

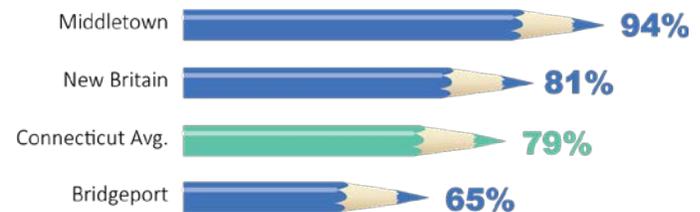
FEATURE: Early Childhood

Children who enter Kindergarten “ready to learn” tend to achieve better educational outcomes. Parents, family members, and friends help children develop social skills, communication skills, and problem solving skills. Preschools and early childhood education settings enhance healthy child development too. These early childhood educators focus on social and emotional learning, building literacy and numeracy skills, and promoting teamwork within a larger group.

The Safe School Healthy Students initiative identifies two statewide areas of focus for early childhood education:

1. Increase access by low-income children to high quality early childhood education opportunities.
2. Improve early identification of behavior and mental health issues, and connect affected students and families to community resources.

The Percentage of Children Entering Kindergarten with Preschool Experience (Fall 2014)



These focus areas represent priorities for Connecticut’s Office of Early Childhood, a core partner in the SSHS initiative. Visit <http://www.ct.gov/oec> to learn more about Connecticut’s statewide efforts to promote healthy child development.

FOCUS: School Districts

Each SSHS school district and their community partners support healthy child development in other ways. For example:

Promoting Access in Bridgeport



Bridgeport SSHS promotes the importance of early childhood education and helps parents learn

about open available openings in their neighborhoods. A Pre-School Showcase creates a forum for parents and providers to exchange information. Grassroots marketing efforts provide ongoing information about the value of healthy child development. Contact Nekita Carroll-Hall for more information (nhall@bridgeportedu.net).

Child First in Middletown



Middletown SSHS partners with Middlesex Hospital Center for Behavioral Health Family

Advocacy Program to expand Child First. This evidence-based model provides intensive, home-based services to vulnerable young children and their parents. Child First helps develop nurturing, consistent, and responsive parent-child relationships. Contact Rachel Sadlon for more information (Sadlonr@mpsct.org).

Intentional Play in New Britain



Kindergarten teachers program intentional play into lesson plans to promote the development of

executive functioning skills. Results include an increase in task orientation, higher attention to detail, and better social skills to succeed in group work. The district will expand this model to grades 1 through 3 at all elementary schools in the upcoming years. Contact Ryan Morgan for more information (morgan4@csgnb.org).

About the Connecticut Safe Schools Healthy Students Diffusion Initiative

The Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHAS) receives federal funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to improve the behavioral health outcomes of students. SSHS Community Management Teams in Bridgeport, Middletown and New Britain work closely with district leaders to implement evidence-based strategies. A Statewide SSHS Management Team creates a statewide platform to share successful strategies with other school districts and communities. Visit <http://www.ct.gov/sde/sshs> or contact SSHS Project Director Carol Meredith (carol.meredith@ct.gov). Visit the federal SSHS website at www.samhsa.gov/safe-schools-healthy-students/about