Early Childhood Data in Connecticut:

What We're Learning and Where to Look



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Accounting & Human Resources

THE NARRATIVE PROJECT

2026 CT data Conference

#CTDataConf | ctdata.org

From Data to Action

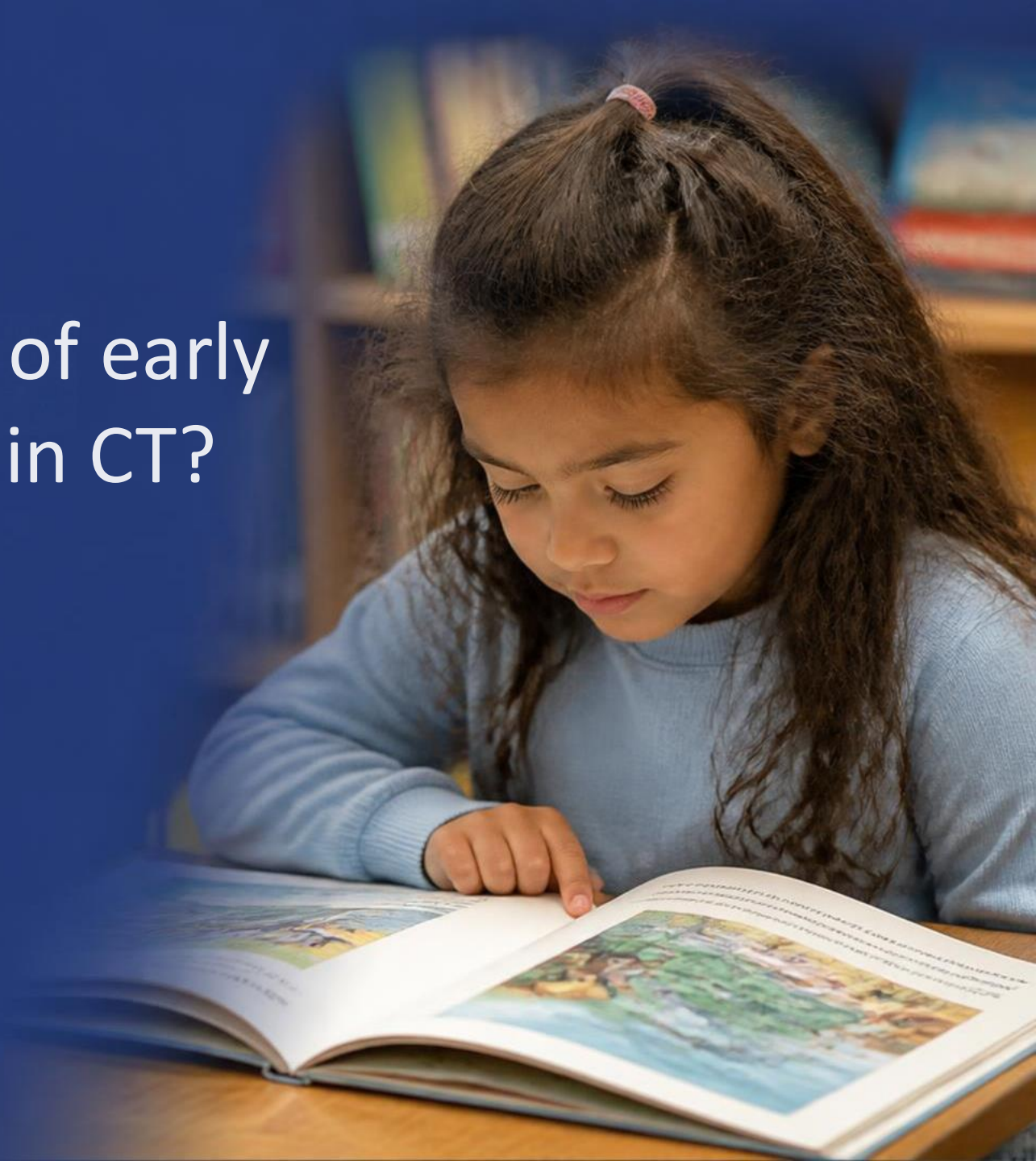
Connecticut's Early Literacy Ecosystem

CT Data Collaborative Conference | December 2026

Suzannah Holsenbeck, Rep. Robin Comey, Kimberly Montero

The Questions

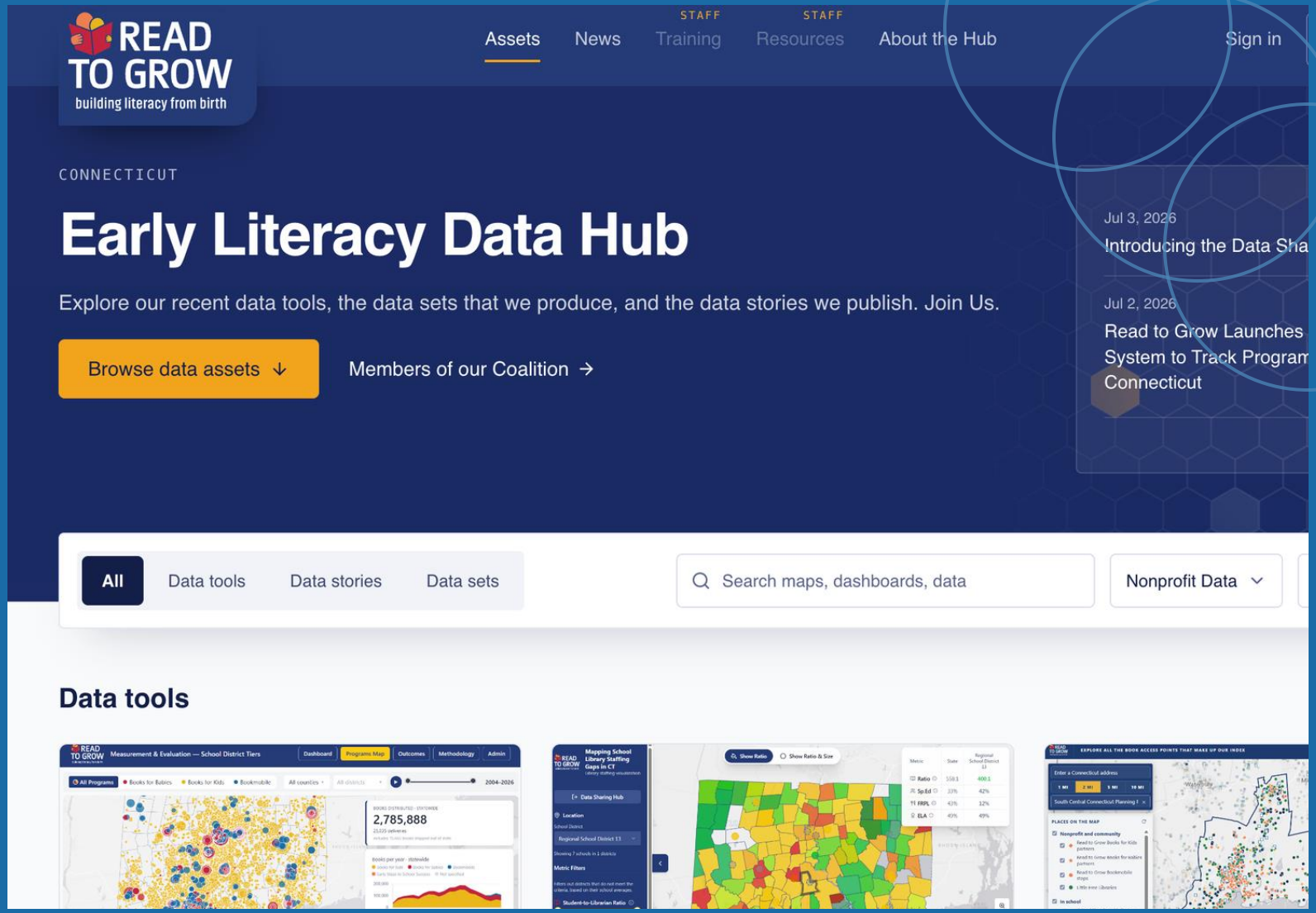
- What does the ecosystem of early literacy currently look like in CT?
- Where are the gaps?
- How can we act together?



Why a Data Hub?

- Program data alone shows activity.
- Community indicators reveal context.
- Publicly available data is fragmented and in multiple formats.
- What if we build something that brings these pieces together?

Explore the Hub



READ TO GROW
building literacy from birth

Reach & Impact Hub

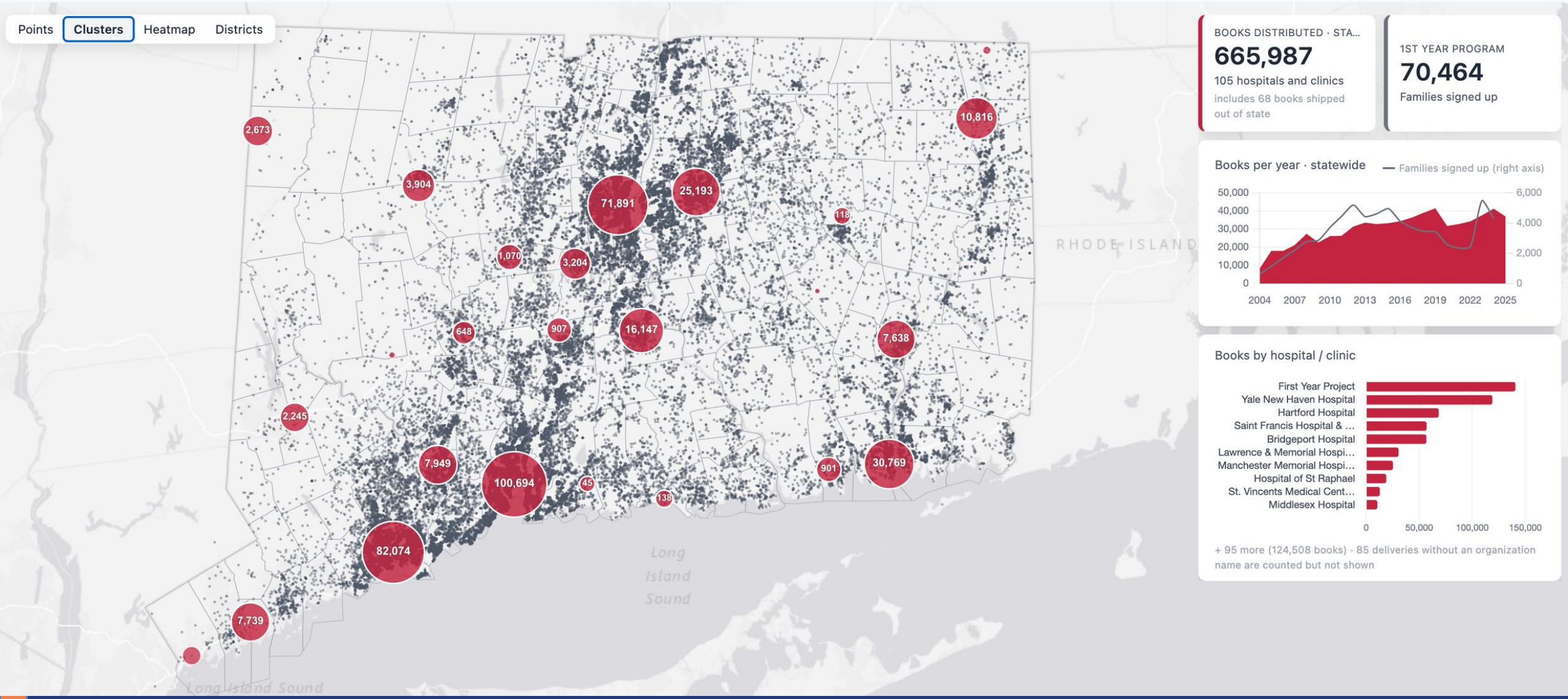
Programs Map | Impact Story | GeoHub | M&E Dashboard | Outcomes | Methodology | Admin

All | Books for Babies | Books for Kids | Bookmobile

All counties | All districts

2004–2026

Points | Clusters | Heatmap | Districts



BOOKS DISTRIBUTED · STA...

665,987

105 hospitals and clinics

includes 68 books shipped out of state

1ST YEAR PROGRAM

70,464

Families signed up

Books per year · statewide

Families signed up (right axis)

Books by hospital / clinic

+ 95 more (124,508 books) · 85 deliveries without an organization name are counted but not shown

Read to Grow
Data Hub 2026

School Districts
East Hartford School District, Ha…

Programs
All

Years (Programs Data)
2004 - 2025

Year (Education Data)
2026

Map Legend

Programs Data

Books Distributed

Books Distributed (Update 03-2026)

- Bookmobile
- Early Steps to School Success
- Books for Babies
- Books for Kids
- Not specified

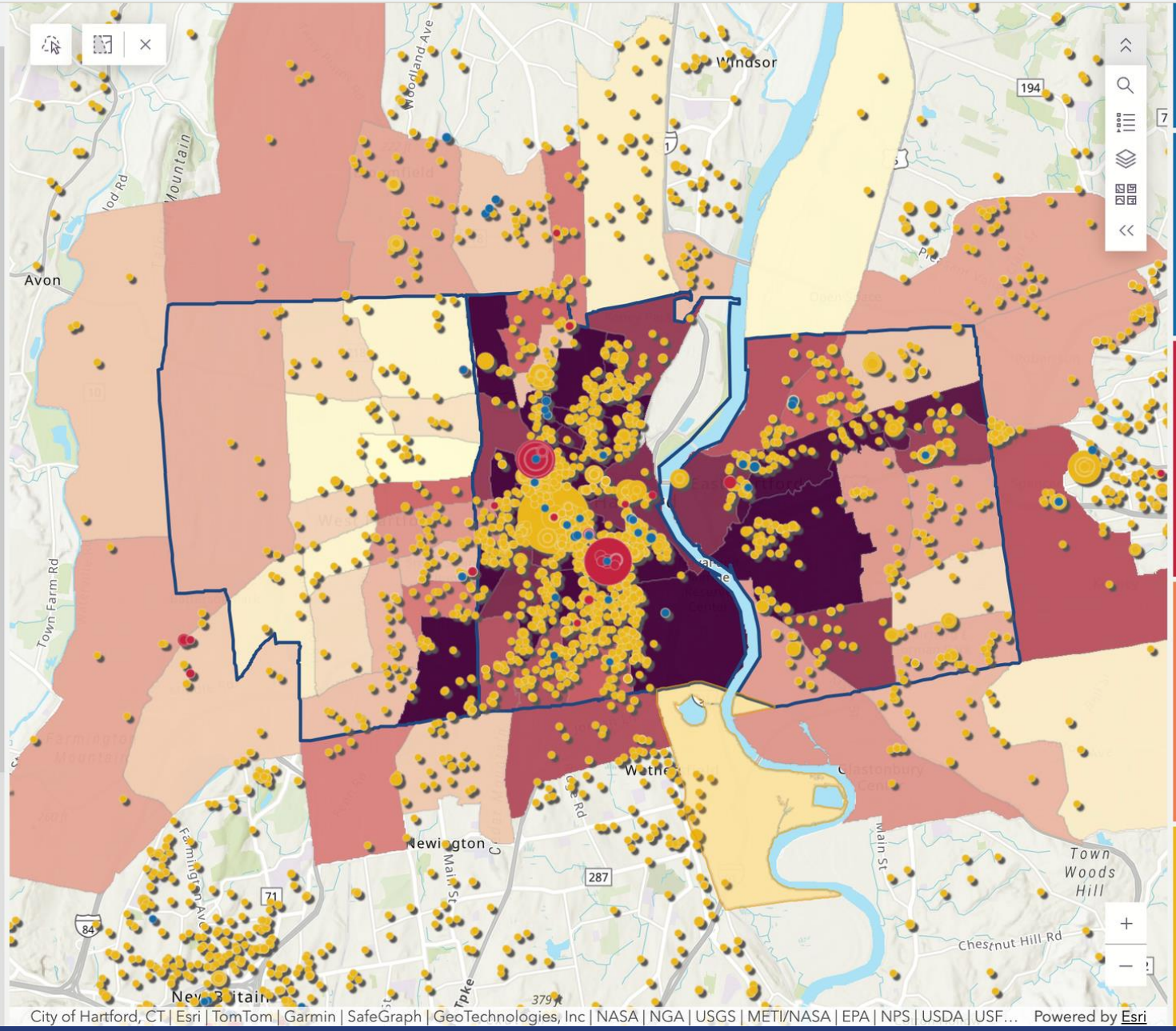
# of books

- > 10,000
- 8,000
- 5,000
- 2,000
- < 0

Public Data

Economic Factors

Percent of Children (under 18 years) whose income in the past 12



⚠ Census & CDC Data for the indicators showcased here is displayed for the latest available year. This includes all the Racial, Social, Household Make-Up, Economical & Languages layers.

% of Children in Households Under Poverty Level

1.5%

% of Children (5-17) in Limited English households

10.5%

% Children (<18) in Households with No Internet

0%

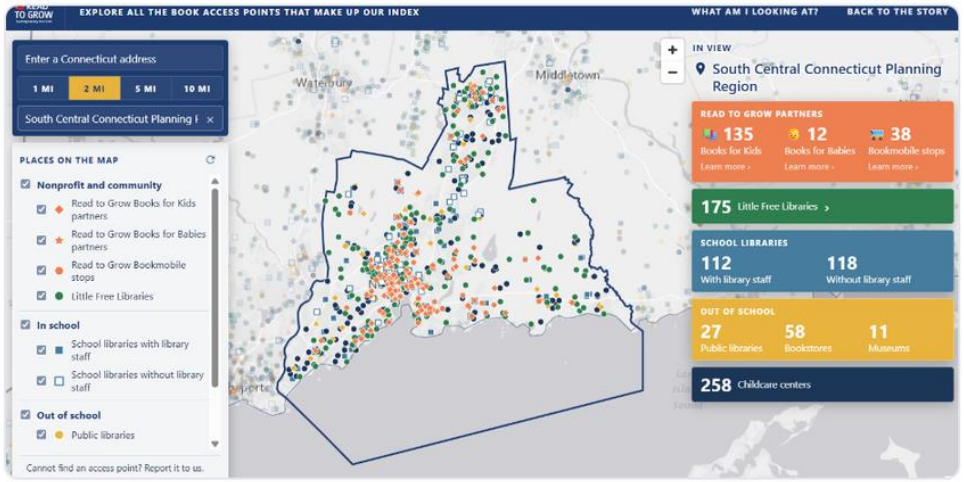
Food Insecurity Prevalence

15%

BOOK ACCESS · INTERACTIVE MAP

Connecticut Book Infrastructure Map

Open the map



ACCESS
Public

THEME
Book Access

ADDED
Mar 5, 2026

UPDATED
Oct 9, 2026

About this asset

Book access largely depends on where you live. We collected over 2000 locations where families can find children book in Connecticut, from in-school libraries, to bookshops, to non-profits and their partners. Explore the largest ever created dataset of book access points in our state.

Related assets

- Book Access Inequities in Connecticut
- Measuring The Book Access Gap
- Book Access Index Exploration Dashboard

Mapping School Library Staffing Gaps in CT

Library staffing visualization

Early Literacy Data Hub

Location

School District

Danbury School District

Showing 21 schools in 1 districts

Metric Filters

Filters out districts that do not meet the criteria, based on their school averages.

Student-to-Librarian Ratio

0:1 — 2000:1

% Special Education Students

0% — 100%

% Free/Reduced Lunch

0% — 100%

3rd Grade ELA Success

0% — 100%

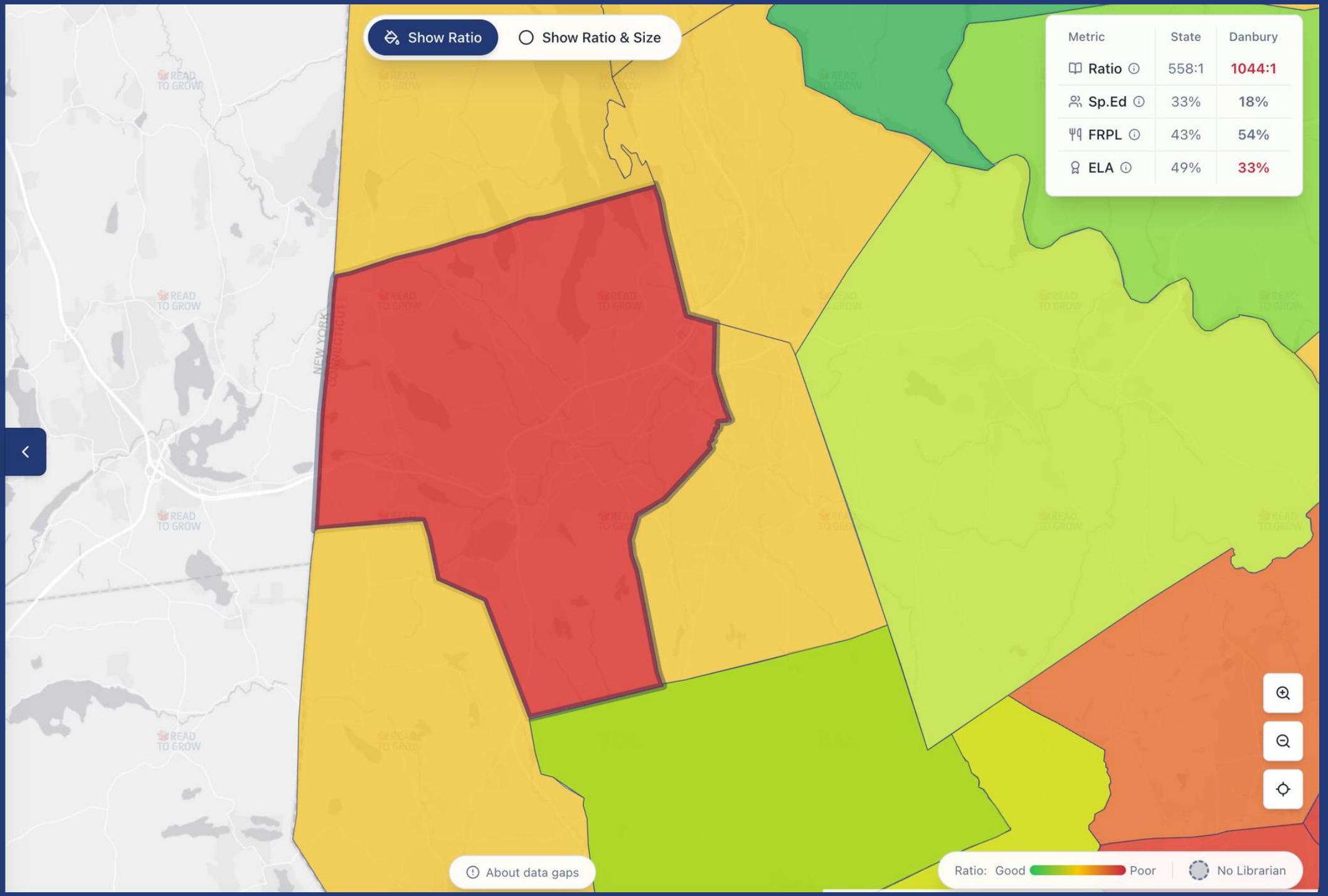
Reset All Filters

View Individual Schools

Download Data

Data Source: CT Department of Education (EdSight)

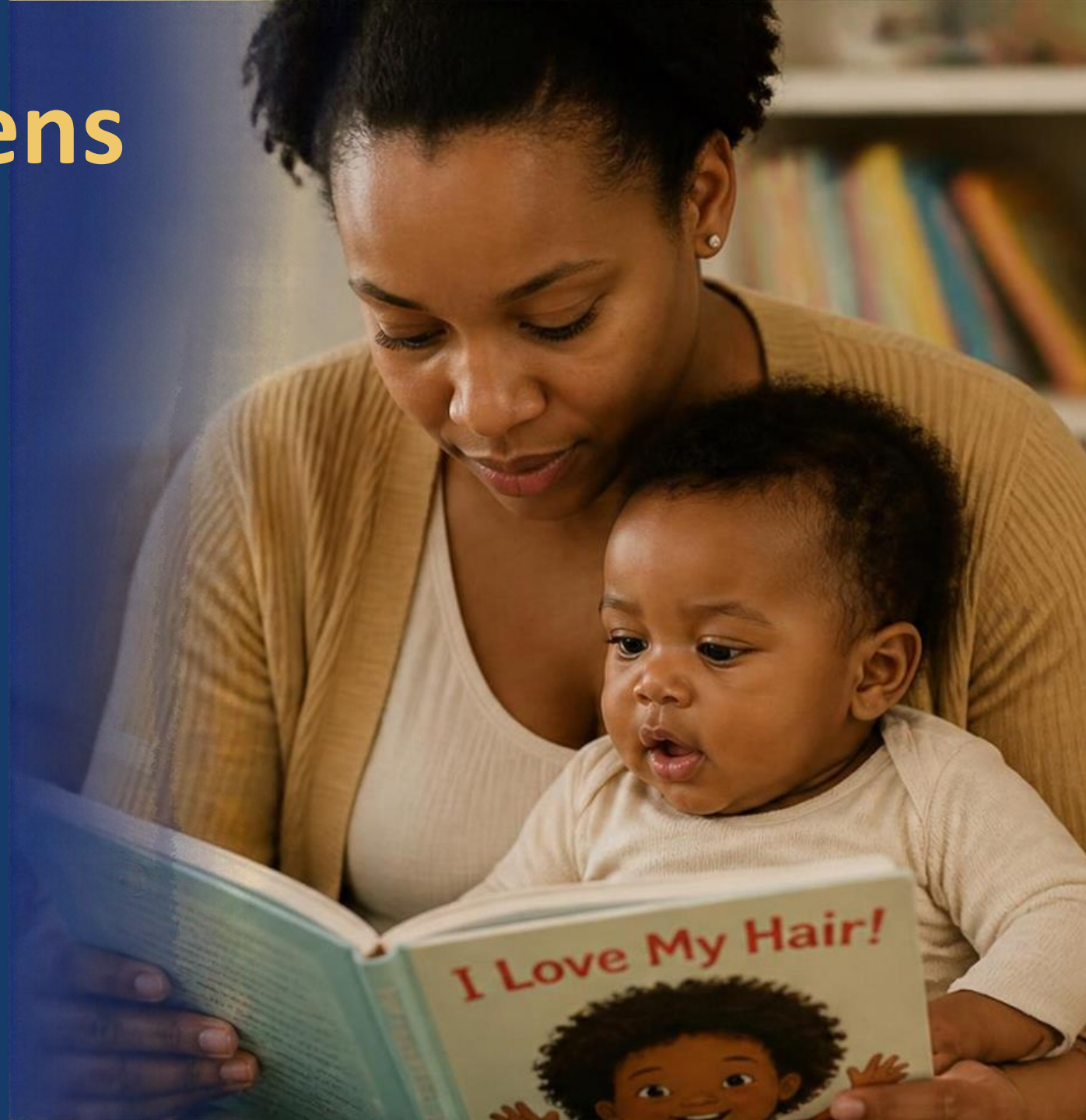
School Year: 2024-25



The Legislative Lens

- Where is the unmet need?
- Which investments can close gaps?
- How can we track equitable reach?

Representative Robin Comey



The Healthcare Lens

Translate complex data into clear action.

Connect maternal and child health contexts.

Use disaggregated data to reveal disparities.



Kimberly Montero • Hartford HealthCare

What Comes Next?

- Improve shared indicators and data quality.
- Invite partners to test and interpret maps.
- Use insights to align resources.



A Shared Call to Action

- Explore the hub.
- Bring your data and local expertise.
- Help build literacy from birth.



readtogrow.org | rtgdata.north-arrow.org

Raising Parents' Voices: The CT RAPID Surveys

Cynthia Willner
Director of Research | CTData Collaborative

About the RAPID Survey Project

- Project of the Stanford Center on Early Childhood
- The Connecticut Project partnered with Stanford to conduct CT statewide surveys in 2024-2026.
- **Goal: Provide actionable data from parents of young children to promote data- and parent-informed policies and programs.**

Advisory Committee

THE CONNECTICUT PROJECT

CT data collaborative

CONNECTICUT NETWORK FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

CT 359
On Target and Thriving at Three, Five, and Nine

Community Implementation Partners

- 17 community-based organizations shared the survey with families across CT.
- Find a full list on our RAPID Survey Hub.
- Early Childhood Collaboratives, Cradle to Career Coalitions, RESCs, United Ways, and more



CT RAPID Surveys

8 statewide surveys of families with young children, fielded in 2024 – 2026. Topics include:

- Child care access & affordability
- Developmental screening
- Financial security & material hardship
- Early literacy & relational health
- Housing & access to health care



Who Responded to the Surveys?

Primary caregivers of children under 6 across CT

- ~1,000 – 2,000 respondents per survey

Not representative of all families statewide

- More likely to be connected to RAPID partner orgs
- More likely to be lower-income

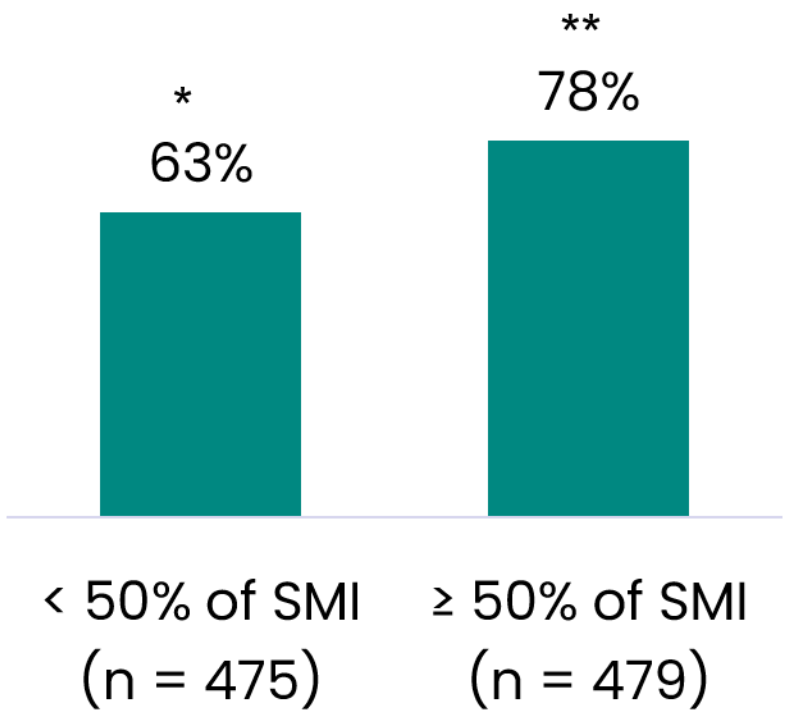
Early Literacy

Daily Reading to Children

70%

read to each young child at least daily

By Household Income



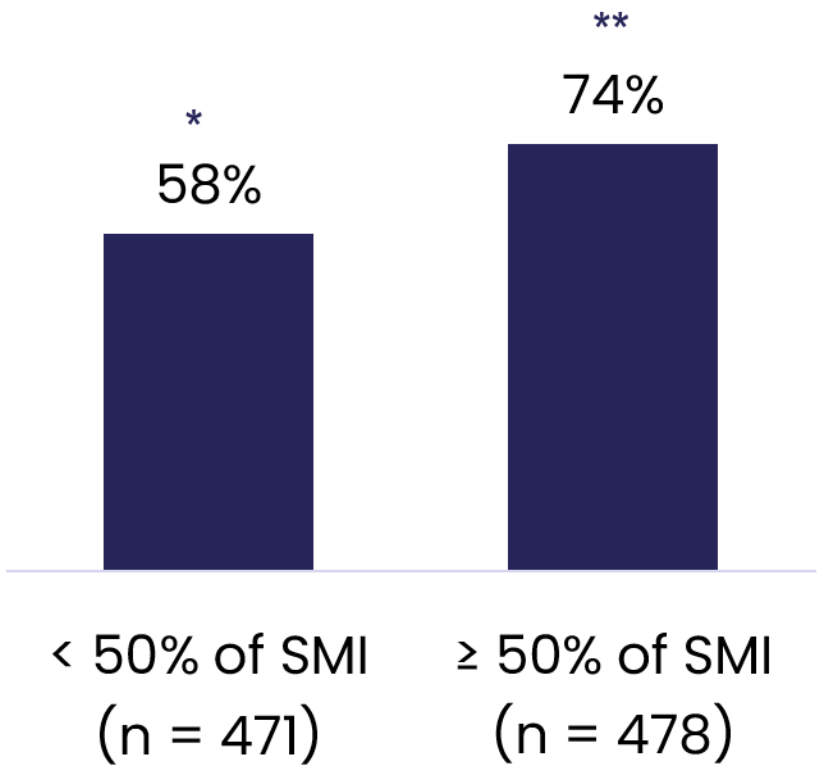
Source: CT RAPID Survey 4

Have More than 10 Children's Books

67%

have more than 10 children's books in the home

By Household Income

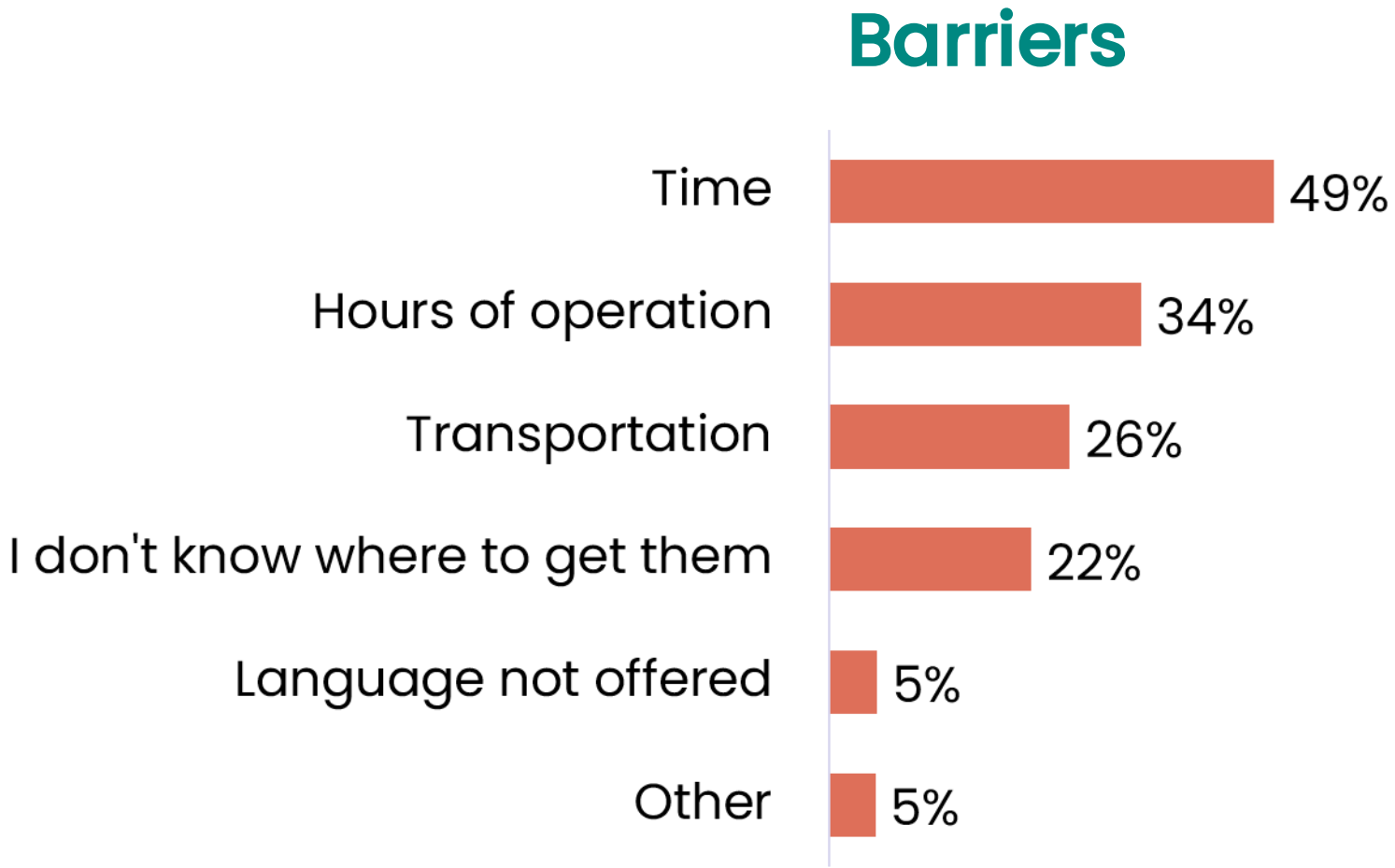


Source: CT RAPID Survey 4

Difficulty accessing free children's books

64%

wish it were easier to get free children's books



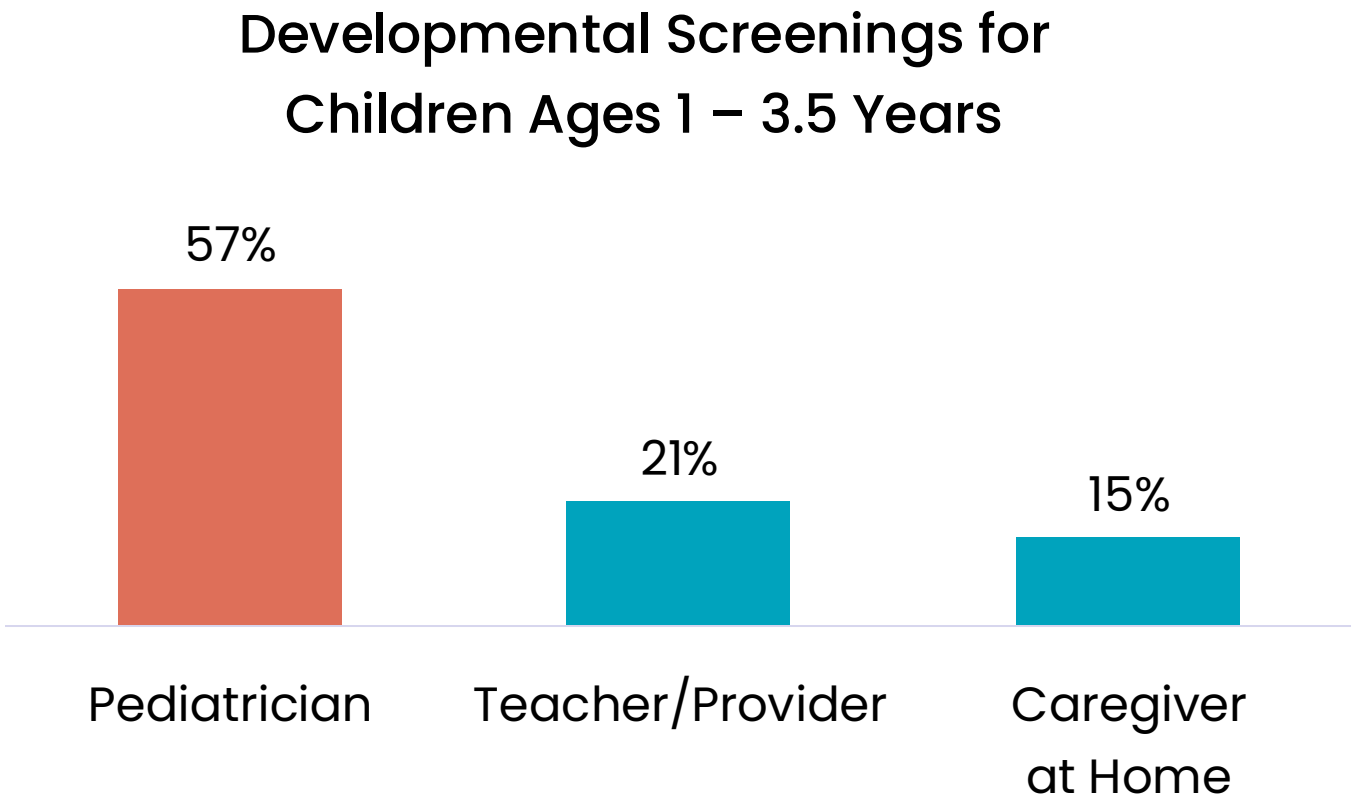
Developmental Screening & Connection to Services

Developmental Screening

Among children ages 1 to 5 years old,

19%

did **not** receive a developmental screening in the past year.



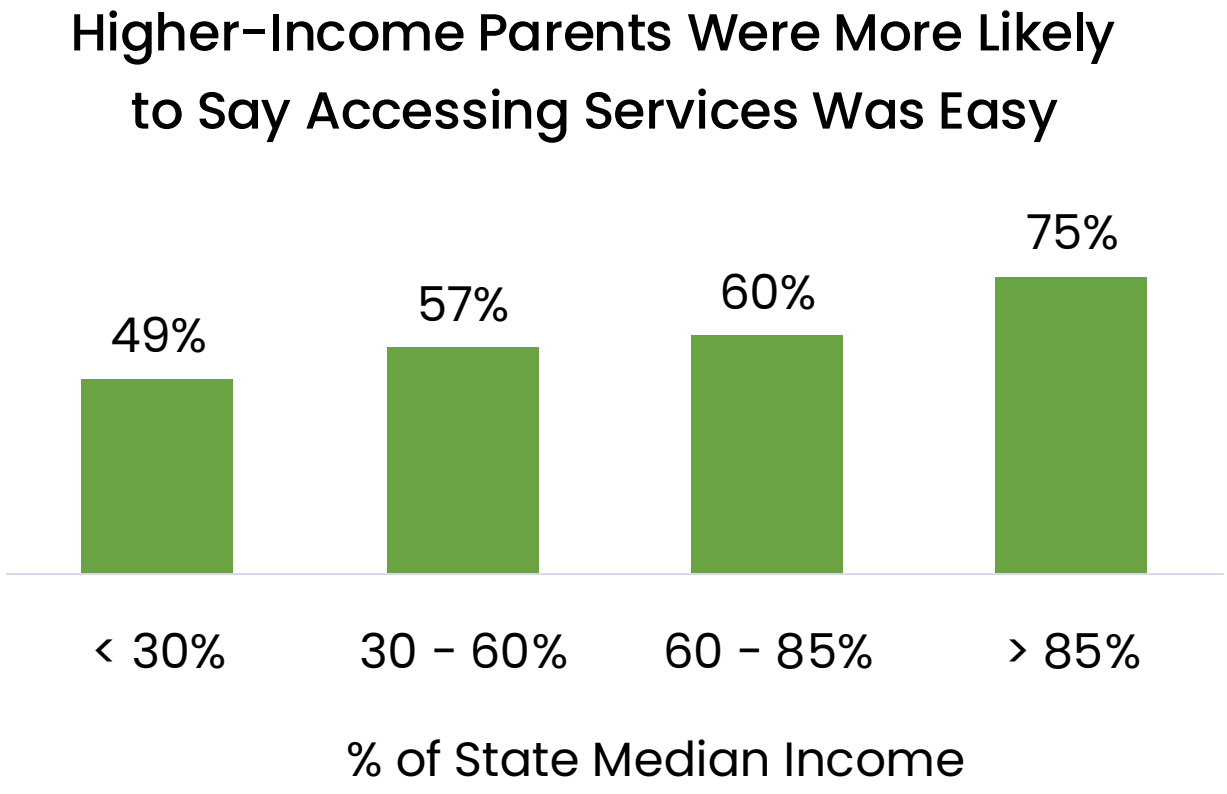
Source: CT RAPID Survey 2

Ease of Accessing Services

Among parents whose children had received services,

52%

said it had been **easy** to access those services.



Source: CT RAPID Survey 2

Need for Parenting Supports

74% of respondents

82% of parents of **children with disabilities**

said they could benefit from **additional parenting resources and supports.**

Source: CT RAPID Survey 2

Material Hardship & Housing

Hard to Pay for the Very Basics

Overall

55%

Low-income (below 50% SMI)

73%

say it is at least “somewhat” hard to pay for the very basics

Source: CT RAPID Survey 3

Food Insecurity in the Past Year

Overall

48%

Low-Income (below 50% SMI)

70%

Source: CT RAPID Survey 3

Housing as a Financial Stressor

51% of respondents

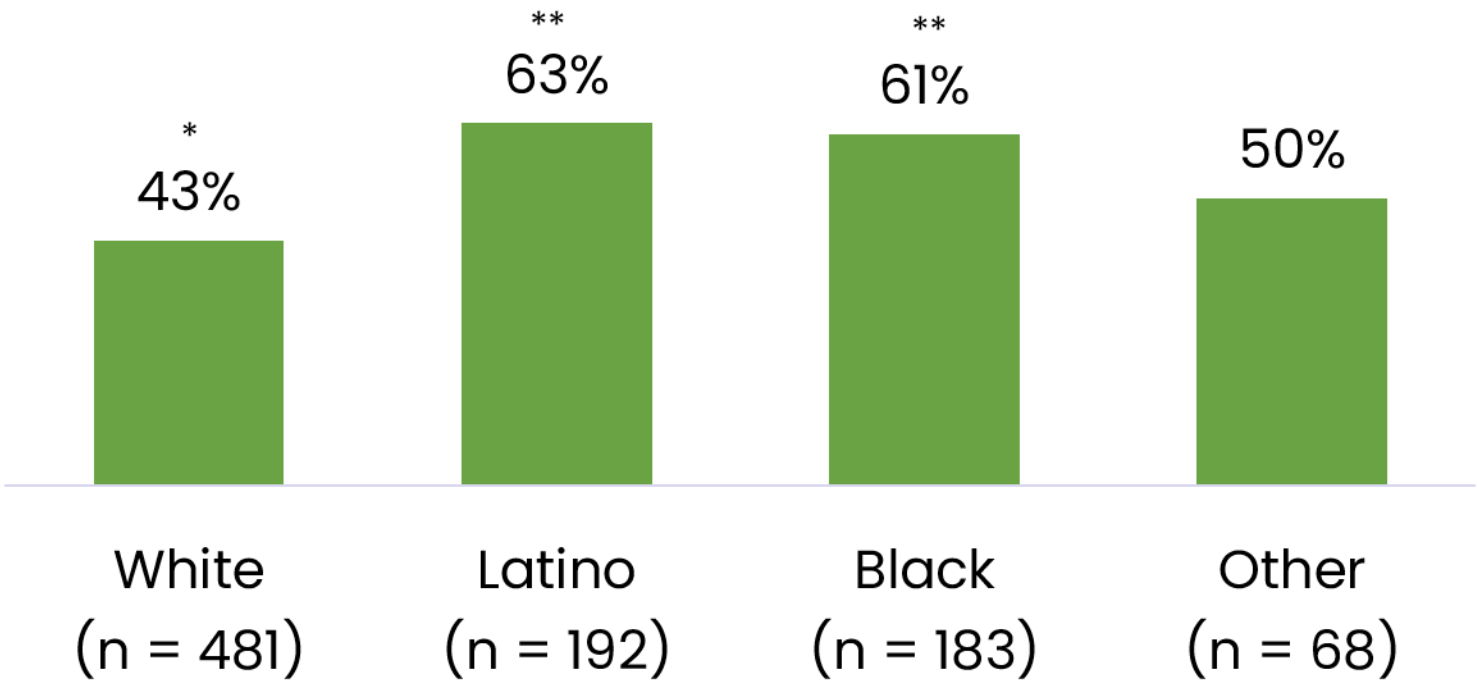
66% of **low-income** respondents

say **affording adequate housing is a financial stressor**

Source: CT RAPID Survey 5

Latino and Black Parents Experience More Housing-Related Financial Stress

Affording Housing is a Financial Stressor

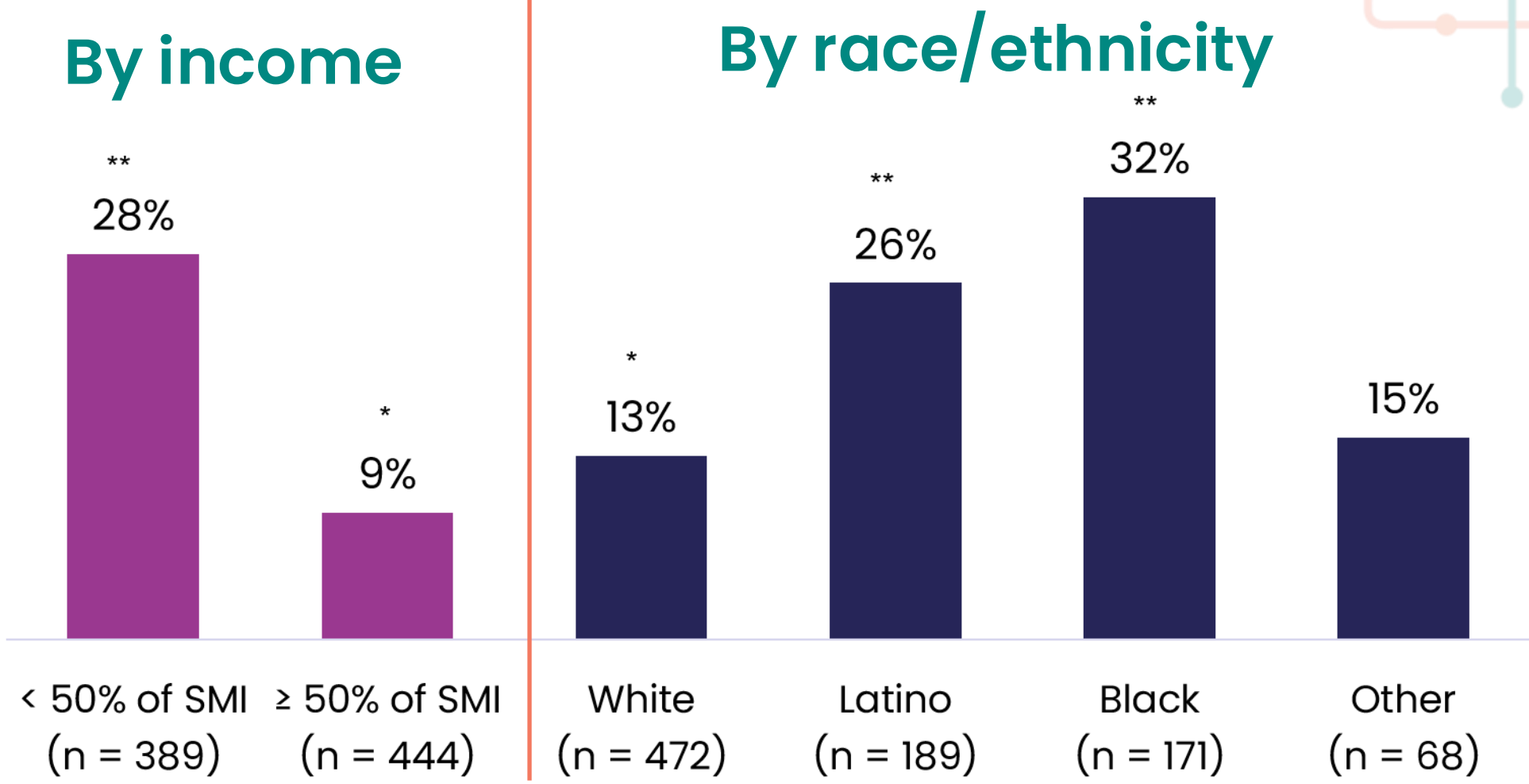


Source: CT RAPID Survey 5

Unable to Pay Full Rent/Mortgage in Past Month

20%

unable to pay their rent or mortgage in full



Source: CT RAPID Survey 5

CTData RAPID Survey Hub

Access the full findings from our RAPID Survey Hub:

www.ctdata.org/rapid-survey-hub

CT State of Babies 2026

From data to policy action for Connecticut's youngest children

CT Data 2026 Conference

Allison Logan, CT 359 Network

A cautionary tale

Without voice,
data are just a set of numbers

Without action,
words are just a set of letters

Without humanity,
our policies stand naked in the world



Who we are: the CT 359 Network

A statewide coalition focused on child wellness and developmental milestones

8 → 120+

members, from the 2023 launch to 2026

3 • 5 • 9

On target at three, five, and nine years

Opportunity-focused: we see and seek opportunities to do better for families and young children.

Accountability-focused: we seek data on what is, what is working, and what can work better.

Built by many hands, checked by many eyes

- Members receive and review reports
- Members provide edits and feedback
- Agencies share data on request
- CT 359 members serve as chapter reviewers and stewards

Why a State of Babies report? Why now?

Babies have been in the shadows of our policies and data

"Connecticut knows children in pieces."

CT State Chief Information Officer

- Births down 18% in two decades
- 1 in 2 young children on Medicaid
- Gaps in data now documented for use in redesign

Grounded in what we have documented



150 pages of research so far, across Chapters 1–3

12+ special reports, from infant mental health to family voice

81 state programs mapped across 9 agencies

1 compilation of key data across all chapters and special reports

What the data tell us, in brief

40%

of CT households are below the ALICE threshold; in Htfd, 82% of children

~2×

rise in pregnancy-related mortality, 2015–17 to 2018–20

~14,000

Medicaid children under three not screened for developmental delay in 2025

41 of 81

state programs include care coordination; one family can have several coordinators

Women's voices: the human throughline

"There is ample quantitative evidence showing that Black women suffer and die from pregnancy and childbirth at disproportionate rates. What is missing are our voices, our lived experiences that bring humanity and urgency to those numbers."

Raising Our Voices, 2025



30 policy action opportunities so far



24 could start in 2027–28

6 would advance later, 2029–33

18 of 30 are about data or research

10 could begin with data the state already holds

Where we are leaning for 2027

Examples that respond to what we are hearing

Maternal and mental health

- Require Medicaid perinatal depression screening and action
- Publish maternal health data by race, ethnicity and insurance
- A family CHW walking alongside HUSKY families from pregnancy on

Missing children

- Give every young child in Medicaid and at the B-3 door an identifier (SASID), link data, and count who is missing
- Follow up with children found ineligible for Birth to Three

The navigation burden

- Map care management across state agency programs
- Map “people” outcomes, numbers served and costs

Case example: a Family CHW in HUSKY

Offered, never assigned: families choose to take part

4 in 10
Connecticut births are paid for by Medicaid

1 in 2
children under three are covered by Medicaid

Universal: Welcome outreach, check-ins and benefits guidance

Targeted: Monthly contact when a need appears, like a positive screen or missed visit

Intensive: NICU graduates dev/beh health needs, medically complex children

How it could start: three sessions

2027–29 Design and pilot, pregnancy to age one

2029 Report costs and outcomes; expand to age 3

2031 Offer to every HUSKY family

Medicaid billing for CHW services is already in law (PA 23-186). No State Plan Amendment has been filed, and no billing code has been provided.

What’s next?

Fall 2026

Technical Report, Special Reports and Key Findings Data Report

Jan. 1, 2027

Policy Report with master Policy Action Agenda

2027

Administrative and legislative action timed to the 2027 General Assembly session

2029–33

Advancing Policy Action Opportunities timed to state budget cycles

Thank you

Read. First publications coming soon!
Test. Bring your data eyes to our program map and indicators
Join. Become a CT 359 member



Access CT 359 resources at
ctdata.org/ct359resources

loganconsulting.co@gmail.com
jmgruendel@yahoo.com

Robin Comey: Comments from a policymaker's perspective

Questions & Discussion

Thank you for attending:

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Please Fill out our Session Survey



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