



The Town of Granby is one of 53 communities in Connecticut that received a Discovery Grant from the William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund to improve connections between early childcare and public education, and to provide support to families of young learners. In Granby, the Granby Early Childhood Council (GECC) is engaged in the work of the Discovery Grant. The GECC is a collaborative of diverse individuals whose interest is the well-being of all children pre-birth to age five. The Council advocates for policies and practices which ensure **“all children arrive at school healthy and socially and emotionally prepared for academic success and life-long learning.”**

The GECC has convened monthly meetings since May, 2006 and has focused its work primarily on school readiness, kindergarten transition and parent support and training. The GECC has adopted the following goals:

1. Increase community awareness and understanding of the importance of early childcare and education in order to create a common public goal.
2. Support and enable parents as their child’s first teacher and advocate with a continuum of parent engagement opportunities.
3. Enhance the capacity of all childcare givers to provide quality developmentally appropriate care of young children through professional development opportunities.
4. Effectively partner with the school’s kindergarten team to create a successful transition the early childcare environment to kindergarten.

On May 6th the GECC will complete the 8 part workshop series on the CT Preschool Curriculum and Assessment Framework that was offered to childcare providers, public educators and parents over the course of this current school year. These workshops were geared towards improving the quality of early childhood experiences for Granby’s children. The workshop series has been facilitated by Beth Bye, State Representative and Director of Early Childhood Education, Capital Region Education Council and Sandra Fowler of the Hartford Association for the Education of Young Children. The workshops have been well attended not only by Granby childcare providers, but also by early educators and providers from several surrounding communities. In particular, the April workshop was attended by providers and early educators representing the following communities: Granby, East Granby, Simsbury, Canton, Burlington and Hartford. This demonstrates the response of childcare providers and early educators throughout the State of CT to Governor Rell’s **Early Childhood Investment Framework, “Ready by 5 and Fine by 9”**. The Framework identifies 50 action items necessary to achieve the following goals for the state’s young children:

- To reach appropriate developmental milestones from birth to age five.
- To begin kindergarten with the knowledge, skills and behaviors needed for success in school.
- To have K-3 education experiences that extend children’s birth-to-five learning and ensure consistent progress in achieving reading mastery.

One of the Ten Immediate Priorities listed in the framework is to develop a multi-year early childhood work force professional development plan to assure compliance with state law and selected national certification programs. Studies have demonstrated that more highly qualified teachers contribute significantly to better outcomes for children. Teachers who have bachelor's degrees and specialized training in early childhood education are better able to meet the school readiness needs of preschool children. In a 2004 policy paper entitled "Better Teachers, Better Preschools: Student Achievement Linked to Teacher Qualifications," The National Institute for Early Education Research summarized the findings of this body of research as follows: *"Both general education and specific preparation in early childhood education have been found to predict teaching quality. Better-educated teachers have more positive, sensitive and responsive interaction with children, provide richer language and cognitive experiences, and are less authoritarian, punitive and detached. The result is better social, emotional, linguistic and cognitive development for the child."*

Granby is fortunate that through Discovery Grant funds its early educators and providers are receiving professional development opportunities that are in line with the Governor's Early Childhood Investment Plan which will result in more highly educated and qualified local childcare providers in Granby, and therefore, better outcomes for Granby's children.

In conclusion, the GECC also recently conducted a parent survey to explore parent sentiment and concern on a range of early childhood issues. The results of this survey, including all parent comments that were listed on the survey, can be viewed on the American Towns website at this link: <http://app3.americantowns.com:80/ct/granby/news/granby-early-childhood-council-gecc-parent-survey-results-summary-91130>

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