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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Beth Bye
Commissioner

DATE: December 10, 2020 **REVISED January 15, 2021**

TO: School Readiness, Child Day Care, and Smart Start funded programs

FROM: Beth Bye, Commissioner

RE: Coronavirus Memo #35 **REVISED**
FY 21 Funding for School Readiness, Child Day Care and Smart Start

The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) strives to support the early childhood infrastructure during the public health emergency by adapting its funding structures for Child Day Care, School Readiness, and Smart Start programs. As the impact of COVID-19 changes, and health and safety protocols shift, so too have our fiscal supports for program operations. A number of funding models have been implemented, including a summer funding model, and a classroom equivalent model based on utilization starting in September, with a 25% operating enhancement as needed, and during the height of the pandemic a full funding model.

Given the recent increase in COVID-19 cases and program closures due to local health or governing entity decisions, OEC will once again adjust the funding model for the months of November, December and January, with the goal of maintaining access to high quality child care now, throughout the year and into the future. This memo sets out changes to support program stability and ensure that families have access to early learning opportunities for their children. All funds provided to School Readiness, Child Day Care and Smart Start programs for SFY 21 are state appropriations.

1. For December 2020 and January 2021, the OEC will provide full funding allocations to programs for sites that meet the requirements for State-Funded Programs Providing Remote Learning as articulated in [Memo 34](#), and for each site that receives OEC School Readiness, Child Day Care and/or Smart Start funds:
 - a. Is open to serve children on-site or remotely, or
 - b. Is closed due to local health or a governing body decision, and
 - c. Continues to employ sufficient staff to effectively engage children and families in in-person/on-site, remote, or hybrid learning at all sites requesting funds.

In-person/on-site care and education remains a priority. However, as indicated in [Memo 34](#), programs may provide remote or hybrid options for learning. Programs, or sites within a multi-site organization, that are not open to serve children and do not provide a remote option will not receive funding. It is

especially important that programs and liaisons maintain current contact information with OEC, especially during the public health emergency.

2. For the November 2020 reporting period, classroom equivalents will be divided by 16 instead of 20. Classroom size and funding amounts have not changed and will continue to be based on 11-20 children for a full classroom and 1-10 children for a half classroom. Please note that the deadline for the SR and CDC reports has been extended through December 18, 2020.
3. Programs will submit the Remote Learning Attestation(s) provided by OEC indicating the learning models (hybrid, remote learning as a program model, and/or remote learning as a family choice) currently implemented, or planned for implementation in the case of a closure, and agreeing to adhere to stated requirements.
 - a. The deadline to submit the form for services provided at time of this memo is January 29, 2021.
 - b. If the learning model or planned learning model(s) changes, the program is required to update the attestation within one week of implementing the changes. The attestation remains in effect unless changed by the program.
4. Organizations that provide services at more than one facility are required to meet the criteria at a funded site in order to receive payment for services at that site.

Reporting

Reports for each funding stream shall be submitted according to the established deadlines (with the exception of the November 2020 report) and should accurately reflect the actual number of children receiving services during the reporting period. Programs may contact their respective program manager with questions regarding reporting or submission deadlines.

Additional information for Child Day Care Programs

In addition to the above commitments for SFY 21 funding, Child Day Care Programs will receive a rate increase for full-time preschool spaces to achieve parity with School Readiness Full-Day/Full-Year rates. This increased rate will be provided as the base rate for full-time preschool spaces, irrespective of funding model, from the beginning of the SFY 21 contract period (October 2020) and forward.

OEC will compute the space rate as follows for full-time preschool spaces:

- a. For September 2020, the original FY21 rate is applied to full-time preschool spaces utilized;
- b. For October and November 2020, the increased rate is applied to full-time preschool spaces utilized;
- c. For December 2020 and January 2021, the increased rate is applied to full-time preschool spaces allocated; and
- d. For 3rd Quarter and beyond, be reflected in the amounts provided in the quarterly payments throughout SFY 21.

Additional information for Smart Start Programs

Public Schools that are funded with Smart Start funds receive their full funding allocation for SFY 21

and are required to engage children and families in in-person, remote, or hybrid learning. The OEC will provide full funding allocations to programs that:

- a. Are open to serve children on-site or remotely, or
- b. Are closed due to local health or a governing body decision,
- c. Maintain enrollment of at least 11 children per funded classroom, and
- d. Continue to employ sufficient staff to effectively engage children and families in in-person, remote, or hybrid learning.

In-person/on-site care and education remains a priority. However, as indicated in [Memo 34](#), Requirements for State-Funded Programs Providing Remote Learning, programs may provide remote or hybrid options for learning.

We continue to support early childhood programs during the public health crisis by adapting payment structures and policies.

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