



# Right from the Start Video Series

## Using Video as a Tool for Engagement and Community Action

Planning and Screening Guide



[www.ctrightfromthestart.org](http://www.ctrightfromthestart.org)



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## RIGHT FROM THE START

**The Right from the Start (RFTS)** initiative evolved from a deep desire among parents, early care providers, and a range of community stakeholders, for a coordinated comprehensive early childhood system in the state of Connecticut. **Right from the Start** was born out of the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund’s convening of teams of individuals and organizations committed to informing the process and the design of that system.

## THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

When we talk about the early childhood “system” in the state of Connecticut, we mean all of us. We all contribute services, supports and environments (formal and informal) that nurture the growth and development of all our children prenatal to age 8.

## THE FOUR FOCUS AREAS

The **Right from the Start** team identified four core focus areas that merited further attention in our state’s early childhood system. These four focus areas are:

- ✓ paying attention to the **Whole Child**
- ✓ minding the **Opportunity Gaps**
- ✓ **Early is Good, but Earlier is Better** and
- ✓ supporting **Local Community Action**.

For more information about **Right from the Start**, the four focus areas or to view the videos please visit [www.ctrightfromthestart.org](http://www.ctrightfromthestart.org).

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

Increasingly, videos are being used as tools for community engagement, raising awareness and social action. This guide, which works in tandem with the **Right from the Start** website, can be used as a way of supporting your efforts to:

- ✓ raise awareness around early childhood development and education in your community;
- ✓ amplify key messages and issues that are important in your community;
- ✓ actively communicate with and further engage parents;
- ✓ enlist the support of partners and other community stakeholders;

## RIGHT FROM THE START VIDEO SERIES

The **Right from the Start** video series includes: four short videos that align with the four focus areas, and a video that provides an overview of the **Right from the Start** initiative. These short videos can be used as discussion starters by members of your collaborative and the local community to advocate on behalf of young children.



# THE VIDEOS



**EARLY IS GOOD, AND EARLIER IS BETTER** — We all know that the early years matter. What we didn't know, until recently, is how much the earliest years matter. This video features several voices sharing the importance of building a strong foundation for learning and development during a child's first 1,000 days. **Length:** 4:09 / **Target Audience:** providers, parents, anyone that works with and on behalf of young children in CT.



**PAY ATTENTION TO THE WHOLE CHILD** — A child's physical and mental health, social development, and learning are closely linked. This video shares what it means to pay attention to the needs of a whole child and why this matters to their growth and development. **Length:** 4:36 / **Target Audience:** providers, parents, anyone working within the early childhood system in CT or with and on behalf of young children in CT.



**MIND THE OPPORTUNITY GAPS** — All children deserve the opportunity for optimal intellectual, social, and emotional development. Unfortunately, statistics show that the zip code where you are born or the color of your skin are strong predictors of future success. This short film shares the insurmountable odds that one family faces as they navigate the many systems that impact children in the state. / **Length:** 7:36 / **Target Audience:** policy makers, stakeholders, anyone working within the early childhood system in CT.



**SUPPORT LOCAL COMMUNITY ACTION** — Connecticut communities are proving everyday how to work collaboratively to deliver services in new more effective ways. This video shares how one local early childhood council is enhancing and implementing their local comprehensive birth-to-8 early childhood plan. / **Length:** 6:51 / **Target Audience:** members of the collaborative community, members of the community, community leaders and stakeholders.

## CONNECTING THIS GUIDE TO YOUR WORK

A good way to connect this guide to your work, is by hosting a screening and discussions session with fellow members from your collaborative. As you view the videos you can follow along with the corresponding topic guides (also located on the **Right from the Start** website). The guides are simple to use and can help facilitate discussions on how these videos and the four focus areas can be integrated into your overall community engagement strategy.

The following questions are designed to support your planning discussion:

- What is your purpose in hosting this discussion/screening?
- How will you use this screening to advance this purpose?
- What key messages stood out for you? Why are these important?
- What are the key messages that were presented in the video/s?
- What key messages most relate to your target audience?
- What are the connections between the key messages presented in the video and the issues that most impact your community?
- How can you link a call to action to the key messages and the issues that most impact your community?



## OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT GOALS

Following are some questions that may be useful for planning your outreach and engagement goals:

- Would you like to bring people together to take action around an issue? What issue? What action? Why? How will this benefit your community?
- Would you like to recruit new members?
- Would you like to identify new community allies and partners that you can build future collaborations with?
- Would you like to build alliances with service providers? Educators? The faith based community?
- What are the kinds of events that align with your outreach and engagement goals?
- Who is your target audience? Why is this the target audience?
- Where will you screen the videos and host the discussion?
- Will you enlist partners and collaborators? If so, who?
- What is the strategic intent behind enlisting these partners and collaborators?
- How will you engage partners and collaborators in the planning process and post-screening?

## DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS

A partnership with local or statewide organizations may serve as an opportunity to focus your event, split the workload and increase the number and diversity of attendees. Your partners can also be vital agents in getting the word out about the event, make sure to include them in your outreach and engagement strategy planning.



## TARGETING YOUR AUDIENCE & AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

### Target Audience May Include

- Stakeholders in your community
- Community organizations
- Parents
- Providers
- Policy makers
- Faith-based communities
- Neighborhood groups (i.e. blockwatch)
- play groups
- libraries

Once you have identified your audience, and established goals for outreach and engagement, it is time to think through the impact and outcomes that you want to achieve.

### Audience Engagement

You can move your audience from passive viewing to active involvement by creating an ASK: What do you want your audience to do (ACTION) as a result of watching the video, attending screening, participating in the conversation? How can audience members get more involved at the local and/or statewide level?

## SOME IDEAS FOR ACTION

Providing ways that your audience can take action allows viewers to commit to getting involved.

Some actions they can take include:

- take personal inventory
- carry the conversation forward to others in the community
- contact elected officials
- participate in upcoming events that center on the issues presented by the Discovery Community and the RFTS network
- host a community screening and initiate discussions with the audience on ways for further engagement in the community
- learn about what is happening in the community and how they can get involved
- connect the audience with the local collaborative group and share ways that they can get involved
- visit the RFTS website to learn more and share their voice (online)
- spread the word about the collaborative's work
- share RFTS website and videos with others in the network



## GETTING THE WORD OUT

You can use a variety of methods to get the word out to your audience. You can use social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest); e-newsletters; listservs; email blasts; flyers, postings, traditional newsletters, newspapers and radio public service announcements.

Prepare a press release and submit to local media sources and be sure to leverage the social networks of your members and supporters.

One of the most powerful and meaningful ways to connect with others is through in-person interactions. Personal invitations from planning group members are a great way to make that personal connection.





## POST-SCREENING/COMMUNITY CONVERSATION FOLLOW UP

The work doesn't end once the credits roll on the screen. In many ways the screening and conversation starts a new cycle of opportunities for engagement and action. It is helpful to think through some ideas for post-screening activity. Here are some questions that can kickstart this discussion among the organizers:

- How can the collaborative support audience participation in the call to action?
- How can the organizers/planning team follow up post screening with the audience?
- How can opportunities gained from the screening be leveraged to amplify the work of the collaborative in the community?

### Some ideas for post-screening follow up may include:

- Clearer communication between providers, resources and parents
- A higher level of parent engagement
- A more effective way to connect parents to providers and resources in the community

#### EXAMPLE:

**Video:** *Earlier is Good, Earlier is Better*

**Target Audience:** Parents and caregivers

**Purpose:** Use this screening/conversation as an opportunity to reach out to parents. Ask parents and caregivers to consider the following questions: *What will they do now that they have had a chance to view this video and engage in a deep discussion around the issues presented in this video?*

**Follow Up:** organize playgroups in various settings throughout the community (meet your parents where they are), some examples may include: medical facilities, libraries, faith based organizations, the mall, etc. Coordinate clothing drives, books drives, etc. and use these as opportunities to connect parents to local and statewide early childhood resources. Organize cooking classes that focus on healthy eating for young children, invite parents to share in the cooking of the meals and offer on-site child care with plenty of activities that nurture and support the growth and development of young children.

## PLANNING THE SCREENING & COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

**AGENDA** — How your agenda is planned will depend on what the collaborative wants to accomplish and the audience that will be in attendance. It is helpful when the agenda is designed with the audience and desired impact in mind.

Who will speak at the event? What will they speak about? How much time should the speaker be allotted?

Will your screening include a panel of “experts?” Who will participate on this panel? Will the panel represent a diversity of opinions and interests? Will the panel reflect the interest and needs of the audience?

Who is going to ask the audience members to support local action?

### Suggested Agenda and Rundown of The Screening

- Start on time (no later than 10 minutes from posted time)
- Welcome and brief introduction to the event— 5 MINUTES
- Introduce the RFTS video—The timing here depends on whether or not you choose to screen the RFTS Overview video—10-15 MINUTES

**Note:** you may want to screen the RFTS overview video prior to screening the RFTS topic video/s chosen for the conversation. The overview video provides some grounding in RFTS's work.

- Introduce the RFTS video/s that will be screened and review some of the key terms—5-8 MINUTES (each)
- Screening of the Video/s—TIME depends on how many videos will be screened
- Discussion—20 MINUTES TO 1 HOUR
- Call to Action—10 MINUTES
- Wrap Up—5 MINUTES





**TIMING THE CONVERSATION** — If the choice framework discussion is appropriate for your audience or if you'd like to go into a conversation focused on systems change: 1 video is recommended for the allotted 2 hours. If you'd like to have a general conversation about the video and discuss local implications or local action, you may be able to screen multiple videos/topics in one 2-hour setting.

### RFTS VIDEO SERIES TOOL-KIT

The following is a list of documents that can be found on the **Right from the Start** website. These documents accompany the video series and serve as supplements to the screenings and conversations.

- RFTS Video Series Brochure
- RFTS Video Series Screening & Planning Guide
- Moderator Training Powerpoint slide deck
- Moderator Topic Guides (one for each video)
- Participant Topic Guides (one for each video)
- Topic Powerpoint slide decks (one for each video)

## SOME GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNITY SCREENING EVENTS

- If the screening will be in a space that does not house on-site projector and audio, please be sure to bring a projector, speakers and a laptop. Please note: that the online version of the videos can be copied onto DVD's. For more information please visit the **Right from the Start** website and download the Technical Support document for more details.
- Visit the venue ahead of time to check AV, set-up, etc. Be sure to test all technology and trouble shoot any issues during this time.
- On the day of the screening, allot enough time (prior to the screening) to test the equipment, etc.
- Provide seating that is comfortable.
- Create a sign-in sheet – include name, address, email address, social media information and organizational affiliation (you can use this info for post-screening follow-up).
- Arrange for accessible parking options and list this information on the invitation.
- Make sure your event is accessible to people with disabilities or special needs (i.e. language translations), and welcome requests for special accommodations.
- Identify a facilitator for the audience discussion or a small panel.
- Offer a sheet with additional resources for members of the audience to take home.
- Provide audience members with information for post-screening engagement and community action follow up.



“If you want to go quickly, go alone.  
If you want to go far, go together.”

—African Proverb



## Join us!

At the heart of this work are connections. From the neurological connections that occur in the early years to the social connections that form the fabric of our communities. From the cross-agency connections that support the development of the whole child to the connections across racial, ethnic and economic groups that enable people to be seen, heard, and included. By developing and strengthening these connections, we can get it **Right From the Start!**

We invite you to join our growing network and...

- Use the **Right From the Start** videos to engage in a dialogue and address one of the issues from the four focus areas.
- Connect with others who are working collaboratively to improve early childhood in our state.
- Visit the **RESOURCE** section on the **Right From the Start** website to learn more.
- Contact us to learn how you can support this work: [rfts@wcmf.org](mailto:rfts@wcmf.org)

## For More Information

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