

# CT OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PARENT CABINET NEWSLETTER

## PARENT CABINET IN ACTION

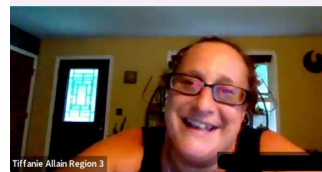
Parent Cabinet members have been meeting monthly to connect and advise the Office of Early Childhood (OEC), through uplifting parent voices and learning more about OEC resources and initiatives for young families. Together, they've explored key challenges, learned more about vital supports for families, and provided feedback on a wide range of topics, including:

- The legislative process and public testimony
- Governor's Universal Preschool Endowment Bill (*now passed as the Early Childhood Education Endowment*)
- One-Point Entry Portal (forthcoming initiative, name TBD)
- Early Start CT & Local Governing Partners (LGPs) & Parent Ambassadors
- Sparkler developmental screening app
- CT Children's Alliance & child abuse prevention strategies
- Community outreach approaches
- Licensing regulations overview
- Outreach for the Parent & Caregiver Survey
- OEC home visiting programs, Even Start, and doula services at York Correctional Institution

### Subcommittee topics also included:

- Elevate (Connecticut's quality improvement system) and new family one-pagers
- The transition from Birth to Three to Special Education or 504 plans
- Overview of Birth to Three and CPAC resources

## SHOUTOUTS!



Parent Cabinet member subcommittee co-chairs: **Amber, Mallory, and Tiffanie** (pictured to the left)



Parent Cabinet monthly meetings co-facilitators: **Tricia, Amber, Mallory, Kelly, Jennifer, and Stephanie** (pictured to the left)



Parent Cabinet member **Shannon** who presented with her partner **Brittany** on their non-profit – **Golden Radiance Village Doulas!**



## PARENT AMBASSADOR AND PARENT CABINET COLLABORATION

Parent Cabinet members continued to meet quarterly with Local Parent Ambassadors to share insights from local and statewide perspectives. These meetings remain vital, especially as the state transitions to the new state-funded program Early Start CT, and the new Local Governing Partners system which Parent Ambassadors will be embedded into, going into effect July 1st, 2025. Strengthening the communication feedback loop with Parent Ambassadors is an ongoing priority with the new system changes.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Parent Cabinet members have also been building relationships in their regions and with each other. Some have had their children join them at events or some have partnered with Alum or each other at events! Here are just some of the moments captured!



## MONTH-BY-MONTH HIGHLIGHTS

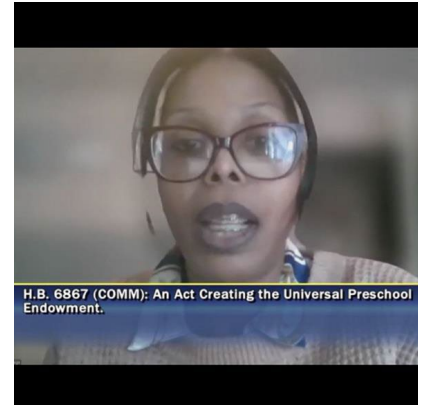
### JANUARY

- **New Member Welcome:** The final group of new Parent Cabinet members joined! Alumni returned to co-facilitate and mentor through April. **Special Thanks** to: Deputy Commissioner Elena Trueworthy, Karen Pascale, Malissa Griffith, Christina Morales, and Marc Olander from IT.
- **Quarterly Meeting (1/30):** Focused on Early Start CT and gathering parent input.
- **Parent & Caregiver Survey Advisory** launched with 4 members and 1 Alum.



## FEBRUARY

- Mallory participated in the **External Steering Committee**.
- **Governor's Press Conference (2/11, Hartford)**: Remarks by PC alum Marinda.
- **Data Subcommittee** launched its first meeting.
- Mallory gave **virtual testimony** in support of the Governor's bill.
- Kelly represented the Cabinet at the **State Inclusion Council (2/20)**.



## MARCH

- Subcommittees on **Access & Affordability** and **Children with Special Needs** kicked off.
- **Governor's Press Conference (New Britain)**: Cris gave remarks.
- Cris attended the **New England Fathering Conference**, sharing insights on reducing institutional barriers for father involvement.

## APRIL

- **Universal Pre-K Endowment Roundtable (4/8)**: Mallory, Amber, and Raquel attended and engaged with policymakers.
- Amber and the Statewide Coordinator participated in the **CT ELDS Advisory** to discuss new outreach strategies.
- Parent Cabinet work was shared at the **CT Head Start Association** meeting.
- The **Community & Family Engagement Subcommittee** launched.



## MAY

- **Governance Subcommittee** began its work.
- Members took part in **Community Outreach Training**.
- The **Data Subcommittee** launched a new outreach form for testing. They also began developing progress measures for the logic model.
- Cris (Region 4) was **appointed to the Early Childhood Cabinet** as the Parent Cabinet representative. Congratulations!
- Building relationships together at a Hartford Yard Goats game with OEC staff.



## JUNE

- The **2nd Parent Leadership Learning Community** on June 6th, 2025 in Middletown at the CT State Community College: Middlesex Campus brought together leaders from the CT OEC Parent Cabinet, 2Gen Initiative's Family Workgroup, Head Start Policy Council, OEC Parents Connecting Parents, and local Parent Ambassadors for a day of connection and learning. Shoutout to the OEC Staff and retiree Deb Adams, Joyce Bosco from the OEC Parent Cabinet co-design team, and OEC Parent Cabinet Alum Joshua Vaughn and Marinda Monfilston who helped to facilitate workshops.
- Members participated in **Facilitation Training** to build their presentation and leadership skills.



## JUNE (continued)

- **Governor's Press Conference:** Christina Pace gave remarks celebrating the passage of the Early Childhood Education Endowment—Connecticut's largest early childhood education expansion to date. [Read More.](#)
- **Quarterly Meeting:** Co-organized with CT Children's Collaborative, this session marked the transition to Early Start CT's new **Local Governing Partners** and **intermediary, Shine Early Learning**, effective July 1.
- **Speaking Opportunity Panel Representation:**
  - **Cris** was on the **National Fatherhood Panel Webinar:** Cris shared his foster parenting journey, Cabinet experience, and fatherhood insights during a national event hosted by Child Welfare Information Gateway (CWIG) and Children's Bureau from the Administration for Children and Families.
  - **Tiffanie** joined an **OEC webinar panel** on **Creating Fun Summer Memories Through Play**, part of the Behavioral Health Initiative Series.
  - **Tricia** represented Connecticut on **"Community at the Center: Structuring Advisory Boards & Children's Cabinets for Meaningful Impact"** alongside New York and South Carolina, supported by Third Sector consultants.



## WELCOME & CELEBRATIONS

Welcome to new member Jocelyn Furtado! She joined as a new addition to the cabinet from region 5 in Danbury! Welcome, and we look forward to your leadership! To read more on Jocelyn visit [Parent Cabinet Membership – Connecticut Office of Early Childhood](#). Thank you to Parent Cabinet Alum Maria for hosting at United Way of Western CT and giving some insight into the Parent Cabinet role!

## WELCOME & CELEBRATIONS *(continued)*

**Congratulations to two Parent Cabinet members who graduated from the CT Parent Leadership Training Institute!**

Shoutout to Janine McMahon (National Parent Leadership Institute) a Parent Cabinet Co-Design team member, Parent Cabinet Alum Joshua Vaughn (PLTI Facilitator for Naugatuck where Amber & Jennifer took PLTI), Current Parent Cabinet member Jenny Canepa (PLTI Alum) and Current Parent Cabinet member Regan Allan (PLTI Facilitator for Bridgeport and Coordinator for Stamford).

**Your leadership is inspiring, and your voices continue to make an impact across Connecticut!**



**AMBER ALLESANDRO**  
Region 5



**JENNIFER ST. JOHN**  
Region 6



## PARENT CABINET ALUM CORNER

Alum have been active in mentoring the newest members, being a part of our meetings, helping as consultants in training, and engaging as leaders in other ways! We look forward to building this Alumni Leadership network and opportunities!



Parent Cabinet Alum Maria Del Pilar Vargas presented with OEC Staff at the NAEYC Public Policy Forum (February 2025)

*Thank You!*

The Parent Cabinet would like to formally thank all of our supporters who help uplift the parent voice. Learn more about the Parent Cabinet at:



[ctoec.org/parent-cabinet](https://ctoec.org/parent-cabinet)