

Norwalk

children and youth

cradle to career

early childhood
nurturing
college
systems change
undocumented youth
social emotional
wellness
multi-cultural

shared accountability
two generational
K-12
breaking down
barriers
Community
transitions
trauma informed
social justice
equity

Mission

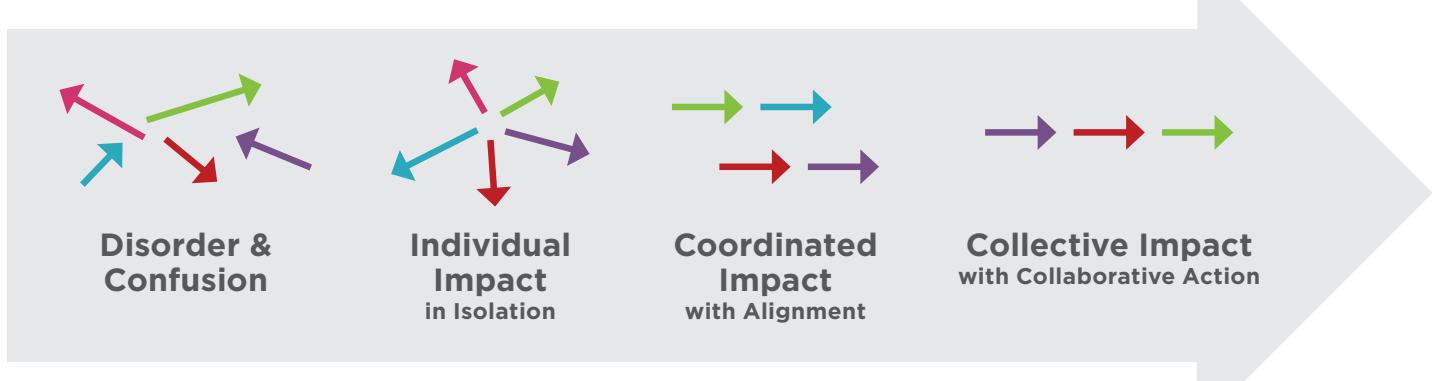
To collectively transform systems by ensuring resources, policies, practices, and power structures actively dismantle racism and drive equitable outcomes for every Norwalk child and young person.

Vision

Norwalk is a connected and equitable community where every child and young person thrives academically, physically, and social-emotionally from cradle to career.

/ Collective Impact

Norwalk ACTS is a Collective Impact partnership that brings people together, in a structured way, to achieve social change. Collective Impact is rooted in the belief that no single entity alone can create large-scale, lasting social change on its own.



The Five Conditions of Collective Impact Adopted by Norwalk ACTS



All participants have a shared vision for change, including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.

Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.

Participant activities are differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.

Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.

Creating and managing Collective Impact requires a dedicated group of staff who provides coordination and support of the partnership.



Norwalk ACTS is a member of the **StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network**. StriveTogether partners with nearly 70 communities across the country to advance equity so local success stories can become the reality for every child, everywhere. Together, we transform failing systems with a collaborative improvement methodology and a proven, data-driven framework for change. We work to close disparity gaps in education, housing and so much more. The StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network impacts the lives of more than 11 million youth – more than half of whom are children of color – across 30 states and Washington, D.C. Learn more at StriveTogether.org

/ Transforming Systems

/ MACRO - MEZZO - MICRO

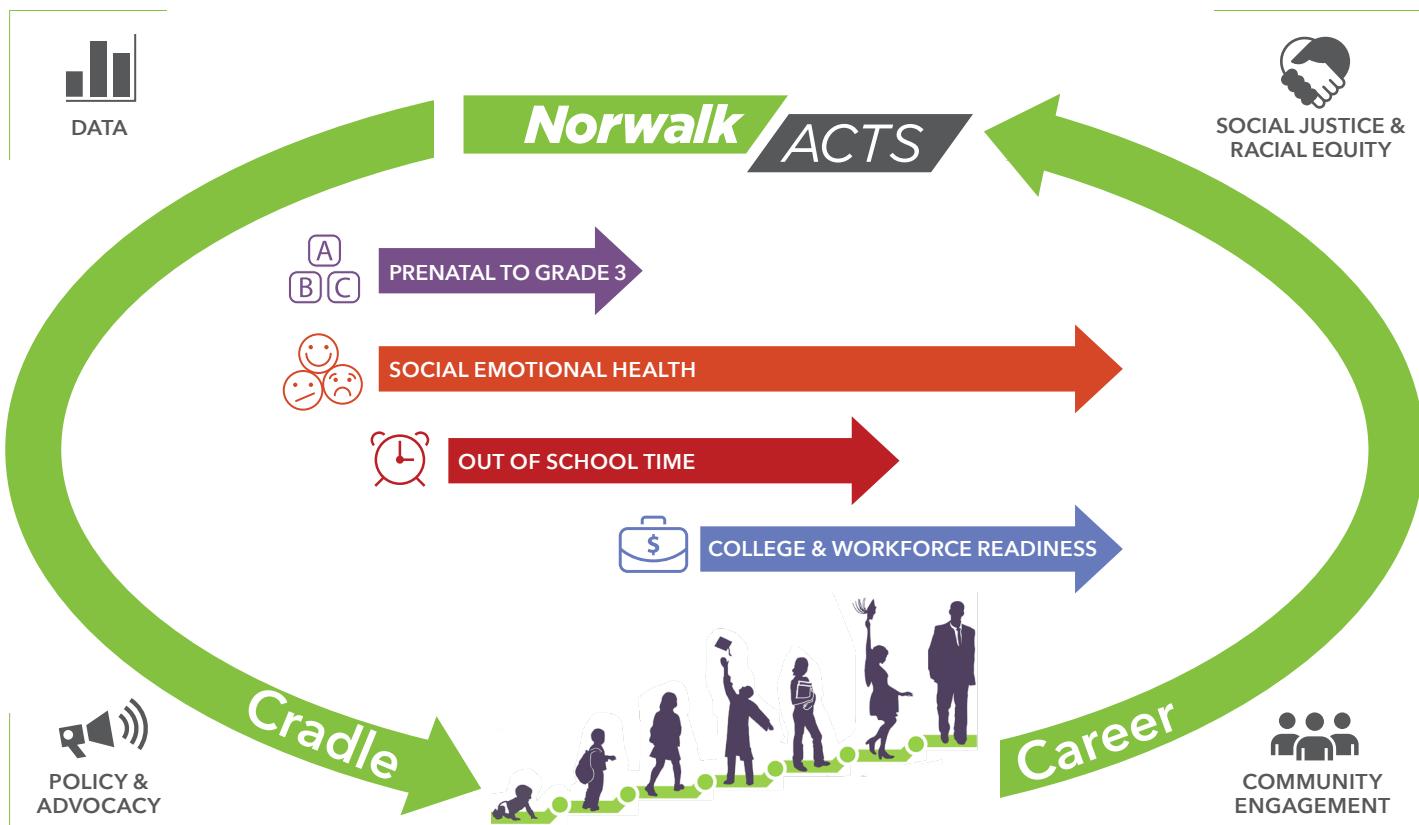
Norwalk ACTS takes a systems change approach to problem solving. Like any system, the Norwalk community is made up of interrelated and interactive parts. The work of Norwalk ACTS is to take a bird's-eye view of the system, understand the various system components, align and strengthen the connections between system parts, analyze data to evaluate how the system is operating to achieve equitable outcomes, and work with all the members of the system to operate more effectively and efficiently. We believe that all interrelated systems must work collaboratively to achieve the outcomes we seek. *Systems change work is an intentional process designed to fundamentally alter the components and structures that cause the system to behave in a certain way.*

Our theory of action for systems change includes:



/ ECOSYSTEM MAP

Our cornerstones are embedded into each of our Initiatives across the cradle-to-career continuum.



/ Cornerstones

Cornerstones are the key 'ingredients' embedded into all of our work along the cradle to career continuum. They are essential elements to moving the needle on population level changes. Backbone staff members, with specific skills in each area, work to support the inclusion of the cornerstones into each of our Initiatives.



Norwalk ACTS believes that *Behind Every Data Point is a Child*. We owe it to our children to know their larger story by collecting, connecting, and analyzing multiple data points, over time, across the cradle-to-career continuum.

Our Data Services provide useful and equitable data access and engagement with insightful information about child and student outcomes—within and across schools, service providers, and Norwalk as a whole. This helps parents, community organizations, teachers and school leaders, employers, and investors collaborate using a consistent evidence base to understand and improve community-level outcomes.



Our goal is to build a secure and reliable cradle-to-career data infrastructure that provides a trusted system for collecting, storing, and accessing data for measurement, analysis and visualization. This will enable access to information that empowers the community to better support all of our children. Norwalk ACTS takes data privacy seriously. We have data-sharing and confidentiality agreements in place with Norwalk Public Schools (NPS), which define safe and responsible use of student data, adhering to all privacy requirements. We also obtain parent consent whenever appropriate before our members share data with Norwalk ACTS.



The purpose of our policy and advocacy work is to engage, educate, and empower community members and partners to be civically active and advocate for equitable policies across the cradle to career continuum.

Our guiding principles:

- Create an inclusive environment where community members are empowered to participate in civic discourse and self-advocacy
- Provide data, resources and trainings that educate community members on key issues and equip them to effectively advocate for change
- Engage community members in conversations about their visions for Norwalk and create opportunities for civic participation with policymakers and elected officials
- Support advocacy efforts that center the voices and lived experiences of community members along with quantitative data to influence change



SOCIAL JUSTICE & RACIAL EQUITY



The need for racial equity in Norwalk is critical and nonnegotiable – it is central to the work of Norwalk ACTS. Since inception, the lack of racial equity has driven, and continues to drive, our work. As such, we recognize the need to center the lived experiences of the BIPOC community and for Norwalk residents to lead and guide our work. We also recognize intersectionality is crucial to equity work. The different identities we hold overlap and affect how we experience discrimination. Examples are race, ethnicity, class, gender identity and sexual orientation. That work requires a commitment to developing anti-racist policies, practices and behaviors to empower those within the community.



We are committed to transforming the way we work with equity woven into the fabric of Norwalk ACTS. Of every endeavor we need to ask, 'Will this move racial equity forward?' and ensure that our commitment to equity is consistently reinforced by our collective action to improve outcomes for historically marginalized, disenfranchised, and oppressed peoples in Norwalk. This is a continuous learning journey which requires humility, vulnerability, the willingness to adapt and embrace failure. Our work and our equity statement will evolve as we progress and learn new perspectives and information on this journey towards anti-racist action.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



We have begun a bottom up approach to engage the community through building awareness, sharing information, working to co-develop solutions and strategies with community members, and involving and mobilizing the community towards improvement. Our goal is to ensure that Norwalk community members most impacted by systems change work are in leadership positions raising their voices, developing solutions, and making decisions that achieve equitable outcomes for every Norwalk child and young person.

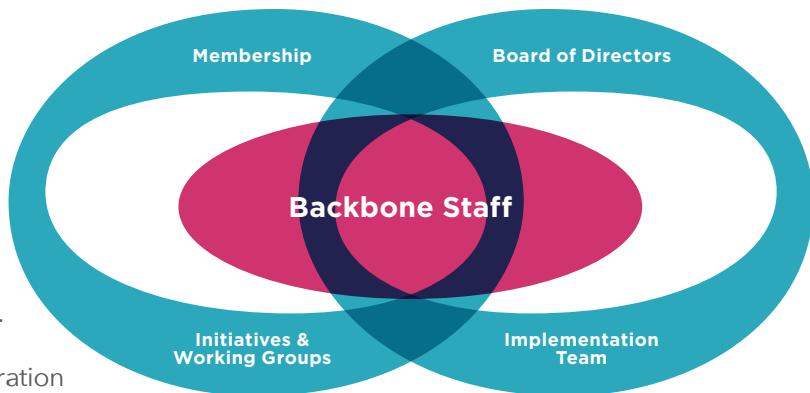
The community engagement spectrum informs how Norwalk ACTS engages the community. The direction of the Community Engagement Spectrum moves from informing to shifting ownership. It represents mobilizing people to support or provide limited feedback to organizing people who want to become decision makers, advocates, and leaders. Moving community engagement to the right side of the spectrum means giving the decision-making power to community members most impacted by the decisions—our north star goal.

Community engagement spectrum stages include:



/ How We Do It

The power driving Norwalk ACTS as a partnership is its members, who act with shared accountability and differentiated responsibilities. Various entities, each operating with specific roles and responsibilities, provide the organizational structure for Norwalk ACTS. The Board of Directors ensures there are resources and alignment between the operation of the non-profit (501c3) and the strategies developed throughout the partnership.



The backbone staff of Norwalk ACTS is the coordinating body of the partnership. They provide cornerstone capacity, convene and facilitate meetings, and align the efforts and resources of members and community partners who work to improve agreed upon community level outcomes.



/ Initiatives

Initiatives consist of groups of community members and cross-sector partners focused on improving select community-level outcomes using action plans and continuous improvement strategies. Initiatives form around specific issues or stages along the cradle to career continuum and when coordination is necessary to improve a particular outcome. Initially this coordination is led by the backbone team but as Initiatives evolve, the level of support adapts as ownership of the work shifts.

PRENATAL TO 3RD GRADE

The Prenatal to 3rd Grade (PN-3) Initiative strives to create an overarching community system for children and families that will launch every young child on a path to success. The Initiative consists of four working groups (Home Visiting, Language & Literacy, Pre-K to K Transition, Early Childhood Health & Development) that are combining the efforts of the early childhood community, using data to promote the value of early interventions, and changing programmatic strategies to address identified needs. The work that supports 3rd grade reading starts long before kindergarten.

Outcome

Norwalk children are ready to learn in kindergarten and reading at grade level by 3rd grade.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL HEALTH

The work of the Social Emotional Health (SEH) Initiative is to organize and provide resources to develop the social emotional skills essential for lifelong success of Norwalk's children and families. As a team of service providers, practitioners, parents, students and leaders from the district and community-based organizations, we strive to create a continuum of enrichment and intervention services, cradle to career. Our goal is to create a coordinated system of support with alignment between community- and school-based programs/ services in order to maximize available resources.

Outcome

Norwalk children and young people cultivate the social emotional skills needed for them to shape their own lives and are engaged in supportive relationships with their family, peers, school, and greater community.



OUT OF SCHOOL TIME

Approximately 86% of a child's time between birth and 18 is spent out of school, mainly at home. The goal of the Out of School Time (OST) Initiative is to develop and sustain a system that ensures our city's children and youth are provided with high-quality, affordable learning opportunities that meet academic, social-emotional, and health & wellness needs.



Outcome

All Norwalk young people are connected to year-round, meaningful out-of-school experiences.

COLLEGE & WORKFORCE READINESS

The College & Workforce Readiness (CWR) Initiative seeks to innovate multiple pathways for college and workforce readiness in order to close the opportunity gap that is reflected in the deep disparities of post-secondary completion and workforce readiness among students of color and those from low-income families. By increasing partnerships and collaboration amongst education institutions, workforce development organizations, and employers, we can increase the number industry-specific credentials and certification training opportunities that will lead to employability and/or successful navigation of post-secondary education.

Outcome

All young people in Norwalk are prepared for post-secondary education and/or a career and have those opportunities accessible to them.

/ Who We Are

Norwalk ACTS is a non-profit, cross-sector cradle to career partnership. We are made up of over 200 community and civic leaders, educators, organizations, and individuals who are committed to collective impact and our mission.



/ Join and Act Now

COLLECTIVE IMPACT RELIES ON EVERYONE DOING THEIR PART!

Join Us

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Working Together, Everything Is Achievable.

Norwalk / **ACTS**