

Norwalk ACTS Receives Grant from New Canaan Community Foundation

June 8, 2026 – Norwalk ACTS was selected as a 2026 grant recipient of the New Canaan Community Foundation (NCCF), which is awarding more than \$1.25 million this year to nonprofit organizations across the region—its largest annual grantmaking total to date. The awards were announced during NCCF's annual Grant Awards Coffee held at the New Canaan Library on June 8.

Through this investment, Norwalk ACTS will continue to advance its Early Childhood Development Initiative, a citywide effort focused on ensuring that every Norwalk child enters kindergarten ready to learn. This work brings together more than 60 partners—including Norwalk Public Schools, healthcare providers, early learning programs, nonprofits, and the municipality—to strengthen developmental screening, family engagement, school readiness, and coordination across systems. The funding supports the infrastructure that makes this collaboration possible, including backbone staff who lead data, communications, and strategy; Early Childhood Community Advocates who connect families to resources; a research partnership with the University of Hartford; and community-based engagement efforts such as Community Cafés (formerly known as Parent Cafés) and The Basics Norwalk early learning campaign. With this support, Norwalk ACTS will also continue assessing community needs and strengthening referral pathways so families can more easily access services. Recent progress includes increasing kindergarten readiness from 58% to 70% and expanding developmental screenings by 56% since 2020, with a goal of reaching approximately 2,500 children annually by 2027 while continuing to deepen family engagement and system coordination.

“Norwalk’s early childhood system is here to support families every step of the way—making sure they can easily find the information, resources, and opportunities their young children need to grow and thrive. Behind the scenes, our organization is working closely with the city, schools, and community partners to make access to these supports seamless, equitable, and as easily navigable as possible,” explains AnaVivian Escalante, Norwalk ACTS CEO.

This investment from the New Canaan Community Foundation strengthens Norwalk ACTS’ ability to advance a coordinated, community-wide approach to early childhood—ensuring that every family in Norwalk has the support they need during the most critical years of a child’s development.

To learn more about the work of Norwalk ACTS, please visit www.norwalkacts.org.

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