

**Appropriations Subcommittee Work Session
OEC Responses to Questions from February 15
February 27, 2-3 pm**

1. How many children and families are currently enrolled in Care 4 Kids?

19,467 children / 13,837 families

2. What is the estimated number of children affected by the change in the kindergarten start age that may seek care?

It is estimated that there will be more than 9,000 students impacted by the change to enroll in kindergarten in Fall 2024 because they will not have turned age 5 by September 1. Many districts are allowing a portion of the children who will not be age 5 by September 1, 2024 into kindergarten based on a parent request or assessment. It is estimated that approximately 71% of all entering Kindergarten students in Alliance districts access preschool before kindergarten. At the highest level, more than 9,000 students do not turn 5 by September 1 and would not be able to enroll in school in the fall of 2024. Potentially, an additional 6,300 students would need preschool spaces somewhere. Based on current enrollment trends, 2,700 could have no formal education for additional year.

3. How many families who will be eligible to stay on Care 4 Kids at redetermination up to 75% of SMI? Please include backup to how this estimate was calculated.

All current families are eligible for the program. There is a federal requirement for states to have a tiered “phase out” and requires a second higher eligibility threshold. Currently, our SMI at application is 60% and families remain on at renewal if their SMI is under 65%. If the proposed legislation passes, new families will need to meet the 65% SMI at application, but once they are on, at each renewal the family will remain eligible until they exceed 75% SMI. This is to provide continuity of care for the children and relief for families who experience a small-modest raise in the year. Approximately 76 current families will remain eligible for Care 4 Kids that would get discontinued at the current 65% phase out threshold. To be conservative, OEC planned on double that number if increasing by 10% SMI. And the planned enrollment was increased to 20,150 (from 20,000) to assure that those remaining will not interrupt others from entering.

Care for Kids Utilization by Income Band

SFY2024 1st 6 Months, Jul-Dec

| C4K SFY24 (Jul-Dec) # of Families by Income as % SMI | # Active Families July 2022- June 2023 | # Active Children July 2022- June 2023 | % |
|--|---|---|---------------|
| % State Median Income (SMI) | # Families | # Children | % of Families |
| 0-10% SMI | 745 | 1,084 | 4% |
| 10-20% SMI | 2,019 | 3,004 | 11% |
| 20-30% SMI | 4,198 | 6,720 | 22% |
| 30-40% SMI | 5,227 | 7,539 | 28% |
| 40-50% SMI | 3,967 | 5,357 | 21% |
| 50-60% SMI | 2,247 | 2,949 | 12% |
| 60-65% SMI | 382 | 539 | 2% |
| 65-70% SMI | 37 | 53 | 0% |
| 70-80% SMI | 37 | 52 | 0% |
| 80-85% SMI | 6 | 10 | 0% |
| N/A in this data match | 43 | 22 | 0% |
| Grand Total * | 18,900 | 27,300 | 100% |

Source: C4K Impact AdHoc Expenditure 2024-01-01 Service Mos & C4K Monthly SMI Reports SFY 2023 sent from UWC to OEC. Jb * Rounded

SFY2023

| C4K SFY23 # of Families by Income as % SMI | C4K SFY23 # Active Families July 2022- June 2023 | C4K SFY23 # Active Children July 2022- June 2023 | % |
|--|--|--|---------------|
| % State Median Income (SMI) | # Families | # Children | % of Families |
| 0-10% SMI | 1,021 | 1,467 | 5% |
| 10-20% SMI | 2,553 | 3,785 | 11% |
| 20-30% SMI | 5,086 | 8,147 | 23% |
| 30-40% SMI | 6,133 | 8,891 | 27% |
| 40-50% SMI | 4,536 | 6,122 | 20% |
| 50-60% SMI | 2,612 | 3,411 | 12% |
| 60-65% SMI | 430 | 609 | 2% |
| 65-70% SMI | 43 | 62 | 0% |
| 70-80% SMI | 46 | 69 | 0% |
| 80-85% SMI | 10 | 16 | 0% |
| N/A in this data match | 106 | 79 | 0% |
| Grand Total * | 22,600 | 32,700 | 100% |

Source: C4K Impact AdHoc Expenditure 2024-01-01 Service Mos & C4K Monthly SMI Reports SFY 2023 sent from UWC to OEC. Jb * Rounded

SFY2022

| C4K SFY22 # of Families by Income as % SMI | C4K SFY22 # Active Families July 2021- June 2022 | C4K SFY22 # Active Children July 2021- June 2022 | % |
|--|--|--|---------------|
| % State Median Income (SMI) | # Families | # Children | % of Families |
| 0-10% SMI | 683 | 1,005 | 3% |
| 10-20% SMI | 1,817 | 2,772 | 9% |
| 20-30% SMI | 3,804 | 6,236 | 18% |
| 30-40% SMI | 4,589 | 6,853 | 22% |
| 40-50% SMI | 3,389 | 4,703 | 16% |
| 50-60% SMI | 1,850 | 2,484 | 9% |
| 60-65% SMI | 354 | 501 | 2% |
| 65-70% SMI | 27 | 35 | 0% |
| 70-80% SMI | 29 | 39 | 0% |
| 80-85% SMI | 8 | 12 | 0% |
| N/A in this data match | 4,237 | 5,571 | 20% |
| Grand Total * | 20,800 | 30,200 | 100% |

Source: C4K Impact AdHoc Expenditure 2024-01-01 Service Months & C4K Monthly SMI Reports SFY 2023 sent from UWC to OEC. Jb * Rounded

4. A written explanation of how Care 4 Kids waitlist works.

The waitlist was created as an enrollment management tool so that we can track caseload and spending. Currently, the caseload is being managed at 18,500. That is the amount budgeted for 2024-25. The Governor's proposal will increase enrollment to 20,125. Parents in JFES, TANF, teen parents, and those that qualify for protective services (DCF foster, DCF adopted for the first year, and families experiencing homelessness) bypass the waitlist and have their applications processed for eligibility. If a parent who is working, in a job training program, adult education or higher education (not master's degree level) applies and is determined eligible, they will be placed on the waitlist. Currently, families are on the waitlist for approximately 8 weeks. Currently, there are approximately 800 families on the wait list, and 1,300 applications are pending. OEC has authorized 14 new positions at the United Way to address the number of pending applications.

5. What are the trends and utilization rates since 2020 for OEC programs (Birth to Three, School Readiness, Child Day Care, Head Start)?

Spreadsheets for School Readiness, Child Day Care and Head Start are added at the end of this document. Smart Start data is found under #14 with the Smart Start fact sheet.

Birth to Three Data:

Referral: The number of children who have completed the referral process with 211 and consent has been given to bring in a provider for evaluation.

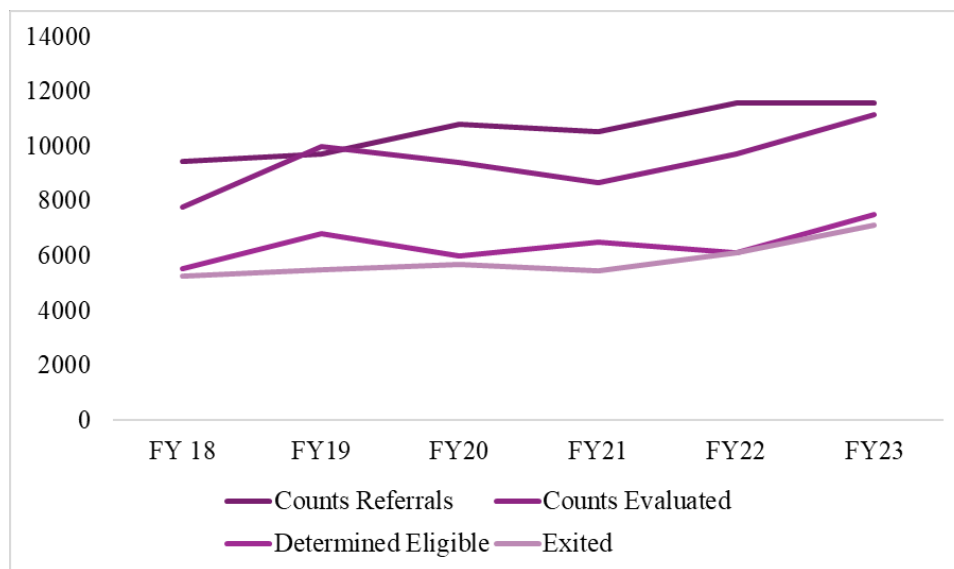
Eligibility: The number of children who have completed the referral process and have a completed evaluation to determine eligibility in Birth to Three.

Determined Eligible: The number of children who had an evaluation and results lead to an eligible determination in the designated time period.

Exit: The number of children who ended services, for any reason, in the designated time period.

| | 7/1/17- 6/30/18 | 7/1/18- 6/30/19 | 7/1/19- 6/30/20 | 7/1/20- 6/30/21 | 7/1/21- 6/30/22 | 7/1/22- 6/30/23 | |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------|
| | FY 18 | FY19 | FY20 | FY21 | FY22 | FY23 | Trendlines |
| Counts Referrals | 9462 | 9704 | 10806 | 10530 | 11601 | 11593 | |
| Counts Evaluated | 7765 | 9977 | 9425 | 8695 | 9722 | 11151 | |
| Determined Eligible | 5526 | 6796 | 6014 | 6492 | 6115 | 7498 | |
| Exited | 5281 | 5490 | 5673 | 5439 | 6126 | 7107 | |

COVID-19 Began



Federal Early Head Start and Head Start Enrollment

This data is a subset of the annual Program Information Report (PIR) submission by Connecticut grant recipients and delegates to the Office of Head Start.

The Office of Head Start did not require grant recipients and delegates to complete the 2020 PIR. The Office of Head Start wanted to eliminate the reporting burden of the PIR as well as remove any confusion on how certain elements of the PIR could be collected and interpreted when programs were closed due to COVID-19.

| Program Year | Program | Funded Enrollment | Cumulative Enrollment |
|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 2021 | Early Head Start | 1,357 | 1,744 |
| 2022 | Early Head Start | 1,345 | 1,740 |
| 2023 | Early Head Start | 1,316* | 1,695 |

*Includes pregnant women

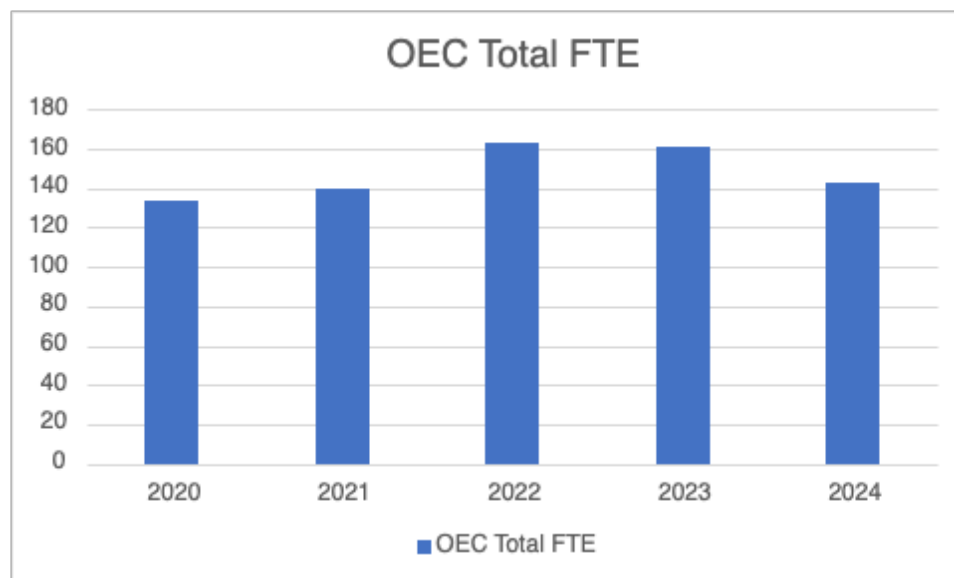
| Program Year | Program | Funded Enrollment | Cumulative Enrollment |
|--------------|------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 2021 | Head Start | 4,316 | 3,296 |
| 2022 | Head Start | 4,274 | 3,946 |
| 2023 | Head Start | 4,346 | 4,046 |

Funded enrollment: Number of enrollments slots the programs are funded to serve.

Cumulative Enrollment: Actual number of children and pregnant women served by the programs throughout the entire program year, inclusive of enrollees who left during the program year and the enrollees who filled those empty places.

6. Please provide an explanation of staffing levels since 2020.

OEC Staffing levels are funded by both federal and state dollars. The graph below shows total employees. 2024 FY is still in process. We anticipate it will reach 2023 count by year's end.

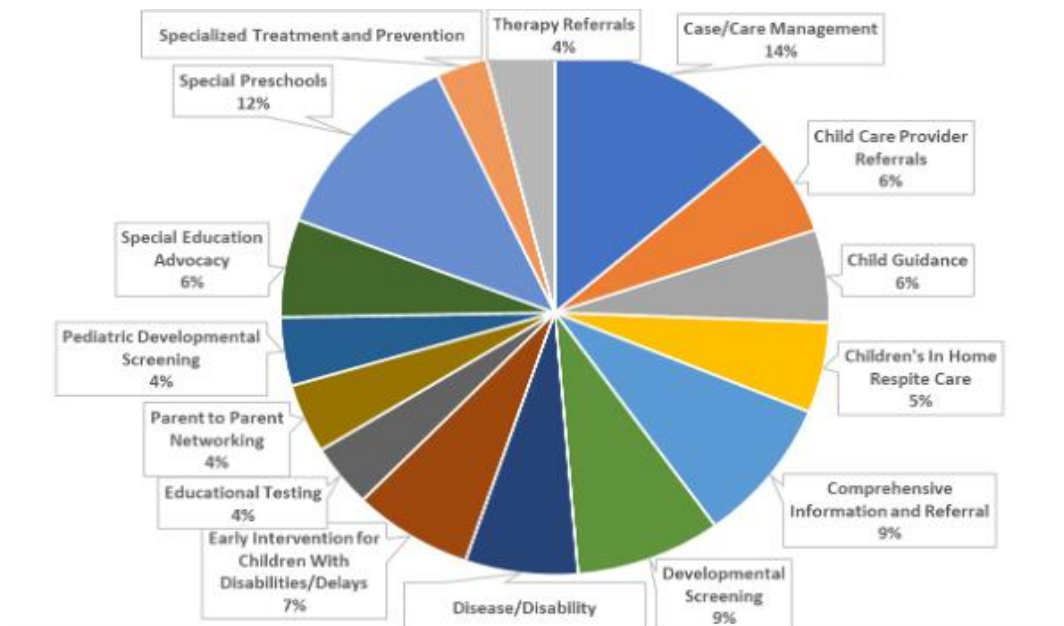


7. What are the utilization rates for the Sparkler app since its inception?

Sparkler utilization chart is found at the end of this document.

8. Describe the breakdown of the \$1.8M in the budget for management of the Sparkler app.

In the year last year 2023, 80.3% of screenings in Connecticut were completed using Sparkler's mobile app, compared with 10.3% who completed screenings online and 9.3% who completed screenings on paper.



Developmental Screening: \$80,000

Up to 60,000 people screened with ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2, and provide enhanced online screening functionality for Connecticut providers and deeper two-way integration with ASQ Online to support OEC's screening implementation and data integration efforts. Additionally, Brookes Publishing charges the OEC for Sparkler site fees (\$100 per physical site) and other various fees associated with utilizing the ASQ, ASQ-SE.

Family and Community Engagement: \$200,000

Currently Sparkler works with over 700 community programs. Community, program, family, and government engagement in order to onboard and engage Connecticut families and the organizations serving them: cities, Family Resource Centers, and schools, healthcare providers, as well as other agencies and organizations serving CT families, including the State Department of Education and the Department of Children and Families. Onboarding includes setting up local

communities to use Sparkler as a tool to engage families. Ongoing engagement entails trainings, learning communities, office hours, newsletters, in person meetings, and more.

Community Engagement Support Grants: \$400,000

Conduct a competitive process where up to 16 communities receive funds to support local family engagement and implementation with an award of \$25,000 per community.

United Way: Care Coordinator – 2FTE \$250,000

Care coordination at 211 Child Development to engage with and support families who have completed the ASQ via Sparkler and need/want support.

Family & Community Engagement Specialists: \$350,000

Four Family & Community Engagement Specialists have worked with more than 32 different communities across the State to focus on developmental screening, play, and family engagement. The Specialist's reach and engage both providers and families across the state to promote healthy early childhood development and support and link to 211 Child Development.

Technology Integration and Customization: \$250,000

Maintaining Sparkler and building new features/functions to support local rollout and engagement. This will include User Experience/User Interface improvements to the mobile app and the Partner Dashboard, feature upgrades to accommodate the statewide expansion, and API integrations. The funds will pay for work by the following developers: backend engineer/architect, mobile engineer, project management, quality assurance (QA), and User Experience/User Interface designer.

Sparkler CT Content Development: \$130,000

Continue refreshing content so that it aligns with CT ELDS. This includes consultants' time to plan, write, edit, translate, upload, and tag content. Each new play card costs about \$500 to create and each new parenting tips costs about \$2,000. Refreshing content (adding media like videos/audio/images has different costs depending on the required refresh).

In total, this will purchase: 10 new parenting tip decks, 100 new play cards, 1000 updates to existing play cards (adding new images/media to enhance the display/parent experience), Tagging of 1000 play cards with CT ELDS so that CT educators can find activities based on Connecticut early learning standards.

Support and Project Management: \$135,000

Fee of \$11,000/month which covers:

1. Strategy and planning
2. Training and Professional Development

3. 2-4 week messaging
4. Routine maintenance and upkeep
5. Support: Responding to the needs of school staff and families

Staffing will include:

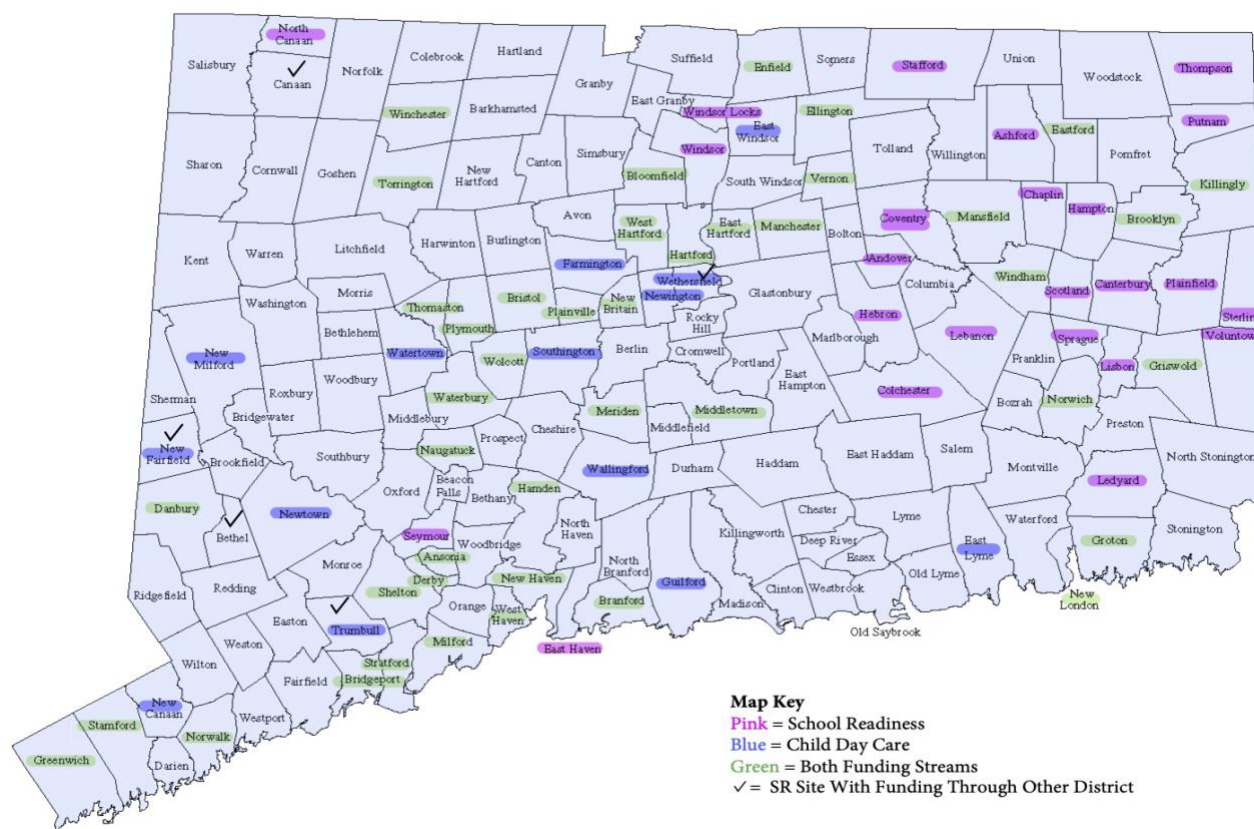
1. 0.8 FTE Sparkler executive director and other consultants @ \$9,500/month
2. \$9,000 for taxes, legal, insurance, occupancy, accounting, and other business expenses

Current Operating Total: \$1,800,000

9. What is the location of the management company for the Sparkler app?

Sparkler was located in Ridgefield CT when OEC originated the contract.

10. Please provide a map of local councils and proposed municipalities with new councils.



11. How many benefit navigators are anticipated to be utilized by OEC?

OEC will contract with three individuals to provide outreach and assistance in securing health insurance coverage through Covered CT, the Exchange, and private insurance.

12. How many providers received stabilization payments last year (FY23), including which providers and the amount received, including Birth to Three, and how many will receive benefits this year?

5,233 stabilization payments were made to child care programs, totaling \$74,335,000 in [FY](#) 2023. They were in virtually every town and city in Connecticut. These were state dollars. OEC added in about \$4 million in ARPA discretionary due to the high application rate exceeding projections. Please see attached flyer that explains the program and who was eligible, etc. Any provider who wished to apply could do so. Some chose not to due to fear of losing benefits such as SNAP and health care and child care.

In SFY 2023 there were \$9.3 million in Enrollment Grants to state-funded child care with SFR ARPA. These went to all state-funded child care programs.

In SFY 2024, OEC sent out the last of the ARPA Stabilization to programs in the highest SVI. OEC sent out \$22.9 million in Stabilization funds. The governor's budget includes \$18.8 million in ARPA to continue this program for FY 25.

Birth to Three

19 Birth to Three providers received two stabilization payments in 2023 (July and November).

The funds used for these payments were part of Birth to Three American Rescue Plan (ARP) Early Intervention Services Over 3 funds. These payments were based on programs with children supported through the summer extension option in Birth to Three, which was a requirement of the specific ARPA funds utilized for the payment.

| Program | July 2023 | November 2023 |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| Abilis | \$ 60,000.00 | \$ 37,599.88 |
| American School for the Deaf | \$ 10,000.00 | \$ 29,599.88 |
| Beacon Services of CT | \$ 172,000.00 | \$ 93,599.88 |
| Benchmark Infant and Toddler Services | \$ 194,000.00 | \$ 81,599.88 |
| Building Bridges, LLC | \$ 152,000.00 | \$ 29,599.88 |
| Cheshire Public Schools - Darcey School | \$ 28,000.00 | \$ 25,599.88 |
| Children's Therapy Services | \$ 78,000.00 | \$ 25,599.88 |
| Creative Interventions | \$ 182,000.00 | \$ 45,599.88 |
| CREC Birth to Three | \$ 104,000.00 | \$ 63,599.88 |
| EASTCONN Birth To Three | \$ 48,000.00 | \$ 21,599.88 |
| Easter Seal Birth to Three | \$ 38,000.00 | \$ 33,599.88 |
| EdAdvance | \$ 118,000.00 | \$ 17,599.88 |
| HARC - Steppingstones | \$ 112,000.00 | \$ 21,599.88 |
| Mentor South Bay | \$ 24,000.00 | \$ 17,599.88 |
| Project Interact, Inc. | \$ 60,000.00 | \$ 29,599.88 |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Reachout, Inc. | \$ 70,000.00 | \$ 141,599.88 |
| Rehabilitation Associates of CT, Inc. | \$ 360,000.00 | \$ 61,599.88 |
| SARAH, Inc. - KIDSTEPS | \$ 192,000.00 | \$ 33,599.88 |
| TheraCare | \$ 130,000.00 | \$ 21,599.88 |
| System Total | \$ 2,132,000.00 | \$ 832,397.77 |

13. Please provide a summary about the Tri-Share Pilot Program.

Tri-Share Child Care Matching Program Fact Sheet

- Pilot program where child care costs are shared equally between the parent, their employer, and the state.
- This initiative will be piloted in New London County. Eastern Connecticut is home to some major industries, such as Electric Boat and home to a significant child care desert.
- This proposal would support approximately 250 children in a child care program.
- The OEC will select a regional or state-wide educational or business organization to collaborate with employers and participating licensed child care providers to provide child care placement for participating employees.
- The administrator will serve as an intermediary among participating employers, employees and licensed child care providers and perform fiduciary, administrative and outreach services to recruit employer participation in the program.
- No more than 10 percent of the administrator's award may be used for administrative costs.
- Electric Boat, located in Groton, CT has committed to participating in the program, with support from the Navy.
- Proposed \$1.8 million in ARPA funds.
- If passed in the state budget, effective July 1, 2024,

14. Please provide a fact sheet on Smart Start.

Smart Start Fact Sheet

The Connecticut Smart Start Program supports local and regional boards of education in establishing or expanding a preschool program under the jurisdiction of the board of education for the town. Districts were required to demonstrate a community need for preschool at the time of initial application and were provided with capital improvement funds in the initial year of funding. Grants for ongoing operating expenses support services for preschool children ages 3-5 who are not yet eligible to enter kindergarten. Teachers in Smart Start classrooms must hold CT teacher certification with an endorsement appropriate for early childhood.

Smart Start programs are:

- Supported through state funds.
 - \$5,000 per child for up to 15 children in the same classroom, allowing for 3 additional children to also be served without additional Smart Start funding.
 - Districts may alternatively distribute Smart Start funded spaces across multiple classrooms in order to braid funding and provide inclusive, integrated services.
- Prioritized for target populations, including low-income families and other priorities set by the district (e.g., children who are dual language learners, children receiving special education services, families experiencing housing insecurity).
- Required to meet similar requirements as other state-funded preschool programs.
 - Required to be Head Start approved or become accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) within 3 years of funding.
 - Report data on child enrollment and staffing in OEC data systems.

| | SMART START \$3,250,000 |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Number of School Districts | 23 |
| Number of Classrooms | 44 |
| Children Served | 650* |

*During FY 22-24 utilization of available spaces has ranged from 96 to 99%.

Through ARPA funding for FY 22, 23, and 24, the OEC has supported an additional 16 “Smart Start for Recovery” classrooms to address an ongoing shortage of preschool spaces in the wake of the pandemic.

| | SMART START FOR RECOVERY \$1,200,000 FOR OPERATIONS, \$800,000 FOR ONE-TIME CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS |
|----------------------------|---|
| Number of School Districts | 10* |
| Number of Classrooms | 16 |
| Children Served | 240 |

* 8 of the 10 Smart Start for Recovery Grantees are also Smart Start Grantees that expanded their preschool program with the additional funding

| Month | State Fiscal Year | Smart Start Capacity | Utilization | % Utilization |
|-----------|-------------------|--|-------------|---------------|
| July | 2021 | Smart Start does not operate in the summer months. It is a school-year, school-day program | | |
| August | 2021 | | | |
| September | 2021 | 650 | 549 | 76.0 |
| October | 2021 | 650 | 554 | 79.8 |
| November | 2021 | 650 | 586 | 84.3 |
| December | 2021 | 650 | 587 | 84.5 |
| January | 2021 | 650 | 603 | 86.8 |
| February | 2021 | 650 | 602 | 72.9 |
| March | 2021 | 650 | 608 | 87.5 |
| April | 2021 | 650 | 623 | 89.6 |
| May | 2021 | 650 | 622 | 89.5 |
| June | 2021 | 650 | 622 | 89.5 |
| July | 2022 | Smart Start does not operate in the summer months. It is a school-year, school-day program | | |
| August | 2022 | | | |
| September | 2022 | 650 | 627 | 96.5 |
| October | 2022 | 650 | 633 | 97.4 |
| November | 2022 | 650 | 630 | 95.9 |
| December | 2022 | 650 | 630 | 95.9 |
| January | 2022 | 650 | 630 | 95.9 |
| February | 2022 | 650 | 632 | 97.2 |
| March | 2022 | 650 | 634 | 97.5 |
| April | 2022 | 650 | 642 | 98.8 |
| May | 2022 | 650 | 642 | 98.8 |
| June | 2022 | 650 | 642 | 98.8 |
| July | 2023 | Smart Start does not operate in the summer months. It is a school-year, school-day program | | |
| August | 2023 | | | |
| September | 2023 | 650 | 640 | 98.5 |
| October | 2023 | 650 | 642 | 98.8 |
| November | 2023 | 650 | 642 | 98.8 |
| December | 2023 | 650 | 640 | 98.5 |
| January | 2023 | 650 | 641 | 98.6 |
| February | 2023 | 650 | 640 | 98.5 |
| March | 2023 | 650 | 643 | 98.9 |
| April | 2023 | 650 | 644 | 99.1 |
| May | 2023 | 650 | 646 | 99.4 |
| June | 2023 | 650 | 645 | 99.2 |
| July | 2024 | Smart Start does not operate in the summer months. It is a school-year, school-day program | | |
| August | 2024 | | | |
| September | 2024 | 650 | 628 | 96.6 |
| October | 2024 | 650 | 632 | 97.2 |
| November | 2024 | 650 | 636 | 97.8 |
| December | 2024 | 650 | 639 | 98.3 |


| | Month | State Fiscal Year | CDC Infant/Toddler Full-Time Capacity | CDC Infant/Toddler Full-Time Utilization | CDC Infant/Toddler Full-Time Utilization % | CDC Infant/Toddler Wrap-Around Capacity | CDC Infant/Toddler Wrap-Around Utilization | CDC Infant/Toddler Wrap-Around Utilization % | CDC Preschool Full Time Capacity | CDC Preschool Full Time Utilization | CDC Preschool Full Time Utilization % | CDC Preschool Wrap Around Capacity | CDC Preschool Wrap Around Utilization | CDC Preschool Wrap Around Utilization % | CDC School Age Capacity | CDC School Age Utilization | CDC School Age Utilization % |
|--|-----------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|--|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| | July | 2021 | 1338 | n/a | n/a | 211 | n/a | n/a | 2091 | n/a | n/a | 96 | n/a | n/a | 203 | n/a | n/a |
| | August | 2021 | 1338 | n/a | n/a | 211 | n/a | n/a | 2091 | n/a | n/a | 96 | n/a | n/a | 203 | n/a | n/a |
| | September | 2021 | 1338 | 956 | 71% | 211 | 63 | 30% | 1927 | 1260 | 65% | 297 | 180 | 61% | 203 | 141 | 69% |
| | October | 2021 | 1338 | 968 | 72% | 211 | 69 | 33% | 1927 | 1262 | 65% | 297 | 184 | 62% | 193 | 157 | 81% |
| | November | 2021 | 1346 | 976 | 73% | 211 | 70 | 33% | 1918 | 1278 | 67% | 297 | 181 | 61% | 193 | 153 | 79% |
| | December | 2021 | 1346 | 981 | 73% | 211 | 81 | 38% | 1918 | 1270 | 66% | 297 | 128 | 43% | 202 | 162 | 80% |
| | January | 2021 | 1346 | 971 | 72% | 211 | 97 | 46% | 2141 | 1396 | 65% | 297 | 174 | 59% | 330 | 183 | 55% |
| | February | 2021 | 1346 | 970 | 72% | 221 | 99 | 45% | 1918 | 1308 | 68% | 297 | 178 | 60% | 202 | 172 | 85% |
| | March | 2021 | 1346 | 1009 | 75% | 211 | 101 | 48% | 1918 | 1375 | 72% | 297 | 182 | 61% | 193 | 155 | 80% |
| | April | 2021 | 1346 | 1036 | 77% | 211 | 107 | 51% | 1903 | 1415 | 74% | 297 | 181 | 61% | 295 | 261 | 88% |
| | May | 2021 | 1346 | 1043 | 77% | 211 | 114 | 54% | 1903 | 1421 | 75% | 297 | 184 | 62% | 295 | 261 | 88% |
| | June | 2021 | 1351 | 1061 | 79% | 211 | 122 | 58% | 1898 | 1469 | 77% | 297 | 182 | 61% | 286 | 269 | 94% |
| | July | 2022 | 1339 | 1113 | 83% | 186 | 120 | 65% | 2091 | 1595 | 76% | 96 | 85 | 89% | 194 | 171 | 88% |
| | August | 2022 | 1339 | 1126 | 84% | 186 | 120 | 65% | 2091 | 1678 | 80% | 96 | 85 | 89% | 218 | 184 | 84% |
| | September | 2022 | 1371 | 1137 | 83% | 186 | 115 | 62% | 1868 | 1344 | 72% | 319 | 192 | 60% | 163 | 149 | 91% |
| | October | 2022 | 1371 | 1158 | 84% | 186 | 132 | 71% | 1868 | 1392 | 75% | 319 | 233 | 73% | 163 | 151 | 93% |
| | November | 2022 | 1379 | 1147 | 83% | 186 | 131 | 70% | 1868 | 1430 | 77% | 319 | 235 | 74% | 177 | 165 | 93% |
| | December | 2022 | 1379 | 1160 | 84% | 186 | 132 | 71% | 2091 | 1562 | 75% | 319 | 243 | 76% | 229 | 216 | 94% |
| | January | 2022 | 1379 | 1115 | 81% | 186 | 124 | 67% | 1868 | 1430 | 77% | 319 | 232 | 73% | 163 | 138 | 85% |
| | February | 2022 | 1379 | 1138 | 83% | 186 | 143 | 77% | 1868 | 1473 | 79% | 319 | 246 | 77% | 177 | 164 | 93% |
| | March | 2022 | 1379 | 1143 | 83% | 186 | 151 | 81% | 1868 | 1505 | 81% | 319 | 247 | 77% | 163 | 150 | 92% |
| | April | 2022 | 1382 | 1195 | 86% | 186 | 146 | 78% | 2091 | 1694 | 81% | 319 | 259 | 81% | 310 | 294 | 95% |
| | May | 2022 | 1363 | 1144 | 84% | 186 | 145 | 78% | 2091 | 1717 | 82% | 319 | 258 | 81% | 182 | 165 | 91% |
| | June | 2022 | 1363 | 1159 | 85% | 186 | 140 | 75% | 2091 | 1733 | 83% | 96 | 91 | 95% | 239 | 228 | 95% |
| | July | 2023 | 1390 | 1163 | 84% | 208 | 161 | 77% | 2078 | 1686 | 81% | 74 | 26 | 35% | 191 | 153 | 80% |
| | August | 2023 | 1390 | 1165 | 84% | 208 | 159 | 76% | 2078 | 1652 | 79% | 74 | 69 | 93% | 191 | 183 | 96% |
| | September | 2023 | 1417 | 1188 | 84% | 208 | 144 | 69% | 1823 | 1397 | 77% | 297 | 159 | 54% | 169 | 162 | 96% |
| | October | 2023 | 1438 | 1203 | 84% | 208 | 151 | 73% | 1823 | 1402 | 77% | 297 | 161 | 54% | 169 | 157 | 93% |
| | November | 2023 | 1448 | 1234 | 85% | 208 | 156 | 75% | 1823 | 1428 | 78% | 297 | 164 | 55% | 169 | 157 | 93% |
| | December | 2023 | 1464 | 1246 | 85% | 208 | 159 | 76% | 1823 | 1434 | 79% | 297 | 163 | 55% | 169 | 160 | 95% |
| | January | 2023 | 1525 | 1285 | 84% | 208 | 154 | 74% | 1823 | 1449 | 79% | 297 | 168 | 57% | 191 | 167 | 87% |
| | February | 2023 | 1555 | 1315 | 85% | 208 | 155 | 75% | 1823 | 1458 | 80% | 297 | 174 | 59% | 191 | 169 | 88% |
| | March | 2023 | 1555 | 1336 | 86% | 208 | 168 | 81% | 1823 | 1479 | 81% | 297 | 132 | 44% | 191 | 173 | 91% |
| | April | 2023 | 1581 | 1372 | 87% | 208 | 168 | 81% | 1836 | 1478 | 81% | 297 | 182 | 61% | 191 | 179 | 94% |
| | May | 2023 | 1591 | 1404 | 88% | 208 | 168 | 81% | 1836 | 1492 | 81% | 297 | 188 | 63% | 191 | 175 | 92% |
| | June | 2023 | 1601 | 1417 | 89% | 208 | 176 | 85% | 2043 | 1667 | 82% | 74 | 31 | 42% | 213 | 200 | 94% |
| | July | 2024 | 2418 | 1718 | 71% | 225 | 175 | 78% | 2023 | 1652 | 82% | 74 | 50 | 68% | 209 | 151 | 72% |
| | August | 2024 | 2418 | 1794 | 74% | 225 | 169 | 75% | 2023 | 1649 | 82% | 74 | 49 | 66% | 209 | 149 | 71% |
| | September | 2024 | 2418 | 1869 | 77% | 225 | 179 | 80% | 1800 | 1368 | 76% | 297 | 188 | 63% | 187 | 177 | 95% |
| | October | 2024 | 2418 | 1958 | 81% | 225 | 186 | 83% | 1800 | 1395 | 78% | 297 | 210 | 71% | 187 | 171 | 91% |
| | November | 2024 | 2418 | 2005 | 83% | 225 | 184 | 82% | 1800 | 1402 | 78% | 297 | 211 | 71% | 187 | 172 | 92% |
| | December | 2024 | 2418 | 2002 | 83% | 225 | 189 | 84% | 1800 | 1449 | 81% | 297 | 211 | 71% | 187 | 172 | 92% |

*n/a = Programs did not report utilization July or August 2020 as funding was under COVID Emergency Order

| | Month | State Fiscal Year | Priority SR Full Day/Full Year Capacity | Priority SR Full Day/Full Year Utilization | Priority SR Full Day Utilization % | Priority SR School Day/School Year Capacity Sept to June only | Priority SR School Day/School Year Utilization Sept to June only | Priority SR School Day/School Year Utilization % | Priority SR Part Day/Part Year Capacity Sept to June only | Priority SR Part Day/Part Year Utilization Sept to June only | Priority SR Part Day/Part Year Utilization % | Priority SR Extended Day Capacity | Priority SR Extended Day Utilization | Priority SR Extended Day Utilization % | Priority SR INFANT TODDLER * Started Nov 2023 | Priority SR Priority INFANT TODDLER Utilization | Priority SR Infant Toddler Utilization % |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------|---|--|------------------------------------|--|---|--|--|---|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| | July FD/FY and ED only | 2021 | 7125 | Not collected due to Covid | | | Not collected due to Covid | | | Not collected due to Covid | | 459 | Not collected due to Covid | | | | |
| | August FD/FY and ED only | 2021 | 7125 | Not collected due to Covid | | | Not collected due to Covid | | | Not collected due to Covid | | 459 | Not collected due to Covid | | | | |
| | September | 2021 | 7073 | 4124 | 58% | 1575 | 791 | 50% | 1327 | 782 | 59% | 456 | 246 | 54% | | | |
| | October | 2021 | 7093 | 880 | 12% | 1579 | 849 | 54% | 1329 | 849 | 64% | 456 | 254 | 56% | | | |
| | November | 2021 | 7093 | 4102 | 58% | 1535 | 864 | 56% | 1373 | 904 | 66% | 456 | 247 | 54% | | | |
| | December | 2021 | 7093 | 4049 | 57% | 1539 | 529 | 34% | 1369 | 1277 | 93% | 456 | 248 | 54% | | | |
| | January | 2021 | 7093 | 4137 | 58% | 1539 | 768 | 50% | 1369 | 1072 | 78% | 456 | 244 | 54% | | | |
| | February | 2021 | 7072 | 4224 | 60% | 1441 | 885 | 61% | 1487 | 1000 | 67% | 456 | 265 | 58% | | | |
| | March | 2021 | 7042 | 4441 | 63% | 1507 | 1030 | 68% | 1426 | 920 | 65% | 456 | 274 | 60% | | | |
| | April | 2021 | 7043 | 4746 | 67% | 1510 | 1129 | 75% | 1410 | 966 | 69% | 456 | 296 | 65% | | | |
| | May | 2021 | 7051 | 4900 | 69% | 1506 | 1186 | 79% | 1403 | 842 | 60% | 456 | 297 | 65% | | | |
| | June | 2021 | 7042 | 5114 | 73% | 1507 | 1147 | 76% | 1426 | 863 | 61% | 456 | 302 | 66% | | | |
| | July FD/FY and ED only | 2022 | 7056 | 5370 | 76% | | | | | | | 456 | 337 | 74% | | | |
| | August FD/FY and ED only | 2022 | 7056 | 5502 | 78% | | | | | | | 456 | 337 | 74% | | | |
| | September | 2022 | 7056 | 4712 | 67% | 2060 | 1640 | 80% | 879 | 655 | 75% | 456 | 298 | 65% | | | |
| | October | 2022 | 7056 | 4887 | 69% | 2060 | 1760 | 85% | 879 | 721 | 82% | 456 | 326 | 71% | | | |
| | November | 2022 | 7056 | 5014 | 71% | 2060 | 1757 | 85% | 879 | 734 | 84% | 456 | 334 | 73% | | | |
| | December | 2022 | 7056 | 5075 | 72% | 2060 | 1762 | 86% | 879 | 735 | 84% | 456 | 343 | 75% | | | |
| | January | 2022 | 7056 | 5005 | 71% | 2060 | 1769 | 86% | 879 | 713 | 81% | 456 | 347 | 76% | | | |
| | February | 2022 | 7056 | 5218 | 74% | 2060 | 1786 | 87% | 879 | 741 | 84% | 456 | 353 | 77% | | | |
| | March | 2022 | 7056 | 5367 | 76% | 2060 | 1808 | 88% | 879 | 772 | 88% | 456 | 369 | 81% | | | |
| | April | 2022 | 7056 | 5448 | 77% | 2060 | 1814 | 88% | 879 | 781 | 89% | 456 | 375 | 82% | | | |
| | May | 2022 | 7056 | 5595 | 79% | 2060 | 1802 | 87% | 879 | 786 | 89% | 456 | 375 | 82% | | | |
| | June | 2022 | 7056 | 5682 | 81% | 2060 | 1776 | 86% | 879 | 777 | 88% | 456 | 375 | 82% | | | |
| | July FD/FY and ED only | 2023 | 7087 | 5756 | 81% | | | | | | | 456 | 361 | 79% | | | |
| | August FD/FY and ED only | 2023 | 7087 | 5267 | 74% | | | | | | | 456 | 356 | 78% | | | |
| | September | 2023 | 7065 | 4816 | 68% | 2025 | 1544 | 76% | 843 | 658 | 78% | 461 | 269 | 58% | | | |
| | October | 2023 | 7065 | 5843 | 83% | 2025 | 2003 | 99% | 843 | 723 | 86% | 461 | 334 | 72% | | | |
| | November | 2023 | 7065 | 5924 | 84% | 2025 | 1750 | 86% | 843 | 732 | 87% | 461 | 348 | 75% | | | |
| | December | 2023 | 7053 | 5387 | 76% | 2028 | 1763 | 87% | 842 | 715 | 85% | 461 | 358 | 78% | | | |
| | January | 2023 | 7063 | 5621 | 80% | 2028 | 1773 | 87% | 842 | 748 | 89% | 491 | 360 | 73% | | | |
| | February | 2023 | 7069 | 5912 | 84% | 2028 | 1800 | 89% | 842 | 756 | 90% | 467 | 367 | 79% | | | |
| | March | 2023 | 7077 | 6084 | 86% | 2028 | 1896 | 93% | 842 | 816 | 97% | 491 | 374 | 76% | | | |
| | April | 2023 | 6802 | 6143 | 90% | 2017 | 1852 | 92% | 823 | 772 | 94% | 491 | 374 | 76% | | | |
| | May | 2023 | 6802 | 6180 | 91% | 2017 | 1825 | 90% | 823 | 767 | 93% | 491 | 380 | 77% | | | |
| | June | 2023 | 6802 | 6287 | 92% | 2017 | 1800 | 89% | 823 | 756 | 92% | 491 | 389 | 79% | | | |
| | July FD/FY and ED only | 2024 | 6854 | 6032 | 88% | | | | | | | 456 | 354 | 78% | | | |
| | August FD/FY and ED only | 2024 | 6862 | 6068 | 88% | | | | | | | 456 | 357 | 78% | | | |
| | September | 2024 | 6802 | 5483 | 81% | 2058 | 1680 | 82% | 901 | 772 | 86% | 456 | 326 | 71% | | | |
| | October | 2024 | 6802 | 5531 | 81% | 2058 | 1729 | 84% | 901 | 785 | 87% | 456 | 333 | 73% | | | |
| | November | 2024 | 6776 | 5756 | 85% | 2063 | 1758 | 85% | 907 | 795 | 88% | 456 | 339 | 74% | 39 | 9 | 23% |
| | December | 2024 | 6782 | 5772 | 85% | 2063 | 1798 | 87% | 907 | 804 | 89% | 456 | 346 | 76% | 39 | 38 | 97% |

| Month | State Fiscal Year | State Head Start School Day/School Year Capacity | State Head Start School Day/School Year Utilization | State Head Start School Day/School Year Utilization % | State Head Start Full Day/Full Year Capacity | State Head Start Full Day/Full Year Utilization | State Head Start Full Day/Full Year Utilization % | State Head Start Extended Day/Extended Year Capacity | State Head Start Extended Day/Extended Year Utilization | State Head Start Extended Day/Extended Year Utilization % | State Head Start Part Day/Part Year Capacity | State Head Start Part Day/Part Year Utilization | State Head Start Part Day/Part Year Utilization % |
|-----------|-------------------|--|---|---|--|---|---|--|---|---|--|---|---|
| July | 2024 | 34 | 0 | 0% | 211 | 104 | 49% | 649 | 150 | 23% | 16 | 0 | 0% |
| August | 2024 | 34 | 0 | 0% | 211 | 95 | 45% | 649 | 149 | 23% | 16 | 0 | 0% |
| September | 2024 | 34 | 34 | 100% | 211 | 156 | 74% | 649 | 273 | 42% | 16 | 0 | 0% |
| October | 2024 | 34 | 34 | 100% | 211 | 181 | 86% | 649 | 319 | 49% | 16 | 0 | 0% |
| November | 2024 | 34 | 34 | 100% | 211 | 135 | 64% | 649 | 281 | 43% | 16 | 0 | 0% |
| December | 2024 | 34 | 34 | 100% | 211 | 167 | 79% | 649 | 335 | 52% | 16 | 0 | 0% |

State Head Start did not begin collecting utilization data until July 1, 2023
 Not all grant recipients are up to date with report submission

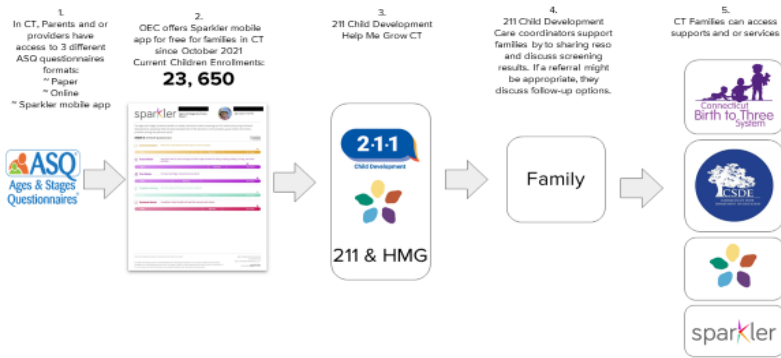
| Item | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | CUMULATIVE TOTAL (AS OF FEB. 21, 2023) |
|------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| # New adults who created accounts | 4,228 | 6,858 | 7,762 | 21,793 |
| # New children who joined | 4,537 | 7,672 | 9,128 | 24,563 |
| # Plays completed | 2,893 | 8,730 | 11,112 | 26,760 |
| Recorded app touches in CT | 74,268 | 188,768 | 232,372 | 594,925 |
| #ASQ 3 completed | 2,299 | 5,699 | 9,433 | 20,583 |
| Screening Results | 1,326 (58%) on track 560 (24%) Monitor 411 (18%) Refer  | 3,108 (55%) on track 1,375 (24%) monitor 1,210 (21%) refer  | 5,285 (56%) on track 2,188 (23%) monitor 1,889 (20%) refer  | 11,548 (56%) on track 4,807 (23%) monitor 4,133 (20%) refer  |
| # ASQ SE completion | 1,806 | 4,079 | 5,995 | 13,302 |
| ASQ:SE-2 results | 1,402 (78%) on schedule 210 (12%) monitor 193 (11%) refer | 2,993 (73%) on schedule 558 (14%) monitor 519 (13%) refer | 4,313 (72%) on schedule 903 (15%) monitor 739 (12%) refer | 9,751 (73%) on schedule 1,855 (14%) monitor 1,636 (12%) refer |
| #Trainings/TA/Office of Hours etc. | 52 Trainings - 132 People | 2 Sessions of Office hours: 32 Participants 337 Trainings and TA - Total 1017 trainees and TA provided 1 Conference - 125 Participants | 10 Session of Office Hours - 57 Participants 421 Trainings and TA : 1203 Participants 1 Conference - 150 Participants | |

Sparkler mobile application is a free modern technology engagement tool giving families greater and more equitable access to child development information, parent tips, evidence-based developmental screening questionnaires, and a direct pipeline to 211 Child Development. 211 Child Development is accessible to parents through the call center and website and is a point of entry to many services including but not limited to Home Visiting, **Help Me Grow CT**, Birth to Three, Pre-school Special Education, and Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs.

Developmental Screening efforts is not new in our state. Connecticut has a long-standing history since the beginnings of the Help Me Grow Connecticut in 1997, by Dr. Paul Dworkin. Help Me Grow is now a national model replicated across 33 states showing efficacy on building a comprehensive early childhood system and developmental promotion and screening toward early detection in young children (birth to 5 years old) <https://helpmegrownational.org/hmg-system-model>

The Office of Early Childhood provides funding to 211 Child Development which administers Help Me Grow CT and Birth to Three Services under one umbrella. Help Me Grow CT makes it possible for Connecticut families and providers to have greater access to developmental screenings in three formats (a) paper version (b) online © **Sparkler mobile app** and most importantly linkages to essential services. CT is first state to make available to families the Sparkler mobile app for free to parents and programs.

Increase Access to Support CT Families



Currently there are over 25,000 children enrolled in the Sparkler mobile app and serving 90 local communities in our state. Sparkler is a mobile app-based service brought to Connecticut families by the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. Sparkler mobile application helps families and early childhood educators monitor children's development milestones and provides ideas to promote learning at home. Parents can download the Sparkler app to complete the Ages & Stages Questionnaires® (ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE), answering questions about their child's development and social emotional growth. Results of the ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE indicate whether further evaluation is needed to determine if a child has a delay or disability and/or qualifies for intervention services such as Birth to Three or Preschool Special Education.

Additionally, in January 2024 Sparkler launched the prenatal component of the application. It includes a prenatal yoga and Pilates series and a content lineup that will help expecting parents get ready for their new babies! Click [yoga and pilates series](#) to preview of some of the content. Sparkler also worked with the Learning Tapestry to develop new functions/features of Sparkler's app and partner dashboard — improving the experience based on feedback from our partners and the families we serve.

Sparkler app includes (but not limited to) the following features:

- ASQ-3 & ASQ:SE-2 evidence-based developmental and social-emotional screening tools
- Digital library containing over 1,000 play activities to promote child development
- Coaching by early childhood experts for families and community partners
- Information, resources, and referrals by accessing 211 Child Development/Help Me Grow CT

The OEC is currently working with 90 local communities, including home visiting programs, childcare programs, family resource centers, Birth to Three programs, public schools, pediatricians, and others that work with the parents of young children. The Sparkler initiative includes staff trainings, technical support, materials, and other resources to share with local families.

Sparkler counted more than 202,000 app touches by Connecticut families related to play, parent tips, and coaching, with families completing more than 14,000 play-based learning activities using Sparkler. More than 700 individual schools, daycares, family resource centers, home visiting agencies, healthcare clinics, early intervention programs, and other providers across the State are now using Sparkler, and more than 1,700 local providers have been trained and set up to use Sparkler to support and engage with the families they serve.

The Office of Early Childhood completed a statewide roll out of the Sparkler application in October of 2021. This rollout raised awareness for the importance of developmental screening and to promote partnerships between families and early childhood educators. Sparkler Learning Inc. has engaged with many parents and early childhood providers in developmental promotion and screenings towards early detection efforts across our state.

SPARKLER CT PROGRAM AND ADMINISTRATOR SETUP (2021-2023)

From 2021 - 2023, Sparkler set up 1,594 groups/cohorts in Sparkler CT. We've also trained a total of 1,664 providers who work at programs across the state so that they're ready to (1) explain the app to families and (2) use the dashboard to engage with and support the families that link with them on Sparkler. The breakdown is as follows:

| | Newly set up in 2021 | Newly set up in 2022 | Newly set up in 2023 | 2021-2023 Totals |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Children's Museum | 1 | | 1 | 2 |
| State agency | 1 | 1 | | 2 |
| FCC Network | 2 | 1 | | 3 |
| Lab School | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Library | | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Healthcare provider | | 1 | 7 | 8 |
| New home visiting agency | 12 | 2 | 1 | 15 |
| Community-Based Organization | 1 | 10 | 13 | 24 |
| Community | 24 | 9 | 3 | 36 |
| B23 | | 13 | 25 | 38 |
| Kindergarten Cohort | 2 | 43 | 5 | 50 |
| FRC | 41 | 5 | 6 | 52 |
| FCC | 54 | 71 | 2 | 127 |
| Public School District | 32 | 5 | 95 | 132 |
| Additional Home Visiting Cohort | 92 | 66 | 62 | 220 |
| Preschool/Nursery/Daycare | 108 | 80 | 45 | 233 |
| Classrooms | 265 | 230 | 147 | 642 |
| TOTAL GROUPS/COHORTS ADDED | 637 | 542 | 415 | 1,594 |
| | | | | |
| TOTAL ADMINS ADDED/TRAINED | 588 | 619 | 457 | 1,664 |

WAGE SUPPORTS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS ENTERS PHASE 2

Child Care Centers

Governor Lamont and the CT State legislature have given funding to the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) to give one-time wage supplements to early childhood educators through **Wage Supports for Early Childhood Educators**. The OEC understands and appreciates how hard early childhood educators are working for our children, and they deserve to be applauded and rewarded for their dedication. There are two phases within this initiative. We are in Phase 2.

ELIGIBILITY:

All licensed programs, as well as license-exempt programs that receive School Readiness funds, are eligible. Eligible staff must:

- be employed at the time of application;
- be regularly scheduled to provide direct service to children (this includes cleaning/cooking staff and admin/receptionists on the program payroll, but shall not include volunteers, substitutes, etc.); and
- be supervisors of those who provide direct service to children, provided they work with teachers or parents regularly, and their salary does not exceed more than \$100,000 per year.

APPLICATION & PAYMENT:

OEC will give these funds directly to programs for each eligible staff member via an application process. Look for an email from childcarefunding@ctunitedway.org with your custom application and follow the application steps. Once funds are received, programs will give funding to each staff member:

- **\$1,700** for full-time (minimum of 30 hours per week or 130 hours per month)
- **\$650** for part-time (defined as less than 30 hours per week or 130 hours per month)
- Additional **18%** on top of staff payments for administrative processing costs

Potential bonuses available for programs and individuals based on additional criteria.

Thank you and your staff for your continued effort in educating and caring for Connecticut's youngest children.



Learn more at
www.ctoec.org/wage-supports-for-early-childhood-educators/

If you have any questions about this process, please contact 211 Child Care at **1-800-505-1000** or email childcarefunding@ctunitedway.org and include your license number for faster assistance.



Connecticut Office
of Early Childhood