

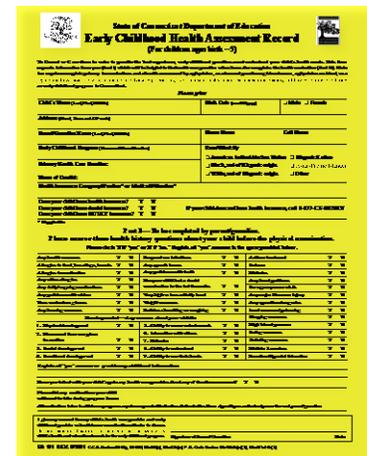
## Accessing Community Level Early Childhood Health Data in Connecticut

Across Connecticut, many communities are developing well thought out strategies and interventions for ensuring that the young children in their community arrive at school ready to learn. It has long been established that for children to succeed in school, attention to their health and social-emotional development, beginning at birth, is essential. More than half of the children who enter kindergarten in the U.S. are lagging in health, socio-emotional and or cognitive development. Early childhood community collaboratives are working to beat these odds, with support from the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund’s Discovery Initiative, the state of Connecticut and other private funding partners.

Identifying the most pressing early childhood health problems in a community is the first step. Unfortunately, Connecticut community collaboratives have struggled to find local health data for young children and have relied on limited public use data sources to guide their planning. Many are surprised to find out that useful health data for young children in their community does exist but it is not accessible in its current form.

A new project is about to change this. The new Early Childhood Health Data Institute will test the feasibility of mining existing data from the Connecticut State Department of Education’s Early Childhood Health Assessment Records (a.k.a. “yellow forms”) in eight community collaboratives representing 12 cities and towns. The participating communities are: Middletown, Norwalk, East Hartford, Bristol, Bridgeport, Stamford, Danbury and Eastern Highlands Health District (*a 5 community consortium from Mansfield, Coventry, Stafford, Chaplin and Vernon*).

The Department of Public Health requires all licensed early care and education (ECE) programs to have a completed State yellow form on file for every child in their care, but the information on the forms has never been tabulated or aggregated to inform planning and programming. The form provides community-specific information on a range of physical health, chronic disease and developmental indicators. Examples of these indicators include: height and weight, vision and hearing screening, dental health, developmental delays, chronic diseases (asthma, allergies, diabetes and seizures), and whether the child has a medical home. The form collects health information from both the child’s parent and doctor.



The form is titled "State of Connecticut Department of Education Early Childhood Health Assessment Record (For children ages 3-5)". It contains several sections: "Child Information", "Parent Information", "Early Childhood Program Information", and "Health Assessment". The "Health Assessment" section includes a checklist of various health indicators, each with a "Y" (Yes) or "N" (No) box for recording the status.

Through the Data Institute project, \$5,000 and a customized database developed by the UCONN Center for Public Health and Health Policy will be granted to each collaborative. The database will provide easy aggregation and reporting of health information in childcare sites. The Data Institute comprises three technical assistance Learning Sessions (March 4, April 23 and May 21) to provide community teams with training on data entry, data aggregation and reporting and using data for

planning purposes.

Once tabulated, the communities will analyze the data to accurately target and efficiently address their most pressing early childhood health and development issues, as part of their comprehensive school readiness and early childhood plans. Participating childcare programs will only share aggregated and de-identified data with community planning teams to ensure confidentiality of all children's health information.

The Early Childhood Health Data Institute project is coordinated by the Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut and jointly funded by the Children's Fund of Connecticut, the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund and the Grossman Family Foundation. Information learned will be shared with state policymakers to plan for further development and better utilization of early childhood and school health information, which is vital to informing state and local early childhood efforts and tracking child health outcomes.

To read more about the Early Childhood Data Institute and CHDI's work with communities to integrate health into early childhood planning, visit our website at [www.chdi.org](http://www.chdi.org) or click on the links below.

- News Release: [New Data Institute Helps Communities Target Health Resources \(3/4/13\)](#)
- News Release: [Helping CT Communities Address Health in their School Readiness and Early Childhood Plans \(1/7/13\)](#)
- A free [Community Tool Kit](#) to help communities integrate health into their health planning efforts.

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