

Our Partnership with New Haven Public Schools



District Challenge

How can New Haven Public Schools (NHPS):

- Align its current early childhood practices, resources, and supports to align to a developmentally meaningful, play-based, and trauma-informed approach to learning?
- Deepen the capacity of the central school system team to message, implement, and sustain developmentally appropriate early childhood instruction across the system?
- Develop an understanding of and support the implementation of a developmentally appropriate curriculum across program strands of Pre-K (Head Start, School Readiness, Magnet Schools), as well as bridging Pre-K to Kindergarten?

Approach

The Bank Street Education Center partnered with NHPS leadership to generate a set of learnings about the school system's early childhood practices by conducting a collaborative review of NHPS's Pre-k classrooms, resources, and supports. Based on the learnings, the Education Center worked in continued partnership with the school system to implement a strategic set of professional learning sessions to develop a common understanding of what developmentally appropriate curriculum and instruction looks like for children ages 3-6.

Phase One: Collaborative Review

- Conducted a targeted collaborative review of early childhood practices, resources, and supports within the school system and generated a report for leadership with key findings and recommendations.
- Visited 41, or approximately half, of the early childhood classrooms across the school system and interviewed a variety of stakeholders including central office staff, parents, classroom volunteers, educators at all levels, and community partners.
- Shared with NHPS an early childhood review tool and protocol to collect and organize the information gathered from the review in partnership with Bank Street College faculty and staff.

Current Project Reach

21,636 total students in New Haven
3,000 preschool children
12 instructional coaches
10 school system leadership team members
125 teachers and paras



Phase Two: Implementation

Strategic Planning with District Staff

- Co-created an early learning vision messaging document to be shared with Pre-K and Kindergarten school leaders, teachers, and parents.
- Worked with central and school leaders to ensure there is a coherent and comprehensive professional learning map for Pre-K/K educators that aligns to and sustains the system's instructional vision.

Professional Learning

- Provided two strands of professional learning to selected "lab site" school staff--one for teachers and one for instructional coaches--with a focus on implementing Creative Curriculum as a developmentally appropriate curriculum tool.
- Supported Pre-K/K teachers and leaders across program strands (Head Start, School Readiness, Magnet Schools) with a focus on developmentally appropriate instruction, environments, and leadership.



"It was great to share information with colleagues and to realize that we share many common goals and stumbling blocks."

"I enjoyed the training [and] I am already implementing it into my curriculum. The small group interaction was very nice. Presenters were very knowledgeable."

Impact

Strategic Planning

The collaborative district review process galvanized the early childhood community to come together in support of a common vision for developmentally appropriate practice and helped garner support from teachers, school leaders, system staff, and community leadership for a strategic approach advancing that vision in classrooms.

Our goals for implementation include:

- A more detailed definition of the vision for early childhood and the bridge to Kindergarten, setting expectations for leaders, teachers, and parents regarding what they will see in the classroom.
- Fidelity of implementation of the Creative Curriculum and the generation of lessons learned for spreading strong curriculum implementation across the school system.
- Pre-K/K teachers and instructional coaches articulating what developmentally appropriate instruction looks like for children ages 3-6 and understanding how to implement it in their classrooms.