

Education and Humans Services Board Notes
October 20th, 2026
Presented by the Ed and HS Team

Parents as Teachers Program (OEC PAT)

The PAT program is dedicated to supporting parents as they navigate the challenges of pregnancy and parenthood. Core program components include home visits, supportive telephone assistance, parent education groups, case management, screenings, nurse, and doula support.

Program Updates:

This month, the PAT team attended the 2026 Parents as Teachers International Conference in Portland, Oregon, where the program received the Losos Prize for Innovation for its Perinatal Continuum of Care Model. Jessica Alarcon, a PAT bilingual parent educator and doula was also recognized as a Parent Educator of the Year for her culturally responsive, family-centered work supporting families experiencing intimate partner violence or depression. These recognitions highlight the program's innovative approach to supporting families and its commitment to strengthening outcomes for parents and children.



Collaborations:

PAT is collaborating with Literacy Volunteers and the Early Care and Education programs to support the annual Bookfest event on Saturday, November 7. The event will provide families with access to free books through Books4Everyone and an opportunity to obtain library cards and check out books through the Ferguson Library Book Mobile. This collaboration promotes early literacy, encourages family engagement, and connects families with valuable community resources.

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:

All four sites held *Back to School* evening events where teachers showed parents their child's classrooms and shared what to expect for the year ahead.

All classes have begun the year with themes *All About Me* and *The First Six Weeks*, helping the children to adjust to their new environments and settle into their routines. They have also been introduced to our mantra: *You Are Safe, You Are Important, You Are Loved*. Coaching began with classrooms at all sites. Nurse Lori Liss from the Greenwich Department of Health began the school year preschool program *Passport to Good Health* where she took heights and weights of the children to calculate BMIs. Our classrooms also participated in Music & Movement Zumba-style and guitar music with Mr. DePuy.

September Enrollment: 166/202

Warburg Infant & Toddler Center

September Enrollment: 48/53; Attendance: 91%

Program Update: Five students received Birth-to-Three services.

Gateway Preschool:

September Enrollment: 41/56; Attendance: 91%

Program Update:

Four preschool children received services in the mornings from GPS; one student received services on site. Two toddlers received Birth to Three services. One toddler was observed to evaluate whether outside services are needed.

Grauer Preschool:

September Enrollment: 44/55; Attendance: 90%

Program Update: The Polar Bears class read *The Colors of Us* and created self-portraits using skin-toned materials. Five children received services in the mornings from GPS. The BOE observed again a child who was observed last school year; the child will be starting with short-term on-site services.

First Steps Preschool

September Enrollment: 33/38; Attendance: 87%

Program Update: Four children received services in the mornings from GPS. The classrooms had a visit from the dental hygienist including a puppet show and oral exam. Coach David supported the teachers in the Kids' Corner class during a 3-D extended sculpture project. Four

children received services from GPS in the morning. Sabrina Motta from GPS checked on an open RFA of a child from last school year and followed up with the family.

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.

Program Updates:

FF has commenced the 2026-2027 program school year with new teachers and clinical interns. We are preparing for academic testing and the start of tutoring support.

Events and Collaborations:

FF welcomes back Greenwich Country Day School for another year of collaboration. This month students participated in activities designed to strengthen listening skills and sportsmanship, including learning a new card game and engaging in outdoor activities with the GHS football team. FF is also continuing its partnership with the Greenwich High School Chess team. Our students are not only learning to play chess, but also strengthening their critical thinking, strategic planning, and problem-solving skills along the way.



Family Engagement:

This month's parent workshop will focus on helping parents establish personal goals that prioritize their mental and physical health. Parents will identify practical steps they can take to support their own well-being while balancing family responsibilities. The workshop will also focus on setting goals to support their children's academic, social, and emotional development. Parents will leave with actionable strategies to promote their own well-being and help their children continue to thrive.

Families are also invited to celebrate at our first family enrichment event of the year on Saturday, October 17th with our Multicultural Picnic which had to be rescheduled from September due to rain.

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:

This month, 17 Literacy Volunteers students earned their CPR Certification through participation in a training with Family Centers Healthcare Professional Manager, Natalie Tocci. Many of the participants enrolled are fulfilling the requirements of their Child Development Associate credential for employment in an early childhood educational setting.



LV also hosted a weekend Academic Writing Workshop to prepare students for CDA coursework and future post-secondary study. Students learned to interpret academic writing prompts, organize their ideas, and support responses with specific examples and evidence from readings, coursework, and professional experience. Through modeling, guided practice, and revision, students worked together and with teachers to strengthen paragraph development, academic language, grammar, and the skills needed for increasingly independent academic writing.

Client Stories:

Two adult students who began English language and workforce readiness classes this summer demonstrated strong engagement by consistently attending ESL instruction and workforce training. Working with tutors and the LV Career Navigator, they developed resumes, prepared professional references, participated in interview coaching, and completed online applications for employment opportunities in Stamford and Greenwich. Both successfully secured full-time employment, demonstrating measurable progress toward workforce readiness, economic self-sufficiency, and greater financial stability for their families.

One student from Rwanda was referred to LV through Connecticut Aging and Disability Services following significant vision loss and limited English proficiency that created barriers to independence and employment. Her goal was to increase her independence and prepare for

employment as a home care companion or aide. LV matched her with a one-to-one tutor fluent in French, one of her native languages, allowing instruction to focus on functional English communication and workforce readiness. As her verbal English proficiency and confidence have increased, she has become more independent in navigating the community, requesting assistance when needed, and using the essential communication skills required for a companion or home care role.

Charter Oak Communities (COC)

Through a unique partnership with Charter Oak Communities (COC), Family Centers offers 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:

Scofield Manor residents began participating in Grand Pals, a new intergenerational group. They made slime, built popsicle-stick houses, and completed puzzles with the children. Residents enjoyed sharing conversations and laughs and looked forward to spending time together. A lively game of Jeopardy welcomed several new residents, giving them an opportunity to get to know others. The Family Centers Friendly Connections Program also resumed chair yoga, helping residents stay active through gentle exercises while enjoying time together.

The RSC at Park 215 and Greenfield helped residents address housing, benefits, utility, and food needs. Two residents facing eviction received support pursuing landlord mediation and rental assistance. Another resident's cash assistance and SNAP benefits, which had ended following system and program changes, were restored after the RSC helped with a new application and required documents.

Lastly, a Greenfield resident was approved for Social Security Disability benefits after a year of RSC support. The RSC also helped the resident obtain SNAP benefits and UnitedHealthcare coverage after their income made them ineligible for Medicaid.

Family Self Sufficiency (FSS)

FSS provides residents of Charter Oak Communities individualized support including vocational counseling, goal planning, educational assistance, financial literacy, and family referrals aimed at helping participants become economically independent.

Program Updates:

The Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program reported a total of **five over-income clients**, meaning these participants have increased their income to a level at which they are no longer eligible to

accrue additional escrow savings, although they may continue to earn interest on their existing escrow balance.

This is a significant accomplishment for both the participants and the FSS Program Coordinator. It demonstrates the participants' hard work, dedication, and commitment to achieving financial independence. Their increased earnings reflect the progress they have made toward self-sufficiency and reducing their reliance on rental assistance.

For these participants, reaching this milestone represents more than an increase in income; it is a step toward achieving a goal that may have once seemed out of reach. They can now work toward transitioning out of the housing assistance system and maintaining housing stability independently. Their success highlights the positive impact of the FSS Program and reinforces its mission of empowering families to build financial security and achieve long-term self-sufficiency.

Reaching Independence Through Employment (RITE)

RITE helps individuals and families attain a greater sense of self-sufficiency through career counseling, goal planning, job-skills training, and guidance throughout the job search process. RITE career counselors provide free vocational support focusing on resume' writing, refining job search skills, and job retention support.

Program Update:

A client informed career advisor that she would be losing her job at a local children's store due to its closure after 16 years of employment. The client sought new employment opportunities near her home in central Greenwich and needed assistance developing a resume. The career advisor and client created a resume and submitted applications to several retailers. The client was subsequently contacted by a newly opened store and completed a successful working interview ending in a job offer!

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 Update:

At Windrose (Greenwich), the career advisor assisted several students with creating and updating resumes and is supporting those seeking after-school employment and work experiences. There is an upcoming field trip to GE in Stamford and the career advisor is working with Toyota of Greenwich for a student who is interested in becoming a mechanic. Work

interviews are expected to begin in November, including an opportunity for another student to work with a local plumber.

At Anchor (Stamford), the career advisor has started working on resumes with students and started exploring potential work experiences. The Career Advisor is working with CT State Community College to host a Health Fair at Anchor on October 28, 2026. The event will introduce Anchor students to diverse career opportunities in the healthcare industry, with approximately seven healthcare professionals sharing insights into their respective occupations.

RITE Start at Anchor has partnered with Stamford Health following their expressed interest in hosting a collection drive to support the students at Anchor. The donation drive began September 30 and will run through October 30, 2026, with the goal of providing essential items to students in need.

Requested donations include grocery and gas gift cards, winter hats and gloves, hygiene essentials, and other necessities. This partnership reflects a shared commitment to supporting students' well-being by helping meet their basic needs and ensuring they have access to essential resources as the colder months approach.

The collaboration between RITE Start at Anchor and Stamford Health demonstrates the positive impact of community partnerships and the importance of working together to support students and their success.

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 15-year-old freshman who was referred to H2H in eighth grade due to chronic absenteeism. He is autistic and blind and has received support services since birth. His mother, who immigrated from India with her family, is his primary caregiver, balancing her son's individualized support needs with the needs of the rest of her family. When the family first enrolled in H2H, the Outreach Worker (OW) focused on building trust with the client's mother, who was initially hesitant to engage. As their relationship developed, she began sharing the challenges of coordinating her son's care and support while remaining present for her family. She expressed difficulty finding a preschool with transportation for her youngest child. The OW successfully secured a placement with busing, helping address a significant barrier for the family.

As the client prepared to transition to high school, his mother worried that Stamford Public Schools (SPS) would be unable to provide the specialized educational support and

accommodations he needed. Although she was interested in exploring outplacement, she was unfamiliar with the process and unsure how to proceed. The OW supported her in requesting a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting and encouraged her to voice her concerns, reinforcing the importance of her knowledge of her son's needs and experiences. The special education (SPED) team denied the request for outplacement and confirmed a transfer to the other public high school. Concerned about this decision, his mother continued pursuing an educational setting and the OW helped connect the family with SPED advocates and attorneys. Following his first day at the new high school, the SPED team approved the client's outplacement, acknowledging that the district could not adequately meet his educational needs. This outcome marked an important step toward securing an educational environment with more appropriate support and accommodations. H2H helped the family navigate a complex special education process and supported the mother in pursuing an educational setting that better aligned with her son's needs.

Collaborations:

- City of Stamford Youth Services Bureau
- Stamford Public Schools
- CT Education Advocacy
- Stamford Prevention Council
- TOW's Transforming Youth Justice Institute
- VITA/Attendance Works
- United Parents and Students

Intensive Family Preservation (IFP)

Through counseling and support, the Intensive Family Preservation Program (IFP) helps families resolve conflicts and improve parenting skills when there is an imminent risk of a child(ren) being removed from the home due to instances of child abuse or neglect. Family Centers partners with Family and Children's Agency of Norwalk to provide program services. The Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) provides program funding and is the sole referral source.

Program Update:

Program is fully staffed and at capacity with cases. There is currently a regional waiting list and various staff vacancies across state program providers.

Client Story/Highlights:

A family was referred to the IFP program due to concerns regarding the mother's parenting skills and the overall well-being of her three children. Interventions have focused on strengthening parenting skills, including establishing appropriate boundaries, maintaining structure and consistency in the home, ensuring adequate supervision, and implementing positive parenting strategies. The clinician has also worked to identify and address the family's needs through referrals and connections to community-based supports. Progress is slow, but we're please that mom is keeping her appointments with the IFP clinician.

Friendly Connections (FS)

Friendly Connections supports isolated, lonely, and/or homebound Fairfield County older adults. The program alleviates isolation by utilizing trained volunteers and master's-level interns called "Friendly Visitors." Friendly Visitors provide phone, 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

In September, Friendly Connections welcomed two new interns who will be seeing clients at McKinney Terrace, Parsonage Cottage and Wormser Congregate. This month, Friendly Connections provided over 100 Friendly Visits with 39 clients facilitated by the program's outreach worker, volunteer and interns.

The program continues to rethink how to best meet clients' needs through group support and to increase participation. Friendly Connections restarted a monthly group at Scofield Manor and led a chair yoga group in September. Recreation and social groups are held biweekly at Parsonage Cottage, and monthly groups are planned for the fall at McKinney and Wormser.

Highlights:

Friendly Connections is planning new ways to engage clients, both with their peers and community and through additional personal touchpoints. After observing that birthdays are difficult for many clients, Friendly Connections is creating a plan to send birthday cards to clients to brighten their day. The program is also compiling a list of local volunteer opportunities suitable for older adults to better support our clients who want to become more involved in the community and meet new people.

Collaborations:

- Parsonage Cottage
- McKinney Terrace II
- Charter Oaks Communities
- Scofield Manor
- Wormser Congregate
- Jewish Family Services of Greenwich