

Oct 12, 2022



To: Mayor, Town Council

From: Hamden's Partnership for Young Children

RE: Hamden ARPA funding request for early care and education community well-being plan

As the nation and our community continues to respond and rebuild from the impact of the pandemic, it is critical that Hamden leaders invest in families with children ages birth to 5, and the high-quality early childhood programs in Hamden. We must ensure our children can develop and thrive, and families are supported as they return to work. Despite the increased challenges exasperated by the pandemic, the early childhood workforce has persevered and remains central to providing convenient, safe, and developmentally appropriate, high-quality care.

***In Hamden, there are 27 center-based childcare programs and 31 home-based programs. They employ over 400 staff and serve close to 1000 children. There are four state funded programs, serving 90 preschool children through the School Readiness grant and 30 children through the Child Daycare Grant.***

***Since ARPA funds should be utilized to "support the negative impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic" and "address negative business impacts", Hamden's Partnership for Young Children requests the Town of Hamden invest \$ 950,000 of ARPA funds to provide much needed support and relief to the families, children, and childcare businesses.***

**Why childcare matters for children, families, providers, and the economy:**

- Parents who cannot work remotely have an acute need for childcare services.
- Our local workforce requires quality, reliable, affordable care for their children.
- Many workers who keep essential retail establishments open are among the lowest paid and cannot afford to lose days of work due to lack of childcare. They also tend to be people of color and minorities.
- Like health care workers, grocery store clerks, police, firefighters, and other essential employees that keep our cities moving, the early childhood workforce is key to a city's economic viability.
- As small business owners, early childhood providers were faced with tough business decisions due to decreased enrollment, inability to secure enough financial resources to

keep afloat, changes to health and safety regulations, and lack of adequate access to necessities such as PPE and cleaning supplies for themselves and children they serve.

- Quality early care and education prepares our children socially, emotionally, and cognitively for the formal teaching years, beginning with kindergarten.

#### **Impact of COVID on Hamden's Young children, families, and childcare:**

- We won't know for some time yet how big a setback COVID has been for the current generation of children in our town, but it is certain to be significant and our goal with ARPA funds is to provide the support necessary to help families and their children recover the best they can.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the already-fragile childcare system to the brink of collapse and is exacerbating existing racial and ethnic inequities for parents, children, and childcare providers throughout the U.S.
- One of the many things this pandemic has revealed is the significance of early learning contributions childcare providers make in a child's early life — and the critical role they play in a thriving, economically vital country.
- Unfortunately, when childcare systems lack equitable structures, access, and financial stability, families and communities suffer.
- It is currently a burden for parents trying to re-enter the workforce or those trying to balance remote work and childcare.
- **See attached testimonials of Hamden childcare providers, both center-based and home-based, which show the unprecedented negative impacts of COVID on small businesses, job security, mental and physical health.**

#### **How ARPA funds can support a more durable Hamden Early Care and Education system:**

ARPA can be used soon to support families, early childhood programs and the health and safety of young children. Specifically, the ARPA funds can be used for COVID recovery in Hamden to:

- Address the diverse needs of children (our most vulnerable population) through new and expanded early learning supports that address social, emotional, cognitive, and mental health needs.
- Promote healthy childhood environments, by supporting programs with enhanced health and safety measures.
- Increase support to small businesses, who are often minority owned.
- Expand equitable, interactive learning opportunities in the community which encourage social interaction and support the healthy development of young children.

**Attached you will find our Hamden Early Care and Education Community Well-being Plan.**

This plan was developed by Hamden's Partnership for Young Children in collaboration with community partners including the Hamden Public Schools, Hamden Preschool Special Education Department, The United Way of Greater New Haven, All Our Kin, ACES, and the Hamden center and home-based childcares. Note that this current proposal would be supported only by ARPA dollars available to Hamden and would not require additional contribution.

**Hamden's Partnership for Young Children (The Partnership- HPYC)** is a collaborative that includes public and private agencies, community members and representatives from the Town and Hamden Public Schools who advocate for Hamden's young children. HPYC serves as the school readiness council, managing the school readiness grant (\$843,318.00) which provides financial support for 90 children to attend high quality preschool in the Town of Hamden. The focus of HPYC is supporting Hamden families and improving the education, care, health, and safety of children from birth to age nine.

Thank you for considering our Hamden Early Care and Education Community Well-being Plan supported by ARPA Funds.

Rita Esposito, Chair



[respo@reachoutinc.org](mailto:respo@reachoutinc.org)

Sheryl Sadinsky, Coordinator



[ssadinsky@hamdenyoungchildren.org](mailto:ssadinsky@hamdenyoungchildren.org)

Hamden's Partnership for Young Children  
60 Putnam Avenue  
Hamden, CT 06517

[www.hamdenyoungchildren.org](http://www.hamdenyoungchildren.org)

[www.facebook.com/hamdenkids](https://www.facebook.com/hamdenkids)

Attachments:

- ARPA funding request for Early Care and Education Community Well-being Plan
- Testimonials Home-Based Childcare
- Testimonials Center- Based Childcare



<p>programs. Although these special education programs meet the special education mandates, many of these children need childcare for full-days due to working parents. Children with special needs often require a higher level of staffing due to limited attention spans and learning delays.</p> <p>Both situations result in staff burnout, large number of transitions and, at times inadequate and inequitable care situations for children.</p>	<p>preventing injury, developing strategies for preventing violent outbursts, understanding behavior intervention.</p> <p><b>HPS Preschool Special Ed staff are trained in PMT. Training is 1 day.</b></p>		
<p><b>Support Needed for Struggling Family Childcare</b></p> <p>Hamden's 31 Family Childcares are struggling to stay open. They are very small businesses with low enrollment and high expenses. Operating out of their homes, the decisions of how and when to open throughout COVID posed unique challenges.</p> <p>Family Childcare Programs operate on a very small margin. The many Covid related challenges over the past 2 years have significantly disrupted their operation. In comparison to childcare centers, these programs often offer longer hours, supporting families with early or late work schedules. At times, they are the choice of parents with special needs children as these children pose unique challenges that are more easily met in a smaller environment.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hire 1 Part Time Bilingual Health and Safety Consultant for Home Childcare, to visit homes, address questions, insure general health and safety of children.</li> <li>2. Hire 1 Part Time Educational Coach for Home Childcares. The Education Consultant will focus on curriculum, family engagement, children with special needs and connecting staff and families with community resources</li> <li>3. Increase Internet access so that Family Childcares, many of whom serve school age children, will have adequate access for homework and any online learning.</li> </ol>	<p>Family Childcare Businesses and Hamden Families seeking home childcare experience</p> <p>Family Childcare</p> <p>10 Family Childcare Homes</p>	<p>All Our Kin \$35,000 plus Fee</p> <p>All Our Kin \$35,000 plus Fee</p> <p>All Our Kin \$10,000 plus Fee</p>

<p><b>Childcare, Center and Family, is Struggling Financially</b></p> <p>State licensing requires regular First Aid, CPR, EpiPen training and it is a significant expense for childcare programs</p> <p>Cleaning Supplies</p> <p>Appreciation for outdoor learning opportunities increased with the onset of covid. Outdoor equipment and supplies used daily by many children and are expensive. Upgrades are an essential need for many childcare sites.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide yearly stipend to Center and Home childcare for training in First Aid, CPR, medication. (2years) (application process)</li> <li>2. Purchase cleaning supplies for all Home Providers for 2 years</li> <li>3. Purchase outdoor equipment for each licensed provider, both home and center (up to \$500 per home childcare and \$1,000 per center)</li> </ol>	<p>100 staff each year for 2 years Total: 250 staff</p> <p>31 Family Childcare</p> <p>31 Family Childcare- \$500 35 sites Center based-range 1000</p>	<p>HPYC coordinate \$35,000 plus Fee</p> <p>HPYC coordinate \$70,000</p> <p>HPYC coordinate \$50,500</p>
<p><b>Need to Expand Community Support for Parents, other Caregivers, and their children</b></p> <p>The pandemic has negatively impacted many families and young children and disrupted the overall development of many young children. Isolation over an extended period limited social interactions, a key element of early learning. Many parents are eager for but unsure of how to boost their young child's overall development.</p> <p>There is a need for support for families to connect them to important community resources like the Diaper Bank, WIC, SNAP, Workforce Development.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Add creative, public, interactive spaces that encourage caregiver/child early learning experiences, social interactions, and development of cognitive and physical skills. Consider- bus stops, Keefe Ctr., shopping center for mini learn &amp; playscapes  <a href="https://developingchild.harvard.edu/innovation-application/innovation-in-action/urban-thinkscape/?utm_source=newsletter&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=August2021">https://developingchild.harvard.edu/innovation-application/innovation-in-action/urban-thinkscape/?utm_source=newsletter&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=August2021</a></li> <li>2. Hire a Family Support Specialist for the town of Hamden to work with center based childcare programs to connect families with needed resources. Provide info and training-collaboration with UWGNH, HPYC and FRC.</li> </ol>	<p>All Hamden residents</p> <p>Families in need</p>	<p>Collaborative group needed with expertise in multiple areas</p> <p>\$300,000.00</p> <p>United Way of Greater New Haven</p> <p>\$35,000 plus Fee</p>

- 
- Administrative Fees to be determined for each organization

**Hamden Early Care and Education Well Being Plan submitted by:**

**Hamden's Partnership for Young Children  
60 Putnam Avenue  
Hamden, CT 06517**

**Sheryl Sadinsky, Coordinator**  
[ssadinsky@hamdenyoungchildren.org](mailto:ssadinsky@hamdenyoungchildren.org)  
[860-305-0614](tel:860-305-0614)

**Rita Esposito, Chair**  
[respo@reachoutinc.org](mailto:respo@reachoutinc.org)

## CHILDCARE CENTER TESTIMONIALS



"Pandemic has affected enrollment of children, available staff for hiring and rent payments. Also, the cost of cleaning materials and air filters etc. The time on testing, cleaning, quarantine after travel and the ever-changing time on paperwork, which took away time for the children."

"We just recently started getting new enrollment, but enrollment was not existent for almost a year and a half. Precovid we had 63 children, We are now up to 34 children, but we are still struggling to make ends meet financially due to an uptick in costs on everything as well the cost to maintain staff. Everyone wants more money. Hiring prior to covid was difficult in this field, but it is ten times more difficult now."

"We have always prided ourselves on hiring staff with a B.A. or M.A. for EVERY position and using full-time teachers to staff every classroom. Sadly, we can no longer provide this high level of quality. We lost nearly our entire staff and are now forced to hire workers without education or experience. We are unable to retain or attract teachers, and we have experienced constant turnover. We are not able to provide the quality of care and education our children deserve. The impact on children is extreme and the constant changes in staffing mean children are unable to develop secure relationships that allow them to thrive and learn. Staff have given notice for June, when they will be taking highly paid positions in public schools and our program will not exist in any meaningful way".

"I would hire more staff if I could do so financially. We are seeing more and more children with behavioral issues who need one-on-one attention, and more staff is a necessity in this day and age."

"Covid decreased our classroom sizes causing us to lose revenue. We lost 12 staff members, closed several classrooms and lost tuition due to Covid."

"Covid has been a hardship on teachers, children, and parents mentally. Everyone is constantly struggling with the right thing to do in order to keep everyone safe. Not all opinions are the same which is challenging. Parents are also struggling when their children have to stay home to quarantine."

"Staffing continues to be an issue, pre-pandemic, we would have 10+ applicants for one position. Now we have multiple positions open with 1-2 people applying or lack of experienced candidates. As minimum wage rises, as a non-profit, the financial impact grows. To remain competitive, we continue to raise pay rates which creates a financial burden as well. We often face scenarios that we have to create wait lists in order to find/hire additional qualified staff."



## FAMILY CHILDCARE TESTIMONIALS



"COVID has affected do to the fact that parents have lost their jobs and us daycare providers also lost children, I have an employee assistant that I have to pay and is not easy it has been hard, I had to close daycare do to being COVID positive as well, lots of things have needed to be implemented for sanitation reasons and to re-arrange the daycare, bills, rent and other expenses have also been a problem do to COVID."

"The Covid pandemic has had a variety of effects on my program, including the use of after-school hours that I had before the pandemic began, rather than replacing them because of the fear that if they're at school and get exposed, and then they're here, I'll have to close down. Another way the pandemic has impacted my program financially is the cost of PPE and the inability to purchase items that you want because you're not sure if your children's tuition will meet your bills because the children may not be here."

"The uncertainty is the most concerning. Not knowing if we will be able to get supplies, not knowing if anyone will lose their job and because of that, not be able to afford child care any longer, not knowing if anyone will get sick and I'll have to close without pay. At the beginning within a week's timespan all my clients opted to keep their children home for what ended up being two months or more. I also lost two families completely."

"My enrollment numbers have been extremely low since the pandemic. It is hard for me to have a group of kids here all at one time. I started to only have one or two kids here and there. I currently don't have any kids enrolled."

"COVID as affected in lots of way, do to the fact that because of COVID lots of changes have been made, new challenges, new things have needed to be implemented in daycares for sanitation reasons, it has affected do to the fact that parents have lost their jobs do to COVID so in that case us daycare providers lose children as well. Being COVID positive and needing to close daycare as affected because their is no income coming in. Bills, rent and other expenses have been a problem because of the income issues."

"I had to shut down for 10 weeks due to the pandemic which caused me not to get paid."

"The Parents are working from home haven't received any calls in quite a long time for childcare."

# Hamden's Partnership Overview 2022-23

---



- Hamden's Partnership for Young Children = Hamden's School Readiness Council/Local Early Childhood Council, required to exist in towns that receive funding through the School Readiness Grant
- Staffed by 2 part time, private consultants, not employees of Hamden
- Usually 2 co-chairs, currently just one Rita Esposito, previous owner of Reachout in Hamden
- The Partnership is required by the CT Office of Early Childhood (OEC) to have several positions/organizations represented including the offices of the Mayor and Superintendent, who also sign off on the CT School Readiness Grant. As of July 2021, a local business owner and workforce or job training representative also need to be represented. And 25% of the members need to be parents.
- Partnership members represent a wide range of organizations; open to all
- Key efforts include expanding awareness of resources, understanding needs of young children, their families and service providers; brainstorming what is working, not working and identify solutions; supporting Hamden's early care and education programs, children with special needs, supporting Hamden Family Resource Center, supporting transition to Kindergarten and Hamden Public Schools.
- Significantly broader focus than the school readiness grant. Technically our age range is children prenatal to age 9. Most of our efforts look to impact infant thru kindergarten.
- Our work is a balance between systems change, grant oversight, and implementation when a need is identified
- Strong collaboration with the Hamden Family Resource Center, Hamden Preschool Special Education Department

## Funding:

- \$ 1,000 Town of Hamden Funding, **(Prior funding: \$30,000)**
- \$30,000 Hamden Public Schools
- \$40,158 CT Office of Early Childhood (SR Grant)
- \$35,000 Preschool Development grant (PDG) from OEC last spring, expires 12/2022
- UWGNH is fiduciary for a portion of our funds, HPS for the remainder

## Outreach & Community Engagement

- Facebook; website [www.hamdenyoungchildren.org](http://www.hamdenyoungchildren.org), limited tweeting
- Email updates to several hundred parents and providers with information on state and local resources & issues
- Development and insert of Guide to Childcare & Preschool in Adult Ed booklet- to all Hamden/North Haven residents,
- Information to Hamden Public Schools, partners, and elected officials

## Grant Management & Support to Early Care & Education providers

- Oversight of the State School Readiness Grant (\$843,318), Quality Enhancement Grant (\$3,881), UWGNH Secure Start (Circle of Security)
- Early Care & Education Committee, Program Director Meetings, Parent Committee, Operations Committee
- Professional Development Opportunities for all childcare staff in Hamden

## **Details and New:**

### **Circle of Security**

- Funding from both Office of Early Childhood along with guidance and funding from UWGNH
- Collaborate with Family Resource Center to provide COS series to parents and teachers

### **Expand Developmental Screenings using Ages & Stages Questionnaires ®**

- Developmental Screenings for children 2mths to 5 years
- Increase awareness of the sequence and expectations of young children's development and how to encourage growth in all areas
- Identify infants, toddlers and preschoolers who might need additional support
- Support to childcare programs and parents
- Partnership with 211 Childcare- website
- Sparkler APP

### **Transition to Kindergarten**

- Outreach, incentives to families and service providers to encourage timely registration
- Transition to K Zoom Call with K teacher for parents
- Preschool Information Form from childcares to receiving Kindergarten teachers
- T-shirts to incoming Kindergarteners
- Instagram Picture Frames

### **Family Support**

- Phone support to families looking for early care and education programs
- In collaboration with the Family Resource Center, opportunities for families to expand their abilities to support their children's learning: What You Do Matters, Ages & Stages Questionnaire, Raising Readers, Read to Grow

### **Parent Ambassadors & Parent Advisory Committee- new 2022**

- Preschool Development Grant (PDG from OEC) requires us to have 2 Parent Ambassadors. We made a local decision to also have a Parent Advisory Committee. Local Parent Ambassadors will connect the Office of Early Childhood Parent Cabinet Regional Reps.
- These efforts are in collaboration with the Hamden Family Resource Center

### **Partnership Task Force: examining issues of childcare and children with Special needs- new 2022**

- Challenges for families and childcare providers: These families need childcare like everyone else but can be challenged to find a program that can appropriately care for/educate their child. Childcare providers can be challenged to meet a child's needs due to lack of information/expertise, staffing, and balancing the needs of the other children.

Sheryl Sadinsky: Coordinator, Hamden's Partnership for Young Children  
Liaison to Office of Early Childhood for School Readiness Grant  
Office: 60 Putnam Ave, Hamden 06517 (Central office for Hamden Public Schools)  
Cell: 860-305-0614, office 203-407-7733, [ssadinsky@hamdenyoungchildren.org](mailto:ssadinsky@hamdenyoungchildren.org)

Jennifer Do: Early Childhood Specialist, Hamden's Partnership for Young Children  
[jdo@hamdenyoungchildren.org](mailto:jdo@hamdenyoungchildren.org)



## Funding Early Care and Education in Hamden

Hamden currently receives funds through three CT State Office of Early Childhood (OEC) programs:

1. School Readiness Grant
2. Child Day Care (CDC) Contract
3. Care4Kids

School Readiness and CDC programs operate 10-hour days, year-round programs for 3 and 4-year-old children. As required by the OEC, 60% of School Readiness families and CDC families need to be at or below 75% state medium income (SMI). Most families are well below that threshold. CDC families must be working or attending a work study program.

All parents pay a fee as determined by OEC, ranging from \$0 - \$98/ week. The fee is determined by income and family size. All sites receiving these funds must be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (or accredited within the first 3 years of funding).

**Hamden School Readiness Community Grant:** Hamden receives funding for 90 slots which go to 3 sub-grantees: 80 slots to Hamden Public Schools Early Learning Program (HELP), 6 slots to Building Blocks Early Learning Center, and 4 slots to The Learning Curve Daycare. Total School Readiness grant award for 22/23: \$843,318. Hamden's Partnership for Young Children receives \$40,158 of those funds to support the School Readiness Liaison, with the remainder going to the childcare programs for the 12-month program (\$8924/slot). These slots are always full. HELP also provides a sliding fee scale for an additional 85 children, with fees ranging from \$400 - \$900/month. Care4Kids last fiscal year brought in \$58,520

**Hamden Child Day Care Contract:** Hamden receives funding for 30 slots, with these funds awarded to Sleeping Giant Day Care, a private program located at the Keefe Community Center. Total grant is \$267,720 (\$8924/slot). Annual parent fees collected are approximately \$40,000. Care4Kids funding annually ranges from \$45,000 - \$50,000.

**Care4Kids** is a state voucher program that helps low to moderate income working families in Connecticut pay for childcare costs. Twenty Hamden center-based programs accept Care4Kids as do most Family Childcare Providers.

### Additional Funding Sources

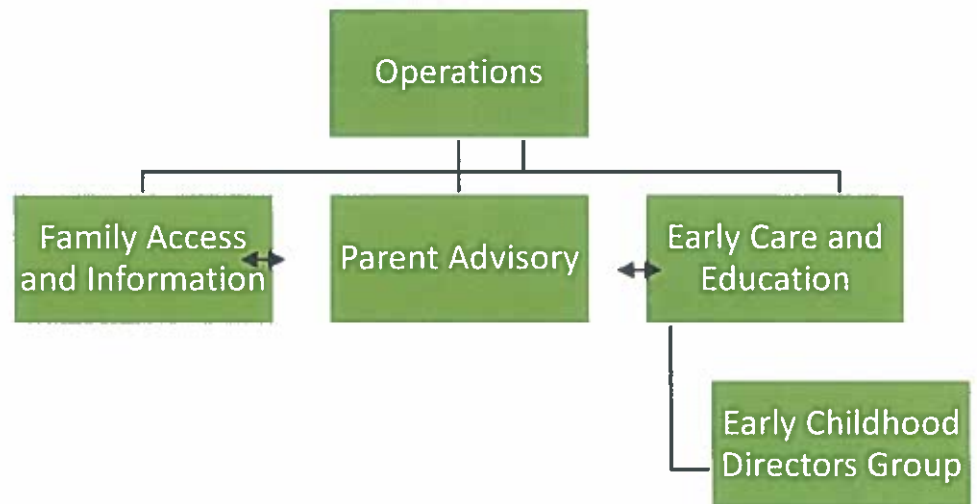
- **CT Department of Children and Families:** Children are placed, and tuition funded by DCF for foster children and other children in need of a childcare placement. Multiple Hamden center-based based and home-based providers work with DCF to provide childcare to meet the needs of these children.
- **Hamden High School** operates a half day preschool program during the school year. Families pay a nominal fee with the program also serving as learning opportunity in conjunction with child development courses.

### Partnership Members

In addition to Hamden Parents and other Community Members the following organizations are represented:

- ACES Early Childhood Services
- All Our Kin
- Building Blocks Early Learning Ctr.
- CT Dept of Children & Families
- Gateway Community College
- Family Check-up & Everyday Parenting
- Hamden Adult Ed
- Hamden Community Services
- Hamden Early Learning Program
- Hamden Family Resource Center
- Hamden/North Haven YMCA
- Hamden Public Library
- Hamden Public Schools
- Hamden Youth Services Bureau
- QVHD
- Reach Out
- SEPTA
- Sleeping Giant Daycare
- The Learning Curve Daycare
- Town of Hamden
- United Way of Greater New Haven
- Workforce Alliance, Inc.

Hamden's Partnership for Young Children is a coalition of public and private agencies and community members who advocate for Hamden's young children. The Partnership's goal is to improve the health and development of children, so that all children can learn at their potential. We accomplish this goal by collaborating with community resources, center and home-based childcare, the Hamden schools, and Hamden families to discover what is working and not working, and how to improve the support systems for Hamden's children. The Partnership also receives and manages the CT School Readiness Grant for the Hamden Public Schools. The Partnership operates with the support of the Town of Hamden and the Hamden Public Schools who are integral in our efforts to effect community change and policy reform. United Way of Greater New Haven serves as the Partnership's fiduciary and has awarded us numerous grants. The CT Office of Early Childhood supports the Partnership's responsibilities as a Local Early Childhood Council.



**Sheryl Sadinsky, Coordinator**

[ssadinsky@hamdenyoungchildren.org](mailto:ssadinsky@hamdenyoungchildren.org)

**Jennifer Do, Early Childhood Specialist**

[ido@hamdenyoungchildren.org](mailto:ido@hamdenyoungchildren.org)

[hamdenkids@gmail.com](mailto:hamdenkids@gmail.com)

203-407-7733

[Hamdenyoungchildren.org](http://Hamdenyoungchildren.org)

