# 2013 System Report Card:  Early Childhood System
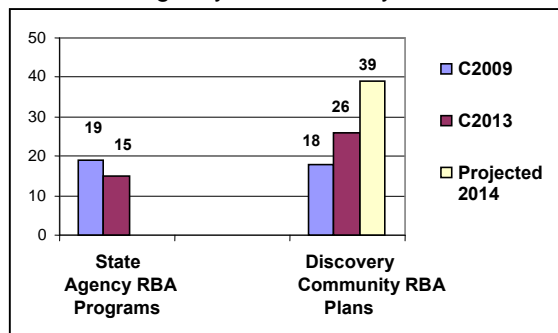
*Quality of Life Result:* **All Connecticut children birth to age 9 grow up in a stable environment, safe, healthy, and ready to succeed.**

*Contribution to the Result:* Coordination of state services for children ages birth to 9

*Partners:*  State agencies with programs for children from birth to age 9 [SDE, DSS, DPH, BOR, DDS, DCF and CHEFA], the Early Childhood Education Cabinet and the Early Childhood Planning Office.  Others include federal and private funding sources; and state, regional and local EC services providers and advocates.

## Performance Measure 1: EC System Accountability

### State Agency & Community RBA Use

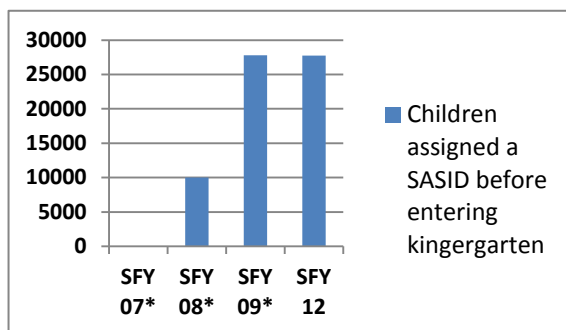

**Story behind the baseline:**

From 2006 through 2009, the EC Education Cabinet used RBA report cards to strengthen accountability. In 2008, 27 programs were reported. In 2009, 19 were reported* and an RBA Accountability Plan was created.  In 2013, 6 state agencies (BOR, DPH, DCF, DDS, DSS, and SDE) completed 15 RBA report cards, a decrease from 2009.

In contrast, the use of RBA as a strategic planning and accountability framework increased at the community level.  In 2009, 18 towns created early childhood plans in an RBA format. The number of towns with early childhood strategic plans increased to 26 in 2013. The number will increase again in 2014 with 39 towns creating RBA early childhood plans.

**Trend:**  ▼ for state agencies but ▲ for community participation  *Reported in the 2009 EC System RBA*

## Performance Measure 2: EC System Data Development

### Preschool age children assigned unique IDs



**Story behind the baseline:**

To make sound policy decisions, young children must be uniquely identified and data must be able to be linked across agencies through an Early Childhood Information System (ECIS). The ECIS has not yet been developed. At the present time, children are uniquely identified through the SASID, the state-assigned student identifier.
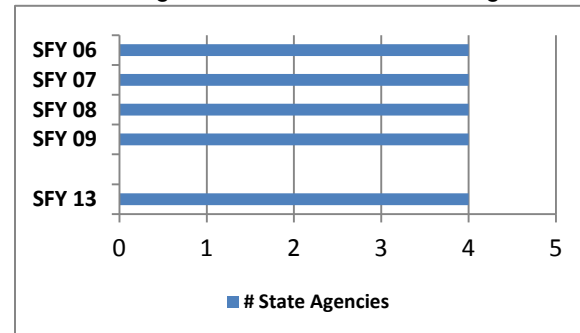
In 2008 CT preschool age children were assigned SASIDs and entered into the SDE database.  In 2009, children in Head Start and the CT School Readiness and Child Development Center programs were added. About a third of 4-year-old children in the state are now in this data system, the same percentage as in 2009. There has been no progress since 2009.

Other states have created EC Information Systems that allow longitudinal tracking of service needs met and child outcomes achieved.

**Trend:** ◄► *Reported in the 2009 EC System RBA*

## Performance Measure 3: Federal EC Funding

### State Agencies and Federal Funding



**Story behind the baseline:**

Five major federal grant categories provide funding for state's early childhood services. While the level of funding varies by year, the funding categories have been consistent for many years.

In Connecticut, these federal funding streams are administrated by four different state agencies:

- Child Care and Development Block Grant – DSS
- Head Start Collaboration: SDE
- IDEA Part B 619, EC Special Education: SDE
- IDEA Part C, Birth to 3: DDS
- Home Visiting (MIECHV): DPH.

Other states have created early childhood governance structures that consolidate the administration of these funding streams in order to maximize their effectiveness and avoid redundancy, inconsistencies, and gaps in services.
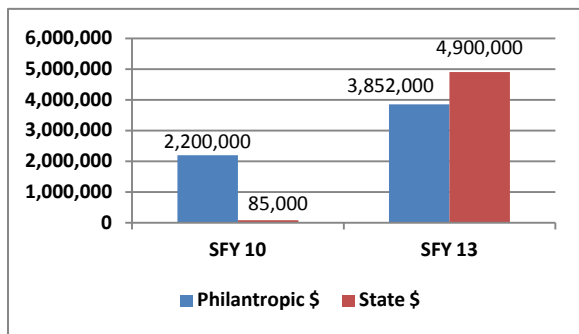
**Trend:** ◄►

*Quality of Life Result:* **All Connecticut children birth to age 9 grow up in a stable environment, safe, healthy, and ready to succeed.**

## Performance Measure 4: Early Childhood Co-Investment

### Philanthropic and State Matching Funding



**Story behind the baseline:**

Building and supporting an early childhood B through 8 system will require both public and private financial resources. This measure shows the growth in co-investment for a specified group of initiatives from 2009 through 2013. NOTE: This does not include other philanthropic investments made over time.

In 2009, the EC Education Cabinet partnered with state and national foundations to bring $2.2 million to CT to address early literacy and children's health, community RBA planning efforts, and Child FIRST early intervention services. That funding required a match of $900,000. When funds for the Cabinet were cut in 2010, just $85,000 was available for match (and only through carry forward dollars from 2009).*

Although the 2013 EC Cabinet does not have funds to invest, several state agencies joined foundations to continue these initiatives. In 2013, $3.85 million in foundation funds supports these initiatives, while state funds contribute an additional $4.9 million. Of the state funding, the largest allocation ($3.8 million) has been to sustain Child FIRST.

**Trend:**  ▲  * *Reported in the 2009 EC System RBA*

## Proposed Actions to Turn the Curve

In order to increase accountability for early childhood programs and outcomes in the state, the Governor has proposed creation of early childhood system to be managed and supported by a new Office of Early Childhood.  This office would bring early childhood programs currently operated by 5 different state agencies together in a new agency with full authority for systemic accountability.

The new Office would be responsible for strategic planning, service coordination and integration, RBA expansion, the development of integrated data development and utilization, and for managing diverse state and federal funding streams.

Approval and implementation of the new Office will dramatically improve the state's capacity to (a) improve children's health and development from birth through age eight and (b) assure that all program expansion serving children and families in the early years is of high quality and effective. Additionally, the Office will (c) guide longitudinal research on children's readiness for kindergarten and (d) link these data with current achievement data available from the State Department of Education to track early school performance.

## Data Development Agenda

The Data Workgroup of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet (including DPH, DSS, DCF, SDE & Care 4 Kids) has discussed ways to increase the number of children about whom information is captured in a cross agency data system.

The Workgroup recommends (a) that CT's birth certificate number be used as a child's unique ID by agencies that serve children before kindergarten and (b) that it be linked to the SASID when children enter school.

Two current data architecture efforts offer opportunities for expanded interagency data matching and use.  The CT Health Information Network, developed with state funding and managed by the University of Connecticut, now offers cross-agency data matching and analysis for research purposes.

In addition, the Department of Social Services is developing a new Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) that will, in 2014, by capable of providing real time inter-agency data exchange.

A key task of the proposed Office of Early Childhood in SFY 2013-2014 will be to guide development of an early childhood interagency data development, exchange, analysis and reporting function.