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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Connecticut Office of
Early Childhood

Beth Bye
Commissioner

DATE: December 10, 2020 REVISED January 15, 2021 REVISED January 28, 2021 **REVISED February 24, 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

Revision February 24, 2021	Update: Addition in item 1 regarding month of March to funding plan; new item 2 regarding funding beginning April 2021; item 6, Priority district family fee replacement payment; and paragraph headed 'Additional Information for School Readiness Program'
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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.

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, February and March 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.

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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. Beginning in April 2021 the OEC will fund School Readiness and Child Day Care programs based on enrollment with the following equivalencies:
 - a. 16 preschool children per classroom; Classroom size and funding amounts will be based on 11-20 children for a full classroom and 1-10 children for a half classroom.
 - b. 8 infants and toddlers per classroom. Classroom size and funding amounts will be based on 5 - 8 children for a full classroom and 1-4 children for a half classroom; and
 - c. As needed up to a 25% operating enhancement, not to exceed the full funding allocation.
3. 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.
4. 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 February 8, 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.
5. 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.
 - a. If a site does not meet the criteria for funding as outlined in item 1 above, please notify the appropriate OEC Program Manager.
6. School Readiness and Child Day Care programs located in Priority Districts that meet the criteria in items 1 and 4 above will be provided a family fee replacement payment. This payment is calculated on an average family fee of \$145 per child for two children per classroom per month for sites that are open per paragraph 1 above for six months during SFY 21. The classroom equivalent is based on the total number of funded children per a classroom of 16 preschoolers or school age children or 8 infants and toddlers. The formula is as follows:
 - a. # classrooms x \$290 per month x 6 months = \$ family fee replacement payment.

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:

- b. For September 2020, the original FY21 rate is applied to full-time preschool spaces utilized;
- c. For October and November 2020, the increased rate is applied to full-time preschool spaces utilized;
- d. For December 2020 and January 2021, the increased rate is applied to full-time preschool spaces allocated; and
- e. For 3rd Quarter and beyond, the increased rate will 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.

Additional information for School Readiness Program

The competitive bid process required by OEC for School Readiness Quality Enhancement funds is waived for the remainder of FY 21.

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