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The Planning Process

The Bridgeport Alliance for Young Children (BAYC) emerged from the 2006 *Blueprint for Young Children* with a charge to capitalize on the strength of the collaboration in Bridgeport and challenge the leaders to provide transparent stewardship of the funds invested in their youngest citizens. This *UPDATE to Bridgeport's Blueprint for Young Children* removes silos from the system, prioritizes achievable strategies identified by the community, and defines the measures that will be used to evaluate our progress. To that end, BAYC leadership, Leadership in Action (LAP) participants, the myriad of providers who volunteer their expertise, and hundreds of parents are committed to the use of results-based accountability (RBA) and Community Decision Making.

When BAYC received a capacity grant in January 2006 from the Governor's Cabinet on Early Childhood, the Department of Education and William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund, the collaboration embarked upon an eighteen month planning process that included

three city-wide leadership meetings ("All-BAYC Meetings") and focus groups at each of the Family Resource Centers (Cesar Batalla School, Dunbar School, Roosevelt School, and Watersville School). BAYC leadership also hosted a Parent Conversation followed by a presentation of preliminary strategies and sought feedback at the January District PAC meeting and at the May Parent Convention.

The Health & Development Work Group assembled indicator data and collected input from parents and medical professionals on the gaps in health care for Bridgeport's young children and their families and priorities for improvement. The leadership met with five parent groups in locations across the community and with providers at the city's two community health centers and other health professionals, conducted a survey with medical professionals at Bridgeport Hospital, and hosted a meeting to finalize the plan's health priorities.

The other work groups (Families Empowering Families, Early Care & Education and Awareness & Advocacy) reviewed the existing *Blueprint*, considered current conditions, and tracked progress in implementation in their process of identifying headline indicators and strategies for the *UPDATED* community plan. The document is a true *community plan* that has received input from more than four hundred parents, city leaders, and providers from all fields — medical and mental health, education, social services, and not-for-profit agencies dedicated to improving the quality of life in Bridgeport.



**Safe,
Healthy,
and
Ready
to
Succeed
in
Life**



**UPDATE
to
Bridgeport's
Blueprint for Young Children**

UPDATE to Bridgeport's Blueprint for Young Children...a Community Plan for Early Childhood

The *UPDATE* presents a road map to address the challenges facing our young children and their families and create the community we want: a city where **all Bridgeport children, birth to age 8, will be safe, healthy, and ready to fulfill their potential.** We can only achieve this ambitious result with the full support of the community.

The *UPDATE* focuses on four strategic areas:

1. **Families empowering families** with the information, supports, and skills needed to encourage their children's success;
2. Ensuring the physical, mental, and emotional **health and development** of young children and their families;
3. Providing equal access to high-quality community and school-based **early care and education** programs to all Bridgeport children;
4. Mobilizing the Bridgeport community behind efforts to support its youngest residents through **awareness and advocacy** strategies.

The Bridgeport Alliance for Young Children (BAYC) is a collaborative of parents, service providers, and community members able to provide the leadership needed to pull together these efforts and drive the success of the *UPDATE*.

For a copy of the *UPDATE to Bridgeport's Blueprint for Young Children*, contact BAYC at 203/339-6318 or go www.baycbridgeport.org to download a copy.



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Quality of Life Results Statement: All Bridgeport children, birth to age 8, will be safe, healthy, and ready to fulfill thepotential.

Strategic Objectives

All parents and caregivers will be empowered with information, family-centered, family-driven support and skills needed to ensure that they are their children's first and most effective teacher.

All Bridgeport children, birth to 8, will have comprehensive, family-centered health care, including medical, dental and vision preventive care and treatment. All children's social-emotional and developmental issues and family risks will be identified and addressed.

All Bridgeport children will have equal access to high quality community-based and school-based early care and education programs.

The Bridgeport community will be fully informed and mobilized behind efforts to support improved outcomes for its youngest residents.

Strategic Areas

Families Empowering Families

We will measure success by tracking:
% of kindergarten through 3rd grade with chronic absenteeism
and
% of substantiated cases of abuse or neglect

- Increase parent awareness of their role as their child's first teacher and participation in programs to fulfill this role
- Increase opportunities for parents to expand the skills and knowledge that will help support their children's engagement, attendance, and success in school
- Increase the availability of services and information offered in multiple languages to parents to help support their children's engagement, attendance, and success in school
- Increase parent participation in leadership roles in the community

The time and effort of partners identified by the Work Group will be the most important resource needed to support this work. Many of our primary partners are already involved in BAYC, including the Bridgeport Board of Education, the City of Bridgeport, the School Readiness Council, local colleges and universities, the United Way of Coastal Fairfield County, the Bridgeport Public Library, the International Institute, faith-based institutions, the Parent Center and Family Resource Centers, Head Start Parent Policy Council, ASPIRA, National Network of Partnership Schools, PLTI Alumni, and RYASAP.

Health and Development

We will measure success by tracking:
% of children 0-8 enrolled in HUSKY who receive their well-child visits as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics
and
% of children who are receiving mental health services to meet the estimated community need

- Ensure comprehensive health care in Medical and Dental Homes with care coordination and implementation of HUSKY requirements
- Increase systematic and comprehensive screening for young children and their parents in multiple community-based programs and settings
- Enhance Bridgeport Early Childhood System of Care capacity to provide comprehensive, integrated services for children and families identified with multiple needs
- Increase and improve mental health treatment services for young children and their families
- Secure support for Medicaid reimbursement for essential services and increased Medicaid rates for all primary care providers and specialists
- Increase the percentage of children who have healthy diets and adequate physical activity

Bridgeport has an impressive array of health and development services that have been engaged in BAYC planning processes. Through the BAYC Child and Family Collaborative, we must now connect these services and make sure all partners (doctors, health centers, early care centers, and neighborhood agencies) are fully aware of services and how to access them. Additional resources will be needed to address specific service gaps as they are identified.

Early Care and Education

We will measure success by tracking:
% of Kindergarten students above standard on the January Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)
and
% of 3rd grade students at or above proficiency on each domain of the Connecticut Mastery Test

- Expand and improve professional development for Early Care and Education staff to improve program quality and increase student readiness for school upon entering Kindergarten
- Expand efforts to improve program quality that is consistent with local, state and federal guidelines
- Implement a Pre-K-3 Literacy Plan that aligns curriculum and integrates current efforts across schools and community preschool sites
- Expand the supply of infant/toddler and preschool slots to meet community needs
- Help children with no preschool experience successfully transition to Kindergarten

In addition to the continuation of funds already invested in these efforts, the primary resource required to implement these strategies is the time commitment of partners and agreement to share existing products, programs and resources. Many of the key partners identified for each strategy are already BAYC members and have committed to implement Plan activities.

Awareness and Advocacy

A major part of mobilizing the community is appreciating how residents are informed about issues relating to young children and their families. Keeping the community engaged and educated in the strategies of the UPDATE is so integral to our success that awareness and advocacy practices are embedded across all of the indicators in this plan.

Increasing Public Awareness The UPDATE calls for a variety of media, language and culturally-sensitive materials and varied approaches to ensure that the strategies and activities reach the widest possible audience. A special effort will be made to make certain that all kinds of audiences will be reached with our message, using both oral and written communications, the Internet, television and radio. We must make sure these messages are exciting, interest people, and are inclusive...reaching those less familiar with the written word and the English language. Our coordinated public awareness campaign will track the # of households aware of children's issues.

Advocating for early childhood Another key feature of this plan and of student success is informing elected officials of the value of early care and education and the level of investment necessary to for our children to fulfill their potential. Our campaign to cement relationships with local, state, and federal elected officials will be tracked by legislative/executive support for children's issues.

The primary resources needed to advance these strategies include the time and talent of BAYC volunteers, BAYC staff support, and in-kind materials and production capacity. Unlike other BAYC work groups, the Awareness and Advocacy Work Group does not have a pool of dedicated professionals from which to recruit members. Work Group leadership therefore must be resourceful to identify concerned residents and professionals to support the awareness and advocacy strategies that will help ensure the achievement of all the goals of this Plan.

Strategies for Action

Partners and Resources Needed

Foundation for Results

Generate Leadership and Education Opportunities

Build Public Support for Changes in Public Policy

Fund and Invest in Systems that Demonstrate Accountability

Build and Support Partnerships that Promote Collaboration