

COALITION CONNECTION



Late Winter 2025

The Importance of Playgroups

The former U.S. Surgeon General, Vivek Murthy issued an advisory, **Parents Under Pressure** calling "attention to the importance of parental stress, mental health and well-being, stressors unique to parenting, and the bidirectional relationship between parental mental health and child outcomes" which "requires the nation's immediate awareness and action"

Communities and Coalition partners throughout the state offer playgroups, creating the space and connection to help families feel supported, valued, and heard. The Alliance's Community of Practice spent time delving into the features of well-run playgroups and created this **Playgroup Blueprint**, intended to be used by anyone interested in starting a local playgroup. Below is an infographic that highlights some key features of successful playgroups.

From a family participant in the playgroup run by Carol Stone at Lakes Region Community Services' Family Resource Center:

"...Playgroup has formed bonds beyond the four walls of the room it's held in, a place that you didn't know you needed until you are there." **Sandy, Lakes Region Community Service Playgroup Member**



Alliance Highlights

Take a look at some of the work we've been up to in the past year,



IN THE COMMUNITY

Coalitions and partners have been featured in a number of local and statewide articles. Learn more about their work in action.

Early Care and Education Association (ECEA) was highlighted in an article about substitute teachers, its expansion into Claremont to support the child care workforce. The Couch Foundation released a dynamic case study and video.

Nashua SmartStart Post-partum group and a joint effort with NH Listens featured in Carsey Institute's newsletter

Read how the Early Childhood partners in the Capital region are building a Trauma-Responsive Community with support from the NH Children's Health Foundation.

HATCH - Hampton Alliance for Thriving Children in the news

EC Region 1 - Pyramid Model Strategies Go To The Library and HOPE Framework Training

"Talk To People: Community Advocacy in Childcare" -Endowment for Health article about The Learning Center in Gorham.

The New Hampshire Statewide Family Engagement Center (NH-SFEC) is dedicated to improving the educational outcomes of New



New Hampshire
**STATEWIDE
FAMILY
ENGAGEMENT
CENTER**

Hampshire students by fostering collaboration among families, schools, and communities. By leveraging evidence-based frameworks and programs, we aim to elevate family voice to form a statewide infrastructure for sustained family partnership in education. The NH-SFEC works both locally and at the statewide level to help schools, families, and communities build the essential conditions for success.

During the second year of the grant, the NH-SFEC assisted with community events, sponsored webinars and summits, facilitated Conscious Discipline and Strengthening Families series, provided online resources for families and educators, and offered multiple Family Villages. Family Villages are a key component of the NH-SFEC, offering a mutual support network for caregivers to develop their personal strengths and goals to enhance their communities as good places to raise children. Complete this [form](#) to receive more information. Our Advisory Council helps to develop and share resources for families and educational professionals. We want diverse experiences and perspectives at the table, including yours!

The Statewide Family Engagement Center Community of Practice focused on Family Engagement from Cradle to Career will be launching on March 27 at 10. [To join in the CoP, register here.](#) and to learn more about these resources and others, visit the [NH-SFEC webpage](#) and [Tips for Families \(Birth-5\)](#)

Family Connections

The NH Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) assists agencies providing Family Centered Supports and Services (Birth to 3) to promote and increase the quality of early supports and services and Preschool Special Education supports and services to eligible children, birth through five years, and their families. **They are looking for more family voices on the ICC.** [Click here](#) for more information.

NH Interagency Coordinating Council	
<i>Be the voice for all our families!</i>	
<small>The Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) is an advisory board for NH Birth to 3. They work in conjunction with the State of NH's Part C of IDEA, Office of Special Education Program to promote and increase the quality of services and supports to eligible children, birth up to age three.</small>	<small>Thank you for your interest in the ICC. Any parent or caregiver of a child who receives, or did receive, Early Supports and Services in NH, should consider joining the ICC. Your input guides the future of NH Birth to Three, how funds could be allocated, and how programs can improve to better serve our communities.</small>
Governor Appointed MEMBERSHIP	
Membership Includes: Parent Area Agencies Services for Family-Centered Services NH Birth to 3 Center Care Head Start Health Insurance Homeschool Education Medicaid	MEETING SCHEDULE <small>The ICC meets virtually on the first Friday of February, April, June, August, and December from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. October is typically an all-day in person retreat.</small>
<small>Parents and caregivers are an important part of the NH ICC; we are the people getting the services and the voices on the screen. NH parents and caregivers who join the meetings become an important voice to how services, organizations, etc. run at the state level. Throughout the years I have spent on the board I have participated in many meaningful conversations that brought up flows in how services operate. I have also shared ideas and provided input into ways to improve services. Parents and caregivers need representation to have a louder voice and make a greater impact at the state level. Join us in making NH a better place for our children and their futures.</small>	
	
<small>Scan the QR code to visit the ICC website</small>	<small>For more information, contact Nicole M. Bushnell@idhs.nh.gov</small>
<small>Revised 4/2024</small>	

Parent Leadership Training Institute

Stevie Klein is participating in the Parent Leadership Training Institute offered by the Manchester Community College. In May, Stevie will represent NH at Zero to Three's annual Strolling Thunder event in Washington DC. Congratulations Stevie!

I joined the PLTI to gain personal and professional skills. This is a great opportunity to grow in my Family Engagement Coordinator role, to best support my Greater Nashua Community. Additionally, this is also a personal goal/challenge for me and I am stepping out of my comfort zone. My personal goal is to build upon my public speaking skills, so then I can best use my parent voice to advocate. I often tell the parents I work with 'nothing about us, without us'. I first heard the phrase when I was new at Smart Start, from Sarah Fox, and it's been sticking with me ever since. If I am going to be sharing this message with parents, I might as well talk the talk and walk the walk. So far, there have been 3 PLTI sessions at Manchester Community College, and I couldn't speak more highly of my experience. By the end of the 20 weeks parents will have a 'community project' they aim to implement in their individual communities. I am hopeful the PLTI program can grow across NH, and more parents can get support in parent leadership.



STEVIE WITH HER SON



All 'Bout the Data, the Data



Just launched! The Children's Health Foundation created a [NH Children's Health Dashboard](#).

Here's how to [utilize it](#)

Join the Endowment for Health for its yearly update of the NH Child Well-Being Data Hub on April 18, 12-1 [Register here](#).

Read [NH Fiscal Policy Institute's](#) series of report [NH Early Care and Education Research Consortium](#)

[DHHS's Data Portal](#) [NH Community Profiles](#)

[Data of Child Care and Early Learning in the United States - Center for American Progress](#)

NH Mom Hub - Building More Support for Maternal Wellness

Champions for Maternal Wellness have coalesced in a number of exciting ways over the past year. An exciting effort is underway in the development of a MomHub, intended to provide "the building blocks of connection, resources and supports for maternal mental health." Alison Palmer and Heather Martin are gathering national, state and local and resources so there's a one-stop place for a new mom to find support, including peer support. Learn more about the [NH Mom Hub here](#) and from this [info sheet](#). Do you provide services or know of others in the community who do? Submit [your organization information](#) to be included in the Mom Hub.

Interested in learning more about the Perinatal Coalitions throughout the state? [Check out the new website](#) of the NHPQC and see where there's a coalition near you. Finally, if you are interested in legislation, read [SB 246-FN](#), Momnibus 2.0 which seeks to provide more supports and services. Read more information [here](#).

HOT OFF THE PRESSES

Just released! [Outcome Summary of ARPA-D Contracted Initiatives](#)

NH's approved **Child Care and Development Block Grant Act** 2025-2027 is posted on DHHS's [website](#)

[Check out](#) Child Care Aware NH **Spring 2025 Training-At-A-Glance**



Report and Reading Corner

New Hampshire

[Kids Left Behind Before Kindergarten](#)

[NH Charitable Foundation Newsletter](#)

[Endowment for Health Newsletter](#)
(featuring several early childhood leaders)

[NH Community Behavioral Health Association 2024 Annual Report](#)

[NH Family Voices - Pass It On Newsletter](#)

Supporting Our Children's Mental Health

Latest Edition of [603 Diversity](#) (online version)

National Reports

National Association of Family Child Care [Impact 2024 Report](#)

Center for the Study of Social Policy
[A Call to Action: Five Priorities to Advance Justice in 2025](#)

ACF - Early Childhood Development
[Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Funding Compendium](#)

Hunt Institute
[Growth and Impact in Early Care and Education State Snap Shots](#)

Children's Funding Project's
[2024 Snapshot](#)

Week of the Young Child April 5-11
See how ECEA is celebrating!





How to Be Inclusive for the Holidays and in Literature



Stefanie Paige Wieder, a consultant currently working with the early childhood educator networks for Nashua Smart Start and Manchester LAUNCH's developed **Making Holidays Inclusive for All Children**. This comprehensive guide addresses the question: What does it look like to help all children grow and thrive in our approach to holidays at school? In 2022, Stefanie also facilitated a dynamic webinar, "Diversity Meets Picture Books". The webinar was geared towards early education professionals, librarians and families. The event is available [here](#) (Passcode: 2?TYsZu2). For more resources on this topic, go to Nashua Smart Start Coalition's [resource page](#).



NH Possible partners are working toward a bold vision for shared prosperity, welcoming communities, and healthy democracy – a state where everyone has what they need to thrive. Interested in learning more or how to get involved? Here's the [website](#) and the [FB page](#).

Effective Co-Facilitation

Here are some helpful considerations and guidance shared during NH Listens' Lunch Box Series on [co-facilitation](#) on February 5. Check out other [Lunch Box sessions](#) and other [training and engagement](#) opportunities



LEGAL CENTER FOR FOSTER CARE & EDUCATION

Read the February [Newsletter](#) of The Legal Center for Foster Care and Education recently updated its [Data Toolkit](#). Read their [analysis](#) of the November 2024 Joint Guidance between US DOE and DHHS regarding the education of children in foster care.

Congratulations to the 2024 newly designated and re-designated Family Resource Centers of Quality (FRC-Q)

FRC-Q designation is earned by demonstrating exemplary practice building family strengths. Family Resource Centers earn this designation through a lengthy application process and self-assessment overseen by the NH Wellness and Primary Prevention Council (WPPC).



New Designation



[Community Action Partnership of Strafford County](#)
[Waypoint Family Resource Center - Upper Valley, Lebanon](#)

Re-designation

[Family Connection Resource Center at Children Unlimited, Conway](#)
[The Family Resource Center of Northern NH, Gorham](#)
[The Upper Room, Derry](#)
[TLC, Claremont](#)
[Waypoint Family Resource Center - Nashua](#)

For more information about the FRC-Q process visit the Family Support NH site [here](#).



Give [a listen to a new podcast](#), **Parenting Through Trauma** hosted by Dartmouth's Dr. Erin Barnett and Becky Parton.

Pyramid Model



Read the NH Pyramid Model's **2024 Report**. Curious to see where Pyramid Model is implemented throughout the state? Here's a [map](#) that shows the locations.

NH Pyramid Model Leadership Team Members can be found [here](#). Interested in learning more? Contact [Joan Izen](#)

Calendar of Events



March 25-26

NAMI NH Annual Virtual Conference

April 5-11

Week of the Young Child

April 7

Early Childhood Professional
Celebration

4:30- 7:30, Grappone Center

April 9

Endowment for Health Annual Meeting

3:30-6pm Concord

April 12

ACROSS NH and NHAN Annual Spring
Celebration & Convention for OST

8:30-3:15

May 22

NH Business for Social Responsibility
Conference

Grappone Center 8:00 am – 5:30 pm

May 5

Community Health Care Worker
Conference

Grappone Center 8:30-3:30pm

May 15

NH Non-Profits Conference
Grappone Center 8:30AM-4:15PM

June 3 & 4

HOPE Virtual Summit

Save The Date

Perinatal Quality Collaborative
Conference

May 1 8-4 Concord



Stronger Together with Partners

We held an engaging regional Greater Nashua early childhood convening co-hosted by Smart Start and Milford Kids Thrive. We had ~40 community partners and parents in attendance. It was a fantastic networking opportunity where we shared our aligned priority initiatives and reviewed the HOPE framework as a foundation for our collective impact.

We recently hosted an informational session for parents in Manchester, providing translation assistance in Swahili, Arabic, and Dari. This event was a collaborative effort among New Neighbor Connections, Childcare Aware, and Smart Start. It proved to be a very productive meeting, as many immigrant families were previously unaware of childcare as a formal industry. Since launching our Family Child Care (FCC) recruitment pilot, awareness of available scholarships has increased, allowing families to recognize that access to childcare can enable them to pursue more sustainable employment opportunities outside the home.

We received support from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation to enhance awareness of the childcare scholarship and assist parents in enrolling through NH Easy. Additionally, UWGN has been approved as a partner agency, to provide support to parents facing challenges during the enrollment process. The Childcare Aware team will assist in addressing the need for childcare providers.

Several FCC trainees attended the session to gain insights about the scholarship, equipping them to better support families who enroll in their childcare services once they begin operations. We plan to host additional informational nights in Manchester and the Greater Nashua area over the coming months.



Is your program in need of Developmental Screening & Monitoring materials, such as Ages & Stages Questionnaire kits, ASQ Learning Activity Books, and more? Interested in ASQ Training for your staff? Reach out to NH Watch Me Grow at NH Family Voices to learn more! NHfamilyvoices@nhfv.org or [603-271-4525](tel:603-271-4525)



Are you a part of an organization that does ASQ screenings for families? If so, please consider scanning the QR Code to the left to participate in Watch Me Grow's ASQ Screening Survey. The information gathered in this survey helps show state funders the amazing screening efforts taking place across NH. This is important so WMG can continue to provide materials, support, and future opportunities to families with young children and the professionals that work with them!