



**Connecticut Administered State-funded
General Policy B-03
Eligibility, Enrollment, Attendance in State-funded Programs**

- ☒ OEC Child Day Care Contractors
 - ☒ OEC Competitive School Readiness Municipalities
 - ☒ OEC Priority School Readiness Districts
 - ☐ OEC State Head Start Supplement
 - ☒ OEC Smart Start
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State-funded early care and education programs are funded by OEC to provide services to children and families. This policy addresses requirements related to eligibility, enrollment, and attendance in state-funded spaces/classrooms.

Programs are encouraged to partner with families to ensure that children attend regularly to receive the full benefit of these services. Building strong relationships with children and families supports continued engagement and regular attendance. When attendance issues arise, programs should support families to address barriers and challenges and to return to full, meaningful engagement with the program.

I. ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE

DEFINITIONS

A. Family shall mean:

A parent(s), a parent's spouse, and their minor children who reside together.

1. A parent is a person of majority age who has legally been granted "in loco parentis" status or who is a child's parent by blood, marriage, or adoption.
2. Additionally, **for School Readiness**, parents who pay more than half the support of their minor child(ren) living with another family, as reported to the federal Internal Revenue Service (IRS) at their last annual IRS filing, may include such child(ren) as a member of their family (i.e., family size) for determining the family's fee.
3. A child for whom Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) is received, living with a supervising relative for whom no TFA is provided. Such a child shall be considered as a family of one.
4. A child in foster care authorized by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Such a child shall be considered a family of one.

B. Enrolled shall mean:

1. The family is eligible for program services.
2. The child has been scheduled to attend the program.
The child shall be deemed to remain enrolled so long as:
 - a. Neither the program nor the family member terminates the child's enrollment, and

- b. The child attends the program at least one day in each monthly reporting period, or
- c. The child does not attend at least one day, but the program holds the space for the child and the family pays the established family fee for the space.

B. Attended shall mean:

- 1. The enrolled child attends the program at least one day in each monthly reporting period.
- 2. Attendance at the minimum threshold of one (1) day during a reporting period cannot occur for more than two months per year.

II. ELIGIBILITY TO ENROLL IN STATE FUNDED PROGRAMS

1. AGE REQUIREMENTS

A. CHILD DAY CARE

- i. Infants and Toddlers
- ii. Preschool
- iii. School-Age
- iv. Kindergarten Eligible Children

B. SCHOOL READINESS

- i. Children who are ages 3 and 4, and children 5 years of age who are not eligible to enroll in kindergarten may enroll in School Readiness.
- ii. Under C.G.S. Sec 10-16t, A local school readiness council may elect to reserve up to five per cent of the spaces in its school readiness programs for children who are five years of age and are eligible to attend school pursuant to section 10-15c. Such children shall only be eligible to participate in the school readiness program if (1) they have been in the program for at least one year, (2) the parent or legal guardian of such a child, the school readiness program provider and the local or regional school district in which the child would otherwise be attending school agree that the child would benefit from another year in the program and to defer attendance in kindergarten until the following year, and (3) a written authorization, signed by the parent or guardian of such a child, indicating that such child will not attend kindergarten until the following year is filed with the local or regional school district in which such child would otherwise be attending school.

C. SMART START

- i) Preschool

2. INCOME ELIGIBILITY

Programs shall determine family income eligibility before enrollment and will redetermine per child fees at least annually thereafter. Families must report changes in gross family income of fifty dollars or more per week and fees shall be re-determined based on and following receipt of the reported changes. Refer to General Policies B-01 and B-02 for additional fee guidance for Child Day Care, School Readiness and Smart Start programs.

A. CHILD DAY CARE

Programs shall enroll at least sixty percent (60%) of families whose gross income is less than seventy-five percent (75%) of the state's median income guideline. The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) shall notify the contractor, in writing, of the state's median income guidelines. When a family's gross income reaches or exceeds the 75% state median income level, the family's currently enrolled child(ren) may remain in the program so long as the family pays the applicable fees and meets all other applicable eligibility criteria..

B. SCHOOL READINESS

Programs shall enroll at least sixty percent (60%) of families whose gross income is less than seventy-five percent (75%) of the state median income guideline.

C. SMART START

Smart Start programs shall prioritize enrollment in accordance with the district's approved application for Smart Start funding. Smart Start grant funding is prioritized for districts that allocate at least sixty percent (60%) of the spaces to children who are members of families that are at or below seventy-five percent (75%) of the state median income.

3. RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

A. CHILD DAY CARE

Programs shall limit the provision of services to families who reside in the state of Connecticut, except that families who reside in the states of Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island who work in Connecticut and receive a child care subsidy from their state of residence which may be used in Connecticut, may receive services under the Child Day Care Contract.

B. SCHOOL READINESS

The local School Readiness Council (SRC) shall establish a written policy regarding whether to allow sub-grantee school readiness programs to enroll non-resident children. Please refer to [GP C-06](#) School Readiness Non-Residency Option.

C. SMART START

Students enrolled in a Smart Start Classroom must be residents of the town(s) served by the local or regional board of education. Proof of residency is required for enrollment.

4. WORK REQUIREMENTS

A. CHILD DAY CARE

Of the families enrolled under the Child Day Care Contract, eight percent (80%) of enrolled children's families shall be earning income through employment. If a family's work status changes, programs can continue to provide services if:

1. The family can be included in the twenty percent (20%) of families not required to be earning income through employment.
2. The program may enter into an agreement with the family regarding their efforts to find work and/or enter a training or education program with an ultimate goal of employment. It is the program's responsibility to establish expectations and required documentation and appropriate monitoring to ensure adherence to any agreement.

b. **SCHOOL READINESS**

There are no requirements regarding employment status.

c. **SMART START**

There are no requirements regarding employment status.

5. **CIRCUMSTANCES OUTSIDE OF THIS POLICY STATEMENT**

When cases relating to eligibility arise that do not fit into the circumstances described within this policy, programs, liaisons, and/or contractors should contact the appropriate Program Manager for individual guidance.

III. **RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHILD DAY CARE CONTRACTORS AND SCHOOL READINESS COUNCILS**

Child Day Care Contractors and/or SRC's are responsible for ensuring that the practices and policies related to enrollment and eligibility are followed by all sub-grantees and sub-contractors.

**For further information concerning this GENERAL POLICY
please contact the OEC program manager.
If you're not sure who that is, visit: <https://www.ctoec.org/contact-us/>**