

United Way of Western Connecticut
Stamford Cradle to Career/Stamford Early Childhood Collaborative

Mission Statement & Program Description

The Stamford Cradle to Career initiative is a community partnership of over 60 organizations which is committed to ensuring that all youth succeed in education, career and life. United Way of Western Connecticut (UWWC) is the backbone agency support for the initiative. In 2016, United Way received funding from the City of Stamford to support the Stamford Early Childhood Collaborative, a longstanding community group. The Stamford Early Childhood Collaborative is now integrated into the Stamford Cradle to Career partnership. The early childhood education goal remains to prepare all children birth through five for a lifetime of learning by engaging families, fostering community, and advocating for resources and results.

The Stamford Cradle to Career organizational structure includes specific sets of indicators and outcomes, each aligned with a transition point of a child's development from cradle to career. Approximately 40 community partners are represented on Community Action Networks (CANs) to address issues related to the given transition point. In 2017-18, under the umbrella of the Cradle to Career initiative, the Stamford Early Childhood Collaborative will:

1. Keep Stamford preschools connected to the Stamford Public Schools
2. Support the implementation of Stamford Cradle to Career's Community Action Networks strategies for Infant Health and Kindergarten Readiness

We are seeking continued funding from the City of Stamford to support the cost of the Director of Stamford Early Childhood Collaborative position, and to help support the annual Stamford Early Childhood Fair, which is administered through the Collaborative.

The Director of Stamford Early Childhood Collaborative, an employee of United Way, oversees the activities and work of the group which annually includes the following:

- **Coordination & Facilitation of Community Action Networks (CANs):** Comprised of representatives from organizations that are participating in the effort to move the identified issues forward, Infant Health and Kindergarten Readiness CANs will review outcome areas related to indicator measures and the continuous improvement process, will consider needs for change and replication of best practice, and make recommendations for funding.
- **Stamford Early Childhood Fair:** Held annually each November, the fair is a free event that offers Stamford children ages birth to eight and their families the opportunity to talk with representatives from area preschools, daycares, and Stamford Public Schools to receive important information on kindergarten registration. The event provides age-appropriate entertainment, games, and hands-on learning activities for children while offering parents an opportunity to learn about community-based organizations and the health, education, and social-service resources available to them in the city. For the past several years, daycare and preschool programs report an increase in enrollment after the event.
- **Kindergarten Information Night:** In partnership with Stamford Public Schools and the Ferguson Library, the Collaborative hosts an annual Kindergarten Information Night in

March for Stamford parents to learn about the registration process, the magnet school program, and the Summer Start program.

- **Play and Learn Nights:** Each May, the Collaborative hosts two activity nights for children transitioning to Kindergarten in the fall. The program offers children a chance to explore literacy and math readiness skills in a “play and learn” format and leave with activities to do at home over the summer.
- **Web Site:** The Stamford Early Childhood Collaborative web site is a central resource for parents for early childhood program information and connections to all partner agencies. The resource component of the site will be expanded in the coming year to include a list and description of all preschools and family home day cares in Stamford.

Stamford Cradle to Career is a collective impact model that includes funding from multiple sources, with United Way serving as a key funder. The City’s financial support of Stamford Cradle to Career and the position of the Early Childhood Collaborative director would demonstrate a commitment by the City to support the collective community effort to ensure equity and excellence in education, for every child, from cradle to career.

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Budget Narrative

Total Request: \$12,500

We are seeking funding for infrastructure support for Stamford's Early Childhood Collaborative for fiscal year 2017-2018. This support includes:

\$10,000 Salary support for Stamford Early Childhood Collaborative Director

\$2,500 Support Annual Early Childhood Fair. This fair is a resource fair aimed at parents of children birth to age eight who are seeking childcare and early childhood development resources in Stamford. The past three years this fair has attracted 500 people and resulted in increased enrollment at preschools across the City. Funding supports entertainment (including a storyteller, a live musical performer and books for each child), table and chair rental, and promotional materials.