

Education and Humans Services Board Notes
April 14th, 2026
Presented by the Ed and HS Team

Family First in Education (Family First)

Family First in Education utilizes a two-generational approach focused on parent engagement and structured after school programming. By understanding both parent and student needs, the program holistically impacts overall family wellness, academic growth in reading/math and social/emotional development.

Events & Collaborations

The Scouts of America and Family First collaborated to host their first Scout kickoff event on April 3rd. All students at our New Lebanon site were invited to participate and learn about scouting. Activities included a scavenger hunt and a hands-on experience where students built and launched their own rockets. This event marked the official launch of Family First's Troop 25. Following spring break, Scout meetings will continue every Friday for the remainder of the year.



Beyond Limits Academics, located in Stamford, offers a weeklong Summer Bridge Program for students entering 6th grade. The Middle School Summer Scholars Program is STEAM-based, focusing on science, technology, engineering, arts, and math. Beyond Limits has generously extended five scholarships to 5th-grade students in our program, and FF will cover registration fees to allow our students to take full advantage of this opportunity. The program takes place in August and focuses on building academic skills, leadership, and health and wellness practices. We are excited to partner with Beyond Limits Academics for the second consecutive year.

Parent Engagement

On March 26th, Family First facilitated its fifth parent workshop. The session focused on equipping parents with strategies to help their children regulate emotions, build confidence, and develop a strong sense of self. The presentation was designed in response to families who expressed concerns about their children's behavior at school and at home. Thirty-three families attended the workshop and were given the opportunity to share their experiences and engage in meaningful discussion.

The Early Childhood Education & Head Start Programs (ECE) – Sites as needed

The Early Care and Education (ECE) program, NAEYC-Accredited Plus (the National Association for the Education of Young Children), serves up to 210 children six weeks through five years old, five days a week, year-round. There are four sites with 18 classrooms. This high-quality program instructs children and assesses their development to improve child outcomes. ECE supports family involvement through committee involvement and workshops throughout the year.

Program update: March began with author studies as we celebrated Dr. Seuss and *Read Across America*. The second checkpoints of the year were completed, after which we held our second Parent-Teacher conferences of the year. Our Family Council had a virtual evening meeting where our Mental Health Consultant gave a parent workshop on *Screen Time in Young Children at Home*. Greenwich Health Department's dental hygienist, Amanda Feminelli, gave a lesson in dental care and gave dental screenings to children at Grauer and Gateway; ten referrals to dentists were made. Greenwich Health Department's nurse Lori Liss visited the preschool classrooms for *Passport to Good Health*, during which she calculated the children's Spring BMIs. The children in our program learned about *Wheels, Containers, Shoes, and Seats*. All regular activities continued including the implementation of *Second-Step Social-Emotional* curriculum in the preschool classrooms; site visits with our Mental Health Consultant; staff coaching; *Music with Mr. Nick*; and *Music and Movement*. We have available spaces for children in our preschool classrooms.

March Overall Enrollment: 182/207

Warburg Infant & Toddler Center

March Enrollment: 54/53; Attendance: 91%

Program Update: Eleven students received Birth-to-Three services, three students received at home services with New York's Early Intervention, and one student received private services.

Gateway Preschool:

March Enrollment: 55/56; Attendance: 87%

Meal Counts: Breakfast: 806; Lunch: 921; Snack: 790; Total Meals: 2,517

Program Update: Eight preschool children attended GPS in the mornings to receive IEP services, four students received their IEP services on site, and three toddlers received Birth-to-Three services.

Grauer Preschool:

March Enrollment: 43/55; Attendance: 91%

Meal Counts: Breakfast: 508; Lunch: 679; Snack: 575; Total Meals: 1,762

Program Update: The Polar Bears class read *Whose Vehicle is This?* The Koala Bears children painted wooden mini racecars and held a race. Five children received services in the mornings from GPS.

First Steps Preschool:

March Enrollment: 30/43; Attendance: 91%

Meal Counts: Breakfast: 220; Lunch: 448; Snack: 457; Total Meals: 1,125

Program Update: Kids' Corner children made individual pinwheels. Four children received services in the mornings from GPS. Three students are in the process of evaluation with GPS.

Literacy Volunteers (LV)

Literacy Volunteers at Family Centers (LVFC) uses the services of trained volunteers to provide free, quality English language education to adults, equipping them with the skills needed to achieve personal and occupational goals. LVFC is committed to educating families, developing a more skilled workforce, and providing educational opportunities to the county's most vulnerable populations, those living in or at elevated risk for poverty with low literacy. LVFC delivers weekly classes at four locations throughout Greenwich and Stamford and through online platforms for synchronous, remote learning.

Events:

Literacy Volunteers delivered a digital workforce readiness workshop designed to equip learners with the competencies required to effectively engage in the contemporary job search process. Participants developed proficiency in utilizing digital tools and employment platforms to upload resumés, navigate online application systems, and initiate strategic job-seeking activities.



LVFC staff also participated in the Stamford Adult and Continuing Education College and Career Expo in March, an annual event that provides a strategic platform for outreach, community

Stamford Adult & Continuing Education

See Who's Coming
SCAN HERE



2026 COLLEGE & CAREER EXPO

- Meet academic, employment, and service organizations
- Explore college and career options
- Bring resumes and references

Rippowam Middle School
381 High Ridge Road
Stamford, CT 06905

Thursday
March 26, 2026
6:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Learn More
mredd@stamfordpublicschools.org
203.977.8824

*Take charge of
your future!*



engagement, and student recruitment. During the event, staff disseminated information about Family Centers programming and actively recruited prospective participants for English language and Workforce Readiness classes. Approximately 600 individuals from the Stamford area attended, representing a diverse population seeking educational advancement and employment opportunities.



This month, our Family Literacy program took a field trip to the Planetarium and Astronomy Center at the Stamford Nature Center. Families participated in the astronomy program about the “Stamford Skies” and developed a deeper awareness of the universe beyond Earth and their place within it. They engaged in astronomy-related reading and activities such as stargazing, identifying constellations, and fostering curiosity about space and scientific exploration.



Client story:

Another CDA student, who is employed at Family Centers ECE program, earned her CDA Credential!

Charter Oak Communities (COC)

Through a unique partnership with Charter Oak Communities (COC), Family Centers can offer resident services throughout all twenty-one of COC properties provided by a team of nine Resident Service Coordinators (RSCs). We offer community-building along with personalized support intended to foster resident leadership and community cohesion while promoting independence and quality of life.

Program Updates:

This month a Fraud Prevention event was presented, in collaboration with the Department of Banking to address residents’ need for financial safety education. Residents were given information on cybersecurity, identity theft, and common frauds, along with practical prevention strategies.

An interactive Financial Fraud Bingo activity allowed participants to identify warning signs in real-life scenarios while remaining engaged.

Ongoing case management support continued throughout the month, including assistance with housing stability, prevention, and connections to community resources. Families were also supported with summer camp applications to ensure youth access to safe and enriching opportunities.

Events

At Clinton Manor Family Centers Cares hosted a free testing event at the property. Residents also enjoyed a healthy coleslaw salad prepared by dietician Inga, which was well received. They also participated in music and movie trivia, as well as abstract art activities.

A variety of new activities including a group game of Heads U and karaoke were introduced, allowing residents to display their singing abilities. The month concluded with a casino Night featuring cards and dice games that encouraged strong participation and engagement, and a Spring-themed bedazzled hand soap activity, where residents created decorative and

personalized designs on their refillable soap bottles. Everyone is looking forward to the spring season.



Pathways to Employment Growth (PEG)

PEG assists participants interested in entering or up-skilling in the healthcare field to obtain certification or licensure via Continuing Education programs with CSCU and other accredited institutions, as well as career readiness and employment assistance.

Program Updates:

The end of March saw the completion of the final Medical Billing & Coding (MB&C) course supported by the program, one of the most difficult and rigorous continuing education pursuits in the medical field.

All five of the enrolled students supported by the program successfully completed the course despite multiple challenges related to the asynchronistic nature of the classwork and communication restrictions with school staff thanks to timely and comprehensive support from the program.

One of these students has already tested and passed her AAPC accreditation testing on her second attempt to obtain her Certified Professional Coder Apprentice title. The other four are currently being coached as they move towards their initial testing attempts.

RITE Start

RITE Start provides career readiness for students attending the alternative high school programs at the Greenwich and Stamford public schools (Windrose and Anchor). Students participate in hands-on learning activities to identify, practice, and improve career competencies needed for today's market. Interested students are eligible to participate in short term work experiences to further practice skills, gain real life experience, and receive stipends for their efforts.

Program Updates:

Anchor and Windrose locations held their spring Career Days in March, with excellent participation and engagement from students. Anchor students attended presentations and received career advice from the Deputy Director of DOMUS, a respiratory therapist at Nuvance Health, and a children's book author. Windrose students heard from the owner of Greenwich

Boxing, a Greenwich firefighter and the Director of Quality Assurance and Safety at Greenwich EMS.



Here to Help (H2H)

The H2H program is a service provided by Family Centers dedicated to supporting students and their families as they navigate Stamford Public Schools and the greater community with a focus on students who are chronically absent and disengaged. Services are tailored to each student's unique needs, focusing on improving communication with schools, connection to community resources, and providing individualized support to re-engage students in school.

Client Story:

The client is a 13-year-old eighth grader in the STEPS program who was referred to H2H by the client's grandmother. The STEPS Program at Stamford Public Schools is a specialized, therapeutic academic program designed to support students requiring small-group instruction, counseling, and social-emotional support. At enrollment, the outreach worker learned that the client had experienced severe trauma, including the loss of both parents within a brief period. While adjusting to living with her grandparents, the client then experienced the loss of her grandfather, who had been the last paternal figure in her life. Although his grandmother

provides a supportive and loving home environment, the client continues to exhibit the long-term effects of death, loss, and grief.

As the outreach worker developed a therapeutic relationship with the client, it became evident that she was capable of academic success; however, her diagnoses significantly impacted her ability to manage daily functioning. The client had previously participated in IICAPS and was successfully discharged but experienced regression with the start of the school year. Intensive In-Home Child & Adolescent Psychiatric Services (IICAPS) is a manualized, home-based clinical treatment developed by the Yale Child Study Center. It acts as an alternative to hospitalization or residential care for children (typically ages 4–18) with severe psychiatric disorders, utilizing a team to provide intensive, multi-hour weekly in-home therapy. Although she had support from her family, school, and various programs within Family Centers, the client refused to leave her room, frequently engaged in conflict with family members, neglected self-care, and became increasingly socially isolated.

Through consistent support and ongoing conversations, the outreach worker gradually encouraged the client's grandmother to consider medication as a potential intervention. The grandmother was initially very hesitant and opposed to both medication and hospitalization. However, the outreach worker collaborated with her to explore all available options while maintaining both the client's and the grandmother's sense of autonomy. At the client's most recent pediatric appointment, the grandmother agreed to explore medication options and was able to identify an appropriate fit for the client.

Within one month, the client demonstrated significant improvement. She began attending school regularly, engaged more positively with family and peers, and resumed consistent self-care practices.

Screening Connecticut's Youth (SCY)

SSY is a free mental health screening program for Stamford families with children in the Stamford school system that aims to address barriers families face when searching for mental health services and other community resources. In addition to providing mental health screenings for children ages 4-17, SSY also provides additional case management services to families in need of addressing other social determinants of health barriers.

Program Updates:

In our ongoing partnership with the Ferguson Library the case manager serves as a touchpoint for the Stamford community twice a week (Tuesdays 2-6pm & Fridays 10am-12pm) where residents can feel safe and comfortable asking for guidance on personal struggles they may be facing. Residents regularly approach the SY Case Manager for assistance applying for benefits, housing, and a plethora of other issues they may be facing.

The SY Case Manager has recently received a large influx of internal referrals from other FCI programs with families that have complex needs who require comprehensive support in multiple areas of life.

Family Testimony

The SY Case Manager recently began assisting a 25-year-old African American woman with two children from the Ferguson Library to find housing and apply for benefits. The SY Case Manager made a 211 call with the client upon initial contact to access the CAN (Coordinated Access Networks) and obtain a referral to a DVCC shelter. The client is escaping a domestic violence situation in Stamford so the SY Case Manager helped the client find shelter in Bridgeport.

The client was enrolled in the DVCC crisis intervention program and began receiving support through the shelter. The family's DCF caseworker also became involved once the SY Case Manager became aware of DCF's previous involvement and notified them of the most recent DV occurrence. The SY Case Manager is actively collaborating with DCF and DVCC to continue supporting the client.

Collaborations:

- Ferguson Library
- Department of Children & Families
- Domestic Violence Crisis Center

Friendly Connections (FS)

Friendly Connections supports isolated, lonely, and/or homebound Fairfield County seniors. The program alleviates isolation by utilizing trained volunteers and master's-level interns called "Friendly Visitors." Friendly Visitors provide phone and virtual and home visits, and support clients navigating "end-of-life" issues, including mental health challenges or loss. They provide case management, counseling, social-emotional and crisis support, and connection to community resources.

Program Updates:

New full-time staff member, Kate Schacter, LMFT, began her role as Outreach Worker for Friendly Connections on March 23rd. Program staff and interns are making efforts to expand services to additional clients at the established sites to help meet the needs of their residents.

Highlights:

Friendly Connections continues to provide strong, responsive support to older adults in our community. In March, with the support of two master's level clinical interns, Friendly Connections continued providing individual support and a socialization group at Wormser Congregate in Stamford. Friendly Connections provided two socialization groups covering topics of communication and a music-centered group.

Additionally, in March five socialization groups were led by Friendly Connections interns and staff at Scofield Manor and three socialization groups were held at Parsonage Cottage. Friendly Connections provided 56 individual Friendly Visits in March.

Friendly Connections accepted a generous donation of food items from Temple Shalom in Greenwich to provide residents of Scofield Manor with a traditional Passover meal.

Collaborations:

- Parsonage Cottage
- McKinney Terrace II
- Charter Oaks Communities
- Scofield Manor
- Wormser Congregate