Design workshops for parents/guardians that focus on tools to help develop early reading skills
 - ❖ Language Arts coordinators will plan two workshops per year for first grade parents and guardians that focus on how reading is taught to their children and how they can support them in the learning process of becoming literate.
- Partner with early childhood agencies, FRC and other Community Based Organizations such as La Via Latina to focus on early literacy activities that parents can do with their children.
- Establish in partnership with the Parent Teacher Organization to offer a literacy series to be held at each elementary school.

2. Create a Range of Opportunities for Early Literacy Programs & Activities

- Establish a coordinated summer reading program
 - ❖ Summer Story Hour would be connected to the Summer Lunch Program
 - ❖ Torrington Library's Summer Reading Program in conjunction with "Mayor Bingham's Boundless Bookworms" reading program will connect the school system with the Governor's Reading Challenge
- Extended day program with a focus on literacy
 - ❖ Students extend their school day by 1 hour, 4 xs per week, to work in small groups on reading and writing skills and strategies that are identified as their specific area of needing improvement. Learning activities may focus on vocabulary, developing background knowledge, using drama to demonstrate comprehension.
- Summer School
 - ❖ Students extend their school year to work in small groups on specific reading and writing concepts, skills and strategies that are identified as their specific area of needing improvement. Instruction during the summer prevents regression in student learning.
- Develop an Adequate Yearly Plan for all students to reach proficiency in Reading and Writing as measured by the CMTs and LAS Links.
- Implement a district wide Professional Development Plan for elementary educators that focuses on instructional strategies for working with students with special needs and/or are English Language Learners with emphasis on cultural differences that affect learning that includes a coaching and mentoring component.
 - ❖ Torrington Public Schools plans and executes professional development over the course of the school year, with half day and full days designated for the in-service workshops

Design a school based plan for grade level professional development that is directly correlated to student performances on standardized tests and allows teachers to monitor student progress in achieving expected performance standards

- ❖ Monthly grade level meetings are held to discuss instructional strategies implemented and the success of these strategies as they directly relate to student academic achievement.
- ❖ Individual elementary schools meet at the beginning of the school year to review results of CMTS and to determine concepts, skills and strategies in Literacy requiring greater instructional focus and emphasis during the upcoming school year (areas in the school's academic achievement which need the most improvement).
- ❖ Administrators visit classrooms to observe if teachers are implementing strategies identified to improve student performance.

- Design common formative assessments to support monitoring of student progress
 - ❖ Administer common formative assessments such as the DRA2 and writing prompts to determine student progress
- Design small instructional groups based upon students' performance and needs
 - ❖ Specially trained teachers in instructional strategies for literacy, special education, and acquiring a second language, work with small groups of students on a daily basis.
- Partner with America Reads & RSVP to help provide volunteers to help support school reading programs.

How will we know if our actions are working?



Program Measures:

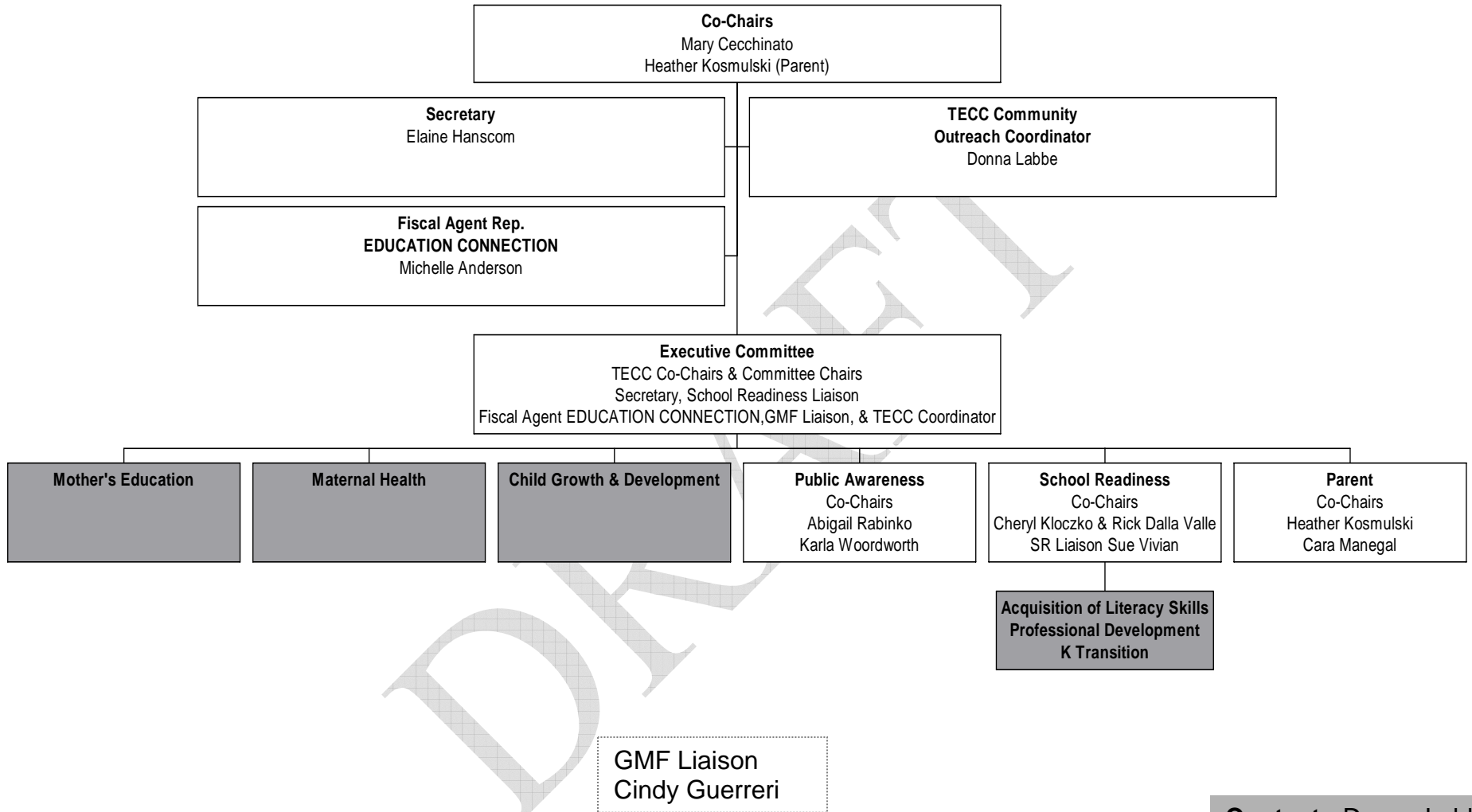
- Number of new library cards issued
- Percentage of children's books checked out
- Number of children's books checked out

- Number of workshops
- Percentage of first grade families attending the workshops
- Number of parent/guardians who attended a workshop that report to read more to their first graders

- **System Measure:**
- Number of reading programs offered
- Percentage of students attending
- Number of students who attended a reading program who met goal on the CMT reading portion

Torrington Early Childhood Collaborative Governance Structure

Proposed Fall 2009– Approved



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A Partnership of

The Torrington Board of Education, EDUCATION CONNECTION, and the City of Torrington
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Torrington Early Childhood Collaborative Asset Mapping

Asset mapping for the Torrington Early Childhood Collaborative (TECC) will be utilized to identify and, where appropriate, create working collaborations within the Torrington area. The focus is on individuals, associations and institutions who demonstrate skills, talents and resources to achieve the Collaborative's goal: *"All of Torrington's children from birth through age eight are healthy and ready to be successful learners."*

The process used will be based on the workshops taught by Robert Francis, Asset-Based Community Development Institute and the documentation that he provided. Building on the preliminary information gathered on individuals, associations, institutions and financial assistance, the following steps will be taken:

- Review of the asset mapping efforts around early childhood of other CT cities (i.e. the City of Branford, City of Wallingford).
- Additional information gathering sessions will be held with key individuals, associations and institutions in Torrington (i.e. Family Strides, Susan B. Anthony Project, Board of Education, Council of Churches, etc).
- Resources identified in Susan B. Anthony's Community Resource and Education Guide will be incorporated into the process.
- Review of the Chamber of Commerce's membership rosters and affiliations.
- Meeting with the City of Torrington to gather information on additional recreational, arts and social service programs.
- Information gathering meeting with the Northwest CT Arts' Council.

All individuals, associations and institutions identified will be asked to complete a questionnaire (in person, via telephone or by mail) to ensure that accurate information is entered into the mapping process. The questionnaire will be updated annually to ensure accuracy of information and will include a request for interim changes to be emailed to a central location. The questionnaire will also include a place for individuals to sign up as volunteers or offer in-kind donations and other resources to support TECC's efforts in achieving its result for young children.

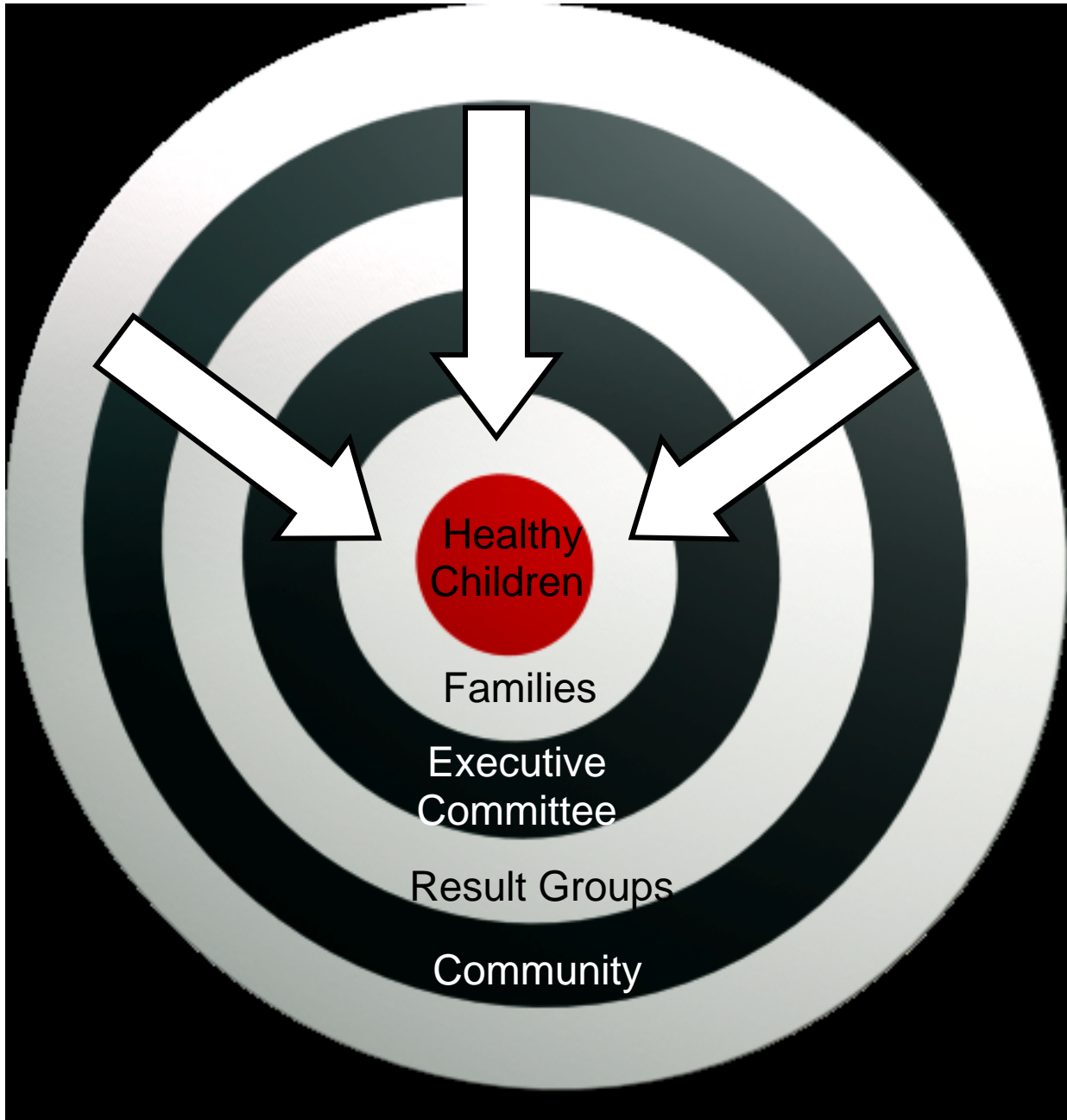
The results from the asset mapping may take several forms, such as:

1. Geographical map of Torrington with color keys indicating the various resources.
2. Data Bases (by age; by need; by location; etc).
3. Resource Guides (for parents, public and providers).
4. A list of organizations/individuals that would like to share resources as well as in-kind support to help move Torrington's result for young children forward

Distribution of the results will be handled through public forums, publicity, distribution of Resource Guides, and specific communications with individuals, associations and organizations identified in the mapping process. Additionally, website (read only) access to the data base may be made available.

Summary

The Torrington Early Childhood Collaborative, a group of passionate individuals that has been fostering the Torrington tradition of coming together for the benefit of its youngest citizens since 2002, has taken the first step towards creating its quality of life for young children and families. Torrington's Results Based Plan, grounded in data, will help to keep all "arrows" of support from the community pointing towards a common goal of fostering and developing a seamless, accessible system of services that is responsive to diverse family and community needs. With continued community support and feedback, Torrington is positioned to attain its result and sustain this quality of life for many generations of Torrington families to come.



"All of Torrington's children from birth through age 8 are healthy and ready to be successful learners"