



ECCS

Early Childhood Collaborative of Southington

Presents

"The State of Early Childhood in Southington" May 29, 2025

Joanne Kelleher, Executive Director
www.southingtonearlychildhood.org

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Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Data from ECCS and Community Partners
- Transition to Local Governance Partner
- How You Can Support
- Strategic Planning
- Community Conversation

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



Source: Town Clerk's Office



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Change to Kindergarten Start Age

- Children must be age 5 by September 1 to start Kindergarten (previously by January 1).
- Cut off age to start PreK not changed by OEC but programs could change their own cut-off.
- Estimated 120 Southington students impacted.
- Parents can request a screening to receive waiver.
 - For 25-26: Screened = 59 (Waiver = 50, No Waiver = 9)
 - Pre-registered for Kindergarten for 25-26 = 395



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Babies Born vs. SPS District Enrollment (24-25)



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Legislative Proposal – [HB7009](#)

- July 1, 2026 - Makes the kindergarten waiver process optional for school districts if the school board adopts an early admissions policy.
- July 1, 2027 - eliminates the optional waiver process, so children must be age 5 by September 1.



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Work of
Community
Partners

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Early Childhood Consultative Partnership

- Free, State-funded program that helps to improve the social-emotional skills of children from birth to age five.
- Supports children with challenging behaviors, creating new routines or improving transitions.
- Center-wide services, classroom services, or individual child services.

Ruth Clark, LMSW, Wheeler Clinic
www.eccpct.com



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Southington Public Library - Children's Department

June 2024 - April 2025	# of Programs	Attendance
Ages 0-2	138	12,716
Ages 3-5	228	36,392
Ages 6-12	224	24,058
Total	590	73,166

- 2024 Summer Reading 0-5th Grade: 1019 children
- 1000 Books before Kindergarten - 158
- Books for Babies - 8



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Outreach of SPL - Children's Department

Preschool Outreach:

- Staff visits YMCA, Margaret Griffin, Village Green, and Town & Country
- Programs located downtown have visited the library
- Seeing about 400 kids each month

Elementary School outreach:

- Staff visits every public elementary school and St. Luke's to talk about the Summer Reading program at the library.
- **Derynoski** (K- 5th) is visiting in May in conjunction with their One Book One School program.
- **Thalberg's** 2nd graders visited this year.



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Family Resource Center of Southington

- Free classes for children ages 1 to 5+ with an adult
- Six sessions a year, about 120 children per week



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Family Resource Center of Southington

- Sessions fill to capacity within minutes with average waitlist of 28 per session.
- Partnering with SHS Family Consumer Science Department to provide experiences for high school students taking Early Childhood Education classes.



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Summer Lunch Program



So no one goes hungry.

SOUTHINGTON BREAD FOR LIFE
 with support from Southington Public Schools and the
 South Central Health District presents




2025


SUMMER LUNCH PROGRAM
MONDAYS, WEDNESDAYS & FRIDAYS
 lunches and programming available at
DePaolo Middle School from 11:30-12:30
 Grab your lunch and stay for some exciting
 programming from our local volunteers!
 (Grab & Go also available)

TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS
 grab & go lunches available for pick-up at
 Bread for Life from 11:30-12:30


JUNE 23-AUG 15

Please note: Lunches are available for individual children in Southington
 Group pick-ups (camps, churches, etc.) are not allowed.



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Changes to Childcare Availability

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Licensed Childcare Centers			
	# Centers	Total capacity	Under 3
May 2022	11 (9 for under 3)	1006	438
2024	Cub Academy My Little Rascals The Learning Experience		
Fall 2024			Toddler ratio changed
May 2025	13 (11 for under 3)	1175	499

Year-round, full day programs.




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Family Childcare Providers		
Date	# licensed	I/T/PreK spaces
2016	30	180
May 2024	23	138
May 2025	20	120

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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PreK/Nursery Schools

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



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Summer and Before/After School

Summer: 6 licensed youth camps, plus part day programs.

Camp Korp	Camp Sloper
Camp Naciwonki	Fast Camp
Leadership Martial Arts	Club SciKidz

School age: Licensed YMCA before/after sites plus LMA, 1 center and some family childcare providers

List at <http://www.southingtonearlychildhood.org/resources>



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State Supports Current Legislative Proposals

- CT lawmakers are considering several bills to improve access to early childhood education.
 - Governor: Universal Preschool Endowment – funded with transfers of unappropriated surplus (including up to \$300 million of FY 25 surplus).
 - Grow Early Start CT
 - Fund Care4Kids expansion. As of February 2025, there were 127 Southington children enrolled.



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State Supports LISC Early Learning Facilities grant

2023 round (\$13M):

3 Southington centers applied, 0 received funding

[Early Childhood Facilities Landscape Analysis Report](#)
| [LISC Connecticut Statewide](#)

Next round (\$10M)



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Early Start CT and Local Governance Partner

www.ctoec.org/early-start-ct/

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Streamlining of State Funded Programs

State Funded Childcare:

School Readiness +
Child Development
Centers +
State funded Head Start

Early Start CT

Local Supports:

School Readiness
Councils +
Local Early Childhood
Collaboratives

Local Governance
Partners (LGP)



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Local Governance Partner

- **Fiduciary** – signs contract with LGP Intermediary and distributes funds - *Community Foundation of Greater New Britain with support from ECCS Board of Directors*
- **Liaison** – coordinates and assists the efforts of the LGP to deliver services and activities, supervise the Parent Ambassador(s), and visit Early Start CT programs to support and enhance quality and compliance – *Joanne and other staff*
- **Parent Ambassador** – spreads the word about the programs and services provided within each community and engages parents and caregivers in designing and implementing the LGP work – *Betsy and Jessica*



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Local Governance Partner

- **Community Table** – a body made up of community stakeholders who are committed to working towards a vision that all young children in Connecticut are safe, healthy, learning, and thriving. The LGP Community Table is responsible for engaging parents, offering training and technical assistance opportunities to local early childhood providers, and conducting a data driven needs assessment and community plan, with the guidance of the LGP Intermediary and OEC.

-Members TBD



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LGP's will Engage Families:

- Leverage and pay a stipend for a Parent Ambassador who will act as a trusted partner to Liaisons and co-designer of strategies to bring family voice into all aspects of the LGP
- Develop family-centered programming and help families navigate the early childhood systems and build functional ECE networks
- Create intentional space for families at Community Table meetings by scheduling with parent availability in mind and creating agendas that prioritize family engagement



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LGP's will Engage Providers:

- Visit Early Start CT programs twice a year to support quality and assure compliance using a standardized template designed by OEC with input from the field
- Connect providers to existing OEC resources, including quality improvement and professional development
- Fund professional development opportunities not currently offered by OEC, to meet the unique needs of providers and the community



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LGP's will Engage the Broader Community

- Convene stakeholders at least six times over the year through Community Table meetings or other activities to share updates, discuss challenges, form partnerships to take collaborative action on identified need, and celebrate wins
- Complete OEC's Local Needs Assessment with support from OEC and national consultants, including:
 - Pulling data for your specific town from sources shared by OEC
 - Responding to narrative questions with input from families, providers, and others
- Create a community plan, including:
 - Identifying gaps and trends related to young children and families based on the needs assessment
 - Implementing collaborative action steps and solutions to address the gaps identified



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Early Start CT Timeline

- Spring 2025: RFA for State-funded childcare slots, LGP planning, agree ECCS will serve as LGP
- 7/2025: Early Start CT begins for State-funded childcare slots
- Summer 2025: OEC contracts with Shine Early Learning as LGP Intermediary
- 7/2025–12/2025: LGP Transition – staffing and establish Community Table
- Fall 2025: Shine contracts with LGP Fiduciaries
- 2026: LGP conducts Community Needs Assessment
- Spring 2027: Competitive state-wide RFP process for State-funded Early Start childcare slots



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Support the ECCS

- Volunteer for Community Table or Board
- Help with Community Needs Assessment
- Tell a young family or make referral
- Make a Donation
- Follow, Like, Share Us on Social Media
- Attend Workshops, Events or Fundraisers - www.southingtonearlychildhood.org/events/



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Strategic Planning

Carol O'Donnell
Principal
Duncannon Group

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Strategic Planning Questions

1. If you could add any programs or resources in Southington to support young children and their families, what would it be?
2. Finding ways to engage families of young children is challenging but so important. What tool, approach or program do you recommend?
3. Of what are you most proud in how Southington supports young children and their families?
4. What else can the Early Childhood Collaborative of Southington do as part of the community's efforts to support young children and their families?

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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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Questions?

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