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New Report Recommends Strategies Linking Literacy and Social-Emotional Skills to Improve Children’s Success in School

Farmington, CT - Experts agree that there is a deep connection between social-emotional development and literacy in children’s early school success including achieving reading proficiency in the early grades. Reading proficiency by the end of third grade is a strong predictor of high school graduation and later student success. In Connecticut, [57 percent of 4th graders](#), including 80 percent of low-income children, and 85 percent of African-American children failed to achieve reading proficiency by the end of 3rd grade posing serious consequences for their future.

“To effectively address the achievement gap in Connecticut and boost school-age reading proficiency rates, we need to start early with integrated strategies that support infant and early childhood social-emotional and language development,” according to Judith Meyers, President and CEO of CHDI.

In 2014, nine communities in Connecticut explored researched-based strategies to link supports for social-emotional and literacy skills. The effort was part of the Connecticut Peer Learning Pilot on Social-Emotional Development and Early Literacy, developed and led by the [Campaign for Grade-Level Reading](#), in partnership with the [National Center for Children in Poverty](#) and with support from the Irving Harris Foundation and others. Participating community teams represented Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund [Discovery Initiative](#) coalitions from Bridgeport, Colchester, Danbury, Enfield, Norwalk, Torrington, Vernon, West Hartford, and Winchester.

Today, the Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut (CHDI) released a report based on the Connecticut Peer Learning Pilot. The report, IMPACT [“**Connecting Social and Emotional Health and Literacy: Critical for Early School Success**,”](#) explores the interplay between young children’s social-emotional development and early literacy and language skills, elevates awareness of the connections between these essential competencies, and seeks to accelerate actions by states and communities to advance children’s readiness for school and successful educational achievement.

“Early cognitive and social-emotional skills are interactive and woven together - like strands of a rope,” notes Ann Rosewater, lead author of the report and co-leader of the Connecticut Peer Learning Pilot on Social-Emotional Development and Early Literacy. “The strategies and tools in this report will help communities implement approaches to align children’s literacy and social-emotional health.”

For the full report and more detailed information on implementing successful strategies for early school success, visit www.chdi.org/publications. For media questions, contact Julie Tacinelli at tacinelli@uchc.edu or 860-679-1534.

The Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut (CHDI), a subsidiary of the [Children's Fund of Connecticut](#), is a not-for-profit organization established to promote and maximize the healthy physical, behavioral, emotional, cognitive and social development of children throughout Connecticut. CHDI works to ensure that children in Connecticut, particularly those who are disadvantaged, will have access to and make use of a comprehensive, effective, community-based health and mental health care system.

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