

# Raising the Valley\*

## Strategic Plan for Early Childhood 2021-2025

*\*Formerly known as the Mt. Washington Valley Early Childhood Coalition*



**Mission:** *To ensure that all families in the Mt. Washington Valley have well-coordinated resources for acquiring skills and supports to enhance their children's development and learning through the early years.*

**Vision:** *All Mt. Washington Valley children and their families are healthy, learning, and thriving now and in the future.*



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September 2021

Dear Mt. Washington Valley Community Members,

We are proud and excited to introduce the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan for Raising the Valley, formerly referred to as the Mt. Washington Valley Early Childhood Coalition (MWVECC). Raising the Valley is a group of community stakeholders including school, healthcare, social service, early childhood educators and other interested partners working together towards the vision that all Mt. Washington Valley children and their families are healthy, learning and thriving now and in the future. Raising the Valley's mission is to ensure that all families have well-coordinated resources for acquiring the skills and supports to enhance their children's development and learning through the early years, particularly birth to age 8.

This plan will help increase community collaborations between stakeholders, from elementary education to healthcare to social services and local businesses. This plan aims to inspire community partners to always include families in conversations that will impact their children, empowering them with their own knowledge of early childhood development. As a result, families will have greater confidence advocating for the supports and services to best support their children. And finally, this plan will strengthen the capacity of families and professionals in building and sustaining productive and mutually beneficial partnerships to improve outcomes for young children which will benefit the Mt. Washington Valley for years to come.

It is important to note that the strategic planning process took place in the midst of the COVID - 19 pandemic, which was already placing increased demands on our coalition partners and the Mt. Washington Valley community as a whole. In addition, the pandemic was affecting families and children in new ways which are addressed by many of the objectives and strategies in the plan. The impact of the pandemic continues to be felt across our communities, bringing to light the many glaring inequities of our early childhood system. And yet these challenges have also resulted in new ways of connecting and collaborating, which our children and families need now more than ever.

Many thanks to all the families and community stakeholders that have supported us to where we are today. We look forward to working together into the future to realize our vision that all Mt. Washington Valley children and their families are healthy, learning and thriving.

Sincerely,

**Raising the Valley Leadership Team**

- Cheryl Frankowski: *Social Worker, White Mountain Community Health Center*
- Caleb Gilbert: *Public Health Advisory Council Coordinator, Carroll County Coalition for Public Health*
- Cathy Livingston: *MWVECC Coordinator, Children Unlimited, Inc.*

- Amber McCay: *Director, Lilliputian Montessori School*
- Heather Phillips: *Community Health Program Manager, Population Health, Memorial Hospital*
- Schelley Rondeau: *Pediatric Nurse Coordinator, Granite Visiting Nurse Association*
- Maureen Shields: *Parent Information Center Representative*
- Pam Stimpson: *Director of Special Services, School Administrative Unit 9 (SAU 9)*
- Sadie Tagliaferri: *Family Representative*
- Karen Willett: *Program Director, Family Centered Early Supports and Services, Northern Human Services*
- Ardis Yahna: *Executive Director, Children Unlimited, Inc.*
- Emily Benson: *Strategic Planning Consultant*



**Vaughn Learning Center**



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Many thanks go out to the Mt. Washington Valley families and community partners who have participated in this strategic planning effort in one way or another, especially amidst the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional thanks go to everyone involved in the variety of existing MWV community networks, who continually strive to communicate and coordinate services to best serve all of our MWV families.

### ***MWV Families:***

Mayra and Jesus Gonzalez

Gina Murphy

Olivia Spaulding

Ally Tulip

Kim O'Brien

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Amber McCay: Director, Lilliputian Montessori School

Ardis Yahna: Executive Director, Children Unlimited, Inc.

Caleb Gilbert: Public Health Advisory Council Coordinator, Carroll County Coalition for Public Health

Cassie Rowe: Family Centered Early Supports and Services (FCESS) Intake Coordinator, Northern Human Services

Cathy Livingston: MWVECC Coordinator, Children Unlimited, Inc.

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Sadie Tagliaferri: Family Representative

Schelley Rondeau: Pediatric Nurse Coordinator, Granite Visiting Nurse Association

Soyla Hernandez: Community Health Worker, White Mountain Community Health Center

Tessa Narducci: Head of Youth Services, Conway Public Library

***MWV Community Networks:***

Building Resilience MWV

Carroll County Public Health Advisory Council

Carroll County Responds to Substance Use Disorders

ChildCare Aware of NH Early Childhood Leadership Collaborative

Crossings: Visiting Nurse Homecare and Hospice Grieving Support Group for Children

Family Support NH Huddle meetings

Head Start Parent Council

Memorial Hospital Continuum of Care Meetings

MWV Childcare Directors Group

MWV Moms Facebook Group

Northern Carroll County Providers Network

Ossipee Community Roundtable

SAU 9 Family Engagement Council

SAU 9 Health & Wellness Committee

SAU 9 Parent Teacher Organizations

Southern Carroll County Coalition

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## Introduction:

This strategic plan serves as a road map to guide community stakeholders working together to provide all Mt. Washington Valley children and their families a family-informed, effective, comprehensive and well-coordinated early childhood system. While currently focused on the families in the Northern Carroll County towns within the SAU9 School District, there is future outreach anticipated to towns within SAU13 as well as families in Chatham whose children attend schools in Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) 72. Funding support for this endeavor was provided by a Community Grant received through the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) awarded to the State of NH in 2019. Raising the Valley's Strategic Plan objectives are aligned to the statewide goals of [NH's Strategic Plan for Early Childhood](#):

**Goal #1: Positive Learning Experiences:** *Effective learning opportunities are provided in all settings, including the home, child care and after school programs, preschools and elementary schools.*

**Goal #2: Healthy Children and Families:** *Children and families throughout the Mt. Washington Valley have access to the best opportunities for early and life-long health.*

**Goal #3: Strong Families:** *Families have the skills, basic resources, and supports to promote their children's development and learning before birth and continuing through age five and beyond.*

**Goal #4: System Coordination:** *MWV young children and their families have the benefit of well-coordinated early childhood programs and services that work effectively together on their behalf.*

Similar to NH's statewide plan, Raising the Valley's Strategic Plan "...is committed to a network of supports that addresses family needs while simultaneously building the capacity of all families to be a part of that system of supports."<sup>1</sup> The plan is grounded in the belief that parents/caregivers are a child's first and best teacher. By partnering with families in this strategic planning process, hearing their unique challenges in accessing services and supports for their children, as well as their wishes to know more about child development, partners learned new ways to work together to build a more resilient and thriving community.

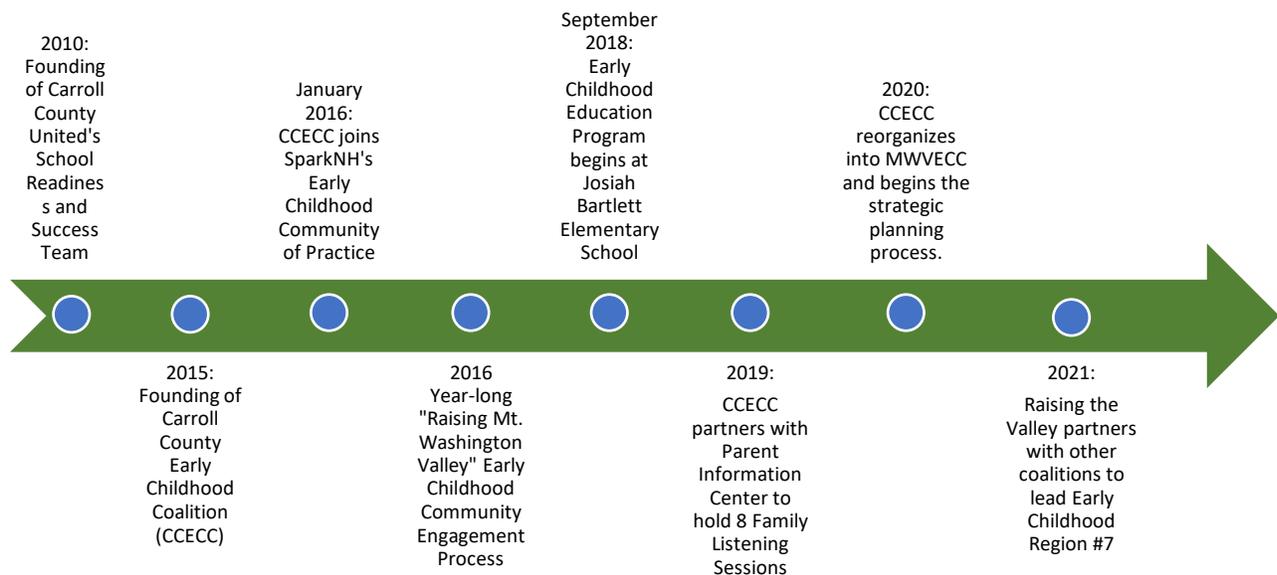
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<sup>1</sup> "New Hampshire Strategic Plan for Early Childhood", June 2020, pg. 2, [https://mypages.unh.edu/sites/default/files/pdg/files/nh\\_ec\\_strategic\\_plan\\_2020.pdf](https://mypages.unh.edu/sites/default/files/pdg/files/nh_ec_strategic_plan_2020.pdf).

## Background:

Raising the Valley, formerly known as the Mt. Washington Valley Early Childhood Coalition, is the result of a continuing evolution of community-based early childhood initiatives supported by a variety of funding streams and community interests beginning over a decade ago. Early coalition efforts were focused on serving the needs of families and the early childhood system and programs throughout Carroll County. However, the large geographical region, as well as service area boundaries for healthcare and K-12 schools, resulted in partners deciding to split the county into two separate regions in January 2020. For the purposes of this work, the Mt. Washington Valley geographic region encompasses the eight NH towns within SAU9 (Albany, Bartlett, Chatham, Conway, Eaton, Hart’s Location, Jackson) and SAU 13 (Madison, Freedom, Tamworth).

### Early Childhood Initiatives in Carroll County: A Timeline



**2010:** Carroll County United’s School Readiness and Success Team formed with the stated goal: “In Carroll County, all children are ready for kindergarten and achieve at or above grade level success by the end of third grade”.

**2015:** Carroll County Early Childhood Coalition forms as a partnership between Children Unlimited, Inc, and Carroll County Coalition for Public Health in December. The coalition serves as a workgroup of the Carroll County Coalition for Public Health’s (C3PH) Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) addressing early childhood and early parenting support, with the goal of providing for the optimal development of children and families living in Carroll County, ensuring all children enter kindergarten healthy and ready to learn and thrive.

**January 2016:** CCECC becomes a member of Spark NH's Early Childhood Community of Practice. Spark NH was the Governor Appointed Early Childhood Advisory Council for the State of New Hampshire, created by Executive Order in September 2011 by former Governor John Lynch.

**2016:** Members of Carroll County Early Childhood Coalition, working together with members of SAU9's State Systemic Improvement Plan's (SSIP) Communications Team, planned and implemented a community engagement process entitled "Raising Mt. Washington Valley". Under the guidance of NH Listens, an initiative of the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire (UNH), with additional funding support provided by NH Endowment for Health and NH Charitable Foundation, the project served to help determine what quality educational programming best serves the needs of preschool age children and their families in the SAU9 school districts.<sup>2</sup> As a result of this effort, a publicly-supported Early Childhood Education Program was initiated at Josiah Bartlett Elementary School. Jackson's publicly-supported Early Childhood Education Program failed to pass on a tie vote at the Annual Jackson School District Meeting.

**2019:** CCECC partners with Parent Information Center (PIC) to hold eight Family Listening Sessions. "The purpose of these family listening sessions was to inform the CCECC of the experiences of families in Carroll County who have children aged birth to seven years old, focusing on the Mt Washington Valley area of Carroll County."<sup>3</sup>

**2020:** CCECC is formally reorganized into two coalitions serving the Carroll County region: Southern Carroll County Early Childhood Coalition and Mt. Washington Valley Early Childhood Coalition (MWVECC). MWVECC receives a Community Grant through NH's Preschool Development Grant (PDG) to begin the strategic planning process. The Council for Thriving Children is established by Executive Order of Governor Sununu on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, replacing Spark NH as NH's Early Childhood Council.

**2021:** As part of a re-branding process, MWVECC is re-named Raising the Valley. Children Unlimited (who oversees Raising the Valley) partners with [Coos Coalition for Young Children and Families](#) and C3PH (who oversees the Southern Carroll County Early Childhood Coalition) as the Regional Lead for the newly formed Early Childhood Region #7 developed by the [Council for Thriving Children](#).

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<sup>2</sup> Michelle Holt-Shannon and Bruce Mallory, "Early Childhood Community Engagement Summary Report", February 2017, Carsey School of Public Policy, University of New Hampshire, [https://carsey.unh.edu/sites/default/files/resource/files/early\\_childhood\\_community\\_engagement\\_report\\_print.pdf](https://carsey.unh.edu/sites/default/files/resource/files/early_childhood_community_engagement_report_print.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Carroll County Early Childhood Coalition Family Listening Session Report, 2019, Parent Information Center, pg. 1.

## Strategic Planning Process:

### *Preliminary Work*

Raising the Valley began the formal strategic planning process in August 2020 following notification of the PDG Community Grant award. Raising the Valley members received an overview of the strategic planning process in September 2020 and considered how to inform and align it with [NH's Strategic Plan for Early Childhood](#). Members discussed how the plan will serve as a tool that will communicate strategy and information to professionals overseeing and offering early childhood programs and services that directly impact families with children ages birth to eight. The plan can also be utilized by the local business community, elected officials and most importantly, Mt. Washington Valley families themselves. It will help Raising the Valley to prioritize future financial needs and provide focus and direction to guide partners in moving from plan to action.

Raising the Valley formed an 11-member Leadership Team to help guide the strategic planning process. Team members were selected from among those representing community organizations and those representing family voice. A parent, serving as the Family Representative on the team, played a key role informing the discussions from a family perspective throughout the strategic planning process. A strategic planning consultant was hired to help guide and facilitate the entire process.

Since September 2020, team members met on a monthly basis, persevering through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, to review prior needs assessments and community engagement efforts to create a plan that is specific to the MWV region. All meetings occurred remotely using the Zoom platform. Objectives and strategies were chosen that address the dynamic and complex issues that impact the families in our Mt. Washington Valley community. When possible, these objectives and strategies were aligned with the strategic planning efforts of other Mount Washington Valley organizations. Members then identified quantitative data sources available at the most local level possible to begin to set benchmarks and track progress towards the plan goals. Throughout the entire process Leadership Team members, representing organizations who are members of the broader Raising the Valley coalition as well as family voices, kept in mind the core principles that inspired the formation of NH's Strategic Plan for Early Childhood that an early childhood system would be "...inclusive, responsive, efficient and evidence-informed".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> "New Hampshire Strategic Plan for Early Childhood", June 2020, pg. 6, [https://mypages.unh.edu/sites/default/files/pdg/files/nh\\_ec\\_strategic\\_plan\\_2020.pdf](https://mypages.unh.edu/sites/default/files/pdg/files/nh_ec_strategic_plan_2020.pdf).



## Data Findings

The Leadership Team reviewed both qualitative and quantitative data, identifying metrics available at the Mt. Washington Valley regional level as well as across Carroll County. These metrics will be tracked on a yearly basis over the entire time frame of the Strategic Plan as a way to monitor trends and progress made in the four goal areas.

The [2019 New Futures/Kids Count Carroll County Data Sheet](#) provided team members quantitative data to inform discussions as more local data was considered. Two key findings in this report were important to address in MWV:

*Access to high quality early education helps develop strong social and emotional skills in children setting the stage for future success. In New Hampshire, enrollment in public preschool differs drastically among counties, leading to a gap in opportunity among our young children depending on where they live.*

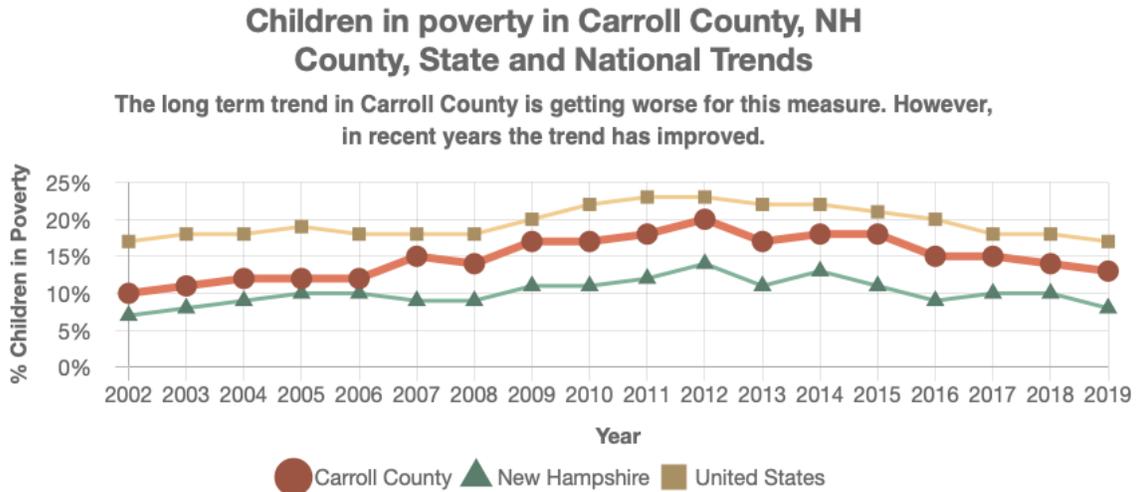
*Home visiting programs in New Hampshire can only serve a fraction of those who would benefit due to eligibility and funding restrictions. Home visiting programs are proven to improve maternal and child health outcomes, family economic self-sufficiency, school readiness and reduce child maltreatment.<sup>5</sup>*

Additional data was reviewed in ChildCare Aware of NH's [Price of Child Care in New Hampshire Report](#), "...single parents pay 40.6% of their income for center- based infant child care. Married parents of two children living at the poverty line pay 94.2% of their household income for center-based child care. The average price of center-based infant child care in New Hampshire is less than as [sic] the average annual tuition and fees at a public four-year college or university."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> "2019 New Futures/Kids Count Carroll County Data Sheet", 2019, New Futures, [https://new-futures.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/Carroll%20County%20Data\\_Kids%20Count%20PDF%20Final\\_0.pdf](https://new-futures.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/Carroll%20County%20Data_Kids%20Count%20PDF%20Final_0.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> "Price of Child Care in New Hampshire Report", 2019, Child Care Aware of America, <https://www.nh-connections.org/uploads/2020/11/New-Hampshire.pdf>

In the [2021 County Health Rankings Report](#) specific to Carroll County, "...13% of children are living in poverty. That is better than the national value and worse than the NH value. The percentage of children living in poverty ranges from 7% to 46%, varying by racial and ethnic groups."<sup>7</sup>



Notes:  
Prior to 2005, children in poverty was based on the Current Population Survey; beginning in 2005, it was based on the American Community Survey.

Even though this quantitative data is not specific to MWV, it helped inform team members as they reviewed a variety of both qualitative and additional quantitative data in local needs assessments and surveys. Members learned from review of the [2018 NH Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program \(NH MIECHV\) Statewide Home Visiting Needs Assessment Report](#) that "...there is a need to expand availability of home visiting to help prevent issues for children and families later on in life, encouraging it to be framed as a universal benefit, not something that is needed, which in tune denotes there is a 'deficit' in family support and skills."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> "2021 County Health Rankings Report", 2021, County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/new-hampshire/2021/rankings/carroll/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

<sup>8</sup> "2018 New Hampshire Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program Needs Assessment", 2018, Community Health Institute, [https://bistatepca.org/uploads/pdf/Bulletins/NH%20Udpat%20files\\_CD/2018%20MIECHV%20Needs%20Assesment\\_FINAL%20SUBMISSION\\_2020.pdf](https://bistatepca.org/uploads/pdf/Bulletins/NH%20Udpat%20files_CD/2018%20MIECHV%20Needs%20Assesment_FINAL%20SUBMISSION_2020.pdf)

Two previous community engagement efforts were reviewed to help inform the 2021 strategic planning process. They were the 2016 “Raising MWV” Early Childhood Community Engagement Project and NH’s Preschool Development Planning Grant’s 2019 Family Engagement, Voice and Leadership Project Family Listening Sessions. These projects enabled families throughout the MWV to provide ideas that were invaluable in the creation of the plan. An important issue that was brought up in the 2019 Listening Sessions is the impact that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) such as poverty, substance use disorders and mental health issues have on families. Families asked for trauma-informed trainings for providers so they can provide more empathetic support and connection to services.

<b>Process Data Metric</b>	<b>Raising Mt. Washington Valley, 2016</b>	<b>Family Listening Sessions, 2019</b>
# participants	78	73
# listening sessions	7	8

(Carroll County Early Childhood Coalition Family Listening Sessions Report, 2019, Parent Information Center and [Early Childhood Community Engagement Report, 2017, NH Listens](#))

Memorial Hospital’s [Mt. Washington Valley 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment Report](#) (CHNA) Report and Carroll County Coalition for Public Health’s (C3PH) Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) “[Charting Carroll County’s Course to 2025](#)” were also valuable resources to review and consider during the strategic planning process. Raising the Valley will work in close partnership as these organizations monitor and track pertinent data points to inform the progress towards plan goals. Memorial Hospital’s CHNA Report states there is a “... tremendous impact that the underlying social determinants of health, particularly housing, transportation, and food insecurity have on residents in Carroll County. Poverty and low socioeconomic status is often at the root of these issues. Without stable employment and a livable wage, many people struggle to afford nutritious foods and to secure and maintain affordable and safe housing and transportation. Participants reported a need for more economic support, financial education classes, and jobs that pay a livable wage.”<sup>9</sup>

It was noted in NH Housing’s [2021 NH Residential Rental Cost Survey Report](#) “... that there is a high demand for apartments, a limited supply, and a low vacancy rate, meaning that it remains a very challenging market for New Hampshire renters. This is paired with a limited supply of homes to buy, hindering the ability of renters to become homeowners.”<sup>10</sup> In 2021 Carroll County’s vacancy rate was .7%, down from 2.7% in 2020 and 11.3% in 2011. In addition, information from the 2020 Housing Instability Survey presented to DHHS and DOE through the NH Council on Thriving Children’s Early Childhood Integration Team at their October 2020 meeting on housing stability indicated that “...families can be waiting for over a year to get housing. As there is a constant need for housing/support, programs should work together to address family needs (safe space, multi family, low income, pregnant moms, and abuse/trauma). Some families are at a higher risk and need the extra support directing them in

<sup>9</sup> Mt. Washington Valley 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment Report, 2019, Memorial Hospital/Maine Health, pg. 13, <https://www.mainehealth.org/-/media/Community-Health/CHNA/2019-CHNA-Report-Carroll-County-Web.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> 2021 New Hampshire Residential Rental Cost Survey Report, 2021, New Hampshire Housing, pg. 3, <https://www.nhhfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/NH-Housing-Rental-Survey-Report-2021.pdf>

the right direction. Families don't know where to start." Through an initiative entitled "Building Resilience MWV", Raising the Valley will continue to work in partnership with Memorial Hospital and C3PH to provide programming and track progress towards building the resilience of local children and their families.

SAU9 was a critical partner in the strategic planning process, sharing the work they were doing as they created their [Conway School District Strategic Plan 2020-2025](#). One of their goals related to Student Growth and Achievement is to investigate and implement effective systems of early childhood education. Raising the Valley looks forward to being kept informed regarding the performance metrics SAU9 will be collecting which includes the number of students accessing early childhood education prior to entering kindergarten and reasons for not being able to access programs, as well as any reports and studies that will inform progress towards their goal. Additional SAU9 data being tracked that can reveal the challenges families may be experiencing related to the Social Determinants of Health includes the following:

**Free/Reduced School Lunch Eligibility by SAU9 District Schools**  
 NH Department of Education Division of Education Analytics and Resources  
*Data collection through i4See and Direct Certification, yearly data available in April*

**Bartlett:**

Year:	Enrollment	Free/Reduced Eligible	% Eligible
2020-2021	148	39	26.35%
2019-2020	154	44	28.57%
2018-2019	151	42	27.81%
2017-2018	158	51	32.28%
2016-2017	167	63	37.72%

**Conway:**

Year:	Enrollment	Free/Reduced Eligible	% Eligible
2020-2021	1524	408	26.77%
2019-2020	1563	502	32.12%
2018-2019	1624	591	36.39%
2017-2018	1666	578	34.69%
2016-2017	1664	592	35.58%

**Jackson:**

Year:	Enrollment	Free/Reduced Eligible	% Eligible
2020-2021	44	3	6.82%
2019-2020	40	6	15%
2018-2019	39	9	23.08%
2017-2018	37	5	13.51%
2016-2017	36	6	23.85%

## Number of Homeless Children and Youth by SAU9 District Schools

NH Department of Education Division of Program Support  
Bureau of Accountability, Data Analysis and Management

*Data collection through i4See and Direct Certification, collected yearly in October*

School	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
Bartlett	<10	6	13
Conway	10	27	16
Jackson	<10	1	3

### ***Development of Strategic Goals, Objectives and Strategies***

In addition to gathering both qualitative and quantitative data and reviewing the strategic plans of local community partners, the Leadership Team members did a thorough review of [NH's Strategic Plan for Early Childhood](#) and began to identify the goal areas for the Mt. Washington Valley. It was determined that the Raising the Valley plan would have similar goals, and members began a brainstorming process to create objectives and strategies to address the needs of MWV children and their families. Each month members were provided with information to review and prepare via e-mail, with summary documents posted to a Google Drive folder to allow the members to provide further comments as needed. Existing community partners and programs were also identified and documented.

After choosing data to monitor at a broader community level, members shared performance metrics that were already being tracked within their organizations that would help show progress towards each goal. The intention was to choose metrics that were specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound (S.M.A.R.T.). The Family Representative on the team was engaged throughout the process, asking pertinent and thoughtful questions from the perspective of families to ensure that their questions and concerns would be addressed in the plan. As objectives and strategies were created, members discussed anticipated activities and the timelines that would be needed to reach each goal. The plan is deliberately designed to be fluid and not rigid, as it is assumed that there will always be unanticipated changes both within partner organizations and the surrounding community and beyond.

The importance of good communication and flexibility was evident throughout the entire brainstorming process, which began in February and extended through May. Staffing changes in organizations impacted our Leadership Team membership, and the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic continued to take its toll as team members struggled with work/life balance issues, as well as meeting the increase work load within their organizations specific to the vaccine roll-out process. Throughout this time the entire Raising the Valley membership was kept informed on progress through updates at their meetings that were taking place every other month.

## ***Plan Development, Approval and Dissemination***

The final stages of plan development took place in July and August 2021 as objectives and strategies were finalized, performance metrics were confirmed and final drafts of the plan were created and reviewed. Parents and caregivers who had participated in the 2019 Family Listening Sessions, as well as other interested family representatives, were offered the opportunity to review the plan and provide final input. Leadership Team members provided additional comments on the Strategic Plan via Google Drive, phone conversations, on-line surveys and e-mail. Following this review, the plan was shared with all Raising the Valley members for their review and final approval.

Dissemination of the plan will take place in Fall 2021 through the following methods:

- Community Partners: websites, Facebook and other on-line platforms
- MWV Moms: a Facebook page organized and monitored by MWV families
- Conway Daily Sun: press release
- Outreach and presentations to MWV business and civic organizations

## ***Evaluation and Monitoring***

Members discussed the process of monitoring the plan in the years ahead, holding community partners accountable and working together to achieve the plan's overall goals. Not only will broader regional data and local data be tracked on a yearly basis, with a specific emphasis on looking at trends over time, but performance metrics have been chosen to evaluate the strategies being implemented to achieve the vision that all Mt. Washington Valley children and their families are healthy, learning and thriving now and in the future. It is anticipated that the newly developed [Early Childhood Regional Mapping Tool](#) will be a valued tool to use in this process, especially as additional data is added to the platform. A Strategic Plan Progress Update will be presented to Raising the Valley community partners on a yearly basis each fall. Families will be an integral part of this process, as family input will be asked for at multiple levels through existing community support groups.

## Summary of Raising the Valley Strategic Goals and Objectives

The Leadership Team, in consultation with members of Raising the Valley and input from the families of Mt Washington Valley, identified the following objectives and strategies to achieve the four goals of **Positive Learning Experiences, Healthy Children and Families, Strong Families** and **System Coordination**. (Please note the “*timeline*” refers to the following: Short-term: 1-2 years, Mid-term: 2-3 years, Long-term: 4-5 years.)

<b>GOAL 1: POSITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES:</b>				
<i>Effective learning opportunities are provided in all settings, including the home, child care and after school programs, preschools and elementary schools.</i>				
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Rationale/Community Context</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Community Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Beginning prenatally, families are empowered in their own knowledge of early childhood development, especially new parents and children with special needs.	Families would like to have better knowledge of early childhood development and behavior in order to address concerns as early as possible.	<p>Create a Raising the Valley Family Mentor position who can serve as a partner for families</p> <p>Promote trainings and programs* that empower parents by sharing information via partners’ on-line platforms, Raising the Valley website and the Family Connections Resource Center at Children Unlimited.</p>	<p>Family Connections Resource Center at Children Unlimited</p> <p>Northern Human Services</p> <p>Memorial Hospital</p> <p>Granite Visiting Nurse Association(VNA)</p> <p>Head Start</p> <p>Carroll County Coalition for Public Health</p> <p>Parent Information Center</p>	Mid- to Long-Term

Objective	Rationale/Community Context	Strategies	Community Partners	Timeline
<p>Parent/caregivers understand the benefits of engaging with their children.</p>	<p>Families want to learn developmentally appropriate activities and information that will help them engage with their children to better understand and respond to their behavior and have fun together</p>	<p>Provide VROOM information and materials to community partners</p> <p>Promote local library story times to families via social media and the Family Connections Resource Center.</p>	<p>Family Connections Resource Center at Children Unlimited</p> <p>Granite VNA</p> <p>Northern Human Services</p> <p>MWV Libraries</p> <p>MWV Healthcare Providers</p> <p>Carroll County Early Childhood Providers</p>	<p>Short-to Mid-term</p>
<p>The Mt. Washington Valley has a strong, stable, and well-educated early childhood education workforce.</p>	<p>Early childhood educators continue to face a variety of funding and systemic challenges that make it difficult to provide equitable access to early childhood programming for all families as well as supporting a stable and well-educated workforce.</p>	<p>Promote and increase participation in the Mt. Washington Valley Childcare Directors Network</p> <p>Coordinate easily accessible professional development trainings for early childhood professionals with community partners</p>	<p>SAU9</p> <p>Children Unlimited</p> <p>MWV Childcare Director's Network</p> <p>Memorial Hospital</p> <p>Building Resilience MWV</p> <p>Child Care Aware of NH, a Program of Southern NH Services</p> <p>NH Department of Health and Human Services.</p> <p>Northern Human Services</p>	<p>Long-term</p>

Objective	Rationale/Community Context	Strategies	Community Partners	Timeline
Home visits are accessible and available to all families at no cost.	Families would like to have better knowledge and understanding of home visiting services that are available in order to strengthen their parenting skills, better understand their children's development, and help them address their own health needs such as caregiver depression and anxiety.	Increase awareness and ways to access home visiting programs for all families via Raising the Valley website and the Family Connections Resource Center at Children Unlimited	<p>Family Connections Resource Center at Children Unlimited</p> <p>Northern Human Services: Family Centered Early Supports and Services (FCESS) and/or Mental Health Services Northern Human Services/FCESS</p> <p>Granite VNA/Healthy Families America</p> <p>Tri-County Community Action Program (TCCAP)/Head Start</p> <p>MWV Childcare Director's Network</p> <p>Memorial Hospital</p> <p>White Mountain Community Health Center</p>	Long-term

**\*Existing Trainings and Programs:** *(complete details can be found in the Appendix)*

- Memorial Hospital Birthing Class
- Memorial Hospital New Life Program
- Strengthening Families Program
- Positive Solutions for Families
- Healthy Families America
- Growing Great Kids
- Kinship Navigation Program
- VROOM

**GOAL 2: HEALTHY CHILDREN AND FAMILIES:**

*Children and families throughout the Mt. Washington Valley have access to the best opportunities for early and life-long health.*

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Rationale/Community Context</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Community Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Families have improved access to universal screenings and services for children to promote optimal development.	Families would like to have opportunities for early diagnosis and better understanding of their children’s health and developmental issues, especially those facing toxic stress and adversities early in life.	<p>Increase parent/caregiver awareness and ways to access universal screenings and services* via Raising the Valley website and the Family Connections Resource Center.</p> <p>Increase parent/caregiver awareness and ways to access blood lead level testing services via Raising the Valley website and the Family Connections Resource Center in partnership with C3PH</p>	<p>Family Connections Resource Center at Children Unlimited</p> <p>SAU9</p> <p>Northern Human Services/FCESS</p> <p>Children Unlimited</p> <p>Head Start</p> <p>Memorial Hospital</p> <p>Saco River Medical Group</p> <p>White Mountain Community Health Center</p> <p>Granite VNA</p> <p>C3PH</p>	Mid- to Long-term
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Rationale/Community Context</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Community Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
In consultation with families, early childhood data is privately and respectfully shared between early childhood programs and healthcare providers to facilitate referrals for services as needed.	Improving communication and partnerships with healthcare providers improves the transitions of children and their families between early education and care settings to better meet children’s individual needs.	Increase the number of MWV community partners who are part of the <a href="#">Unite Us</a> referral platform.	<p>Memorial Hospital</p> <p>White Mountain Community Health Center</p> <p>Saco River Medical Group</p> <p>Northern Human Services</p>	Mid- to Long-term

			MWV Childcare Directors Network Children Unlimited C3PH	
<b>Objective</b>	<b>Rationale/Community Context</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Community Partners</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Children’s social/emotional outcomes are improved as a result of increased access to evidence-based practices, strategies and trainings available throughout the community.	Families, early childhood educators and the greater community understand the importance and long-term benefits of having equitable access to supports and services that address children’s social and emotional needs to help reduce challenging behaviors and promote resilience.	Promote and offer trauma-informed training opportunities for families and professionals throughout the community  Expand implementation of the <a href="#">Pyramid Model Framework</a> in MWV early childhood programs  Complete a readiness assessment to implement the Adverse Early Childhood Response Team (ACERT) in MWV	Building Resilience MWV Coalition  Child Care Aware of NH, a Program of Southern NH Services  MWV Childcare Directors Network  SAU9  C3PH	Mid- to Long-term

**Existing Screenings and Services:**

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Screenings: adaptations of [Center for Youth Wellness ACE Questionnaire \(ACE-Q\)](#)
- Developmental Screenings: [Ages and Stages Questionnaire \(ASQ\)](#), [Ages and Stages Questionnaire Social/Emotional \(ASQ-SE\)](#)
- Caregiver Depression Screenings: [Public Health Questionnaire-2 \(PH-2\)](#)
- [Child Find](#) Screening
- Blood Lead Level Testing services provided by MWV Healthcare providers
- [Unite Us](#)

**GOAL 3: STRONG FAMILIES**

*Families have the skills, basic resources, and supports to promote their children’s development and learning before birth and continuing through age five and beyond.*

Objective	Rationale/Community Context	Strategies	Community Partners	Timeline
<p>All families are connected to resources by accessing organizations that address issues related to social determinants of health (transportation, housing, financial and food insecurity, and other basic economic resources)</p>	<p>Families will be able to better address their basic economic needs and support their child’s optimal development if they have a clearer understanding of the services for which they are eligible, provided this information is shared with empathy and free from judgement.</p>	<p>Increase the number of community partners trained to use <a href="#">NH Easy</a> to better connect clients with needed services</p> <p>Promote the Family Connections Resource Center as a single point of entry to access basic economic services and supports to MWV healthcare providers and the broader MWV business community via Raising the Valley website</p> <p>Create a Raising the Valley Family Mentor position who can serve as a partner for families to help connect them to existing support groups and social media (MWV Moms)</p>	<p>Northern Human Services</p> <p>Children Unlimited Family Connections Family Resource Center</p> <p>Northern Carroll County Providers Network</p> <p>Granite VNA</p> <p>White Mountain Community Health Center</p> <p>C3PH</p> <p>Head Start</p> <p>SAU9</p> <p>MWV Childcare Directors Network</p>	<p>Short- to Mid-term</p>

Objective	Rationale/Community Context	Strategies	Community Partners	Timeline
Families advocate for the programs and services that support optimal child development.	Families would like to have a voice and increase their engagement with Raising the Valley events and other early childhood programs and services as their schedules permit to support their children and be able to provide information to other families.	<p>Create a Raising the Valley Family Mentor position who can serve as a partner for families</p> <p>Identify and post MWV-based parent peer support groups in a variety of community settings and on the Raising the Valley website</p>	<p>Northern Human Services</p> <p>Parent Information Center</p> <p>Children Unlimited/ Family Connections Family Resource Center</p> <p>SAU9 Elementary School Parent-Teacher Organizations</p>	Short- to Mid-term

**Existing Initiatives:**

- [Unite Us](#)
- [NH Easy](#)
- Facebook Groups (MWV Moms)
- Parent/Caregiver Support Groups across community settings

**GOAL 4: MT. WASHINGTON VALLEY SYSTEM COORDINATION**

*MWV young children and their families have the benefit of well-coordinated early childhood programs and services that work effectively together on their behalf.*

Objective	Rationale/Community Context	Strategies	Community Partners	Timeline
<p>Transitions are improved during the early stages of life for children and their families as a result of better partnerships and collaboration between community partners and improved knowledge of resources available in the community.</p>	<p>Through increased collaboration and coordination, early childhood educators and other community organizations are able to partner with families to access effective programs and services, especially during times of transition between any type of community settings, in order to reduce anxiety and improve child and family outcomes.</p>	<p>Launch a website and branding campaign to increase awareness and understanding of early childhood programs and services specific to MWV</p> <p>Increase the number of MWV community partners who are part of the <a href="#">Unite Us</a> referral platform.</p> <p>Promote transition activities in all community settings, especially between MWV EC providers and SAU9 Kindergarten programs, to families via community partners' on-line platforms, Raising the Valley website and the Family Connections Resource Center at Children Unlimited.</p>	<p>Children Unlimited</p> <p>SAU 9</p> <p>Northeast Woodland Charter School</p> <p>Robert Frost Charter School</p> <p>MWV Childcare Directors Network</p> <p>MWV Healthcare Providers</p> <p>MWV Libraries</p> <p>Child Care Aware of NH, a Program of Southern NH Services</p>	<p>Short-to Mid-term</p>

Objective	Rationale/Community Context	Strategies	Community Partners	Timeline
<p>The MWV business community has an understanding of the importance of early childhood education, resources, services, and programs to better support their employees.</p>	<p>The broader MWV community, especially the business community, needs to understand the importance of early childhood education and how it impacts a variety of workforce issues and life-long health outcomes for children and their families.</p>	<p>Invite a representative of the MWV business community to attend Raising the Valley meetings</p> <p>Launch a website and branding campaign to increase awareness and understanding of early childhood education, programs and support services specific to MWV</p>	<p>Children Unlimited</p>	<p>Short-to Mid-term</p>

**Existing Initiatives:**

- Kindergarten Transition Evening at Conway Public Library
- SAU9 Kindergarten Transition Programs
- [Unite Us](#)

## Measures of Success

The following measures were chosen to help Raising the Valley understand and assess the progress being made towards achieving the stated goals and objectives of this strategic plan. Broader regional data trends will be tracked as well to understand and assess the well-being of MWV children and families. Data-based decision making and family input will play an integral part in determining future activities to be undertaken by community partners, as well as the long-term sustainability of these activities. It is hoped that continual improvement of data collection efforts at the state level through the combined efforts of NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and NH Department of Education (DOE), in conjunction with the newly designated Early Childhood Regions, will provide additional support to local and regional efforts.

### Raising the Valley Early Childhood Measures of Success

<b>Performance Metric</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Goal Addressed</b>	<b>Data Source</b>
Increase # families who report increased understanding of basic child development milestones	Baseline to be determined in first year of plan	Goal #1	Protective Factors Survey  Other Family Program Surveys as available*
Increase # families who report increased understanding of ways to engage with their children	Baseline to be determined in first year of plan	Goal #1	Protective Factors Survey  Other Family Program Surveys as available*
Increase # of MWV healthcare providers and early childhood programs sharing VROOM with their clients	Baseline to be determined in first year of plan	Goal #1	MWV Healthcare Partners  MWV Childcare Directors Network
Increase # families enrolled in local library story times	Baseline to be determined in first year of plan	Goal #1	MWV Libraries
Increase # early childhood programs taking part in MWV Childcare Directors Network meetings	7 (out of possible 13)	Goal #1, #4	MWV Childcare Directors Network
Increase # of collaborative professional development trainings with SAU9 staff	1	Goal #1	MWV Childcare Directors Network  SAU9

<b>Performance Metric</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Goal Addressed</b>	<b>Data Source</b>
Increase # children served by home visiting programs	<p>Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (2015-2017): Children Served: 43 Home Visits: 907</p> <p>Family Connections Resource Center at Children Unlimited, (2020): Families Served: 136</p> <p>Northern Human Services FCESS (2020): Children Served: 41</p> <p>Granite VNA/Healthy Families America (October 2020) Children Served: 15 Home Visits: 104</p>	Goal #1, #2	<p>2019 Kids Count</p> <p>Family Connections Resource Center at Children Unlimited</p> <p>Northern Human Services FCESS</p> <p>Granite VNA/Healthy Families America</p>
Increase # of children under age five receiving developmental screenings ( <i>ASQ, ASQ-SE screening rates</i> )	Baseline to be determined in first year of plan	Goal #2	MWV Community Partners
Increase % of caregivers who are screened for depression ( <i>PHQ-2 screening rates</i> )	<p>100% (White Mountain Community Health Center)</p> <p>Baselines among other community partners to be determined in first year of plan</p>	Goal #2	MWV Healthcare Partners
Increase # of children birth to 8 receiving Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) screenings	171 (Memorial Hospital, FY2020)	Goal #2	MWV Healthcare Partners
Increase # of children attending SAU9 Child Find screenings	Baseline to be determined in first year of plan	Goal #2	SAU9
Increase % of children, 0-72 months old, tested for Blood Lead in Carroll County, 2019	26.9%	Goal #2	<a href="#">NH Division of Public Health Services, Dept of Health and Human Services</a>

<b>Performance Metric</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Goal Addressed</b>	<b>Data Source</b>
Increase # of MWV community partners using the Unite Us referral platform.	1	Goal #2, #4	MWV Community Partners
Increase # trauma-informed training opportunities available to families and community partners	2	Goal #2	Building Resilience MWV
Increase # of MWV early childhood programs implementing the Pyramid Model Framework	0	Goal #2	MWV Childcare Directors Network
Increase # of MWV community partners who can access NH Easy on behalf of their clients	1	Goal #3, #4	MWV Community Partners
Increase # of families accessing Family Connections Resource Center at Children Unlimited	Baseline to be determined in first year of plan	Goal #3	Family Connections Resource Center at Children Unlimited
Increase # of people accessing Raising the Valley website	Baseline to be determined in first year of plan	Goal #1, #2, #3, #4	Children Unlimited
Increase % of children accessing early childhood education programs, home visiting or other early intervention programs prior to entering kindergarten	Baseline to be determined in first year of plan	Goal #4	SAU9
Increase % of children attending SAU9 kindergarten transition activities	Baseline to be determined in first year of plan	Goal #4	SAU9

*\*Programs and services currently include: Memorial Hospital New Life Program, Memorial Hospital Birthing Class, Strengthening Families Program, Positive Solutions for Families, Healthy Families America, Kinship Navigator Program, SAU9 Family Engagement Council, additional parent/caregiver support groups*

## **Conclusion**

Raising the Valley Strategic Plan for Early Childhood represents the hard work and dedication that Raising the Valley members and community partners have towards the families and children of the MWV. The time and insights families provided through community engagement events, family listening sessions, as well as the participation of a Family Representative on the Leadership Team was instrumental in creating this plan to guide Raising the Valley in its mission of ensuring that all families have well-coordinated resources for acquiring the skills and supports to enhance their children's development and learning through the early years, particularly birth to age 8. This plan will serve as a roadmap for MWV community partners to better collaborate and coordinate as they work together to achieve the four goals of Positive Learning Experiences, Healthy Families, Strong Families and Early Childhood System Coordination across Mt Washington Valley. While specific measures of success were chosen to evaluate progress towards these goals, community partners recognize it is crucial to remain flexible and adaptive to best serve the needs of families in these times of great uncertainty. This plan will serve as a resource to inform the broader community of the importance of the early years and the strategies that have been determined by families to best support their children. It is the hope that this plan will ultimately engage business owners, community leaders and other stakeholders outside the early childhood system to collaborate in innovative ways to not only support a thriving workforce, but to help Raising the Valley achieve the vision that all Mt. Washington Valley children and their families are healthy, learning and thriving now and in the future.

# APPENDIX

## Acronyms:

ACES: Adverse Childhood Experiences  
ASQ: Ages and Stages Questionnaire  
ASQ-SE: Ages and Stages Questionnaire- Social/Emotional  
C3PH: Carroll County Coalition for Public Health  
CHIP: Community Health Improvement Plan  
CHNA: Community Health Needs Assessment  
FCESS: Family Centered Early Supports and Services  
HFA: Healthy Families America  
MIECHVP: Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting Program  
MSAD: Maine School Administrative District  
MWVECC: Mt. Washington Valley Early Childhood Coalition  
NHS: Northern Human Services  
PDG: Preschool Development Grant  
PIC: Parent Information Center  
SAU: School Administrative Unit  
SSIP: State Systemic Improvement Plan

## Resources:

[2017 NH Listens Early Childhood Community Engagement](#)

[2018 NH Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program \(NH MIECHV\) Statewide Home Visiting Needs Assessment Report](#)

Memorial Hospital's [Mt. Washington Valley 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment Report](#)

[2021 County Health Rankings](#)

[2021 NH Residential Rental Cost Survey Report](#)

Carroll County Early Childhood Coalition Family Listening Session Report, 2019

[Carroll County 2019 Lead Exposure Data Brief](#)

[Charting Carroll County's Course to 2025](#): Carroll County Coalition for Public Health Community Health Improvement Plan, 2021-2025

ChildCare Aware of NH, a Program of Southern NH Services: [2020 New Hampshire Fact Sheet](#)

ChildCare Aware of NH, a Program of Southern NH Services: [Price of Child Care in New Hampshire](#)

[Conway School District Strategic Plan: 2020-2025](#)

[Council for Thriving Children](#)

Carsey School of Public Policy [Early Childhood Community Engagement Summary Report](#), 2017

[Early Childhood Regional Mapping Tool](#)

New Futures/Kids Count: [2019 Carroll County Data Sheet](#)

[NH's Strategic Plan for Early Childhood](#)

## **Trainings and Programs:**

[Child Find](#): SAU9 organizes free Child Find events to all children ages 3-5 years of age residing in the towns of Albany, Bartlett, Chatham, Conway, Eaton, Hart's Location and Jackson. Developmental screenings are offered in the areas of speech and language, fine and gross motor skills, pre-academic skills, hearing and vision.

[Growing Great Kids](#): The primary focus of the Growing Great Kids curriculum is on fostering the growth of secure attachment relationships and developmentally enriched, empathetic parenting that supports families to help reduce stress and build protective buffers for their children.

[Healthy Families America](#): HFA promotes child well-being and prevents the abuse and neglect of children in communities through family-focused and empathic support provided in the home.

[Kinship Navigation Program](#): The Kinship Navigation Program links grandparents and other relative caregivers, both inside and outside of the formal child welfare system, to the services and supports specific to their family's needs. Kinship Navigators provide emotional support, education and guidance to relative caregivers, and offer information, referral, and follow-up services to promote independence and enhance the well-being of the families they serve.

[Memorial Hospital Birthing Class](#): Monthly classes provide a better understanding of the labor process and the variety of pre- and post-natal information and support programs available for new families.

Memorial Hospital's [A New Life Prenatal Substance Abuse Treatment Program](#): This structured, comprehensive program promotes a centralized care approach linking midwifery/obstetric care and more involved treatment for Substance Use Disorder in order to improve the coordination of care, the patient experience and ongoing maternal success and newborn health.

[NH Easy](#): NH Easy helps individuals and families find and receive assistance programs including Medical, Child Care, Nutrition, and Community Services.

[Positive Solutions for Families](#): Positive Solutions for Families trainings provide families with information on how to promote children's social and emotional skills, understand challenging behaviors, and use positive approaches to help children learn appropriate behavior.

[Pyramid Model Framework](#): The Pyramid Model is a conceptual framework of evidence-based practices for promoting young children's healthy social and emotional development.

[Strengthening Families Program](#): The Strengthening Families Program is an evidence-based family skills training program for high-risk and general population families that is recognized both nationally and internationally.

[Unite Us](#): Unite Us is an on-line electronic referral platform that enables community partners enrolled in the network to refer clients to the most appropriate partner for specific services.

[VROOM](#): VROOM is a free suite of tools promoting fun activities that encourage parents and caregivers to play an active role in a young child's brain development.

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