

# SomerBaby:

Welcome baby visits  
in Somerville



SomerPromise

# A Snapshot of Somerville

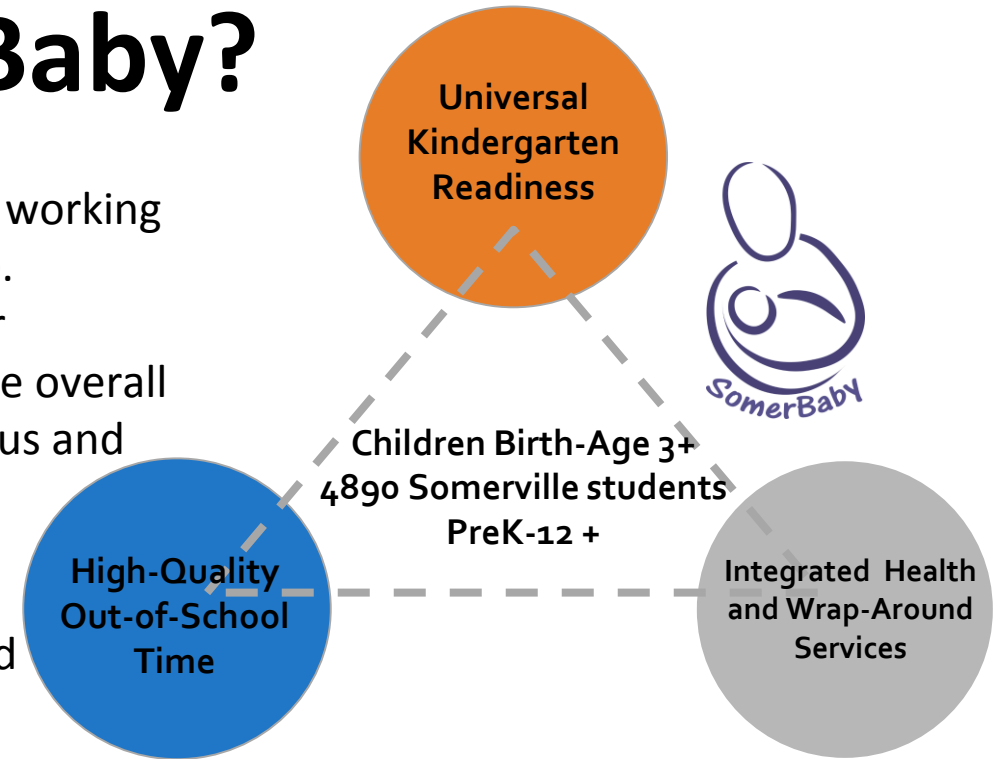
- Gateway city: almost 25% foreign born, 51 languages spoken in schools
- Population 81,322 - of which 32.3% aged between 25 and 34
- Over 800 babies born per year
- Offers wide range of free EE programs and family resources
  
- Rapidly escalating house prices and rents
- Huge disparity in median incomes
- 39% of school students considered economically disadvantaged

# Why SomerBaby?

For three years Somerville has been part of a consortium of 6 cities working with the Harvard School of Education on the **By All Means** initiative. By All Means Somerville has identified three main areas of focus for development. SomerBaby is one of the projects that will support the overall goal of “eliminating the link between childrens’ socioeconomic status and achievement.”

## Where better to start than at birth?

We already have a wide range of free Early Childhood programs and family resources, but we know there are barriers for families to connect with these resources. SomerBaby helps to break down these barriers and conduct screenings *as early as possible*.



Barrier	How SomerBaby Helps
Language	Multilingual home visitors
Basic knowledge about resources & referrals	Information about resources and a number to call
Community connection/social connectedness	Follow through calls and reminders about opportunities
Perception/norm that Birth-Pre-k or K is only in the family realm	Invites families to join health and learning systems and networks

# Our First Year

- SomerBaby launched in June 2017. Between then and the end of August 2018 staff have made 131 visits
- Referrals come from a variety of places including SPS Parent Information Center, CHA Pediatricians, City Social workers, Doulas, CHA staff, School liaisons, Riverside Community Care, clothing and food pantries and local outreach
- Each family receives one visit, a bag of resources, immediate follow up calls as needed, and at least one follow up call in the baby's first year
- 51 Spanish speakers, 34 Portuguese, 17 English, 8 Nepali, 29 other (Chinese, Urdu, Punjabi, Gujurati, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Somali, Japanese, Hebrew)
- 2 main home visitors speak Spanish and Portuguese – can request other language support from SFLC staff
- 63 families (almost ½) declared incomes as less than \$20,000/year
- Main areas of concerns have been:
  - immediate needs (diapers, formula, car seats)
  - housing (affordability, safety, landlord problems)
  - finding childcare
  - applying for vouchers, WIC, SNAP, Health insurance



# Staff have connected families to:



- ✓ Basic needs (food, clothing, strollers, cribs, other baby needs)
- ✓ City services (Housing, HHS social workers)
- ✓ Somerville Homeless Coalition
- ✓ Playgroups and parent support groups
- ✓ Early Head Start and EI
- ✓ Immigration Resource Clinics
- ✓ SNAP
- ✓ VNA services
- ✓ ESL Classes
- ✓ Mass Health
- ✓ Breastfeeding support

.....and more



# Plans for this Year

- We plan to visit 250+ families in our second year
- Continue to include all families, but target high-needs families
- Further collaboration with community agencies
- Create pipeline of parent mentors from existing SomerBaby parents
- Create system to maintain contact until school registration



## CHALLENGES

- Funding needed for more home visitor hours; increased language capacity; oversight
- Development of optimal I.T. and protocols for record keeping (\$, privacy, etc)
- Unable to help with many of the main issues such as housing affordability



Questions? Comments?



THANK YOU  
GRACIAS  
OBRIGADA

