



Early Literacy Matters!

Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

Monthly Newsletter | October 2019

The goal of the monthly newsletter is to provide information and resources that will help children in our region meet the critical benchmark of reading at grade level by the start of fourth grade. Please spread the word and share with anyone you know who is invested in helping children learn while developing a joy of reading.

In this issue, you'll learn about Attendance Awareness, and resources that are available in Hartford and New Britain.



Infants, toddlers and preschoolers develop language and pre-literacy skills every day that will help them become readers. Talking, reading and singing with infants and toddlers helps them build these skills. Programs and initiatives in Hartford and New Britain are focusing on increasing the number of words children are exposed to each day.

Hartford recently launched *Hartford Talks* – a replication of Providence Talks – an initiative that improves the “talk environment” for lower-income families. In New Britain, LENA Start will be offered to help parents use regular feedback from LENA technology to help increase interactive talk in order to close the early-talk gap.

Learn more:

[Hartford to Partner with Bloomberg Philanthropies on Early Childhood Learning Innovation](#) : “The City of Hartford was selected as one of five American cities that will replicate Providence Talks, an early childhood education program that empowers parents and caregivers with tools to support language development at a critical age and help children enter kindergarten classroom ready.”

With leadership from the City of Hartford, partners from the Hartford Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and The Village for Families & Children participated in a planning process to launch Hartford Talks, an early literacy program awarded to the City by Bloomberg Philanthropies. Funds are being provided by the City of Hartford, the Fund for Greater Hartford, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, and United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut to replicate the LENA professional development and home-visiting components. Contact Jane Crowell at jcrowell@hartford.gov for more information.

[LENA Start in New Britain](#) : LENA Start is a program designed to increase the amount of conversation between parents or caregivers and children, birth to three, in 10-week group sessions for parents. The curriculum focuses on techniques to encourage increased use of language with their children, especially through the use of books provided at each session. LENA’s “talk pedometer” technology provides data that on the home language environment that is used as feedback for parents. LENA Start is being launched in the next week at two locations in New Britain.

The Coalition for New Britain's Youth was the catalyst for bringing the program to New Britain. Initial funding and matching grants from LENA, The Fund for Greater Hartford and Farmington Bank Community Foundation has allowed the program to be introduced this fall. The Central CT Family Literacy Center (a collaboration of the YWCA, Literacy Volunteers of Central CT and the Consolidated School District of New Britain), located at the YWCA, and THOCC Family Enrichment Center will be the locations for the first sessions. Please call Maria Simao at Literacy Volunteers of Central CT (860-229-7323) for more information.

How can our community join in the effort to promote early literacy?

- Resources to help families and caregivers turn everyday moments into learning opportunities are available from [Talking is Teaching](#). Download some tips to share with families and caregivers, and sign up for monthly bundles of resources [here](#).
- Volunteer: There are many opportunities to get involved with supporting early literacy for children in our community! Please help spread the word about these opportunities: [Find Volunteer Opportunities Through United Way](#).
- Remind families and caregivers of the importance of consistent school attendance year-round:

Every Day Matters. Attend TODAY, Achieve TOMORROW.

Absences add up!

Make Every Day Count



Resources

- [Attendance Works](#)
- [Coalition for New Britain's Youth](#)
- [Consolidated School District of New Britain](#)
- [Hartford Public Schools](#)
- [LENA](#)
- [Talking is Teaching](#)

To learn more or share ideas for future newsletters, contact Latonia Tabb, Senior Manager, Education Initiatives, United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut at 860-493-1128 or ltabb@unitedwayinc.org.

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With support from individuals, workplaces and grants, United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut has provided resources – including financial contributions and volunteers – to local community-based organizations since 1924. We mobilize the people and the resources needed to support programs and initiatives that create lasting solutions for the complex issues facing children and families in the region; such as the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (CGLR).

The Coalition for New Britain's Youth is a citywide collaborative committed to improving the lives of New Britain's youth, birth through age 24, and working to ensure they have what they need to be successful in school, career, and life.

Nationally the CGLR is a partnership between schools, municipalities, businesses and community organizations to rally behind a coordinated effort to ensure all youth are reading on grade level by the end of third grade, a critical milestone and predictor of on-time high school graduation.



A special thanks to The Fund for Greater Hartford for their investment that supports the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading's communications plan!



United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut

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