



Parent Information Action Research Project

Funded by the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund

Connecting parents, those with primary responsibility for young children, and others in the community to information about early childhood education is key to success of young children. Parents who have access to quality information and the supports to use that information can make better decisions regarding children.

Who are we?

The Parent Information Action Research Project (PIAR) team consists of ten parents who have been selected from five Discovery communities: Bridgeport, East Hartford, New Haven, Torrington, and Waterbury. The PIAR team is led by Dr. Paige Bray, a researcher and educator with the University of Hartford and a community participant in Discovery for eight years.

What are we doing?

The parent co-researchers are finding ways to help all parents and those with primary responsibility for young children get the information they need to support children's healthy development and learning. The team as a whole is developing an Issue Guide to help communities discuss parent concerns. In addition, each parent co-researcher is designing an action research project related to the interests and needs of his or her community. The projects will yield practical outcomes benefiting the community's children, and lessons to share throughout the Discovery Network.

How can you help or learn more?

Thank you to all community members and parents who responded to the co-researchers desire to **listen!** Parent co-researchers have completed the first year of the project which included community-specific forums as well as focus groups to **hear what parents are saying** and are concerned about today. What the co-researchers heard shaped the forth-coming Issues Guide.

Connect to your local Discovery collaborative and parent leadership opportunities. Each community collaborative and coordinator plays such a pivotal roll in this work! **Join** them in your community's efforts on behalf of young children.

Currently the parent co-researchers are focusing on their specific action projects (see details on back). For more information about action inquiry, how to support an action project, or contact a member of the research team just email us at parentinfoactionresearch@gmail.com

Parents Helping Parents Get the Information They Need

Monica L. Jackson and William Carter, Co-Researchers

Bridgeport Alliance for Young Children parent co-researchers are working on an anti-bullying project. The program has a two prong approach with the "Be a Buddy, Not a Bully" component for children and the "How to Bully Proof Your Child" presentation to support parents. The team is researching what makes people bully each other, who are the victims, who are the bullies and in what places bullying occurs. Co-researchers have identified that bullying is occurring in many likely and unlikely places. Parents, children and community members having information from real experience makes a difference. They are in the planning stages of a local event in the Bridgeport area to inform youth and parents about bullying and ways to prevent it.

Crystal Hernandez and Timeca Smith, Co-Researchers

East Hartford Child Plan parent co-researchers are working on a project to develop a safe, family friendly location that is centrally located to the community. The co-researchers have already developed an initial plan for a play space that is both easily accessible and close to the town green. The East Hartford team continues to build support and community "buy in" surrounding the park project and have been working closely with the town mayor and other community political leaders.

Doreen Abubakar and Yury Maciel-Andrews, Co-Researchers

New Haven Early Childhood Council parent co-researchers are working on two distinct, but linked projects. One project is titled 'The Community Parent Engagement Network'. This project is exploring the process of developing parent engagement within a specific neighborhood in New Haven. The parent co-researcher is developing a survey to determine what types of information would be useful to support parents of this specific New Haven neighborhood.

Another project is titled the 'Parent and Provider Early Childhood Information Survey'. This project is focused on researching and assessing personal preferences for the type of information parents in the New Haven community wish to receive, the effectiveness of social media tools in delivering early childhood information to parents, and the way they receive this information. The co-researcher is in the process of developing a survey tool that answers these questions.

Cheryl Petersen and Karla L. Woodworth, Co-Researchers

Torrington Early Childhood Collaborative parent co-researchers are working on a project titled: The One Year Birthday Party. The researchers have organized a birthday party designed for the parents and families of children born in 2011. The party was intended to enable parents of young children to be connected to services and resources related to early childhood. In addition, the team is looking for ways to connect with and engage new parents in collaborating with Torrington Early Childhood Collaborative (TECC). The team continues to focus on recruitment and parent engagement within TECC and are currently looking for new and exciting ways to connect with parents in their community.

Carmen A. James, MA and Rubis Santos Collado, Co-Researchers

Waterbury Bridge to Success parent co-researchers are working on two distinct projects. One project is titled: Waterbury Community Resource Fair. The researcher on this project has connected with community members who host an annual gathering that links new and existing community members with critical resources. The project is currently working to gather support from additional sponsors and community resource providers.

The Taking Action in Waterbury research project is designed to inspire parents and community members to act on behalf of Waterbury's children. The researcher is currently working on the ground in community meetings with parents and political leaders to continue to encourage involvement.