

## Our Partnership with New Haven Children's Ideal Learning District



### Challenge

Birth through age eight is a critical time of development for all children and forms the foundation for later success. The growth that takes place in this period sets the stage for all complex learning, including problem solving and the ability to sustain meaningful and caring relationships. However, without high quality support and care, young children can begin to gather compounding challenges instead of strengths. This is the same in New Haven, CT, as it is all over the country.

How can a focused investment in New Haven create universal access to high-quality early care and education and support better academic and life outcomes for all children later in life?

### Approach

New Haven Children's Ideal Learning District (NH ChILD) proposes to revolutionize the early care and education landscape in New Haven by galvanizing the community around a common vision of Ideal Learning to provide quality early care and education experiences for all children ages zero to eight. The concept of Ideal Learning stems from a partnership of organizations, led by the Trust for Learning, with a shared commitment to developmentally meaningful, play-based, and trauma informed care including the Montessori Leaders Collaborative, North American Reggio Emilia Alliance, Tools of the Mind, and Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America. The Bank Street Education Center is leading the implementation planning for the NH ChILD project in partnership with the Friends Center for Children.

NH ChILD serves as a national example of a multidisciplinary, cross sector, community effort to increase the number of young children served in "ideal" child-centered learning environments. New Haven is well poised to serve as a model for such an effort given its

### Projected Project Reach

21,636 total students in New Haven

4,613 preschool-aged children

4,370 infants and toddlers



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size, diversity, capacity, and demonstrated commitment to early childhood care and education.

### Design

*Provide Access to Ideal Learning Early Childhood Education for All New Haven Children Ages Zero to Five*

- Work together with providers, families, educators, and civic leaders to increase the capacity of current programs and add new programs, as needed, so that all children have access to Ideal Learning.
- Overcome barriers to access by growing programs and providing transportation in underserved neighborhoods, subsidizing programs, and creating a universal application system.

*Strengthen Existing Programs to Support Ideal Learning for New Haven Children through 2nd Grade*

- Professional learning experiences are content-specific, provide opportunities for active learning, make explicit connections to classroom practice, sustained and cohesive across sessions, and address equity and diversity concerns.
- Expand degree-granting satellite programs to build the collective capacity of early childhood education providers in ways that align with the Ideal Learning vision. By the year 2021 all early childhood education providers will be required by law to have bachelor's degrees in early childhood education. Currently, 68% of existing New Haven publicly-funded early childhood programs are not on track to meet this requirement.

### Implementation

In April 2017, the Bank Street Education Center, Trust for Learning, and Friends Center for Children held a kick-off event and released the "Making the Case" paper which serves as a landscape analysis for the possibilities for realizing the vision and a call to action to the early childhood community in New Haven to lead the way. To read the paper or learn more about the initiative, please visit [newhavenchild.org](http://newhavenchild.org).

Additional engagement, planning, and fundraising work is underway to complete the first phase of the project:

Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
Make the case	Identify implementation partners	Begin efforts to close the gap in access by providing additional spaces in early childhood programs
Unveil the vision	Continue to engage community	Continue to expand professional learning supports to improve the quality of new and existing programs and schools
Engage potential partners	Raise implementation funds needed to launch phase III	Monitor and evaluate progress
Raise \$500,000 for phase II		