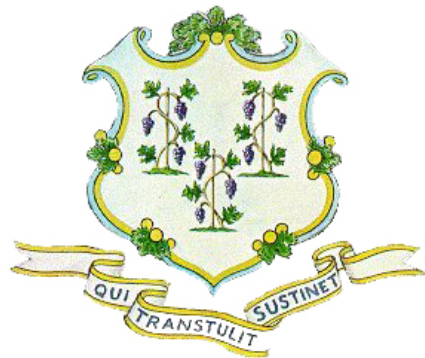




Landmark policy, proven practice, and return on investment

Connecticut Commission on Children 2008–2009 Annual Report





State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Commission on Children



Dear Colleagues and Families of Connecticut:

The Commission on Children is recognized for our commitment, public leadership and outreach to children and families. The Commission consistently researches models and policies that provide positive outcomes for children's health, safety and learning.

Through partnering with the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government and with business, foundations, media and families, we develop landmark policies, bring grant dollars and other assets to the state, and reach out to inform the public on key issues that affect our children and their families.

Embedded in all our work is a focus on prevention. Reaching children early on—whether through immunization, preschool, early reading, or any of the other proven practices—makes them more likely to succeed as adults. It also saves taxpayers from many of the social expenses they might otherwise incur later on.

Our work, of course, continues. Please check our website, at www.cga.ct.gov/coc, for daily information regarding children and youth in Connecticut. If you would like any of our products or any information regarding children's policy, call us at (860) 240-0290.

Sincerely,

M. Alex Geertsma, M.D., F.A.A.P,
Chairman
Connecticut Commission on Children



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Commission on Children

“There is no other resource like the Commission on Children. Their ability to conduct rapid and thorough research keeps Connecticut informed about the circumstances of children and families as well as cutting edge solutions to problems families face.” - Jennifer Carroll, parent

Connecticut Commission on Children 2008-2009 Annual Report

Introduction: The country’s most severe recession in a generation has cost the nation more than five million jobs since it began in late 2007. Connecticut has entered an economic recession that will affect children and families for decades to come. Three things have become painfully clear:

- Virtually all the progress made in children’s economic well-being since 1975 is likely to be wiped out by the downturn.
- The impact is especially severe for low-income children of color.
- Children who fall into poverty now will feel the impact well past the economic recovery.

The Commission on Children searched for the best national economists on the impact of the recession on children. First Focus, a nonpartisan research group based in Washington, D.C., has developed estimates of the economic costs relating to two aspects of recession-induced child poverty in Connecticut: lost earnings and poorer health outcomes. Specifically:

- An additional 35,000 Connecticut children will fall into poverty during this recession.
- As adults, these children will earn an average of \$19,000 less per year than their Connecticut peers who avoided poverty.
- By age 37, they’ll be 20 percent less likely than their peers to report being in very good health.

- The economic cost to Connecticut from projected earnings loss and poorer health status of these children will run to \$800 million per year.

The Commission worked with state legislators to develop a Task Force on Children and the Recession. In June, 2009 the Speaker announced the formation of such a task force to buffer the number and impact of 35,000 children falling into poverty. Representatives Jarmoc and Urban provide leadership as Co-Chairs of the Children in the Recession Task Force. The Commission provides strategic planning and model policy design.

The Commission’s overarching work is now focused on promoting the health, safety and learning of Connecticut’s children through 1) research, 2) education and outreach, 3) key partnerships, 4) civic engagement and 5) revenue generation.

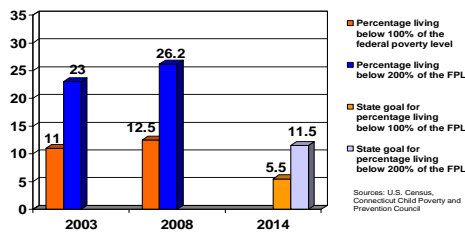
“Whatever the issue may be, the Commission seeks out the authoritative information, identifies the knowledgeable leaders in the field and defines the best practices. In doing so, the Commission informs the legislative process and the general public on those policies that have proven effective in advancing the health and well being of children. If we didn’t have the Commission, we would have to invent it.”

**Peter Libassi, Former General Counsel,
Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare
Washington, DC**

RESULT: No Child Lives In Poverty

Indicator 1: Child Poverty

Connecticut Children in Poverty



The story behind the baseline:

The poverty rate for children living below 100% of the federal poverty level has remained constant for the last five years. The poverty level for those families with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level, generally considered the working poor, is growing. Both cohorts will predictably increase under the current recession.

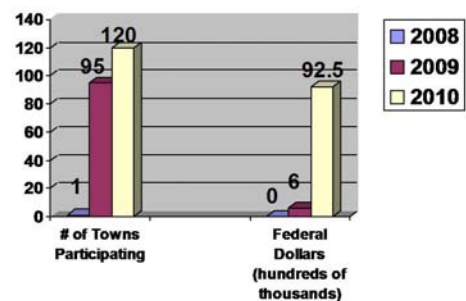
Poverty contributes to poor social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes for children and hinders cognitive development. Although Connecticut's overall poverty rate is lower than most states, the income disparities impacting urban and minority families are among the largest in the nation. The Connecticut labor force is projected to lose over \$1 billion in future productivity for every year that the current number of Connecticut children live in poverty.

What the Commission on Children did:

- Worked with legislators to create a state goal of poverty reduction by 50% in ten years. This law, P.A. 04-238, was the first in the nation and has been replicated in other states.
- Drafted policy for legislators to create the Child Poverty and Prevention Council (CPPC) intended to bring state branches together to bolster prevention and reduce poverty P.A. 04-238.
- Analyzed costs and effects in the state's ten-year poverty reduction plan issued by CPPC.
- Raised the funds and brought in national experts across political party and values, to advise the Child Poverty and Prevention Council on proven strategies to reduce child poverty by 50% in ten years. Mediated this work and wrote up the shared consensus findings.
- Linked RBA to the Child Poverty and Prevention Council and helped facilitate the RBA process.
- Worked with Legislators and NCSL to identify an additional \$133 million in potential funding through the TANF Emergency Fund.

- Worked with legislators to pass Public Act 08-161 which mandates using the SNAP E&T reimbursement dollars to address family poverty reduction and to align strategies with Connecticut's state goal of reducing child poverty by 50% within 10 years.
- In 2008, Connecticut submitted for \$606,348 in SNAP E&T reimbursement from the federal government.
- The Commission assisted in the development of thirteen new SNAP E&T community collaboratives comprised of 95 towns which will generate an estimated \$9.25 million back to the state on an annual basis.

Maximizing SNAP E&T Federal Reimbursement

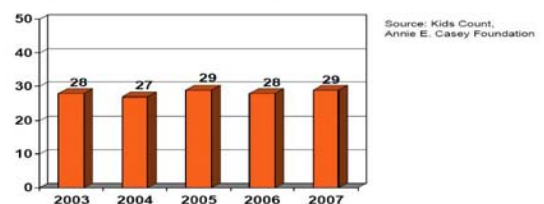


Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Maximize the federal stimulus package immediately to buffer against increased family poverty utilizing opportunities in housing, nutrition, jobs and education.
- Reorder state priorities to invest strictly and adequately in proven poverty reduction interventions as proposed by national experts and CPPC.
- Analyze family impact – in addition to state fiscal impact - of proposed policies being considered by the General Assembly.
- Link state contracts to poverty reduction outcomes.
- Develop SNAP E&T collaboratives in towns not yet participating.

Indicator 2: Employment

Percent of Connecticut children in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment



The story behind the baseline:

A significant barrier to economic security is a lack of job skills, training and education needed to obtain a good job at a fair wage. Low-income families also face other barriers such as transportation, health care and child care – all of which are required in order to succeed in the workplace. The prevalence of Connecticut families with children who do not work full-time, year round has remained constant for five years. The recession will soon increase these numbers.

Many working families continue to struggle to make ends meet and some rely on work supports such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly Food Stamps. The SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) program is designed to help SNAP recipients obtain the skills they need to succeed in the labor market. SNAP E&T's 50/50 matching funds component enables states to be reimbursed for 50% of non-federal expenditures on employment and training and related support services to SNAP recipients – without a state cap on the funds received.

What the Commission on Children did:

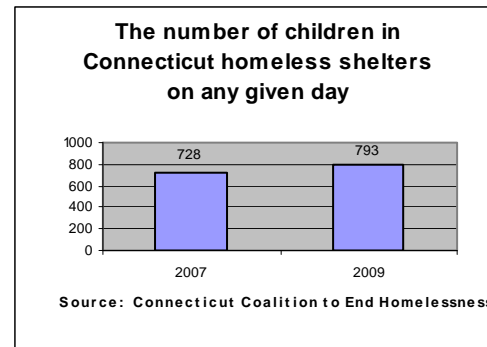
- Uncovered the SNAP E&T 50/50 federal funds maximization opportunity. Opened the door for Connecticut to receive millions of dollars annually in federal poverty reduction funds focused on employability and wages.
- Worked with legislators to mandate the use of SNAP E&T 50/50 federal reimbursement funds to achieve state poverty reduction goals in P.A. 08-161. By giving preference and targeted funds to community collaboratives, the law provided incentives for community leaders to work together, across sectors, to reduce poverty.
- Worked with collaborating partners throughout the state to publicize the SNAP E&T opportunity.
- Held state and regional events to publicize the DSS RFQ for SNAP E&T.
- Established the Fatherhood Initiative in 1999 with legislators to promote the full and active emotional and financial involvement of fathers in the lives of their children.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Collaborate with state legislators, CPPC and the Children in the Recession Task Force to maximize federal funds for employment.
- Continue to work with local communities and DSS to maximize funds and ensure that they are used for proven poverty reduction strategies.

- Bring together all regions to share strategies in employability as well as methods of increasing family food stamp utilization to address nutrition and bring in more federal dollars.

Indicator 3: Homelessness



The story behind the baseline:

Annually, one out of every 365 Connecticut children receives services at a homeless emergency shelter. From 2007 to 2009, the number of homeless children in our state increased by 9% (from 728 to 793). Homeless children have higher rates of acute health problems, learning disabilities, and socio-emotional problems, coupled with lower rates of participation in early childhood programs, than their peers. Nationally 20% of school-age homeless children do not attend school; among those that do attend, 41% change schools throughout the year. Each school change sets a student back 4-6 months academically.

What the Commission on Children did:

- Led visits to shelters and held community forums with legislators, DSS and SDE's McKinney-Vento experts to assess service needs for young homeless children.
- Promoted comprehensive services for young homeless children and raised \$50,000 in private funds that were then matched with public funds to create pilot programs throughout the state.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Provide quality early care and education to homeless children.
- Provide job training, life skills training, job search assistance, and housing assistance for parents in homeless families.
- Streamline enrollment for services; e.g., Food Stamps, WIC and HUSKY.
- Increase affordable housing in the state and maintain programs providing housing/rental subsidies.
- Utilize TANF Emergency Funds to help pay for homeless services and to support families before a housing crisis to reduce foreclosures and evictions.

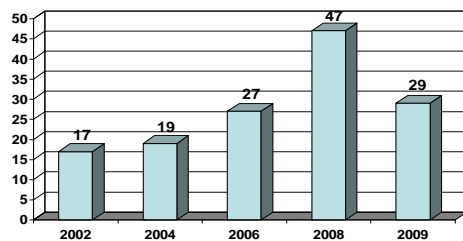
Barriers:

- Connecticut has not implemented certain proven poverty reduction strategies, or adopted a state earned income tax credit.
- The budget crisis eclipses the poverty issues with some maintaining there are not enough dollars now to act comprehensively.
- Fiscal crises lead to a silo response where each town argues for its discrete needs.
- There are certain interventions that are costly and are less likely to be adopted widely enough to benefit the working poor and middle class.

RESULT: Parents are Engaged and Informed about Children's Programs and Policies.

Indicator 1: Family Civic Engagement

Communities Offering Parent Leadership Training with Parent Trust Funds



The story behind the baseline:

Connecticut policy recognizes parents as the ultimate consumers of services and programs for children and need to be involved from the onset as partners in public initiatives. Intentional efforts to increase family civic engagement improve public policy and program operation while diversifying the network of involved parents.

The number of communities offering parent leadership training had more than doubled in the last six years. This trend is largely due to public demand and a public and private partnership supporting the Parent Trust Fund for civic engagement. Funds for the Parent Trust were allocated in the '09-'10 state budget but not released by DSS.

What the Commission on Children did:

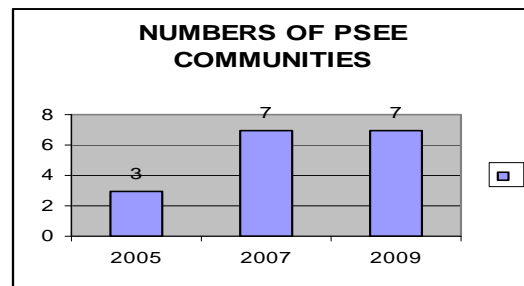
- Created the concept of a Parent Trust and brought in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to create the launch with \$250,000 dollars.
- Led on the development of the Parent Trust Act, a state-sponsored family civics initiative established in 2001 by the Connecticut General Assembly. This act leverages public and private funding to support parent leadership training.

- Established a management team to coordinate the statewide infrastructure for the Parent Trust Fund with state and philanthropic partners.
- Created special outreach and education to involve more fathers in leadership training.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Continue and expand the Parent Trust Act to embed family civics in Connecticut.
- Continue outreach to increase fathers' engagement in leadership roles for their children.
- Promote intergenerational family civics to bring in grandparents raising grandchildren.

Indicator 2: Parent Involvement in Schools



The story behind the baseline:

Research shows that children with parents involved in their learning develop better grades, test scores, long-term academic achievement, attitudes and behaviors. Children do best when families and schools share information and partner in creating quality learning environments.

Families, schools and communities have come together to triple the number offering Parents Support Educational Excellence (PSEE) training between 2005 and 2009.

“When families are involved at home, at school, and in the community, children do better and schools get better.”

Anne Henderson
Annenberg Institute for School Reform
Washington, DC

What the Commission on Children did:

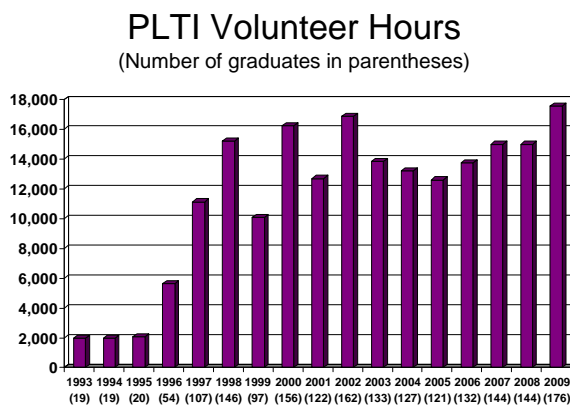
- Collaborated with the Connecticut Center for School Change to develop a curriculum on how parents can help schools be more effective through family-school partnerships.
- Leveraged private funds from the Lone Pine Foundation to field-test the curriculum.
- Obtained federal funds through the US Department of Education to support statewide implementation.
- Led on passage of a state law requiring school districts to report on parental involvement through Strategic School Profiles (P.A. 06-167).

- Analyzed parental involvement data required in P.A. 06-167.
- Linked parent partnership in schools with the state's Race to the Top application.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Continue to monitor parental involvement data in School Profiles.
- Expand the number of communities offering Parents Supporting Education Excellence (PSEE) training to increase parent-school partnerships.
- Bring the statewide parent leadership infrastructure to scale when the Race to the Top application is approved.

Indicator 3: Parents as Civic Leaders



The story behind the baseline:

Parents' opinions are often unheard. They sometimes lack advocacy skills or civic knowledge but not the motivation or commitment to make change in the best interest of children. Parents prepared to lead are better prepared to advocate for children, volunteer in their community, serve on non-profit boards, lead parent-teacher associations and serve on boards of education. Evaluation data shows that on average, a PLTI graduate volunteers 2 hours per week in their community. In the last decade, PLTI graduates are estimated to have generated over \$1.1 million in volunteer hours.

“The Liberty Bank Foundation supports PLTI because it reaps so many rewards. We are bankers looking to invest and get a good return. This has been a good investment.”

Sue Murphy
Liberty Bank Foundation
Executive Director

What the Commission on Children did:

- Researched what motivates parents and what supports they need to become engaged in children's programs and public policy.

- Established the nationally recognized Parent Leadership Training Institute in 1992, which provides parents the knowledge and skills to meaningfully lead for the next generation.
- Evaluated longitudinal outcomes to determine civic participation and ascertain what keeps parents engaged in community over years.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

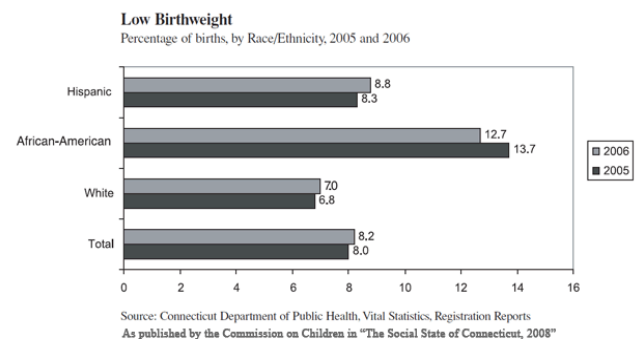
- Train state and local leaders on how to work with parents and bring them in as community assets.
- Bolster opportunities for parents to lead on policy and program, particularly within the current economic context.
- Expand public-private partnerships to increase and embed the family as a true partner in children's policy.
- Ensure the public and private funds are allocated and released through the Parent Trust so communities can offer parent leadership training.

Barriers:

- The Parent Trust was moved to the Department of Social Services instead of the Department of Education, where it was meant to be located.
- The Department of Social Services did not put out a request for proposal and lapsed the dollars, though the Legislature allocated the dollars.
- The Governor recommended that the Parent Trust be eliminated from the state budget.
- People do not understand the importance of family engagement and tend to minimize it, particularly when dollars are short. Parents are not seen as a serious constituency or real asset to the state.

RESULT: Children are Born Healthy and Remain Well and Safe.

Indicator 1: Low Birth Weight Babies



The story behind the baseline:

Low birth weight (LBW) infants are those born weighing less than 5 pounds 8 ounces. The national target for LBW babies is 5%; in 2006, 8.2% of Connecticut newborns were LBW, reflecting an increase of 24% between 1990 and 2006. Impacts of

LBW include infant death, cerebral palsy, vision impairments, cognitive deficiencies, developmental and learning disabilities, poor educational performance and behavioral problems.

What the Commission on Children did:

- Created and published the Harvard-acclaimed report, *First Words, First Steps*, identifying low birth weight as a priority area for the state.
- Created cross-agency effort to address LBW.
- Raised \$150,000 from Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, partly to address LBW in Hartford.
- Sought to finance low birth weight interventions utilizing the federal TANF Emergency Fund.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Reduce preventable hospitalizations for LBW that cost the state \$194 million in 2006 by implementing proven prevention programs including:
 - Link WIC and SNAP E& T and make sure all pregnant women who are eligible are receiving these benefits;
 - Promote smoking cessation for pregnant women; and
 - Provide groups for pregnant women to offer support and information on best health practices such as Centering Pregnancy.
- Continue and expand quality home visitation programs to ensure parents have the knowledge, skills and resources for competent parenting.
- Educate teens about their health and pregnancy prevention.

transportation, understanding of the importance of immunization and free vaccines are continuously addressed.

Immunization saves lives, lowers medical costs and prevents serious illness and disabilities. For every dollar invested in just one Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTP) vaccination, Connecticut saves \$6.21. Connecticut is in the top five states in the nation for on-time immunizations and has been for the past 12 years.

What the Commission on Children did:

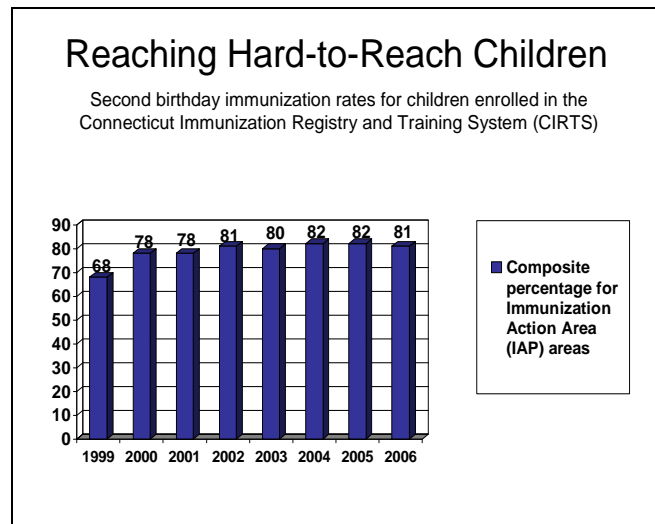
- Developed targeted outreach campaign aimed at hard to reach low income parents.
- Received a CDC award for outstanding outreach campaign, media, print materials, and public awareness efforts.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Continue COC/DPH/IAP partnership to achieve immunization goals.
- Continue public awareness campaign on the effective science of immunization.



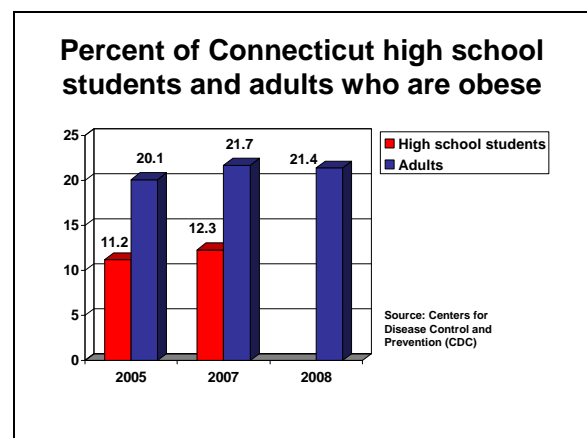
Indicator 2: Childhood Immunization



The story behind the baseline:

Immunization rates for the hard-to-reach children in Connecticut have improved and remain high (81%). The barriers to getting children immunized including

Indicator 3: Childhood Obesity



The story behind the baseline:

Obesity is the second-leading cause of preventable death in the United States, after smoking. Reports show an increasing number of children (12% of high school students) and adults (21%) in Connecticut are obese.

Unhealthy food choice, eating behaviors and reduced activity levels are major factors contributing to overweight and obesity. Only one in five Connecticut high school students eats the recommended five or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables and most do not meet the recommended physical activity level.

In one year, obesity-related health problems in Connecticut added \$856 million in adult medical expenditures, including \$665 million in Medicaid and Medicare costs.

What the Commission on Children did:

- Provided guidance on policy development to Sustinet obesity task force in 2009.
- Developed proposals for obesity prevention partnership with minor league sports team.
- Brought best practices to state attention through major conferences in 2005 and 2008.
- Designed and led a series of regional forums on obesity with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities with a grant from the National League of Cities.
- Worked with the American Heart Association to obtain state budget funding for child obesity prevention initiatives at the local level that highlighted initiatives at 2008 state forum.
- Wrote *Playbook for Prevention* and CBS Radio PSAs for mayors to encourage families to use local resources.
- Developed proposed statewide data tracking system for obesity and chronic diseases with state and local partners.
- Worked with Legislators to increase access to bicycle routes, walking trails and sidewalks to schools (P.A.- 09-154).

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Maintain state reimbursement for healthy food school programs.
- Establish statewide data tracking system for obesity and chronic diseases, based on Commission proposal.
- Launch statewide public awareness and education campaign.
- Partner with First Lady Obama's new child obesity reduction plan.

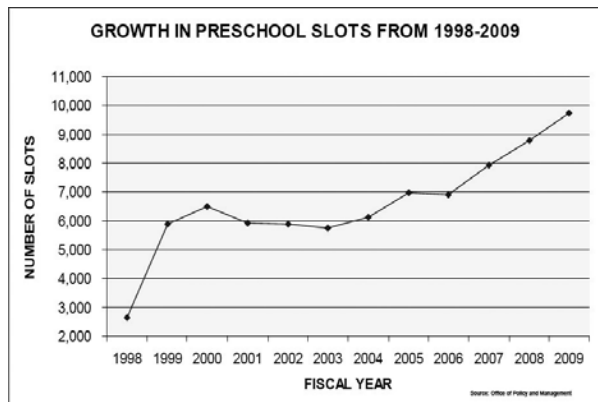
Barriers:

- A large and unresolved budget deficit impedes development of effective, new strategies.
- Declining budgets may result in slight declines in success and sustainability over time.
- Child obesity crosses into the realm of family decision making and policy recommendations will only succeed if they focus on proven public health strategies.

- Most people are unaware of low birth weight issues and outcomes. This will take a major public education push.

Result: Children and Youth are Ready for and Succeed in School.

Indicator 1: Preschool Enrollment



The story behind the baseline:

Critical neurological development occurs in early childhood. The brain develops to 90% of its capacity in the first five years. A child's ego, self esteem and learning patterns are developing and linked together before a child reaches kindergarten. Quality preschool is proven to assist in these important years with cognition, social and emotional skills, gross motor skills and language and numeracy development. Poor quality care or no early care is often the starter fuel for inequities in educational achievement.

This graph shows that the number of children utilizing quality preschool slots has gone up nearly four times since preschool was made available for three and four years olds in 1998. Between 1998 and 2009, we have gone from 2,700 children attending preschool. This increase shows a positive trend. This trend should continue to close the gap for those not yet in preschool due to lack of supply, limited access or family working hours.

What the Commission on Children did:

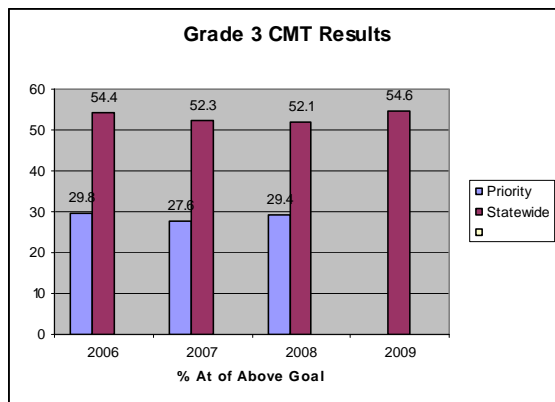
- Designed a system of preschool with standards, goals, evaluation, parent engagement, health care linkages and early language development in the priority school districts.
- Helped draft and win passage of Connecticut's comprehensive school readiness law in 1997 (P.A. 97-259).
- Provided ongoing research and develop policy on the School Readiness system in Connecticut.
- Conducted ongoing public awareness and education campaign and provided materials and booklets to the public.

- Designed a building expansion plan and financing mechanism with CHEFA as the intermediary to address the shortage of facilities in the urban sector.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Maintain investment in child care and school readiness programs to meet demand.
- Invest in child care workforce through scholarship and increased wages using the federal stimulus package.
- Align standards and financing for the early childhood education system across departments. This would increase supply, align reimbursements and promote a stronger system.
- Expand infant and toddler programs to address current shortage.

Indicator 2: Reading



NAEP Grade 4 Reading Proficiency Rates

	2002	2003	2005	2007
National Public	30*	30*	30*	32
CONNECTICUT				
All Students	43	43	38	41
White	52	54	47	52
Black	17	12	12	15
Hispanic	15	18	15	16
Not Eligible	51	53	48*	53
Eligible	21*	18	14	13

* Value is significantly different from the value for the same jurisdiction in 2007.

The story behind the baseline:

A child who is not reading by the end of first grade has a one in eight chance of ever becoming a proficient reader. The impact of low literacy is seen at many levels including school retention, special education, drop outs, unemployment and crime. Connecticut has one of the greatest achievement gaps in reading in the states.

The state CMT results reveal strong differences in performance between low and moderate income

children and middle class children. Similarly, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test above reveals White students significantly outperforming Black and Hispanic students. Since 95 % of all children can be taught to read, the achievement gap in reading calls for critical review.

A THIRD OF STUDENTS TAKING TEACHING TEST FAIL

	Test Takers	Total Passed	Pass Rate
Southern Connecticut State University	168	96	57%
Sacred Heart University	146	111	76%
Central Connecticut State University	132	77	58%
Eastern Connecticut State University	130	75	58%
University of Bridgeport	102	70	69%
University of New Haven	89	58	65%
Quinnipiac University	55	47	85%
St. Joseph College	54	31	57%
University of Hartford	44	28	64%
University of Connecticut	35	32	91%
Teach for America	30	28	93%
Western Connecticut State University	18	6	33%
Fairfield University	17	13	76%
Mitchell College	15	5	33%
TOTAL	1,035	677	65%

Teachers who know the current research and are trained in the science of reading can help every child read. Yet, not all teachers know how children learn to read. They have not been taught assessment and intervention. So when a child is not catching on, they do not know how to assist and succeed in a timely manner. Not all higher education institutions teach their pre-service teachers the science of teaching reading to young children. This is both a national and Connecticut challenge.

What the Commission on Children did:

- Wrote the draft policy for the education committee that requires teachers to have the “skills and knowledge to teach reading effectively.” This became statute.
- Brought in national experts on higher education and the teaching of reading. Sought and acquired the research on the different national tests for teacher qualifications and presented the findings to Higher Education leaders.
- Facilitated the development of the state’s Reading Panel to create a Reading Blueprint for the teaching of reading in grades, kindergarten through grades three (P.A. 99-227).
- Brought Haskins Laboratories to state policy and practice to utilize their research on the brain and proven methods for the teaching reading.
- Raised \$3 million from Congress through work with the federal reading panel and NICHD to test summer reading institutes and targeted reading academies with Haskins Labs and SDE.

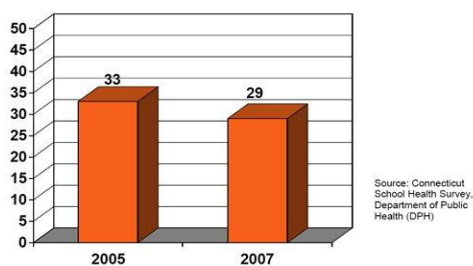
- Drafted a bill that required a pre-service test in the science of reading for college students in teacher degree programs. The test findings could help us see what reading courses needed to be added in various higher education institutions to bolster the skills set in reading. The bill was not passed but the State Board of Education voted to implement the strategy and the pre-service test is now in place.
- Raised dollars with the national Casey Foundation and the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund to pilot community literacy interventions in the early years with evaluation.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Provide external mentors for current teachers in kindergarten through grade three in the science of reading.
- Ascertain what skills are not adequately taught in higher education, utilizing the findings from the preservice test in reading and improve curriculum to meet reading goals.
- Inform parents, particularly low-income parents, how children learn to read and what they can do at home while partnering with the schools in grades kindergarten through grade three to improve reading scores.
- Bolster family literacy and parent child reading programs for families with infants and toddlers and two year olds.

Indicator 3: Bullying

Percent of Connecticut high school students bullied on school property in the previous year



The story behind the baseline:

When we fail to prevent bullying, the results impact learning, safety, and personal well-being. Targets of bullying often feel isolated, lonely, or depressed. Sometimes they attempt suicide. Schools can become violent, dangerous places where children feel unsafe and less able to concentrate and learn. As the chart above indicates, nearly one-third of high school students have been bullied.

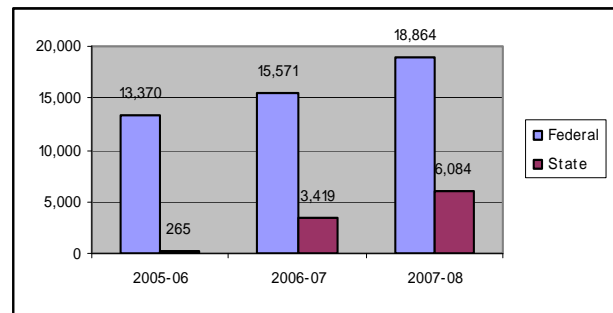
What the Commission on Children did:

- Brought international anti-bullying best practices and experts to assist Connecticut. Trained hundreds of school officials on anti-bullying approaches through regional forums and individual school meetings.
- Obtained significant philanthropic funding for anti-bullying initiatives under state Safe Learning Grant Act.
- Issued *Brave Enough to Be Kind* report and *Playbook for Prevention* section on “Safe Learning” to educate the public.
- Advised legislators on strategies to improve state law culminating in 2008 revision that required school districts to submit bullying data annually to SDE, along with their bullying policy in 2009, and for SDE to analyze and report on the policies and the needs of school districts (P.A. 02-119, P.A. 06-115, P.A. 08-160).

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Implement research based anti-bullying strategies. Train schools in bully reduction strategies.
- Hold school districts accountable for compliance with the anti-bullying law and help them understand what they must do.
- Establish decrease in bullying as a performance measure in school improvement plans.

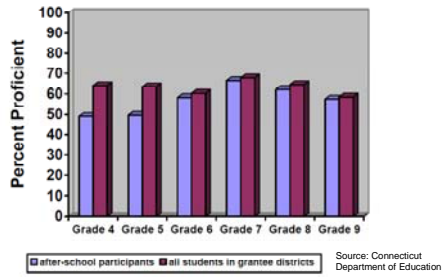
Indicator 4: After School



The story behind the baseline:

The chart shows an increase in the number of students enrolled in after school programs due to increased state and federal funding. In 2007-08, a total of 24,948 students were enrolled, out of which 18,864 (76%) students were enrolled in federally funded programs. Research indicates students involved with safe, enriching programs with competent, caring adults show increased school attendance and academic achievement.

Reading proficiency: Students in after-school programs compared to all students



What the Commission on Children did:

- Formed the after school alliance with public and private stakeholders to facilitate the statewide effort to build a strong after school system in Connecticut.
- Identified cost benefit for after school in the Commission’s report: *A Children’s Stock Portfolio: One Smart Investment*. For every \$1 invested, it saves taxpayers \$3; an additional \$1.7 million to \$2.3 million is saved by putting one high risk youth on the right path in cost avoidance for detention and long term incarceration.
- Helped garner C.S. Mott grant funds for after school system building (SDE administers the funds).
- Promoted public policy on after school including P.A. 03-246 establishing the state After School Advisory Committee.
- Played a leadership role in the allocation of new funding for after school in the state budget for FY 08 and 09. (Note: the Governor’s proposed biennial budget cuts funding from \$5.5 million to \$500,000 for FY 10 and 11.)

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Maintain investment in after school programs at the 2008-2009 levels.
- Maintain the After School Advisory Committee to continue quality improvement and maximization of private dollars.
- Provide ongoing professional staff development in proven reading instruction and classroom management.

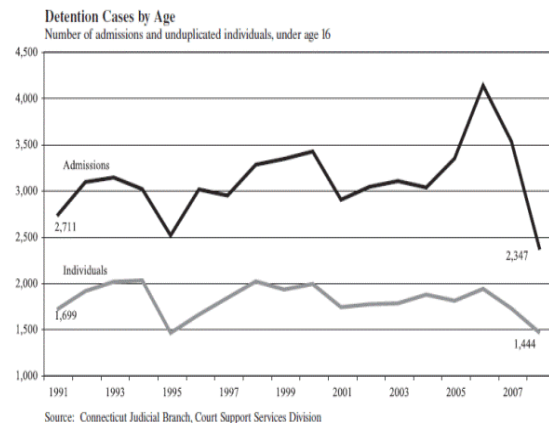
Barriers:

- Preschool and after school programs cost money. In a declining economy it is hard to bring to scale what is necessary to help children thrive.

- There is some defensiveness among higher education institutions being told what and how they should teach. This is starting to change and the pre-service tests shown here will help with this shift in performance.
- Bullying will often increase in times of family stress when children witness upsets and abuses of power at home.
- Bullying prevention and after school programs can be erroneously considered ‘soft’ services or extras in a difficult economy yet they provide a necessary safety net for learning.

RESULT: At-Risk Youth Will Succeed & Avoid Long-Term Involvement with the Juvenile Justice System

Indicator 1: Juvenile detention cases



The story behind the baseline:

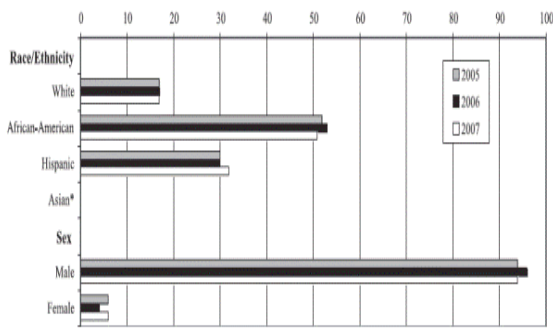
The current trend indicates that both the number of youths detained, as well as the total number of admissions to Connecticut’s three detention centers, showed dramatic decreases from 2006 to 2008. New policy direction aims to address the underlying causes for the behavior to prevent long term involvement in the system.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Fully implement our statute to keep 16 and 17 year olds out of the juvenile justice system.
- Strengthen local Youth Service Bureaus.
- Maintain investment in Juvenile Review Boards.

Indicator 2: Young people in correctional facilities by race/ethnicity and gender

Young people in correctional facilities by race/ethnicity and gender
Percent of total, under age 19, 2005-2007



Source: Connecticut Department of Correction *Less than 1 percent

The story behind the baseline:

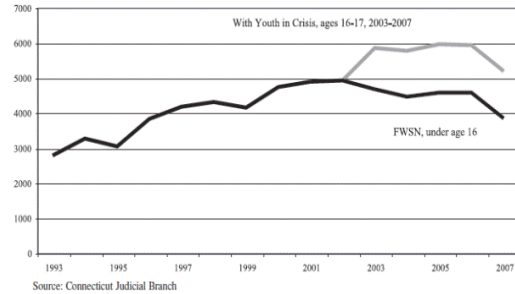
Children ages 14 and 15 who are charged with the most serious crimes as well as youths aged 16 and 17 charged with criminal offenses are treated as adults in the court system. The number of incarcerated youth has risen steadily from 673 in 2004, to 838 in 2007. For offenders under 16, the population is very small. A large majority of youth in prison (85%) were at least one grade level below their peers and had an average reading level of third grade.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Implement Raise the Age legislation to move 16 and 17 year olds into the Juvenile Justice System instead of the adult criminal system.
- Implement proven strategies for reading assessment & intervention and behavioral health issues

Indicator 3: Families with Service Needs

Status Offense Referrals
1993-2007, Families with Service Needs, under age 16
2003-2007, with Youth in Crisis, ages 16-17



Source: Connecticut Judicial Branch

The story behind the baseline:

As of October 1, 2007, status offenders could not be held in detention. A 2008 evaluation of the newly established four Family Support Centers examined outcomes: of the 44 clients completing the program, 81% have not been referred or adjudicated since they completed their program. Overall there has been a 30% decline in referrals to Court for further action.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Expand Family Support Centers from four to nine centers.
- Address systemic issues of poverty and the achievement gap among minority populations.
- Implement research-based truancy reduction programs in schools.
- Institute accountability measures for programs.
- Keep teens in high school and disallow their early departure.

Barriers:

- The budget deficit has made it difficult to fully implement targeted prevention strategies and recent changes in law.

CONNECTICUT COMMISSION ON CHILDREN PERFORMANCE REPORT CARD: 2009

Approach: 1: Research

The Commission on Children will perform pertinent research on current trends impacting children and families and shares the research findings with the Legislature and the public. Research will include from one to three such reports annually, including the social health index every two years, reviewing eleven social health indicators and one major topic of interest to the public. Said research will be utilized for data-driven decision making regarding necessary policy and program reforms for children, youth and their families.

Four Major Reports	<p>The Social State of Connecticut 2008</p> <p>Young People and the Law: A Brief Overview and Three-Year Comparison</p> <p>The Federal Stimulus Package: What's in it for Children and Families?</p> <p>Children and the Recession Task Force: First Quarterly Report</p>
Four Major Policies	<p>An Act Concerning: Responsible Fatherhood and Strong Families (PA 09-175)</p> <p>An Act Concerning Health Insurance Coverage for Autism Spectrum Disorders (PA 09-115)</p> <p>An Act Improving Bicycle and Pedestrian Access (PA-09-154)</p> <p>An Act Simplifying Procedures for Early Childhood Education Facilities (S.A. 09-10)</p>

Approach 2: Education and Outreach

The Commission on Children will inform the public of child development and public policy issues in the areas of a) child health and safety, b) learning, c) economic self-sufficiency and equal access, d) family strength and e) overall social health. The Commission on Children will i) reach all geographic regions of the state, ii) utilize print and electronic media, including new and innovative participatory technology, iii) present information to communities in forums, group discussions and public events, and iv) annually distribute, with a targeted media plan, pertinent informational booklets written by the agency on key child development issues such as school readiness, prevention and literacy.

82%	Immunization rate for hard-to-reach children
141,173	Public information requests fulfilled
100,000	Documents downloads through the COC website
40	State, regional and community forums held assessing and coordinating need
521	Information and strategy meetings with parents, providers, elected officials on information policy, civic engagement

Approach 3: Partnership Development

The Commission on Children will perform its functions with substantive links to and partnerships with educators, families, city and town officials, youth leaders, scholars, the elderly, the business sector, media, the religious community and health and public safety professionals. All such partnerships will be diverse, pragmatic, and focused on specific outcomes for children and the community. Performance will be measured by the policy, program, research and/or civic gains attained, as partnership is a strategy to promote good child outcomes.

95 communities	Organized to maximize federal SNAP E&T revenue
6 Community Public Hearings	Organized for Children in the Recession Task Force
4 Task Force Forums	Organized for Legislative Task Force on Fatherhood
90 State and National Partnerships	Organized to achieve specific policy or civic outcomes

Approach 4: Civic Engagement

The Commission on Children performs its functions within a civic framework ensuring that families understand, participate and lead on children’s issues in Connecticut. Outcome data will be reviewed annually from the two extensive family civics initiatives created by the Commission on Children to increase family civics and family leaders for children, the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) and Parent Supporting Educational Excellence (PSEE). The outcomes will include a) increased technical skills, b) increased civic involvement and confidence, c) increased community involvement and d) increased parental input at decision-making tables. Both initiatives has been evaluated by national researchers for their civic impact. The Commission also works statewide ensuring the voice of youth in community and state policy.

16 Communities	Offering the Parent Leadership Training Institute or Parents Supporting Educational Excellence training
47 Communities	Offered training and technical support to promote family civic engagement
1 national research report	Published “The Impact of Civic Leadership Training for Parents” based on research conducted by RMC Research Corporation
2 Youth-focused Public Hearings	Integrated Congressman Larson’s Youth Cabinet with the Children and The Recession Task Force Public Hearings

Approach 5: Revenue Generation

The Commission on Children will seek to find additional resources for children through comprehensive revenue generation efforts including identifying federal funds maximization opportunities. The Commission will seek opportunities to generate private funds as well. Revenue Generation, including federal funds maximization, will be measured by a) information shared on revenue generation opportunities, b) partnerships and strategies designed to create federal access and eligibility, and c) resources garnered for the state as a result of these efforts.

Revenue Generated and/or Identified by Source

\$9.25 Million	Federal SNAP E&T
\$133 Million	Federal TANF Emergency Funds
\$250,000	Private Foundation Match for the Parent Trust Fund
\$1 Million	Kellogg Foundation Grant for the City of Hartford. (Pending)

Population Results

Children are healthy and safe.
No child lives in poverty or suffers from discrimination.
Children and youth succeed in school.

Population Indicators

Low birth weight babies	Preschool Enrollment	Child Poverty Rate
Employment rate	Childhood Obesity Rate	Afterschool Programs
Homelessness	Youth Leadership	Reading Scores
Parental Involvement in Schools		Racial and Gender Inequities
	Family Civic Engagement	

Foundational Strategies

Model Policy Development	Leadership Development	Public Awareness
Legislative Action	Community Capacity-Building	Civic Engagement
Systems- Building	Research-based prevention	Return-on-Investment
	Federal Funds Maximization	

Key Partnerships

Business	Parents	State Agencies
Philanthropy	Community Civic Leaders	Congress
Community-Based Organizations	Faith-Based Organizations	Universities
School Leaders	The Judicial Branch	Youth

Organization Core Values

Innovation	Integration	Information	Impact
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Create innovative strategies to overcome barriers.
Focus on outcomes with impact.
Promote racial and economic equity.
Work across sectors.

Commission on Children Board and Staff, 2008-2009

Voting board members



M. Alex Geertsma, M.D., F.A.A.P.,
*Chair**



George A. Coleman
*Vice Chair**



Judith Busch
*Secretary**



Alison Hilding
*Treasurer**



Laura Lee Simon
*Chair Emerita**



James P. Cordier



Mary K. Fox



Josh Piteo



Mary Grace Reed



Leslie Wolfgang



John Yrchik



Representative
Andrew M.
Fleischmann



Senator Mary
Ann Handley



Senator Jonathan
Harris



Representative
Michael P.
Lawlor

*Executive
Committee

I am delighted to serve on the Commission on Children board as the representative from the Connecticut Department of Education. The long and distinguished leadership provided by the Commission to our legislature and executive policymakers has fostered valuable, permanent benefits to our children and families. To me, the Commission represents an effective way to galvanize the thinking and efficient use of limited resources to meet the needs of children and families.—*George A. Coleman, Interim Commissioner, State Department of Education*

Commission on Children Board and Staff, 2007-2008 (cont.)

Non-voting board members

Department of Children and Families

Commissioner: Susan I. Hamilton
Designee: Rudy Brooks

Department of Correction

Commissioner: Theresa Lantz
Designee: Mary Marcial

Department of Developmental Services

Commissioner: Peter O'Meara
Designee: Tammy Garris

Department of Education

Commissioner: Mark K. McQuillan
Designee: George Dawaliby

Department of Public Health

Commissioner: J. Robert Galvin, M.D.
Designee: Norma Gyle

Department of Social Services

Commissioner: Michael P. Starkowski
Designee: Sylvia Gafford-Alexander

Office of Policy & Management

Secretary: Robert L. Genuario
Designee: Anne Foley

Attorney General

Richard Blumenthal
Designee: Susan Pearlman

Chief Court Administrator

The Honorable Barbara M. Quinn

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Family Strength and Parent Leadership Director

Rachel Levy

Executive Secretary

Mary Kate Lowndes

Accounts and Grants Manager

Edie Luciano

Senior Legislative Secretary/PLTI



To learn more about the Commission on Children
or order our publications:

- visit our website at www.cga.ct.gov, or;
- call us at (860) 240-0290.

