



# ECCS

**Early Childhood Collaborative of Southington**

*Presents*

## **“The State of Early Childhood in Southington” May 25, 2021**

**Joanne Kelleher, Director**  
***[www.southingtonearlychildhood.org](http://www.southingtonearlychildhood.org)***

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## **Thanks to ECCS Funders for 7/2019 to 5/2021**



**CT Early Childhood  
Funder Collaborative**

**American Eagle  
Federal Credit Union  
Cash Back Program**



**Donations from the ECCS Board and members of the community.**



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## ECCS Board

- Thank you to current board members
  - Rachel Wardwell
  - Ryan Howe
  - Michelle Beauregard
  - Pat Johnson
  - Shannon Fitzsimons
  - Brian Williams
  - Molly Virello

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## Welcome and Introductions

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# ECCS

Early Childhood Collaborative of Southington

- ECCS Strategic Plan
- Town Statistics and Trends
- State and Federal Updates
- Community Conversation
- Wrap up

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## About the Data

- Southington Public School District
- State and Federal Agencies
- United Way ALICE Report
- CECA Research
- ECCS Surveys and conversations

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## Strategic Planning

*Completed September 2019 – February 2020*

### **Purpose:**

To enhance the quality of life of and ensure that all children in Southington are healthy and ready to learn.

### **Target Age of families served:**

Programming from birth to entry into kindergarten

Resource-sharing related to children from birth to grade 5



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**All children**  
are healthy and  
prepared for school.

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## Trends Identified During Strategic Planning

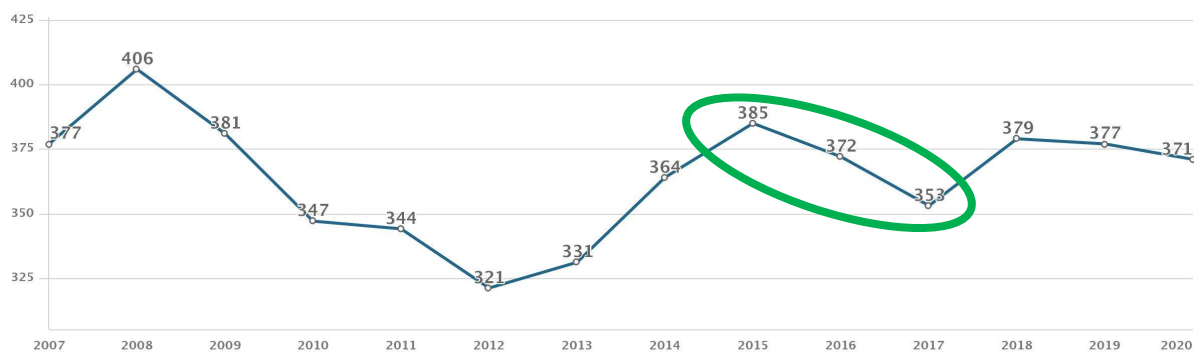
- Longtime residents see this as solidly white, middle-class community
- Increase in Racial and Ethnic Diversity
  - Increase in number of students needing English Language services (and at higher levels)
- Increase in Poverty Levels
- Increase in number of children per household



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## How Many Young Children Are There? Babies Born to Southington Families

Source: Town Clerk's Office



Age 0 to 4 years = 1,917, Per US. Census, American Community Survey, 2019, 5 year average vs. 1853 for sum of babies born 2014-2018.



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## Racial/Ethnicity of SPS Students

Percentage by Race/Ethnicity	10/1/19	10/1/16	10/1/13	10/1/10	10/1/07
American Indian or Alaska Native	*	0.1	*	0.1	0.3
Asian	3.6	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.3
Black or African American	2.4	2.1	1.9	1.6	2.2
Hispanic or Latino of any race	9.8	7.7	6.3	5.3	3.9
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	*	0.1	*	0	
Two or More Races	4.4	3.3	2.6	2.4	
White	79.8	83.2	85.7	87.4	90.4
<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>6336</b>	<b>6582</b>	<b>6704</b>	<b>6790</b>	<b>6893</b>
<b>Number Non-white</b>	<b>1280</b>	<b>1106</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>662</b>

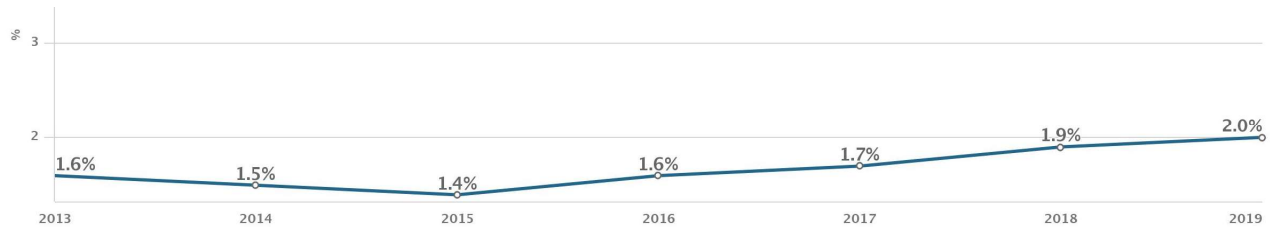
Source: EdSight annual reports

91.89% of Southington is white per CERC Town Profile 2019



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## English Language Learners - SPS



- 2004-05 - 49
- 2006-07 - 88
- 2019-20 - 125

Parents of children in elementary school speak 21 languages. (2017)

Source: EdSight annual reports and SPS



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## Southington – ALICE

**Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed**  
Households that earn more than Federal Poverty Level but less than basic cost of living for the area.

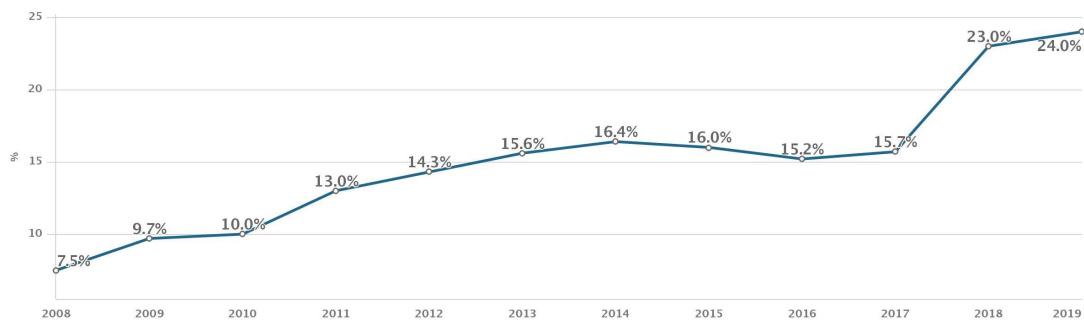
	2014	2018
• Poverty:	4%	5%
• ALICE:	19%	24%
• Above ALICE:	77%	72%



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## Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch

Percent of Children Grades K-12



Source: Edsight.



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## Trends Identified During Strategic Planning

Mental health needs are increasing  
 (anxiety, depression, understanding of trauma)

- Need for trauma-informed care and social emotional learning training for childcare providers
- Decline in Empathy
- Decline in Self-Regulation



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## Trends Identified During Strategic Planning

Dependence on electronic devices  
(smartphones, tablets, computers)

- Impact on kindergarten readiness due to decrease in parents reading to children
- Decrease in Gross Motor Skills
- Decrease in Fine Motor Skills



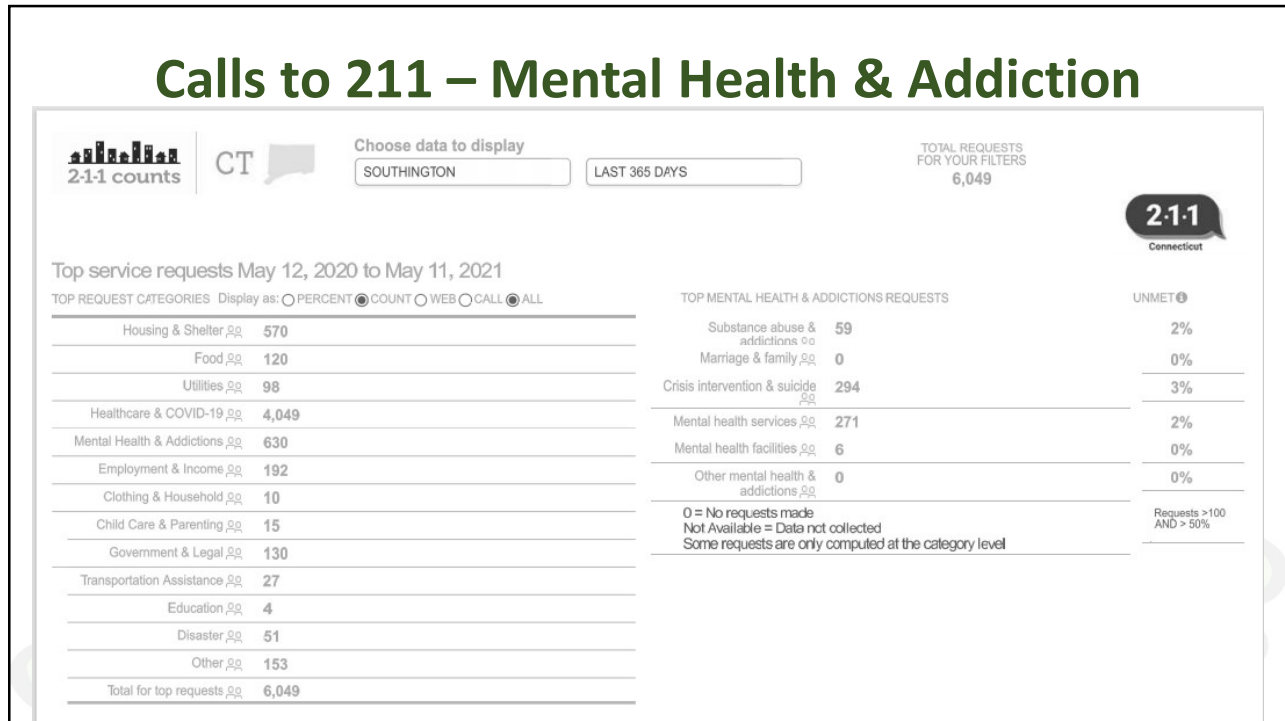
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## And Since March 2020...

- COVID-19 Illness
- Mental Health
  - Stress
  - Anxiety
- Childhood Trauma
- Remote Learning
- Lack of Socialization Opportunities



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## Mental Health Insights - SPD

**Mental Health Distress Related Calls for Service (calendar year):**

- 2019: 300 calls for service 25 calls per month.
- 2020: 264 calls for service 22 calls per month
- 2021: 110 calls for service year to date, 22 calls per month year to date

These numbers are specific to mental health distress type calls, they do not include Domestic or Family Violence situations.

**Death by Overdose (calendar year):**

- 2019: 10
- 2020: 12
- 2021: 04 year to date (5/24/2021)

Note: These are updated from what was shared during the live presentation

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## Domestic Violence Served by Prudence Crandall Center

<u>Time period</u>	<u>Adults and children served</u>	<u>Units of service</u>
4/1/2019 – 3/31/2020	174 from Southington	539
4/1/2020 – 3/31/2021 <b>(COVID period)</b>	203 from Southington <b>(+29 individuals )</b>	643 <b>(+104 units)</b>

Service delivered to these clients include court advocacy, shelter, counselling, safety planning and info/referrals



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## Other Health Insights?

5/16/2017

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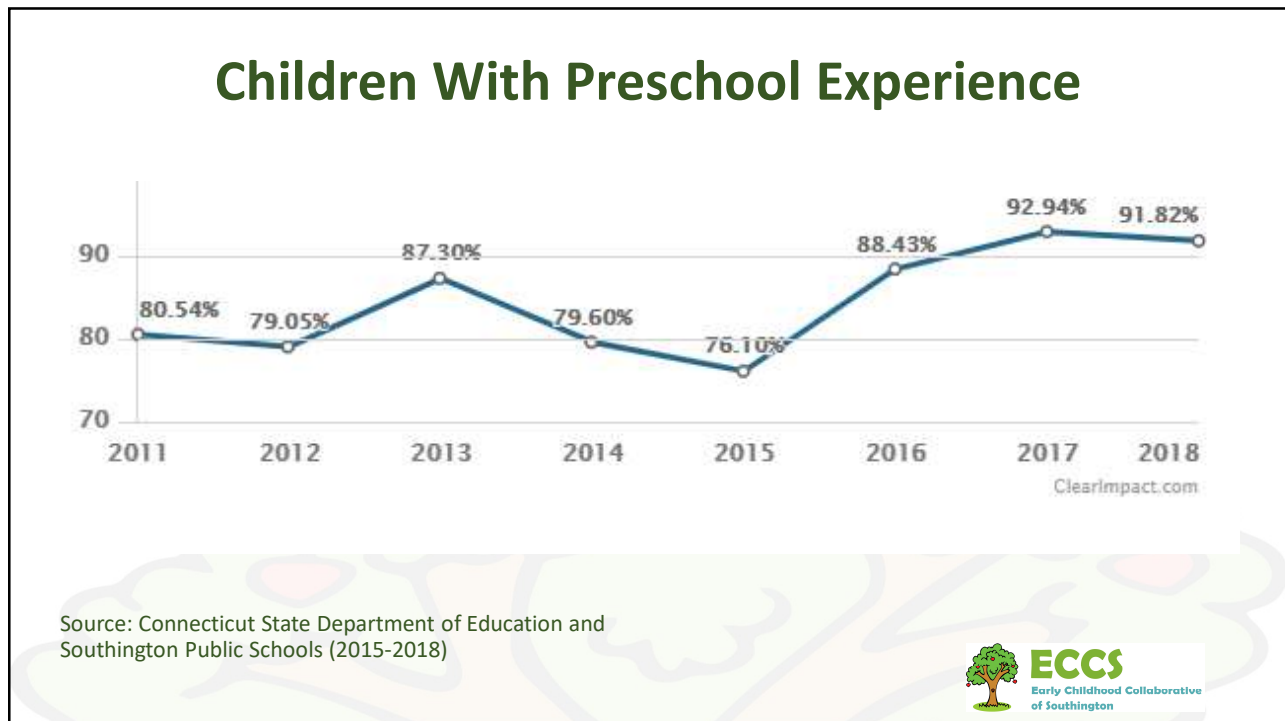


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## Pandemic Impacts on K Registration

- For 2019-2020 year, 453 K students
- For 2020-2021 year, 428 K students
  - Down by only 25
  - There were 13 few babies born in 2016 (372) vs. 2015 (385)

For 2021-2022 registration 48 had no preschool experience.



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## Trends Identified Around Childcare: A Crisis

- Space Availability
- Staffing and Regulations
- Caregivers work long hours, low wages
- Costs driven by adult-child ratios



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## What Does Childcare Cost?

- Nursery Schools
    - Age 3-5: \$146-310 per month, PT, 2-3 days/week
  - Centers
    - Infants/Toddlers: \$200-\$265 per week FT
    - Preschool: \$150 -\$245 per week FT
- FT Childcare costs = In-State UConn tuition



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## Care4Kids

- A state childcare subsidy for low-moderate income families if working or, temporarily, in training.
  - Now: less than 50% of the State Median Income (SMI), family of 4 = \$60,300
  - Plan under American Rescue Plan Act to increase that SMI %
- Care4Kids family fees will be waived from 4/1/21 to 9/30/21 under Coronavirus relief package
- Only 100 Southington Children enrolled (as of 2/21)
- Encourage people to apply.

Source: <http://www.ctcare4kids.com/>



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## Licensed Childcare Centers

	# Centers	Total capacity	Under 3
May 2019	11 (9 for under 3)	934	380
May 2021	11 (9 for under 3)	1006	438

School age: Licensed YMCA before/after sites and 5 licensed youth camps.

List of all Southington childcare providers and other resources at <http://www.southingtonearlychildhood.org/resources>



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## Family Childcare Providers – May 2021

	Age	#	Cap
Infant	0-23 months	24	48
Preschool	2-5 years	24	144
School Age	5-12 years	24	72

Women-owned small businesses owned run out of their homes. Licensed, registered and inspected. Must meet training requirements. Limited to 2 infants and up to 6 pre-school age, plus school age.



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## Nursery Schools

- Village Green Nursery School
- Zion Lutheran Nursery School
- YMCA Nursery School
- Southington Catholic
- Southington Public School Integrated Preschool
  - Special Education students (CT requirement)
  - Community peers



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## Other Pre-School Experiences - Free

- Family Resource Center of Southington
  - Classes for children age 1 to 5 with an adult
  - Six-week sessions, year round
  - Currently mix of online and smaller classes
- Southington Library
  - Variety of children's programs – currently online
  - Children's Department needs more space –  
Upcoming Referendum



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## Covid Pandemic Impacts on Childcare

- Health Concerns – Staff and Families
- Restrictions on Class Size
- Cohort Limitations
- Cleaning Requirements
- Increased Financial pressure



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## Provider Survey - Staffing

Seven of 10 providers are hiring.

- “We advertised online and in the newspaper for staffing. As with many business looking for employees, there are hardly any responses.”
- “We have both full time and part time positions open in our toddler and preschool areas. We have been looking for staff for about two months.”
- “..we've pretty much been dealing with finding good staff to fill these roles for about a year. “
- “We always have a need for substitutes.. very difficult to fill those part time spots.”



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## Provider Survey – Concerns

Concerns seen in children and families:

- Behavioral Issues (8 of 15)
- Family financial issues - unemployment, etc. (5 of 15)

Concerns of business/staff:

- Stress levels (9 of 15)
- Impact of the past year on children (8 of 15)
- Vaccine hesitancy (8 of 15)
- Impact of minimum wage increases (6 of 10)
- Financial viability (6 of 15)



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## Provider Stories



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## State and Federal Perspective

Merrill Gay

Executive Director

CT Early Childhood Alliance



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## Strategic Plan Output

### Strategic Goals:

1. Kindergarten Readiness  
(new emphasis on English learners, families with lower socioeconomic status, and Families of Color)
2. Health and Safety  
(new emphasis on mental health)
3. Access to Quality Childcare
4. Organizational Sustainability

### Accomplished via:

1. Outreach
2. Education
3. Advocacy



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## Outreach

- Events: Farmer's Market, Health Family Funfest 2020, PRIDE Festival
- Community Organizations: Chamber, Activate, Behavioral Health Stakeholders, IFA
- Books and math kits for incoming K students
- Books for Southington Community Services
- Social Media, email and calls to answer questions about childcare, providers, etc.



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## Encouraged Pre-K and K registration



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## Education

- Calls for Providers and Virtual Office Hours
- RULER Emotional Intelligence webinars
- Supporting Mental Health Upon Return to School During Covid-19 webinar
- Kindergarten Info Sessions
- Expanded ECCS website: Covid, Anti-racism, Grief...
- Social Media: Car Seat Usage, Fire Prevention, Stress, Supports, other health and safety



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## CT Helmet Law

Children under the age of 16 must wear head protection when:

- Bicycling
  - Skateboarding
  - Rollerblading
  - Inline Skating
  - Scootering
- } **New Law**

[www.southingtonearlychildhood.org/health-development/bicycle-safety/](http://www.southingtonearlychildhood.org/health-development/bicycle-safety/)

Children under 16 years old must wear a helmet when riding a scooter.



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## Advocacy

- Advocacy at Federal, State and Local level
- No Small Matter Movie and discussion  
[www.southingtonearlychildhood.org/no-small-matter/](http://www.southingtonearlychildhood.org/no-small-matter/)
- Member of
  - Southington Chamber of Commerce
  - CT Early Childhood Alliance
  - CT Children's Collective
  - Tunxis Early Childhood Professional Educators' Consortium



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## New Initiatives

- Parent Ambassadors
- Parent survey and focus groups
- SPARKLER App Rollout
- Additional outreach via print and social ads



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## Need Resources? Have a Question?

- Childcare and before/after school options
- Camps and summer programs
- Enrichment activities – dance, sports, music
- Healthcare providers and mental health support
- Kid's events and activities
- Parks, playgrounds and outdoor spaces
- Health and development issues

[www.southingtonearlychildhood.org](http://www.southingtonearlychildhood.org)



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## Community Conversation

- What are your thoughts?
- What other needs are there in the community?
- What else can the ECCS do?

All comments are welcome.

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## Support the ECCS

- Tell a Young Family
- Make a Donation
- Volunteer
- Join Board
- Follow, Like, Share Us on Social Media
- Attend Workshops, Events or Fundraisers -  
[www.southingtonearlychildhood.org/events/](http://www.southingtonearlychildhood.org/events/)



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## Questions?

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