

# CT Cradle to Career Coalition

## Quarterly Newsletter

*Advancing Economic, Educational, and Health Equity  
Across Connecticut*

**Welcome to the Connecticut Cradle to Career (C2C) Coalition Quarterly  
Newsletter!**

At the Connecticut Cradle to Career Coalition, our work is grounded in shared learning, civic and community engagement, data-informed decision-making, and advocacy shaped by lived experience. This year, across our communities, we championed legislative solutions that reflect the critical importance of early childhood development, educational opportunity, and equitable access to health and economic resources.

The 2025 Connecticut legislative session marked a historic milestone for children and families, especially in early childhood education. The Coalition was proud to help shape and support landmark legislation that establishes a new early care system: one grounded in affordability and workforce sustainability. With a permanent endowment, capped child care costs, competitive salaries for early educators, and expanded opportunity for families and children with special needs, Connecticut is setting a national precedent for what it means to invest in our youngest residents.

While several priorities remain unfinished, this session laid a strong foundation for greater equity and economic mobility from cradle to career.

At the same time, important programs like Full-Service Community Schools are facing potential elimination in the proposed federal budget. As a statewide coalition, we remain committed to protecting what works — and pushing for policies that put children and families first.

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**Coalition Wide Advocacy Impact at a Glance**

# Community voices shaping policy



**SIX**  
participants  
testified before  
the legislature



**10 Coalition members**  
submitted testimonies  
on 22 bills

The Coalition's Policy & Civic Engagement Director joined Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas and a fellow community leader to highlight how our partnerships advance civic engagement through their work. Click the link below to learn more:

**DOING CIVICS: REAL WORLD  
EXAMPLES**

## C2C Initiative Highlights



**CT Cradle to Career Goes to  
Washington**



**Morning Without Child Care**



Last month, members of Connecticut's Cradle to Career Coalition attended the 2025 StriveTogether Policy Summit in Washington, D.C., where they met with federal leaders and elevated key issues like youth mental health and disconnection as economic challenges affecting communities across the state. Representatives from all five Coalition partnerships—Bridgeport Prospers, Danbury Collective, Norwalk ACTS, Stamford Cradle to Career, and Waterbury Bridge to Success—introduced Connecticut's place-based work to our federal delegation, including the offices of Senators Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy and Representatives Jahana Hayes and Jim Himes. The ask to all offices were the same: champion a Congressional resolution that recognizes youth disconnection as a national crisis and support the reinstatement of funding for Full-Service Community Schools. The coalition also joined national partners to explore how local, data-driven advocacy can shape policies that improve outcomes for children, youth, and families

This spring, all Cradle to Career partnerships participated in *Morning Without Child Care*, an annual day of action organized by Child Care for CT. Our teams helped lead 5 of the 15 rallies held statewide, with Governor Lamont joining us at the event in Waterbury. Communities gathered to call for a child care system that works—for families paying up to 27% of their income, for early educators earning less than \$35,000 a year, and for an economy losing \$1.5 billion annually to a system in crisis. Our Coalition showed up in force: organizing, speaking out, and standing alongside parents, providers, and advocates. Together, we helped drive the momentum that led to this year's historic early childhood reform legislation. This action was a clear reminder: when communities unite for change, policy follows.

## Learn About Each Cradle to Career Initiatives

Bridgeport Prospers is advancing health equity through CARE (Community Action for Recovery and Empowerment)—a youth-driven program tackling mental health disparities and empowering residents to build a healthier, more equitable Bridgeport.

➤ [Learn more about Bridgeport Prospers](#)

Stamford Cradle to Career successfully advocated for universal free school meals and is leading efforts to sustain Full-Service Community Schools at Dolan and Rippowam.

➤ [Explore Stamford C2C's work](#)

Norwalk ACTS is advancing youth-led mental health work and local workforce development through their Data Action Teams and community convenings.

➤ [See what's new at Norwalk ACTS](#)

Danbury Collective is deepening community engagement after joining the StriveTogether national network in 2023, with a focus on high school graduation and postsecondary readiness.

➤ [Get Get involved with the Danbury Collective with the Danbury Collective](#)

Waterbury Bridge to Success mobilized hundreds for Morning Without Childcare and continues to champion early learning, equity, and access across city systems.

➤ [Follow Waterbury BTS's impact](#)

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## **Moving Ahead: From Policy To Practice**

The Coalition is entering its next phase—where equity-focused policy must be paired with local implementation that works for real families. We're working to:

- Leverage place-based partnerships and local governance to ensure policies meet the needs of each community
- Address access barriers like unsafe sidewalks, limited transit, and disconnected infrastructure that block opportunity
- Sustain funding for early childhood, education, and health care.
- Launch Youth Community Health Worker pilot programs and legislation by 2026.
- Advocate for a permanent Child Tax Credit.

### **Take Action: Help protect Full-Service Community Schools.**

Proposed federal budget cuts would eliminate \$150 million in FSCS funding nationwide. These schools are working—in Stamford and beyond. Contact your members of Congress by **July 18** to urge continued support for FSCS programs.

**TAKE  
ACTION**

Read our [full summary](#) to see how collective impact is driving systems change across Connecticut, and what's next as we prepare for 2026.

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**The Danbury Collective**



United Way of Coastal  
and Western Connecticut

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