



Connecticut

Cohort 6, Funding Period 2014–2019

[Connecticut Project LAUNCH](#)

Grantee Overview

Connecticut Elm City Project LAUNCH is committed to supporting high-quality early childhood systems focused on families with children ages birth to 8 years in the New Haven community. New Haven has one of the highest rates of childhood poverty in the nation at 34.1%. The Dwight neighborhood is the city's most densely populated area and contains a high proportion of over-burdened, under-resourced families. Connecticut Elm City Project LAUNCH aims to decrease racial and gender disparities in access to mental health screening and evidence-based services for low-income African American and Hispanic mothers.

Project Milestones

All [Project LAUNCH](#) grantees implement five promotion and prevention strategies intended to increase access to preventative care and to raise the quality of prevention and promotion services available to children and families. In Connecticut Elm City LAUNCH, these five strategies are implemented through the following activities:

- **Screening and Assessment:** Connecticut Elm City LAUNCH has increased screening and assessment at the local and state levels to promote physical and mental health for children ages birth to 8 years and their families. Locally, LAUNCH has implemented developmental screening in three local pediatric practices, a local shelter, and a network of home-based care service agencies. These screenings include: the [Ages and Stages Questionnaire](#)® (ASQ-3™), [Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social & Emotional](#)® (ASQ:SE-2™), the [Screen for Childhood Anxiety-Related Disorders](#) (SCARED), the [Vanderbilt Assessment Scales](#) for ADHD, the [Patient Health Questionnaire](#) (PHQ-9) for depression and/or anxiety, the adult and child versions of the [Centers for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scales](#) (CES-D and CES-DC), and the [M-CHAT](#) autism screening assessment for children 16–48 months old. At the state level, Connecticut Elm City LAUNCH has focused on surveying existing early childhood screening and assessment efforts across the state to identify gaps in services and possible areas for collaboration and coordination across agencies.
- **Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation:** Connecticut Elm City LAUNCH is using the [Early Childhood Consultation Partnership](#) (ECCP®) evidence-based model to provide early childhood mental health consultation. As a result of a collaboration with Project LAUNCH, ECCP® is testing the expansion of the model to grades K–3 in Connecticut public schools. The ECCP® clinician provides intensive site, core classroom, and child-specific level consultation services.

- **Integrating Behavioral Health into Primary Care:** Connecticut Elm City LAUNCH’s mental health clinician is actively engaged in efforts to integrate behavioral health into primary health care in the community. In Years 2 and 3 of the project, the LAUNCH clinician provided behavioral health services at three pediatric practices. In this role, the LAUNCH clinician facilitated the connection between medical and behavioral health providers and has completed the [Trauma-Informed Child Parent Psychotherapy](#) (TI-CPP) 18-month training. In addition, the LAUNCH clinician is now the program manager for the Embedded Clinician Program at Clifford Beers Clinic, where she will partner with pediatric providers across the greater New Haven area and work to refine and implement a model of care where Clifford Beers will colocate a licensed social worker at the pediatric office. This program will enhance the sustainability of LAUNCH’s screening and behavioral health integration efforts, increasing the likelihood of prevention and early detection of developmental and social and emotional delays in very young children and improve health outcomes for children and their families. The LAUNCH clinician continues to build relationships with pediatric providers in New Haven, and the Clifford Beers Clinic is working to refine its embedded clinician model and execute business agreements with interested pediatric providers.
- **Enhancing Home Visiting:** Both the state and local LAUNCH teams are focusing on workforce development to support home visiting professionals. Connecticut Elm City LAUNCH supported the development of an Infant Mental Health curriculum for home visitors, which is currently being used to increase knowledge of infant social and emotional development. At the state level, Connecticut Elm City LAUNCH has focused on helping enhance and expand communication between home visitors and primary care providers.
- **Family Strengthening:** Connecticut Elm City LAUNCH organizes a monthly Parent Wellness group focused on health and wellness. The group features workshops by providers who present on services available in the local community. Through their participation in the group, parents have received advocacy training and have an opportunity to influence early childhood policy, practices, and systems at both the local and state levels. The Parent Wellness group incorporates SAMHSA’s Eight Dimensions of Wellness, which include: 1) emotional, 2) environmental, 3) financial, 4) intellectual, 5) occupational, 6) physical, 7) social, and 8) spiritual. In addition, Project LAUNCH has initiated [Circle of Security](#) groups at Clifford Beers Clinic. The groups are designed to help parents understand their child’s emotional world by helping them learn to read emotional needs, support their child’s ability to successfully manage emotions, enhance the development of their child’s self-esteem, and honor the innate wisdom and desire for their child to be secure.

Systems Integration

Project LAUNCH’s partnership with the Office of Early Childhood has been instrumental in recruiting the Connecticut Early Childhood Cabinet to serve as Connecticut Elm City LAUNCH’s State Young Child Wellness Council. Furthermore, through a partnership with United Way, Connecticut Elm City LAUNCH has been able to effectively engage the community around key messaging related to the five LAUNCH strategies. The Young Child Wellness Council has been exploring ways to increase race equity in child care and other settings serving young children and their families.

Vignette

“The Elm City Project LAUNCH Wellness Group provides a safe and welcoming environment where we learn and try to address barriers that may be causing stress. It was a relief to hear similar and different experiences from other parents and brainstorm ways they could be overcome without the isolation that many of us at times felt. The group environment encouraged us to reach out for advice and support. Clifford Beers is an ideal location, as there is a wealth of knowledge and support available beyond anything a group alone could give. Having child care was a great help, as it reduced a barrier for parents who would otherwise have not been able to attend. It was nice to have representatives from other service providers, such as the Department of Social Services, Moms Partnership, and Mothers for Justice, attend the meetings. This provided an informal introduction to what in some instances can be a traumatic meeting and gave insight to other available services and providers. Even when there were no presentations, the information gained among the group regarding wellness, what’s happening in the community, and the networking with other organizations is an excellent way to empower us as parents and increase access to appropriate services for ourselves and our children.”

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