




New Britain Early Childhood Collaborative


2012 Community Report Card on Child Well-Being

Based on the


Blueprint for New Britain's Young Children

Healthy Birth Weight (weighing more than 2,500 grams or 5.5 pounds)			
State Average 2009	New Britain Baseline	New Britain 2009	Trend
91.9% <small>CT DPH 2009 Registry Report</small>	90.2% <small>CT DPH 2006 Registry Report</small>	92.7% <small>CT DPH 2009 Registry Report</small>	NA

Births to Mothers Who Have Completed High School			
State Average 2009	New Britain Baseline	New Britain 2009	Trend
87.4% <small>CT DPH 2009 Registry Report</small>	70.4% <small>CT DPH 2006 Registry Report</small>	74.9% <small>CT DPH 2009 Registry Report</small>	

4 Year Olds at a Healthy Body Mass Index (BMI >5 th and < 85 th percentile)			
State Average	New Britain Baseline	New Britain 2011	Trend
No Data	47% <small>2009 pre-k height & weight measurements</small>	61% <small>2011 pre-k height & weight measurements</small>	

Children Ready for Kindergarten (in the language, literacy and social/emotional domains)			
State Average 2011	New Britain Baseline	New Britain 2011	Trend
26% <small>2011 CT SDE Kindergarten Inventory</small>	8% <small>2009 CT SDE Kindergarten Inventory</small>	23.3% <small>2011 CT SDE Kindergarten Inventory</small>	NA

Children Reading at Grade Level (Goal) in 3rd Grade			
State Average 2012	New Britain Baseline	New Britain 2012	Trend
59.2% <small>2011 CMT</small>	16% <small>2009 CMT</small>	23.1% <small>2011 CMT</small>	

Trends are indicated when data moves in the same direction for 2 years

A Letter to Our Supporters

In 2008 the New Britain Early Childhood Collaborative brought together over 100 people and organizations to create a Blueprint for improving the lives of the city's young children, from birth through 3rd grade. The Collaborative includes parents, early care providers, educators, local government, and health and human service providers who are working together to improve and better coordinate services for families with young children.

After analyzing data, the Blueprint planning committee selected five key citywide indicators of childhood well-being: birth weight, education level of mothers, childhood obesity, school readiness, and 3rd grade reading. The group then developed strategies and action steps designed to improve child well-being as measured by these indicators. During the three years since release of the Blueprint, work has begun on a number of promising initiatives. This "work in progress" is highlighted at the end of the detailed section for each indicator.

Despite the fact that the recession has now forced a third of New Britain's children below the poverty line, there are some signs of progress. Our partner organizations have used the data presented in the Blueprint to adapt and develop new services. Several have come together, collaborating in new ways to provide services they could not offer on their own. The Collaborative will continue to rely on the support of the entire community as we work toward meeting the challenges laid out in the Blueprint.

Tracey Madden Hennessey, chairperson
New Britain Early Childhood Collaborative

Executive Summary

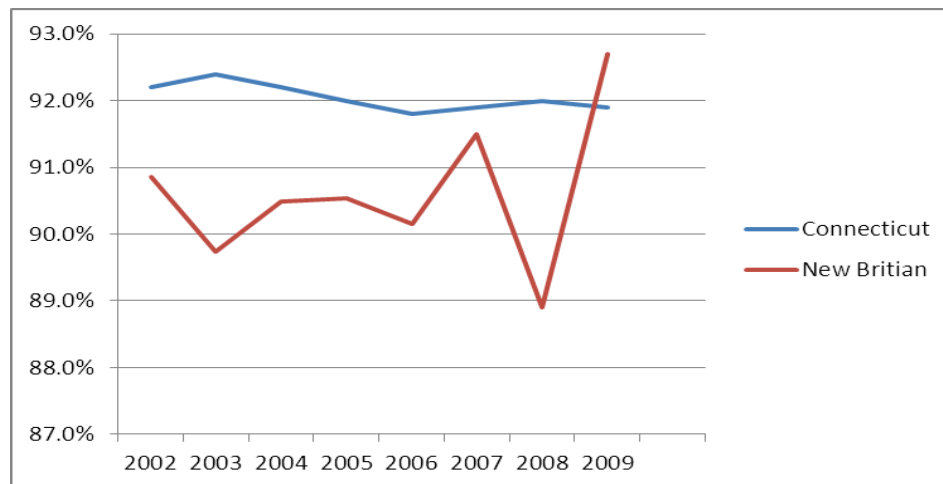
The 2009 Blueprint highlighted five citywide, population-level indicators of child well-being. It then laid out a set of strategies and action steps intended to improve outcomes in these areas. During the three years since the Blueprint was released, work has begun on a number of new initiatives. That being said, much more remains to be done.

There has been clear progress on two of the five indicators: the education level of mothers and 3rd grade reading, although in both cases New Britain's data is unacceptably low. The record on childhood obesity is mixed. While the percentage of children above the 95th percentile (those classified as obese) has crept up slightly, the percentage of children who are overweight and therefore at risk of becoming obese in the future has dropped significantly. In the areas of birth weight and kindergarten readiness there is no discernible trend. In each category the most recent year's data is positive, but the previous year was worse than the baseline.

Healthy Babies, Healthy Weight

Over the past 10 years, New Britain's rate of babies born at a healthy weight (>5.5 lbs) has been about 2 percent lower than the state average. In 2009, for the first time in a decade, more of New Britain's babies were born at a healthy weight than the state average. However, over the past several years the rate has fluctuated wildly. In 2008, 11.1 percent of New Britain's babies were born at low birth weight, a rate that rivals many Third World countries. Since there are between 1,000 and 1,100 babies born to New Britain families each year, each percent change in the low birth weight rate represents 10 to 11 babies. When the rate of healthy birth weight is 2 percent less than the state, this means about 20 more babies born too small each year than one would expect based on the state average. In other words, this is the equivalent of a preschool classroom's worth of children who are starting behind at birth. For the approximately 75 percent of these children who are also low income, the combination of the two risk factors puts them at higher risk for continued health problems, poor school attendance and academic failure.

Babies Born at Healthy Birth Weight



Over the past seven years the state average has remained fairly constant, but New Britain has seen substantial variance from year to year, particularly in the last several years of data. The causes of this variance are still not fully understood. Further analysis of data will be necessary to revise strategies to address this problem.

Since women from New Britain deliver their babies at various hospitals in the region, the data used in the Blueprint comes from the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), which compiles it from all the hospitals. The DPH takes two to three years to collect, analyze and release the data. This means that the Blueprint was based on 2006 data and the most recent DPH published data is from 2009, the year that the Blueprint was released.

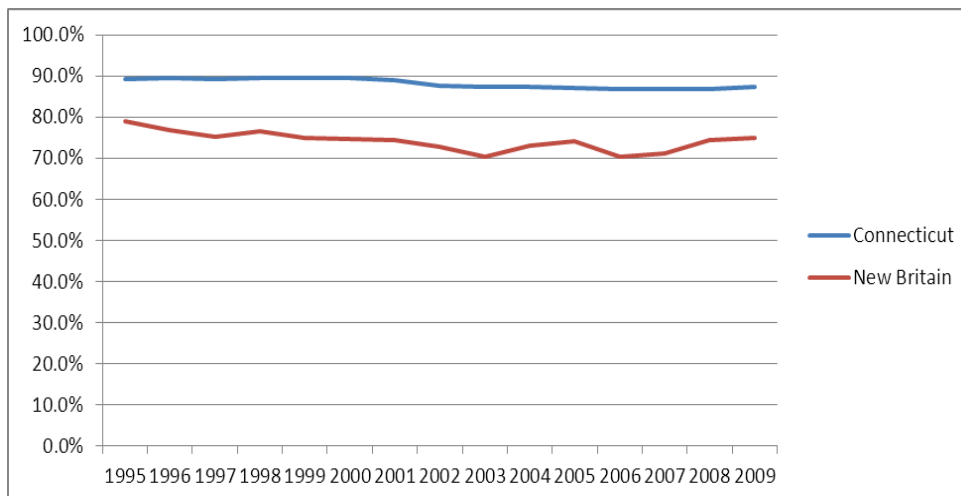
Work in Progress to Address Low Birth Weight

- Creation of the Family Enrichment Center at The Hospital of Central Connecticut (free birthing classes)
- Expanded home visiting program starting during pregnancy

Like Mother, Like Child

The education level of a child's mother is one of the strongest overall predictors of a child's academic performance. Since release of the Blueprint, the number of new mothers with a high school diploma has nearly reached 75 percent. This is a small improvement over the 2006 baseline data but still significantly below the state average. New Britain has a high teen pregnancy rate. However, of the 263 births to women who had not completed high school, only 99 of these births were to women under 19 years old. In other words, pregnancy interrupted the education of only 2 out of every 5 births to a mother without a high school diploma. The remaining 3 out of 5 births were to women who had already dropped out and started a family. New Britain's low high school graduation rate (55 percent overall and 43 percent for Latinos) is the primary driver of this indicator.

Births to Mothers Who Have Completed High School



Work in Progress to Reduce the Dropout Rate

- Graduation Odyssey (expanded support for at-risk students)

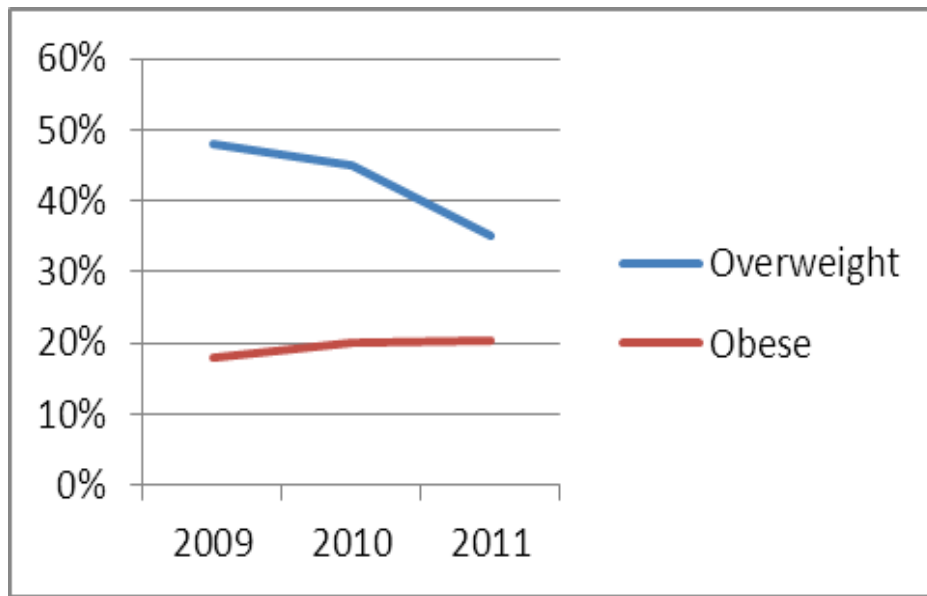
Work in Progress to Help Mothers Get Their Diploma

- Central Connecticut Family Literacy Center

Heading in a Healthy Direction

The trends in this area are mixed. While the overall rate of 4 year-olds in the healthy weight range improved significantly, the rate of childhood obesity among 4 year-olds edged up from 18 percent to 21 percent. The driving factor in the improvement has been the reduction of children who are overweight. One significant policy change that may be impacting this data was the change in the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) food package. Roughly three-fourths of New Britain's children qualify for WIC. In the fall of 2009, WIC substantially changed the allowable foods that can be purchased with WIC benefits. Additionally, Head Start improved its menus, and several preschools have increased physical activity during day.

Overweight and Obesity Among 4 year olds in New Britain, Conn.



Work in Progress to Reduce Overweight and Obesity

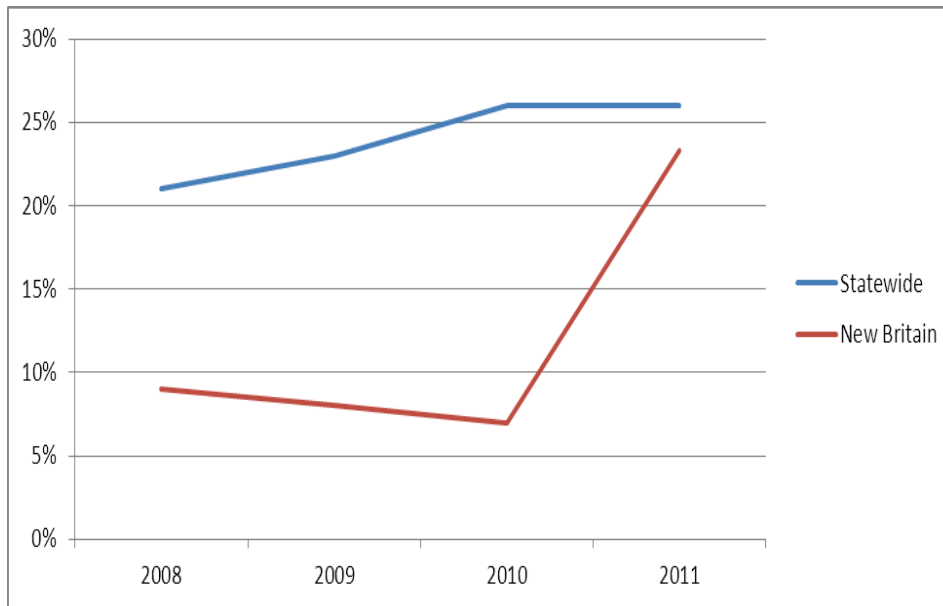
- New WIC Food Package (changed what foods families can purchase with their coupons)
- Improvements to the Head Start lunch menu
- Increased physical activity in the preschools
- Health Department surveillance of childhood obesity data in older children
- Expanded nutrition counseling for obese pediatric patients at the Community Health Center

Ready for School

New Britain's Kindergarten Inventory ratings increased substantially in the fall of 2011. Whether or not this reflects children more ready for school or simply a change in how the kindergarten teachers implemented the rating scale after being retrained is yet to be seen. Connecticut's Kindergarten Inventory is a fairly crude placeholder for a better assessment that the state has been promising for years.

Regardless of the accuracy of the Kindergarten Inventory, it is clear that New Britain's children are far more likely to live in poverty with a parent who didn't finish high school and speaks a different language at home than children in the suburbs. All of these factors put children at greater risk of starting school behind their better-off peers. One troubling fact is that children learning English as a second language, the very children the research indicates benefit the most from preschool, are still the least likely to be enrolled in New Britain's preschools.

Children Ready for Kindergarten (rated 3 on Kindergarten Inventory in the areas of Language, Literacy & Social/Personal skills)



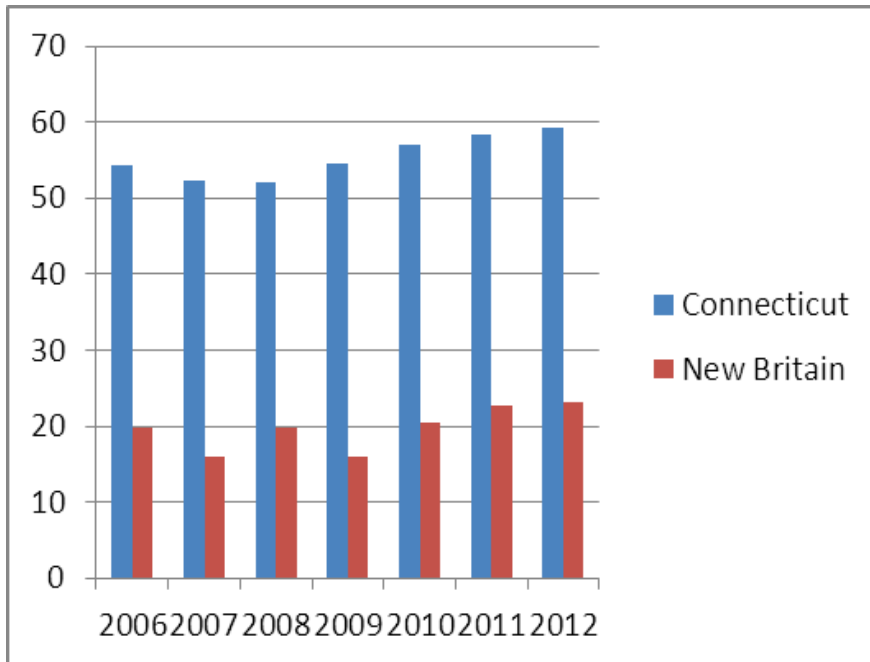
Work in Progress to Improve School Readiness

- Sixty-seven new preschool slots added for 2012
- Pre-literacy training and materials for preschool teachers (Developing Talkers)
- Wheeler Clinic's Child First Program to help families with young children who are in crisis
- Professional development for preschool teachers on working with English Language Learners
- Expanded Parents as Teachers home visiting programs through The Hospital of Central Connecticut and a new Family Resource Center at Smith School

Start Early, Finish Strong

The percentage of New Britain children reading at grade level in 3rd grade rose slightly over the past four years (from 16 percent to 23.1 percent), but it remains the lowest in the state. Fewer than 1 out of every 4 third graders is reading at grade level. New Britain lags behind every other community in every demographic subgroup. Among poor third graders (qualifying for free or reduced price meals) 1 in 5 is reading at grade level. Among New Britain's English language learners less than 1 percent reached grade level by 3rd grade. When comparing New Britain to other communities, however, the largest gap is among children whose families had enough income that they do not qualify for reduced price meals at school. Statewide, almost three-fourths of this group was able to read at grade level. In New Britain only one-third reached grade level.

3rd Graders Reading at Grade Level



Work in Progress to Improve 3rd Grade Reading

- School district initiative to improve attendance
- Purchase and use of "Breakthrough to Literacy "
- Deployment of iPads to streamline reading assessment and help personalize instruction.
- Central Connecticut State University after-school tutoring in reading at Chamberlain Primary School

This Community Report Card was produced by the New Britain Early Childhood Collaborative. For more information about the data and analysis presented in this report or to support the effort to improve outcomes for New Britain’s children, please contact the Collaborative at 860.229.6018 x309.

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