

# 2012 STATE OF THE CHILD IN BRIDGEPORT



**Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition**

*Mobilizing for Children*



**Research.**

**Advocate.**

**Educate.**

**Mobilize.**



## 2012 Report on the State of the Child in Bridgeport

### Executive Summary

The Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition (BCAC) annual State of the Child report presents a snapshot of the well-being of Bridgeport's children. It gives a grade comparing Bridgeport's children to children statewide and a grade for "effort" that shows if progress has been made in key areas from one year to the next.

This year, we draw your attention to a particularly disturbing trend—the sharp increase in child poverty. The number of children in Bridgeport living below the federal poverty line rose from 31% in 2010 to almost 40% in 2011. Meanwhile, the city's unemployment rate hovers around 13.5%, compared to 9.2% statewide as of August 2012.

These numbers become even more striking when compared to conditions in the rest of Fairfield County. The poverty rate for Bridgeport children (39.9%) is three times higher than that of Fairfield County (12.8%), and the unemployment rate is nearly two times higher.

While these disparities are troubling, the difference in family median income is alarming. The median income of Fairfield County families with children under the age of 18 (\$109,663) is nearly four times more than that of Bridgeport families (\$29,647), a disparity of \$80,016. The gap is larger between Bridgeport and Fairfield County than any other city and county in Connecticut. BCAC believes that narrowing these disparities will improve the lives of Bridgeport's children.

While Fairfield County as a whole has begun to see economic recovery, Bridgeport is not sharing in this recovery. Too many children in our community have to contend with poverty and all its concurrent hardships. BCAC will continue to address and highlight these disparities while advocating for policies and practices that will allow all Bridgeport children the opportunity to grow up healthy, safe, and well-educated.

# A REPORT CARD ON THE WELL-BEING OF BRIDGEPORT CHILDREN

## KEY:

A+ = more than 20% better

C = less than 5% difference

A = 10 - 20% better

D = 5 - 10% worse

B = 5 - 9% better

F = more than 10% worse

	GRADE	EFFORT
	Bridgeport vs. State	Progress from previous year

	GRADE	EFFORT
	Bridgeport vs. State	Progress from previous year

### Child Poverty

% Children living in poverty	F	F
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### Early Care

% Children entering school with preschool experience	F	C
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Licensed child care for infants and toddlers	F	C
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### Education

% Meeting CT Mastery Test goal in reading	F	C
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Graduation rate*	F	C
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### Child Health

Infant mortality rate*	F	D
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% Low birthweight*	F	C
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% Late or no prenatal care*	F	A+
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Teen births*	F	A
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% 2-year-olds screened for lead poisoning	A+	C
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### Housing

Homeless children	F	B
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Families on the waiting list for public housing	NA**	C
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### Child Safety

Children confirmed abused or neglected	F	A+
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Family violence arrests	C	A
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Juvenile arrests***	C	A+
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Juvenile arrests for violent crimes***	F	A
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\*2009 data; updated data not available

\*\*Statewide data not collected

\*\*\*Data reflects arrests of juveniles under the age of 18 in 2010 and not incidents

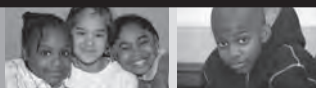
*Living in poverty puts children at greater risk for disease, poor nutrition, poor school performance, violence, abuse, and homelessness.*



## Age Breakdown Population 2011

Under the age of 5	10,160
Ages 5-9	12,414
Ages 10-14	8,870
Ages 15-17	5,759
Total Children Bridgeport	37,203
Total Population Bridgeport	145,634
Children as % of the Total Population	26%

*U.S. Census Bureau*



## Racial and Ethnic Composition Children Under the Age of 18

African American	42%
Asian	2%
Latino	40%
Native American	.08%
White	13%
Multiracial	3%

*U.S. Census Bureau, average 2005-2009*

## Child Poverty

- Child poverty increased significantly in 2011. According to the U.S. Census American Community Survey, an estimated **40% of Bridgeport children (more than 14,400) lived in poverty (\$19,090 for a family of three) in 2011**, compared to 31% in 2010.
- Bridgeport's rate of child poverty in 2011, 40%, is more than 2½ times the statewide rate of 15%. Nationwide, 22.5% of children live in poverty.
- In Bridgeport, 35% of African American children, 33% of Latino children, and 28% of white children live in poverty.
- 72% of Bridgeport children live in families earning less than 200% of the federal poverty level, the income considered necessary to meet a family's basic needs.
- The unemployment rate in Bridgeport went up slightly, from 13.3% in August 2011 to 13.5% in August 2012. The statewide unemployment rate was 9.2% in August 2012.

## Child Hunger

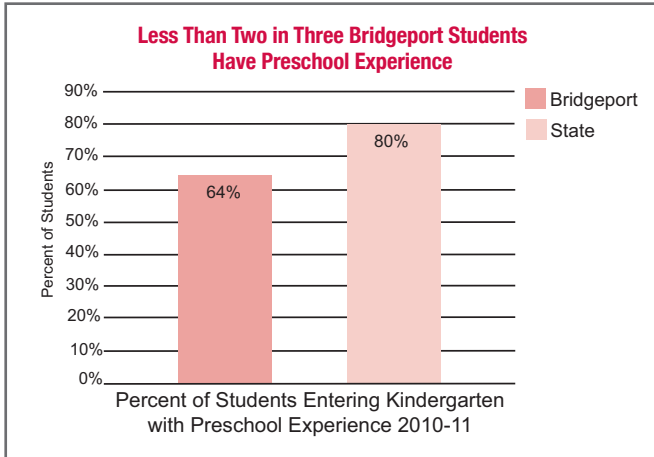
- In July 2012, 13,070 Bridgeport children lived in families receiving food stamps, now known as SNAP. This number represents 390 fewer children than in June 2011, a slight decrease of 3%. Statewide, there was a 3% increase in the number of children receiving SNAP.

## Family Status

- In 2011, **58% of Bridgeport's families with children under the age of 18 were headed by a single parent, compared to 31% statewide.**
- 1,294 Bridgeport children (3%) were being cared for by a grandparent in 2011.

Children who participate in quality early childhood programs are more likely to perform better academically, graduate high school, get a job, and earn a higher income than those children who do not participate.

## Child Care Capacity and Need



- 64% of kindergarten students entered Bridgeport public schools with preschool, nursery school, or Head Start experience in the 2010-11 school year, compared to 65% in 2009-10. Statewide in 2010-11, 80% of kindergarten students entered school with preschool experience.
- In 2011, 9,826 Bridgeport children under the age of six (80%) lived in families in which all of the adults were in the labor force.
- In 2011, there were 860 licensed child care spaces for infants and toddlers in Bridgeport, 30 fewer spaces than the previous year.
- In 2011, there were 13 licensed child care spaces per 100 children under the age of three in Bridgeport, compared to 21 spaces per 100 children under the age of three statewide.

## Child Care Costs

- In the Bridgeport area, the average cost for full-time licensed child care for one year is \$13,785 for infants and toddlers and \$11,680 for preschool age children.
- In 2011, 3,193 Bridgeport children, 12 fewer children than in 2010, benefited from Care for Kids, Connecticut's child care subsidy program.

## Child Care Quality

- 1,446 children attend Bridgeport child care centers or preschool programs accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or its equivalent. In addition, nearly 900 children attend programs that meet standards established by Head Start.
- In 2011, 1,151 Bridgeport children receiving state child care subsidies (36%) were in informal child care settings, including care provided by a grandparent, other relative, or non-related adult in the child's home.

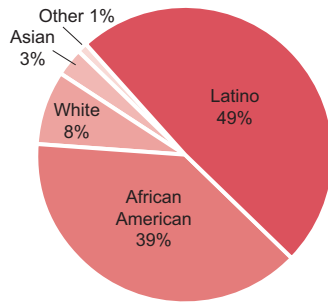
**BRIDGEPORT LICENSED CHILD CARE AND PRESCHOOL PROGRAM CAPACITY 2011-12**

	Infants/ Toddlers	3-4 Year-Olds
Licensed child care centers and Head Start programs	606	2,670
Licensed family day care homes	254	519
Board of Education pre-kindergarten		
full-day	—	270
part-day	—	482
<b>Total</b>	<b>860</b>	<b>3,941</b>

*Living in poverty, overcrowded classrooms, high teacher turnover, and unsafe school environments contribute to poor student achievement and high dropout rates.*

## Student Enrollment

- There were 20,245 students in the Bridgeport school system as of September 30, 2011.



**Racial and Ethnic Composition  
Bridgeport Schools 2011-12**

- During the 2010-11 school year, **99% of Bridgeport public school students were economically disadvantaged** or lived in families earning less than 185% of the federal poverty level (\$35,316 for a family of three), compared to 34% of students statewide.

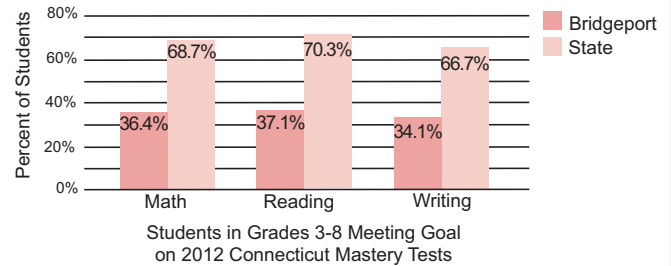
## Academic Performance

CMT AND CAPT RESULTS				
	Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT)		Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT)	
	2012	2011	2012	2011
Math	36.4%	35.6%	10.3%	10.3%
Reading	37.1%	35.5%	8.2%	10.5%
Writing	34.1%	32.6%	21.3%	21.1%
Science	26.9%*	24.2%*	10.5%	10.7%

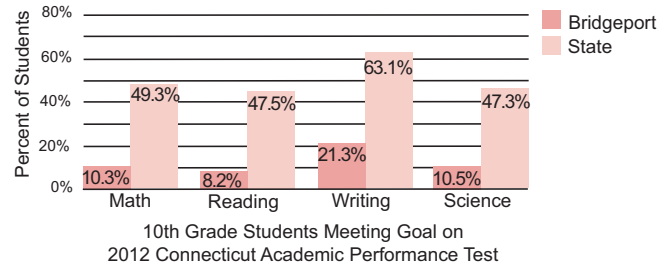
Bridgeport Students Meeting Goal on 2012 and 2011 CMT (Grades 3-8) and CAPT (Grade 10)

\* 5th and 8th grade only

### Connecticut Mastery Test Results Clearly Show Achievement Gap



### Wide Achievement Gap for High School Students

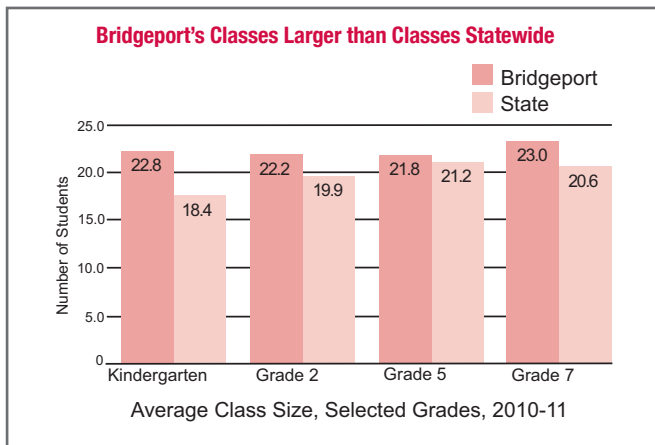


- 55% of Bridgeport's Class of 2011 took the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), compared to 73% statewide. Bridgeport students averaged 405 on reading, 397 on math, and 402 on writing. Statewide, students averaged 502 on reading, 505.5 on math, and 506 on writing.
- 70% of Bridgeport's graduating Class of 2010 went on to post-secondary education, compared to 86% statewide.

### Bilingual Education

- In the Bridgeport school district, 73 different languages are spoken.
- During the 2010-11 school year, 13% of Bridgeport students (2,607) were not fluent in English, compared to 5.5% of students statewide. Bilingual education is provided in three languages: Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole.

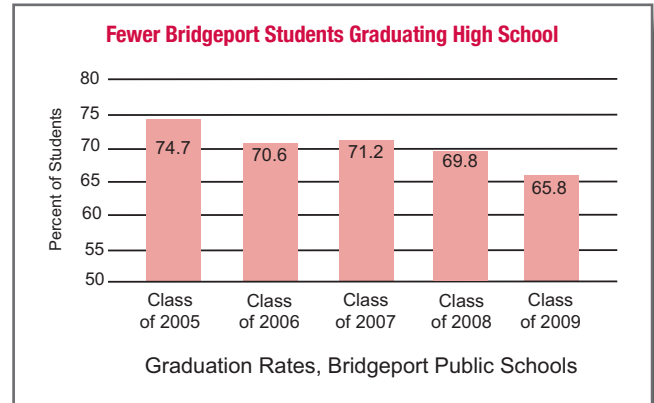
### Class Size



### Students with Disabilities

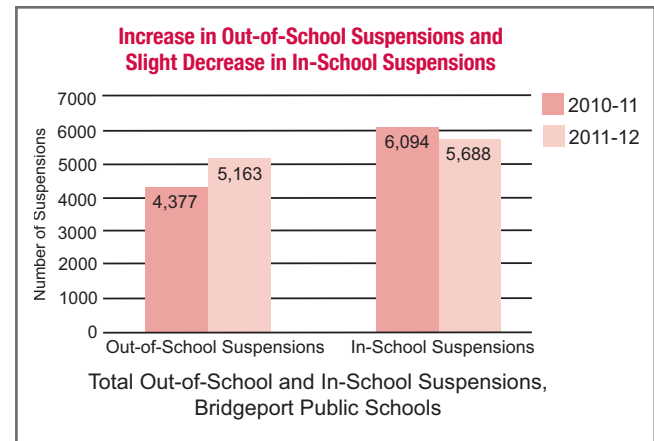
- 13.3% of Bridgeport students (2,665) received special education services in 2010-11, compared to 11.4% statewide.
- 67% of Bridgeport students with disabilities in the Class of 2009 graduated with a standard high school diploma, compared to 81% statewide.

### Graduation Rate



- **66% of Bridgeport's Class of 2009\* graduated**, compared to 91% statewide. Research indicates that youth who do not graduate high school are more likely to live in poverty and be involved in criminal activity than those who do graduate.

### Student Discipline



- Research shows a relationship between out-of-school suspensions and dropping out of school.

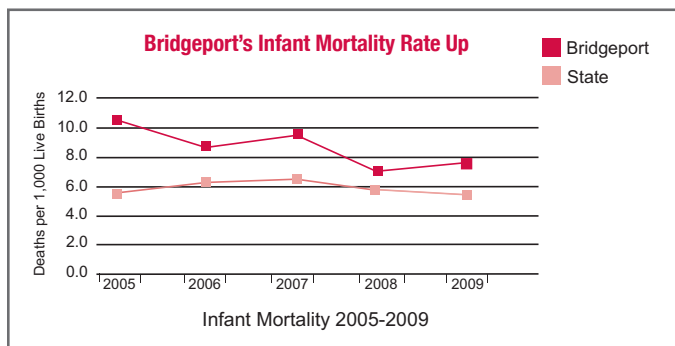
\*2010 data not available

Good health—including physical, behavioral, and oral health—is essential for a child’s development and well-being.

## Infant Health

### Infant Mortality & Low Birthweight Babies

- In 2009\*, the infant mortality rate in Bridgeport was 7.7 infant deaths per 1,000 live births, compared to 7.3 in 2008, an increase of 5%. Bridgeport’s rate was 40% higher than the state rate of 5.5.



- In 2009\*, 9.8% of all Bridgeport babies were born with low birthweight (about 5.5 pounds at birth), compared to 10.1% in 2008. Statewide, 8.0% of all babies were born with low birthweight.

### Prenatal Care

- In 2009\*, 14.5% of Bridgeport mothers received late or no prenatal care during their pregnancy, compared to 18.5% in 2008. Statewide, 12% of mothers received late or no prenatal care in 2009. Research show that mothers who receive late or no prenatal care are more likely to have a low birthweight baby than mothers who receive prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy.

\*2010 data not available

RACIAL AND ETHNIC DISPARITIES IN PRENATAL CARE AND INFANT HEALTH			
	African American	Latino	White
Infant Mortality (Infant deaths per 1,000 live births)	10.7	7.6	6.2
Low Birthweight	12.0%	9.1%	9.1%
Late or No Prenatal Care	13.0%	16.8%	10.7%

Infant Mortality, Low Birthweight, and Prenatal Care by Race and Ethnicity, Bridgeport, 2009\*

## Child Health

### Childhood Asthma

- In fall 2010, Community Allied to REACH Health Equity (CARE) surveyed 1,707 Bridgeport residents to determine health needs. Of the 627 respondents with children, 14% reported having a child with asthma; the frequency rose to 18% for families living in poverty.

### Health Coverage

- People without health insurance are less likely to go to the doctor, get a necessary medical test, or fill a prescription than those with health insurance. Two-thirds of the uninsured are working.
- According to the U.S. Census, 10% of Bridgeport children were uninsured in 2011, compared to 4.4% in 2010.
- As of June 2012, 25,114 Bridgeport children were enrolled in HUSKY, Connecticut’s health insurance program for low-income children and their parents, compared to 24,838 children in June 2011—a slight increase of 1%. Statewide, enrollment in HUSKY increased less than 1%.



## Lead Poisoning

- Lead poisoning can lead to verbal, perceptual, motor, and behavioral disabilities. African American children are five times more likely than white children to suffer from lead poisoning.
- The State Department of Public Health highly recommends lead screening for children under the age of six, and particularly for children under the age of two. In 2010, 53% of Bridgeport children under the age of six and 87% under the age of two were screened for lead poisoning, compared to 52% and 86% respectively in 2009. Statewide, 66% of children under the age of two were screened for lead.
- Of all children screened in Bridgeport in 2010, 2% (128 children) were lead poisoned, an increase of 15% compared to 2009. Statewide, a total of 743 children were lead poisoned, representing a less than 1% increase over 2009 levels.

## Mental Health

- In a survey conducted in April 2011 by the Search Institute for RYASAP (Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership), **23% of Bridgeport students in grades 7-12 reported feeling sad or depressed most or all of the time and 19% reported attempting suicide one or more times.**

## Oral Health

- 81% of adults with children who responded to the fall 2010 CARE survey reported that their child had a regular source of dental care.

## Preventive Health Care

- 78% of Bridgeport children born in 2008 and enrolled in the State Immunization Registry and Tracking System were vaccinated against major vaccine-preventable diseases before they turned two, compared to 79% statewide.

## Teen Health

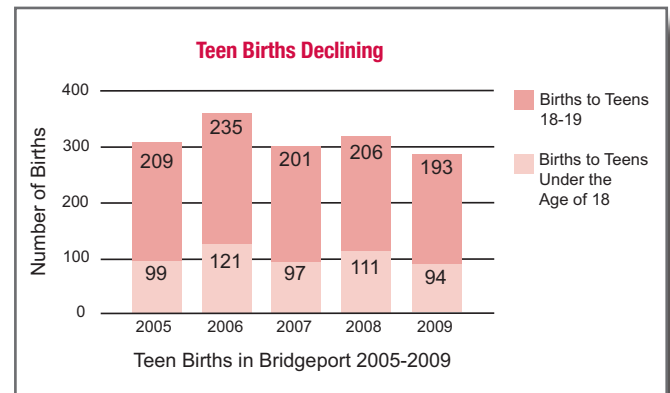
### Sexually Transmitted Diseases

- In 2011, 436 Bridgeport adolescents under the age of 20 were treated for sexually transmitted diseases, compared to 496 in 2010, a decrease of 12%.
- **Bridgeport's rate of sexually transmitted diseases in 2011 was 21 cases per 1,000 adolescents, compared to 4 cases per 1,000 adolescents statewide.**

### Substance Abuse and Smoking

- In the April 2011 RYASAP survey, 25% of Bridgeport students in grades 7-12 reported using alcohol at least once during the previous month; 13% used marijuana; 10% used inhalants; and 5% smoked cigarettes.

### Teen Pregnancy



- In 2009\*, there were 94 births to teens under the age of 18, a decrease of 15% compared to 2008. Teenage mothers are at high risk of poverty, domestic violence, and unemployment. Their children are seven times more likely to live in poverty than other children.
- Bridgeport's teen birth rate is three times the statewide rate. The 2007-09\* birth rate for Bridgeport teens ages 15-17 was 34 births per 1,000 teenage girls, compared to the statewide rate of 11 births per 1,000 teenage girls.

\*2010 data not available

Homeless children are at increased risk of poor health, developmental delays, mental and behavioral health problems, and lower educational achievement.

Long-term exposure to violence can lead to depression, academic failure, teen pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, and adult crime.

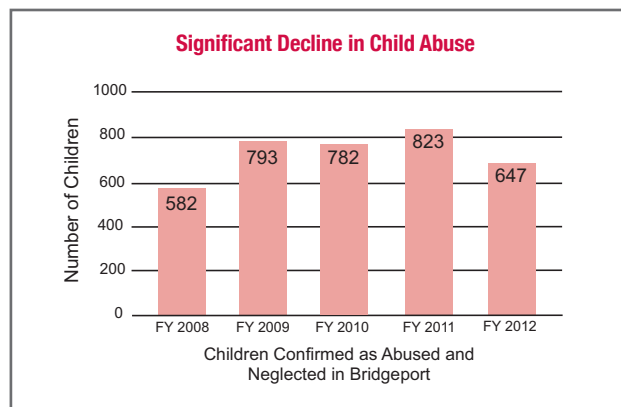
## Homelessness

- In 2010, 279 children spent time in a Bridgeport homeless shelter, compared to 300 in 2009.
- The rate of children living in homeless shelters in Bridgeport is four times the statewide rate. In 2009-10, there were 8 homeless children in Bridgeport shelters per 1,000 children, compared to 2 homeless children per 1,000 children statewide.

## Housing

- A parent working 40 hours a week at the minimum wage (\$8.25/hour) earns \$1,430 a month. In 2011-12, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in greater Bridgeport was \$1,277 a month. Paying rent is especially challenging for the 58% of Bridgeport families headed by a single parent.
- The federal definition of affordable housing is housing that costs no more than 30% of a family's income. Using this definition, a wage earner would have to make \$24.56 an hour (three times the minimum wage) to afford the average two-bedroom apartment in Bridgeport.
- As of July 2012, there were 4,128 families on the waiting list for public housing, compared to 4,322 families the previous year, a decrease of 4%.
- As of July 2012, there were 3,433 Bridgeport families using a Section 8 voucher or a State Rental Assistance Program (RAP) certificate, with 1,795 families on the waiting list.

## Child Abuse

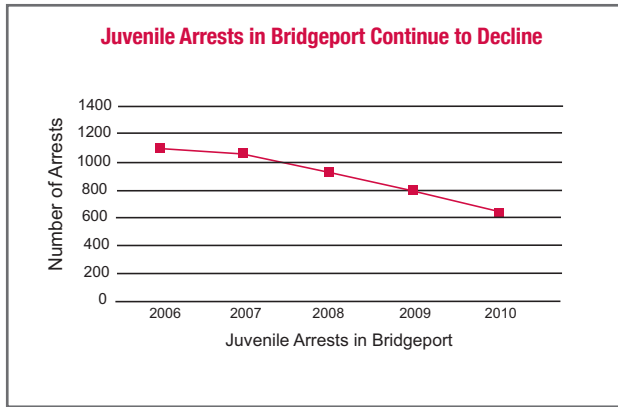


- The number of children in Bridgeport confirmed as abused or neglected decreased 21% from 2010-11 to 2011-12. Statewide, abuse and neglect cases decreased by 18%.
- There were 18 children confirmed as abused or neglected per 1,000 Bridgeport children in 2011-12, compared to 10 children per 1,000 children statewide.

## Domestic Violence

- In 2011, there were 710 arrests for family violence in Bridgeport, compared to 821 in 2010, a decrease of 13.5%. Children who experience domestic violence are more likely to demonstrate aggressive behavior than children from nonviolent homes.
- Bridgeport's rate of family violence arrests in 2011 was 23 arrests per 1,000 families, the same as the statewide rate.

## Juvenile Violence



- There were **628 juvenile arrests in Bridgeport in 2010, compared to 799 in 2009, a decrease of 21%**.
- Bridgeport's juvenile crime arrest rate in 2010 (40 arrests per 1,000 youth ages 10 to 17) was the same as the state rate.
- In 2010, 200 arrests, 32% of all juvenile arrests in Bridgeport, involved children under the age of 15. Arrests for juveniles under the age of 15 decreased 19%.
- **Juvenile arrests for violent crimes\* in Bridgeport decreased by 12.5% in 2010.** There were 77 juvenile arrests for violent crimes in 2010, compared to 88 in 2009.
- Bridgeport's juvenile violent crime arrest rate in 2010 (5 arrests per 1,000 youth ages 10 to 17) was more than double the state rate (2 arrests per 1,000 youth).

\* Violent crimes are defined as murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

*The more positive experiences or developmental assets young people have, the less likely they are to be involved in risky behaviors and the more likely they are to succeed in school and in life.*

## Youth Development

- Quality youth development programs have been shown to reduce juvenile crime by as much as 25%, improve high school graduation rates by 20%, and reduce illegal drug use by as much as 50%.

POSITIVE EXPERIENCES ARE CRITICAL FOR HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT	
Positive Experience	Percent of Students Reporting
Living in a caring neighborhood	27%
Getting a lot of encouragement at school	41%
Caring about their school	43%
Participating in youth programs in school or in the community	48%
<i>Search Institute Survey Results, Sample of Bridgeport Students Grades 7-12, April 2011</i>	

# CALL TO ACTION

BCAC calls upon concerned residents and government at all levels—local, state, and federal—to work with us to ensure that all of Bridgeport’s children:

- Have equal opportunities to succeed in life
- Grow up in families with the economic resources to be self-sufficient
- Have access to affordable, licensed, quality child care
- Receive a high-quality education
- Have a healthy start in life
- Have access to affordable, quality health care
- Have a clean environment
- Live in decent housing
- Live in neighborhoods that are safe and free from violence
- Receive the nurturing and support needed to achieve their full potential

## JOIN US!

### PARTICIPATE ON ONE OF OUR TASK FORCES:

- Children’s Health and Family Economic Empowerment
  - Education and Early Care

*To join a Task Force,  
please call (203) 549-0075, ext 10,  
or visit our website at [www.bcacct.org](http://www.bcacct.org).*



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*Mobilizing for Children*

### BRIDGEPORT CHILD ADVOCACY COALITION

2470 Fairfield Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06605  
(203) 549-0075 FAX (203) 549-0203 [www.bcacct.org](http://www.bcacct.org)

Chair	Jane F. Norgren
Executive Director	Mary Pat C. Healy
Director of Research Emeritus	Barbara Edinberg
Director of Policy and Research	Robin Lamott Sparks
Public Policy Analyst	Ilana Ofgang, Esq.
Outreach Associate	Mory Hernandez
Health Care Organizer	Lazaro Corro Benites
Administrative Assistant	Nicole Bass

Sources are available upon request.  
Information is based on the most current data available.  
10/12

Photo credit, p. 1, center: Bassick High School Photography Students



A very special thank you to



**ELIZABETH M. PFRIEM**

**NORMA F. PFRIEM FOUNDATION**

for their support!

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*Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition (BCAC) is a coalition of organizations, parents, and other concerned individuals committed to improving the well-being of Bridgeport's children through research, advocacy, community education, and mobilization.*

**[www.bcacct.org](http://www.bcacct.org)**