
Family Fee Webinar

OEC State Funded Providers
January 2024



Connecticut Office
of Early Childhood

WHAT WE WILL DISCUSS TODAY:

- General Policy B-01: [Fee Schedule](#) Updates & Review
- General Policy B-02: [Fee Guidance](#) Review
- Resources for Providers & Families
- Most Frequently Asked Questions
- Questions & Answers



State-funded General Policies

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For Programs

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- Funding Opportunities for Programs
- Health and Safety
- Program Improvement Resources
- Resources for State-Funded Early Care and Education Programs**
- Overview

General Policies

OEC General Policies detail requirements and guidelines for School Readiness, Child Day Care Contracts, Smart Start and State Head Start state-funded early care and education programs.

Key for table below:

- SR = School Readiness
- CDC = Child Day Care Contracts
- SS = Smart Start
- SHS = State Head Start Supplement

SR	CDC	SS	SHS
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OEC State-Funded General Policies

OEC General Policies **detail requirements** and **guidelines** for state-funded early care and education programs.

Found online: <https://www.ctoec.org/general-policies/>

OEC Homepage > For Programs > Resources for State-Funded Early Care and Education Programs > General Policies

General Policy B-01: Fee Schedule

Fee Schedule informs providers of the fees to be charged to families enrolled in a School Readiness, Child Day Care, or Smart Start funded space.

- Effective Date
- Space Types covered under Fee Schedule
- Instructions
- Example
- Fee Schedule

General Policy B-01: Fee Schedule Updates 2024

The **only** change to the Fee Schedule for 2024 is an **update to the State Median Income levels**.

The Updated Fee Schedule Consists of

- **Same as 2022:** Percentage-based fee schedule based on income, family size, and space type
- **New for 2024:** Revised State Median Income levels used to determine fee rate

Most families and providers will see no change under the 2024 fee schedule.

Family Fee Schedule Examples

Under the current fee schedule, families earning between 20% SMI and 100% SMI will all pay the same proportions of their incomes. **Most families won't see any changes to their Family Fees.**

	2022	2024
Family earning \$35,000/year*	Family is in 26% SMI bracket → Family's fee is currently \$64/week, which is 9.5% of their income	Family is now in the 23% SMI bracket → Family's fee is now \$57/week, which is 8.5% of their income (\$7 decrease)
Family earning \$80,000/year*	Family is in 61% SMI bracket → Family's fee is currently \$146/week, which is 9.5% of their income	Family is now in 60% SMI bracket → Family's fee is still \$146/week, which is 9.5% of their income (no change)
Family earning \$110,000/year*	Family is now in 84% SMI bracket → Family's fee is currently \$201/week, which is 9.5% of their income	Family is now in 83% SMI bracket → Family's fee is still \$201/week, which is 9.5% of their income (no change)

**All scenarios involve a family of 4, with one child in full-time infant/toddler care.*

How Did OEC Determine what updates to make?

OEC conducted a review of stakeholder feedback and program data to inform changes

Surveys and focus groups were administered throughout July and August. We heard from 260 families, 45 providers, and 27 school readiness liaisons/CDC contractors. OEC also reviewed family enrollment data to understand key trends impacting families and providers.

Key Findings:

- Transitioning to a percentage-based fee schedule is administratively challenging
- Repeated major changes to the fee schedule are disruptive for parents and providers
- Most families have very limited incomes (equivalent to \$56,000 or less for a family of four)

When do I start using the new fee schedule?

The new fee schedule goes into effect as of **January 1, 2024**.

For <u>newly</u> enrolled families:	For <u>currently</u> enrolled families:
All families enrolled on or after January 1, 2024 , must pay family fees based on the updated schedule using new SMI brackets.	Families will start paying fees based on the new fee schedule at the date of their next income redetermination , at the latest.

Providers have flexibility to charge families based on the new fee schedule before their next income redetermination, as long as the provider gives them 30 days notice before changing their fee.

General Policy B-02: Fee Guidance

Provides guidelines on the implementation of the Fee Schedule to determine per-child contribution fees for families participating in an OEC-funded space.

- Definitions
- Policy
- Responsibilities
- Determining family income, family contribution and fee
- Care 4 Kids

General Policy B-02: Fee Guidance

- **Section I: Definitions** clarifies terms that will aid providers in verifying things like family size and what counts as income and what doesn't.
- **Section II: Policy** explains requirements and guidance for the implementation of all things related to the fees.
- **Section III: Responsibilities** provides detail for School Readiness Councils, Child Day Care Contractors, and Smart Start BOEs on their responsibility in the application and monitoring of the Fee Schedule and Fee Guidance.
- **Section IV: Determining Family Income, Family Contribution and Fees** makes available more information to operationalize the Fee Schedule.
- **Section V: Access to the CT Child Care Assistance Program Care4Kids** provides both information on the C4K program and the relationship between C4K and state-funded spaces.

Who determines the family fee?

Providers will continue to be responsible for determining each family's fee.

1. Providers will continue to collect required documentation for families:
 - Verification of annual income
 - Verification of family size
 - Birth Certificate
 - Proof of residency
2. Providers will use verified family size and income to determine the percentage of annual income to be used to calculate the family fee, based on space type.
3. Notify family what their weekly fee will be. Providers are required to give **30 days notice** before changing a family's fee.

School Readiness Councils and CDC Contractors are required to monitor the implementation of the Fee Schedule and Fee Guidance.

Example Family Fee Determination

A family of four is enrolling one child in a full-time preschool space. Their gross (pre-tax) annual income is \$43,000.

Key Information

- Family Size: 4
- Family Income: \$43,000
- Age Group: Preschool
- Program Type: Full-Time
- Program Published Cost of Care: \$260/week

Fee Schedule Information

- Income as Percentage of SMI: 32% - 35%
- Fee as Percentage of Income: 8%

Calculations

Annual Family Fee:
 $\$43,000 \times 8\% = \$3,440$

Weekly Family Fee:
 $\$3,440 \div 52 = \66.15

Actual Weekly Fee: \$67

Family Fee Calculator

Tool built by OEC to assist providers and families in calculating the weekly family fee. Found on the homepage of the [ECE Reporter](https://ece-reporter.oec.ct.gov/) application.

1. Open the ECE Reporter application:
<https://ece-reporter.oec.ct.gov/>
2. Click the “**Family Fee Calculator**” tab next to the ECE Reporter icon.
3. Click the purple “**Open Family Fee Calculator**” button located in the middle of the screen.
4. A white box will appear on the right side of the screen, titled “**Calculate Family Fee**”.
5. Enter the requested information in the boxes below. *Remember to select the correct fee schedule from the drop down.
6. Click “**Calculate**” on the bottom of the screen.
7. The yearly and weekly family contribution will appear on the screen.

Calculate Family Fee ✕

Household Size

4

Annual Household Income

43000

Fee Schedule

Current (Fee Schedule Effective 01/01/2024) ▾

Age Group

Preschool ▾

Contract Space Type

Full Time Care ▾

Annual Fee: \$3,440.00

Weekly Fee: \$66.15

Calculate Close



Resources

Tools and Resources

- Dedicated OEC webpage: <https://www.ctoec.org/oec-family-fee-information/>
 - Family Fee Webinar Recordings (past and current)
 - Family Fee Webinar Slides
 - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
 - Provider Resources
 - Resources for Families
 - [Fill-in-the blank form](#) to streamline the process of notifying families about fee changes. Available in English, [Spanish](#), and [Arabic](#)!
- [Family Fee Calculator](#)
- School Readiness Liaisons, CDC Contractors, or Smart Start Board of Educations
- OEC Grant Program Managers are available to answer specific questions and provide individualized assistance.



Frequently Asked Questions

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Q: What document(s) should I use to determine gross total income?

A: GP B-02 says federal or state tax return should be used as the primary source for verification. If a tax return is not available, providers may accept a month's worth of paystubs or letter from employer on company letterhead. See full list of acceptable documentation in the GP!

Q: What do I use for documentation if the family is claiming to have no income?

A: Providers must have a policy on what they will accept for documentation. OEC has seen providers require families to complete an attestation form, and in some cases have that form notarized.

Q: Do I have to calculate fees for every child?

A: Yes, programs must calculate AND document the per-child fee for all children enrolled in a state-funded space, even those with Care4Kids. Note: Smart Start programs are only required to do this if they charge a family fee.

Q: How often do I need to determine a family's fee?

A: At the time of enrollment and annually thereafter. Providers may pick a point in time to redetermine all families, regardless of their initial enrollment date, to have everyone on the same schedule. Programs must notify families in writing of any change in fee schedule 30 days prior to the date the change is to take place.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: If a child has an active Care4Kids certificate, do I charge the family the OEC family fee or the C4K family fee?

A: If a child has an active C4K certificate and enrolled in a state-funded space the provider is only allowed to charge the family the family fee as indicated on certificate. It does not matter if the family fee + C4K reimbursement does not equal the program's full cost of care.

Q: What if the family can't afford their fee?

A: All providers are required to have a published hardship policy. That policy can be applied if a family requests relief from paying the fee. Programs are required to document this loss of income as a budget line item. Remember, providers must charge the fee, but are not required to collect the fee.

Q: How do I report to the OEC the amount of family fees/tuition collected?

A: Family fees/tuition must be reported (in the month you collect them) via your program's monthly report in the ECE Reporter System.

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**THANK
YOU!**