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**ANNUAL REPORT ON THE STATUS OF  
EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION IN CONNECTICUT  
STATE FISCAL YEAR 2021**

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Ned Lamont  
Governor



Connecticut Office of  
Early Childhood

Beth Bye  
Commissioner



**VISION**

*All young children in Connecticut are safe, healthy, learning, and thriving. Each child is surrounded by a strong network of nurturing adults who deeply value the importance of the first years of a child's life and have the skills, knowledge, support, and passion to meet the unique needs of every child.*

**MISSION**

*To partner with families of young children to advance equitable early childhood policies, funding and programs; support early learning and development; and strengthen the critical role of all families, providers, educators, and communities throughout a child's life. We will assertively remove barriers and build upon the strengths of historically disenfranchised people and communities to ensure fair access to OEC resources.*

## **SECTION 1: FEDERAL AND STATE SUPPORT FOR EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION**

### **Division of Early Care and Education**

The Division of Early Care and Education oversees and monitors state and federal grants, contracts and subsidies that support early care and education programs. The unit is charged with ensuring the funds are administered efficiently and are used for the purposes intended. These funds include:

1. Child Day Care Contract Program
2. School Readiness Grant Program
3. Smart Start Grant Program
4. State Head Start Supplement Program
5. Early Head Start Child Care Partnership
6. Even Start
7. Child Care Development Fund (including Care 4 Kids Subsidy Program)

### **Child Day Care Program**

Child Day Care programs provide early care and education to infants and toddlers, preschoolers and/or school age children who meet certain eligibility requirements, including incomes below 75% of the state median income. These programs are in towns and cities across Connecticut. Section 8-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) specifies that the purpose of this funding is for the development and operation of child day care centers for children disadvantaged by reasons of economic, social, or environmental conditions. The services provided through the Child Day Care contracts are supported with state funds.

Enrollment and capacity in Child Day Care programs fluctuated throughout FY 2021 due to several factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic including group size limitations, local conditions, and family preferences. OEC worked to stabilize these critical programs with enhanced state payments to reduce the impact of low enrollment and help the program survive the pandemic fiscally. Programs had the option to provide remote services if they met specific requirements and additional adjustments were made to ensure that programs were able to continue to safely serve children and families.

<b>Child Day Care Contract Program</b>	
<b>\$33,589,517</b>	
Number of Communities	47
Number of Programs	48
Number of Sites	97
Sites that are also SR (40 PSR; 9 CSR)	46
Sites that are also SHS	17
Infant/Toddler Full-Time	1,335
Infant/Toddler Wraparound	187
Preschool Full-Time	1913
Preschool Wraparound	297
School-Age Full-Time	205
School-Age Part-Time	195

## School Readiness

School Readiness is a state-funded initiative that provides access to preschool programs for 3- and 4-year-old children. At least 60% of households serviced must have incomes under 75% of the State Medium Income. School Readiness is comprised of both Priority and Competitive Communities as defined in legislation and structured to:

- promote the health and safety of children;
- provide opportunities for parents to choose among affordable and accredited programs;
- encourage coordination and cooperation among programs and services;
- recognize the specific service needs and unique resources available to particular municipalities; prevent or minimize the potential for developmental delays in children;
- enhance federally funded school readiness programs;
- strengthen the family through encouragement of parental involvement;
- reduce educational costs by decreasing the need for special education.

Enrollment and capacity in School Readiness programs fluctuated throughout FY 2021 due to several factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic including group size limitations, local conditions, and family preferences. OEC worked to stabilize these critical programs with enhanced state payments to reduce the impact of low enrollment and help the program survive the pandemic fiscally. Programs had the option to provide remote services for children enrolled in Part-Day spaces if they met specific requirements to ensure that programs were able to continue to safely serve children and families. Some School Readiness programs requested to temporarily convert Full Day and School Day spaces to Part Day in order to provide the remote learning option. This resulted in a significant increase in Part Day spaces and decreases in other space types.

<b>School Readiness Program</b>			
\$93,717,373			
\$906,382,02 Spaces			
\$2,186,215 Admin			
\$892,955 QE			
	Priority	Competitive	Total
Number of Communities	21	46	67
Number of Programs	130	67	197
Number of Sites	221	80	301
<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>10,819</b>	<b>1,455</b>	<b>12,274</b>
Full-Day Spaces	7,082	694	7,776
School-Day Spaces	1,842	259	2,101
Part-Day Spaces	1,439	502	1,941
Extended-Day Spaces	456	NA	456

## Smart Start

Smart Start serves children ages 3 and 4 years old in public school settings. It provides local and regional boards of education with funding to establish or expand a preschool program under the jurisdiction of

the board of education for the town. Smart Start services are supported through state funds. Enrollment and capacity in Smart Start programs fluctuated throughout FY 2021 due to number of factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic including group size limitations, local conditions, and family preferences. Programs had the option to provide remote services if they met specific requirements and additional adjustments were made to ensure that programs were able to continue to safely serve children and families. In June, the agency expanded Smart Start with ARPA funding, adding over 200 spaces across 10 sites.

<b>Smart Start</b>	
\$3,250,000	
Number of School Districts	23
Number of Classrooms	44
<b>Children Served</b>	<b>650</b>

### **State Head Start Supplement**

Head Start is funded directly by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to community providers that provide comprehensive child and family support services to low-income families with children ages 3 to 5 years old. Head Start serves approximately 6,000 children, and through the State Head Start Supplement, Connecticut provides supplemental funding to 11 of the 19 federally funded Head Start grantees to increase capacity by 320 preschool-aged children. These funds also extend the day/year of federally funded Head Start spaces and support quality enhancement activities in Head Start programs.

<b>State Head Start Services</b>	
\$5,083,238	
Number of Communities (14 Services & Innovative Enhancement funding options; 23 Innovative Enhancement funding option only)	34
Number of program sites	47
New Full day/full year Spaces Created (Services funding option) in 14 communities	264
Extended day/extended year Spaces (Innovative Enhancement option) in all Head Start programs	994

### **CCDF/Care 4 Kids Subsidy Program**

The Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) is the primary federal funding for low-income families who are working or participating in education and training to help pay for child care. The Care 4 Kids subsidy program allows eligible families to select a provider anywhere in the state for care. The subsidy can cover full-time, part-time, quarter-time and summer care, based on the family's work schedule. Families earning up to 50% of the State Median Income (SMI) are eligible to enroll; at the 12-month redetermination, a family can earn up to 65% of SMI.

A combination of state and federal funds supports the Care 4 Kids subsidy program. In FY2021, 5,418 providers served 24,695 children. (Source: ImpaCT Child Care Ad Hoc Report for Paid Services as of 07/03/2021).

**Early Head Start Child Care Partnership**

Early Head Start (EHS) is funded directly by the U.S. Department of HHS to community-based organizations to provide year-round comprehensive child and family support services to low-income pregnant women and families with children birth to 3 years old. EHS settings include child care centers, family child homes and family home visiting. Three EHS CT grantees were awarded a federal grant to partner with home-based and center-based child care programs to provide comprehensive services based on the EHS model. The OEC provides state funds to support children in the three federally funded EHS-CC Grant Partnership Programs whose families are not eligible for the Care4Kids subsidy program.

<b>Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership</b>	
\$1,339,233	
Grantees	3
Number of Providers	44
Number of Children (Monthly Average)	222

**Even Start Literacy Program**

Even Start is a program that gives families access to the training and support they need to create a literate home environment and to enhance the academic achievement of their children. Five primary components are integrated to create a comprehensive program, with all families participating in all components. Local programs build on existing community resources to offer educational and support services to help parents and children learn and succeed together. The following are the five components: 1) Early Childhood and/or School-Age Education; 2) Adult Education; 3) Parents and Children Learning Together (PACT); 4) Parent Education and Support; and 5) Home Visits to Support Educational Programs.

<b>Even Start Family Literacy Program</b>	
\$295,456	
Grantees	3
Number of Families	37
Number of Adults	48
<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>69</b>

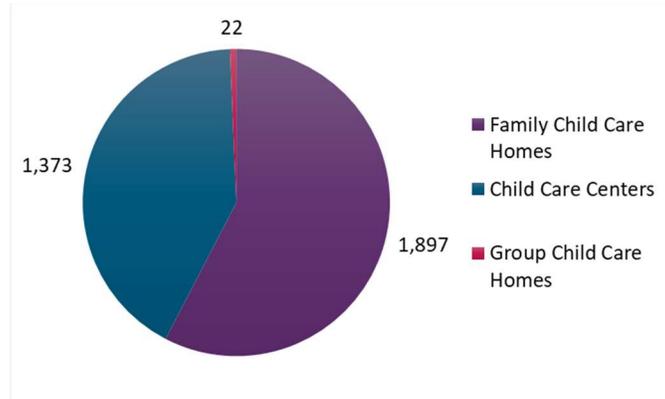
**SECTION 2: EXPENDITURES FOR EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>
Early Care and Education	\$122,026,863.39
Child Day Care	\$ 31,649,692.00
School Readiness (Competitive and Priority)	\$ 90,645,443.00
Smart Start	\$ 3,250,000.00
State Head Start Supplement	\$ 4,719,622.75
Care for Kids (C4K)	\$ 55,045,133.01
Early Head Start Child Care Partnership	\$ 1,144,209.00
Child Care Quality Enhancement	\$ 4,423,220.65

## SECTION 3: EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION LICENSING

### Licensing

There are approximately 3,292 licensed child care programs in Connecticut:



The licensing process includes enforcement to ensure compliance with the law and the regulations. Enforcement is critical for the delivery of quality, safe child care services. Connecticut’s licensing regulations are among the most rigorous in the country. However, as stated by the federal Office of Child Care, strong licensing regulations, without a commitment to taking action when they are not met, do not meet the goal of protecting children from harm. Effectiveness in enforcement includes the following:

- A strong licensing statute that sets forth a range of enforcement options;
- Fair and uniform enforcement of rules;
- Sufficient qualified staff;
- Adequate funding; and
- Strong administrative support.

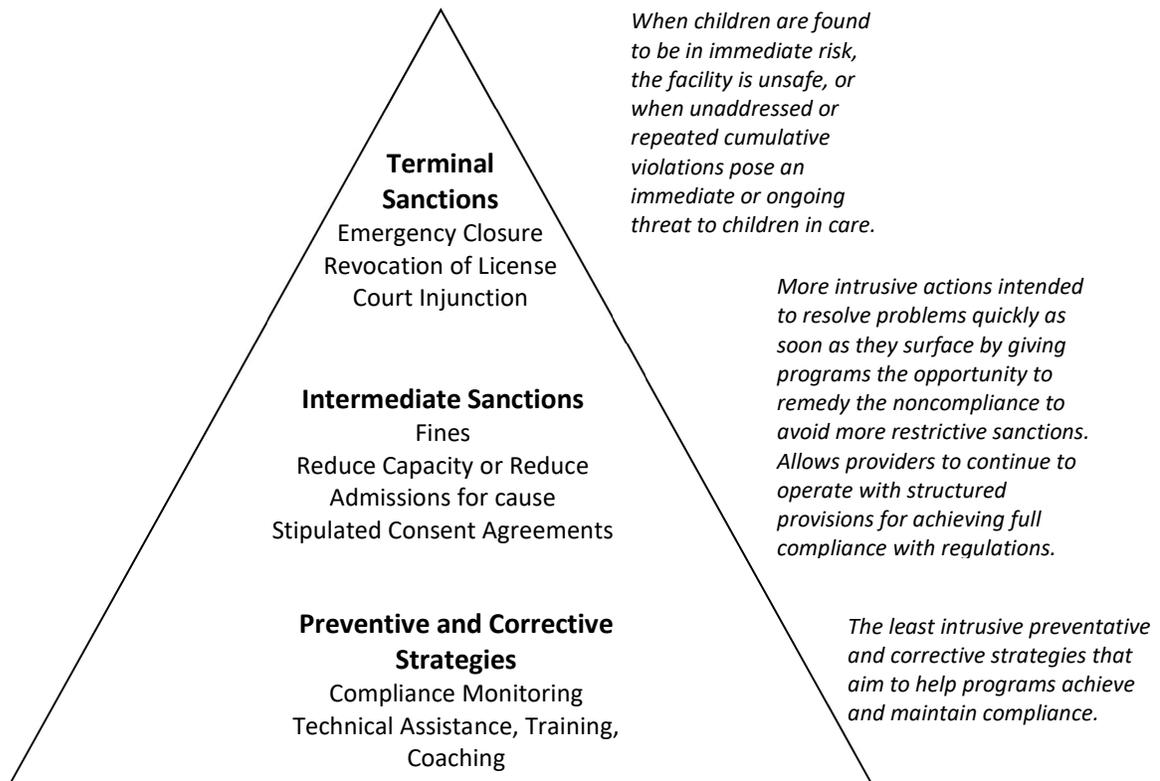
### Types of Inspections

Types of Inspections	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Family Child Care Homes Full, Unannounced Inspections	946	1,131	2,263	2,266	2,412	2,018	1,453	490
Child Care Centers Full, Unannounced Inspections	931	1,173	1,595	1,876	1,752	1,593	1,041	331
Group Child Care Homes Full, Unannounced Inspections	19	16	30	37	39	27	17	4
Total: All types of inspections (includes above types plus initials, partials, follow-ups, etc.)	3,547	4,339	6,468	7,220	7,360	8,097	5,417	4,286

## Licenses/Approvals

Initial Licenses/Approvals/Issued by Type	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Family Child Care Homes	202	177	161	155	115	4	142	165
Child Care Centers	61	62	57	63	44	28	57	62
Group Child Care Homes	0	4	3	4	2	11	1	2
Family Child Care Staff-Assistant	59	84	66	53	37	10	60	46
Family Child Care Staff-Substitute	154	176	213	202	169	1	208	185

## Types of Enforcement Actions



Enforcement Actions Taken	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Fines	5	6	8	9	10	8	4	2
Consent Agreements (generally also includes a fine)	26	24	25	33	27	33	25	27
Voluntary Surrender of license (in lieu of the state filing charges) May occur after a summary suspension.	15	10	8	7	15	12	3	4
Revocation of license	10	13	8	29	11	12	6	3
Summary Suspension of license/approval (emergency closure)	4	4	6	4	5	0	1	1

The need to take an enforcement action against a provider can also arise when a complaint is filed against the provider. All complaints are investigated, and those investigations are most often conducted by separate staff who are specifically assigned to investigate complaints. The most common types of licensing complaints concern supervision, staff-child ratios, health/safety/cleanliness/nutrition, and discipline/behavior management. However, another significant type of complaint is if someone suspects that a program is operating illegally.

**Number of complaints received (includes youth camps)**

<b>Enforcement Actions Taken</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
Number of Complaints Received	772	799	821	943	851	913	776	490
Number specific to suspected illegal care	188	174	177	197	132	141	88	54
<i>Note.</i> Approximately one-third of the complaints of suspected illegal care were substantiated as being operating illegally.								

**Complaints by setting and type**

<b>Setting</b>	<b>2013</b>		<b>2014</b>		<b>2015</b>		<b>2016</b>		<b>2017</b>		<b>2018</b>		<b>2019</b>		<b>2020</b>	
	Level 1	Level 2														
Family Child Care Homes	43	116	60	98	53	91	45	94	50	96	44	91	34	88	25	52
Child Care Centers	141	287	167	297	162	330	187	406	195	365	188	459	148	417	80	275
Group Child Care Homes	1	8	3	4	0	2	0	4	2	4	0	2	3	2	1	1
<i>Note.</i> Level 1 complaints involve suspected abuse/neglect.																

## SECTION 4: EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION WORKFORCE

### Workforce Registry

The Early Childhood Professional Registry is an information system that collects data on the demographics and education qualifications of the individuals who work in the early care and education field, as well as classroom-level staff assignment data for early care and education programs.

Using data in the user's account, individual and program level compliance is measured for state funded Qualified Staff Member (QSM) and Care4Kids health and safety orientation. Data is also used to assess the following: licensing Head Teacher, the Early Childhood Teacher Credential (ECTC), the OEC scholarship assistance fund, and technical assistance provider approval. Access to free online training (including Care4Kids health and safety orientation training) is accessible via the user's account.

Participation is mandatory for the following populations:

- Staff who work in programs receiving School Readiness, Child Day Care, State Head Start, Smart Start, or Care4Kids; and
- Individuals applying for scholarships, licensing Head Teacher, and the ECTC.

Workforce Registry	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21
Total # Registry account holders	14,230	16,371	18,783	21,195	25,251	17,818	15,288	26,280	26,566

*Note.* In FY18 an annual account renewal process was created; FY18 and FY19 numbers depict only renewed accounts. FY20+ numbers above depict account with activity within the year.

### Scholarships

Between FY13 and FY21, a total of 23,229 scholarships were awarded. Award categories include credit tuition toward credential and degree attainment, exam fees, and books. Funds awarded total \$9,152,277 over the last nine fiscal years.

Scholarships	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21
Total # Awards	3,131	2,282	3,750	3,236	1,830	1,554	2,092	2,491	2,863
Leadership Credits	NA	52	63	25	8	54	75	70	146
Pathways Exam	94	142	86	8	1	5	7	5	1
CDA/Equiv.	33	54	92	112	132	58	178	104	60
AA	453	274	390	206	83	80	74	162	106
BA	668	458	910	873	516	767	922	629	734
MA	68	64	60	71	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Degree fees	327	281	753	803	484	119	186	709	847
Books	1,070	705	1,238	1,067	598	460	636	786	921
Other	418	252	158	71	8	11	14	26	48
Total \$ Awarded	\$1,076,753	\$708,240	\$1,213,387	\$1,085,940	\$865,760	\$720,870	\$957,425	\$1,211,576	\$1,312,326

*Note.* "Other" includes: School-Age Head teacher credit awards (3), Care4Kids Family child care provider non degree class awards (CDA renewal or NAFCC; 17), CDC (Connecticut Director Credential) fee awards (28)

## Early Childhood Teacher Credential (ECTC)

In 2013, Connecticut developed the Early Childhood Teacher Credential (ECTC) for both the associate and bachelor-degree levels. The ECTC ensures common programs of study among approved institutions ensuring that all graduates have similar knowledge, skills and competencies. Using the NAEYC bachelor-level professional development standards, Connecticut created a state approval system for programs of study not associated with public school certification. Participants are able to earn the ECTC through graduation from a college approved to offer the ECTC track, or by submitting materials for an individual review if graduating from a college that does not offer the ECTC track. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen increased interest in the Individual Review Route and have contracted with CT AEYC to manage the applications as part of OEC's quality improvement contracts. Data below is from the OEC's Early Childhood Professional Registry as of 12-10-21. Figures are cumulative since 2013.

Route	A Level			B Level			Total Approved
	IT	PS	ITPS	IT	PS	ITPS	
Individual Review Route	4	14	7	10	84	26	145
Approved College Route	4	224	70	7	76	131	512
<b>Total</b>	323			334			657
<i>Note.</i> IT = Infant and Toddler; PS = Preschool; ITPS = Infant through Preschool; A level = Associate Degree Level; B level = Bachelor Degree Level							

## SECTION 5: EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION RESOURCE AND REFERRAL

2-1-1 Child Care is a free, confidential, and statewide service, funded by the state through United Way of Connecticut. This service helps match the requests of parents with child care providers and programs. Parents can contact 2-1-1 Child Care for resources and referrals to: licensed child care centers; family child care; before- and after-school programs; summer camps; nursery schools; nanny agencies; Head Start and Early Head Start; School Readiness programs; and play groups.

Child Care Referral Specialists help parents learn about options in their community and understand what to look for in finding a quality child care arrangement. In addition, Referral Specialists also help parents become connected to other resources such as Care 4 Kids or Birth to Three for families who may have concerns about their children’s development.

<b>FY2021</b>	
<b>211 Child Care Transactions</b>	
Contact Center Transactions	35,400
Web Search Engine	66,603
Web Resource Views	105,852
<b>Professional Development</b>	
Early Care Professionals Trainings	63
Early Care Professionals	866
<b>On-site Family Child Care Tech Support Visits</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Child Care Referrals</b>	
Number of Infant	24,765
Number of School Age	15,348
Number of Preschool	14,569
Number of Toddler	12,678
<i>Note. PD was halted July 2020 through January 2021 due to Covid 19.</i>	