STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

Connecticut Office of
Early Childhood

Connecticut Administered State-Funded Program
General Policy A-01

Legislative Requirements for Staff Qualifications in State-Funded Programs*

*This policy is in effect under legislation that expires on 6/30/25. An updated policy, effective 7/1/25, is available on the General Policies webpage.

> X   OEC Child Day Care Contractors
> X   OEC School Readiness Programs
> X   OEC State Head Start Supplement
> X   OEC Smart Start

This general policy (GP) updates guidance on the implementation of legislation at each site receiving state funding: Child Day Care, School Readiness, Smart Start or State Head Start Supplement. All state funded child care programs must meet Connecticut legislative requirements for staff education qualifications.

In the programs with state-funding noted above, the percentage of designated Qualified Staff Member (QSM) distribution described in the QSM Qualifying Options table (p. 2) applies to the entire program. This includes ALL classrooms serving any combination of infants, toddlers or preschoolers, regardless of classroom funding.

The QSM is designated for each classroom from the **individuals who meet both the definition of Teacher and QSM eligibility requirements**, and is assigned to the classroom by a program staffer with administrative access in the Connecticut Early Childhood Professional Registry, http://www.ccacregistry.org/

> **For example:** If a program has three classrooms and only one classroom has children receiving state funds from any of the sources listed above, all three classrooms must have a designated QSM with a qualifying Bachelor degree or higher by July 1, 2029. In the interim, programs must meet each benchmark as detailed on page 3.

QSM Qualifications
Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Section 10-16p is amended by Public Act 19-34. The following two tables summarize the legislation and provide information regarding state-funded program QSM qualification requirements while emphasizing the rollup from individual staff eligibility to program compliance.

Degrees and credits must be from a regionally accredited higher education institution. All education documentation must be on file and verified in the Connecticut Early Childhood Professional Registry http://www.ccacregistry.org/

To be a designated Qualified Staff Member (QSM) in a state funded program, your program administrator must do the following in the OEC Registry: a) Confirm your employment, and b) tag you in the role of Teacher c) in a specific classroom / group in a state funded program.

Are you ELIGIBLE? Find out in 3 Steps:
1. Find your education details in the chart below.
2. Make sure all of your education is reflected in your free OEC Registry account (www.ccacregistry.org).
3. Check your OEC Registry membership card for your QSM eligibility and expiration date.

☑	My EC qualification is:	Am I eligible?	How long am I eligible?	Next Steps
☐	Less than a CDA credential AND 12 ECE credits	Not yet	Not eligible yet	Apply for **OEC Scholarship** toward your ECE degree!
☐	Current CDA credential AND 12 ECE credits	Yes, for a little longer…	…until June 30, 2025	Apply for **OEC Scholarship** toward an ECE degree!
☐	Associates degree in any field AND at least 12 ECE credits	Yes, but…	…until June 30, 2025	Apply for **OEC Scholarship** toward your ECE bachelor degree!
☐	Bachelor's degree or higher in any field AND at least 12 ECE credits	Yes, but…	…until June 30, 2025	Apply for the **ECTC (Early Childhood Teacher Credential) B Level Individual Review Route**!
☐	On 06/30/2015 I was grandfathered in the Registry as meeting the bachelor degree because I worked at my program since 1995 and had my associate degree	Yes, but…	…until June 30, 2025	Apply for **OEC Scholarship** toward your ECE bachelor degree!
☐	Associates degree in ECE, OR ECTC (Early Childhood Teacher Credential) - Associate level only (Traditional college route OR Individual Review Route)	Yes, but…	…until June 30, 2029	Apply for **OEC Scholarship** toward your ECE bachelor degree!
☐	On 06/30/2015 I had a bachelor degree + at least 12 ECE credits in the Registry and was grandfathered as meeting the bachelor degree	**YES!**	**You meet the goal!**	Take advantage of quality professional development to keep your skills sharp and stay up to date with the latest ECE research and best practices.
☐	Bachelor's degree in ECE	**YES!**	**You meet the goal!**	
☐	ECTC (Early Childhood Teacher Credential) - Bachelor level only (Traditional college route OR Individual Review Route)	**YES!**	**You meet the goal!**	
☐	Current teacher certification in early childhood education	**YES!**	**You meet the goal!**	

PA 19-34 (SB 932) Program Compliance Benchmarks and Details			
A	**B**	**C**	**D**
Goal: All DQSMs have at least a CDA credential + 12 ECE credits	**Goal: 50% or more DQSMs have at least an associate degree in ECE, AND the remaining percentage have a CDA credential plus 12 ECE credits**	**Goal: 50% or more DQSMs have a qualifying bachelor degree in ECE, AND the remaining percentage have an associate degree in ECE or an ECTC associate level (traditional or IRR)**	**Goal: 100% DQSMs have a qualifying bachelor degree in ECE**
Until June 30, 2022	**July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2025**	**July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2029**	**From July 1, 2029 on**
100% of DQSMs must be career ladder[1] 7 or higher in the Registry , meeting one of the following: 1. Current CDA credential plus 12 ECE credits 2. Associate degree or higher plus 12 or more ECE credits 3. Current teacher certification in ECE/Special Education 4. Any grandfathered QSM status	At least 50% of DQSMs have one of the following: 1. Current teacher certification ECE/ Special Education 2. ECTC (Early Childhood Teacher Credential) Associate or Bachelor level; traditional college route or IRR (Individual Review Route) 3. Associate degree or higher specifically in ECE 4. Any grandfathered QSM status	At least 50% of DQSMs have one of the following: 1. Current teacher certification ECE/ Special Education 2. ECTC (Early Childhood Teacher Credential) Bachelor level only; traditional college route or IRR (Individual Review Route) 3. Bachelor degree specifically in ECE 4. Grandfathered QSM status with expiration 2099	100% of DQSMs have one of the following: 1. Current teacher certification ECE/Special Education 2. ECTC (Early Childhood Teacher Credential) Bachelor level only; traditional college route or IRR (Individual Review Route) 3. Bachelor degree specifically in ECE 4. Grandfathered QSM status with expiration 2099
	Remaining % have: • CDA credential plus 12 ECE credits • The OEC also recognizes any non-qualifying degree (not mentioned above; ladder level 9 or higher)	Remaining % have: • Associate degree ECE OR ECTC (Early Childhood Teacher Credential) Associate level; traditional college route or IRR (Individual Review Route)	

[1] https://www.ccacregistry.org/index.cfm?module=careerLadder&navID=nav33

Notes:

- **Individual** QSM eligibility is automatically calculated for every OEC Registry account holder. Detail of status is found on the user's *Education and Training Report* AND *Registry membership card*.
- **Program compliance** is automatically calculated in the OEC Registry, and is visible in the *Designated QSM Compliance Report for State Funded Programs* (extra detail) and the *Designated QSM Summary Report for State Funded Programs* (short form), accessible by authorized administrative access users.

For Staff Not Currently meeting a Qualifying Bachelor Degree

Programs should actively support staff to achieve QSM requirements: provide guidance and track progress in individual and program-wide professional development plans [also see NAEYC Program Standards and Accreditation Assessment Items – Standard 6 Topic Area D – Ongoing Professional Development; and OEC licensing regulations – Staffing 19a-79-4a(g)]. Staff enrolled in degree programs have a plan of study (POS) developed and regularly updated with the staffer's college advisor. The POS should be regularly reviewed and referenced during professional development plan check ins. Staff should make measurable progress toward qualifications goals, keeping in mind that the ultimate goal is for 100% DQSM staff to have their ECE bachelor degree by July 1, 2029.

Smart Start

Each classroom with children enrolled through Smart Start must be instructed by an individual who is an employee of the local board of education and holds certification pursuant C.G.S. Sec. 10- 145b, with a CSDE endorsement in early childhood education or early childhood special education, as follows:

- 112 Integrated Early Childhood/Special Ed., Birth - K
- 113 Integrated Early Childhood/Special Ed., N/K through grade 3
- 512 CT Montessori, Primary, Birth to Kindergarten (only valid in Montessori settings)
- 01 PreK-Grade 8
- 02 PreK-Grade 6
- 03 PreK-Grade 3
- 08 PreK-K
- 065 Comprehensive Special Education PreK-Grade 12

Individuals holding 112 or 113 or 065 teacher certifications are required for classrooms in which a child's Individual Education Program (IEP) requires special education instruction.

The following web links are related to this policy:

OEC ECTC Approved Colleges and Approved ECE Teacher Certifications http://www.ct.gov/oec/lib/oec/earlycare/workforce/approved_colleges_certifications.pdf
Connecticut Early Childhood Professional Registry http://www.ccacregistry.org/
Early Childhood Teacher Credential Individual Review Route (IRR ECTC) http://www.ct.gov/oec/cwp/view.asp?a=4541&q=563038
Information on Regionally Accredited Higher Education Institutions https://ccacregistry.org/index.cfm?module=whatIsCollegeAccreditation&navID=nav36

For further information concerning this GENERAL POLICY please contact the OEC program manager.
If you're not sure who that is, visit: https://www.ctoec.org/contact-us/

Glossary of Terms for GP A-01

This glossary reflects the terms used in GP A-01 for the OEC administered state-funded programs.

Administrative Staff	Those individuals responsible for "planning, implementing and evaluating" a program for young children; "the role of the administrator covers both leadership and management functions (NAEYC)." This may include, but is not limited to, the following administrative team members: executive director, director, program administrator, assistant director, principal, curriculum coordinator, education coordinator, site manager.
Classroom	A "classroom" is considered a group of children not to exceed the recommended group sizes outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Federal Head Start, and the OEC Child Care Center and Group Child Care Home Licensing Regulations. OEC licensed programs are required to meet child care licensing requirements for ratio and group size. In addition, there must be one designated QSM per classroom or group.
Early Childhood Teacher Credential (ECTC)	The ECTC is issued through the OEC to validate that an individual meets teacher competencies in six standards. See http://www.ct.gov/oec/lib/oec/ectc_approved_colleges_2017_rev.pdf for OEC Approved College/Teacher Certifications comprehensive listing. Higher education institutions on this listing have aligned their programs with national and Connecticut standards for early childhood preparation programs. Depending on the coursework associated with the degree, individuals can apply for an Infant/Toddler ECTC, a Preschool ECTC or both, and at the Associate and/or Bachelor degree levels. Individuals applying for the credential through an approved institution's path to the ECTC must be enrolled in the Registry and can apply online through the applicant's Registry account at http://www.ccacregistry.org/ NOTE: The Teacher Certifications comprehensive listing provides guidance but each individual must have verification of successful completion of the ECTC track at the college/university.
Early Childhood Teacher Credential Individual Review Route (IRR ECTC)	Individuals who do not have a full concentration in early childhood but have 12 credits in early childhood or child development may apply for an alternative route to obtain the ECTC. Information about the process for the Individual Review Route (IRR) to the ECTC can be found at http://www.ct.gov/oec/cwp/view.asp?a=4541&q=563038

Grandfathered Qualified Staff Member (QSM)	• An individual, regardless of role, who held a Bachelor degree or higher of any type AND had 12 or more early childhood credits (ladder level 11 or higher) AND who was employed in a state-funded program on June 30, 2015 was grandfathered as meeting the qualifying degree with an expiration of 12/31/2099. • An individual, regardless of role, who held an Associate degree of any type AND had 12 or more early childhood credits (ladder level 9 or 10) AND who was employed in that same state-funded program since 1995 or before was grandfathered as meeting the qualifying degree with an expiration of 06/30/2025. Should this individual achieve a qualifying degree, the designation is updated to the new expiration. Grandfathering is noted in the Registry on the individual's profile, membership card, and Education and Training Report, as well as on the program's Staff Qualifications Detail Report. This designation allows the individual to change their employment after June 30, 2015, and be hired as a designated QSM in any other state-funded program. Individual employment requirements may vary and employers may choose to require specific degrees, credentials or certifications as long as the requirements meet the minimum state guidelines.
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
OEC Approved CSDE Teacher Certification Endorsements	**Approved Certification Endorsements*** Below is the list of the CSDE's teacher certifications with early childhood endorsements, in accordance with C.G.S. Section 10-145b, that are accepted as meeting the state-funded staff requirement. The individual's certification must be current, not expired, and the individual must keep the certification current in order to be considered as meeting the educational requirements. If the certification is expired, individuals can apply to be reviewed under the IRR ECTC process. 113 Integrated Early Childhood/Special Ed., N/K through Grade 3 112 Integrated Early Childhood/Special Ed., Birth – K 512 CT Montessori, Primary, Birth to Kindergarten (only valid in Montessori settings) 001 PreK – Grade 8 002 PreK – Grade 6 003 PreK – Grade 3 008 PreK – K 065 Comprehensive Special Education PreK – Grade 12 ***** Non-Smart Start funded programs may have staff with current ECE certifications from another state.

Designated Qualified Staff Member (QSM)	Designation given by the program's administrative access Registry user to the one individual per classroom that meets the definition of Teacher and QSM education requirements. This person must be identified in the Registry (see QSM Instructions under Program Administration prior to log in; or under My Resources – Program Administration – QSM). The Registry auto-calculates eligible QSMs and indicates the relevant expiration dates. Only eligible QSMs assigned to a specific room are made available to be chosen in the Registry in the drop down menu for that room/group.
	State-funded programs must keep a schedule for all classrooms at each site that consistently provides for the same Teacher as DQSM to be present in the same classroom for a minimum of 60% of the classroom's operating hours each day.

Registry	The Connecticut Early Childhood Professional Registry at http://www.ccacregistry.org/ Use the Registry tools for: • job applications (Required document = OEC Registry Education and Training Report), and • ongoing assessing (the 2 program level QSM reports)
Regionally Accredited Higher Education Institution	The goal of higher education institution accreditation is to ensure that education provided meets acceptable levels of quality. Accreditation determines a school's eligibility for participation in federal (Title IV) and state financial aid programs. Proper accreditation is also important for the acceptance and transfers of college credit, and is a prerequisite for many graduate programs. Connecticut recognizes credits and degrees from regionally accredited colleges and universities. For more information about regional accreditation, go to https://ccacregistry.org/index.cfm?module=whatIsCollegeAccreditation&navID=nav36
Teacher (definition established in 2012; combination of essential criteria found in the definitions by Head Start and the NAEYC)	An **"individual with primary responsibility for a classroom of children"** is most commonly referred to as the "Teacher". It is expected that the "Teacher" of infants, toddlers and/or preschoolers knows, understands and applies theories of child development, content knowledge across multiple domains (such as math, language and literacy −including support of dual language learners− science, creative arts, social and emotional, physical, approaches to learning, etc.). The "Teacher" also demonstrates commitment to continual professional learning performing their responsibilities consistent with the field's ethical principles. The "Teacher's" responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following: • coordinating and engaging in the planning and implementation of experiences for young children using Connecticut's Early Learning and Development Standards and other standards or frameworks as applicable to funding, such as Head Start; • coordinating and engaging in the observation and documentation of children's progress; • making informed decisions, using multiple sources of information, about children's progress across all domains of learning; • partnering with families in meaningful ways to support the development of relationships between children and their families, and sharing and gaining information pertaining to each child's approach to learning, progress, and general health and well-being; • working with a team of professionals, such as assistant teachers, administrators, public school personnel (e.g., special education teachers, therapists, etc.) to coordinate information about children's progress and adjust teaching practices to meet the needs of all children; • engaging in on-going professional learning opportunities to remain current with early childhood research and best practices; and • maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment.