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STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Connecticut Office of
Early Childhood

Beth Bye
Commissioner

DATE: October 7, 2020

TO: School Readiness, Child Day Care, and Smart Start funded programs

FROM: Beth Bye, Commissioner

RE: Coronavirus Memo #31
General Policy Waivers for School Readiness, Child Day Care, and Smart Start funded programs

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide notification of waivers of OEC General Policies as related to the funding of School Readiness, Child Day Care, and Smart Start programs for the SFY 21 funding period. The waivers include statutory and policy items that the OEC is waiving to provide funded programs with the flexibility necessary to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and to align adjustments made by OEC to the scope of service and/or funding method for the current fiscal year.

This memo replaces Memo 8 issued March 20, 2020. All general policies remain in effect except as noted below.

The provisions listed for each of these General Policies have been waived as noted for School Readiness, Child Day Care, and Smart Start. These waivers will cease at the end of SFY 21 or upon notification by OEC, whichever comes first.

EXPIRES

| | General Policy | School Readiness | Child Day Care Contracts | Smart Start |
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| A-01 | <p>Legislative Requirements for Staff Qualifications in State-Funded Programs — Describes the required staff education qualifications for all state-funded child care programs.</p> | <p>- The OEC will temporarily waive QSM requirements due to COVID-19. The OEC expects programs to take all measures to ensure that children are receiving the best care possible, but recognizes that staffing will become impacted during this crisis.</p> | | <p>No provisions of the requirements for staffing in Smart Start programs have been waived.</p> |
| B-04 | <p>Definition of space types, categories of care — Describes the types of care each program provides.</p> | <p>-The minimum number of hours, days, and weeks per year a child must consistently be in need of services for each SR funded space type are waived.</p> <p>-School Readiness requirements relating to the implementation of an Alternative Plan of Care for children enrolled full day/full year are waived.</p> <p>- The School Readiness requirement that at least 50 percent of the community spaces must meet the requirements for Full- Day/Full-Year is waived.</p> <p>-During FY 21 RFP process, communities completed waivers for variances in the</p> | <p>-The specific requirements for categories of care have been waived per Part 1.A.1.b of the CDC contract.</p> | <p>-The requirement that districts provide 6 hours of care per day, five days per week, for a minimum of 180 days is waived. Districts are required to submit a Smart Start Fiscal Year 21 Plan for approval. Such plan must include the length of the school year and provide details for services under a full in-person model, a hybrid model, and a distance learning model.</p> |

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| | | number of hours, days and weeks services are provided. | | |
| B-05 | Meeting Quality Assurance Requirements — Describes the expectations and necessities for each funded program. | <p>-Alternative Interim Quality Assurance Process-The OEC is adjusting the requirement for programs that are not NAEYC Accredited or Head Start approved to have an on-site observation by an approved ERS rater. Instead programs will be required to work with an ERS rater to use the tools appropriate to ages served in a self-assessment process.</p> <p>-OEC will recognize any extensions communicated to the specific program by NAEYC or the Office of Head Start. Documentation of this extension should be provided to OEC as required in the General Policies. Programs that have not received a formal timeline extension and that have extenuating circumstances affecting their ability to meet accreditation timelines due to COVID-19 may submit a request for a waiver of this requirement in writing to the OEC. Approval of such requests will be contingent upon programs being licensed, license-exempt, and in compliance with other funding requirements.</p> | | |
| B-06 | Spaces for Children with IEP — Describes the policy for children with disabilities and their participation in OEC programs. | In order to provide flexibility in coordination of services, children receiving special education services are not required to be physically located at the program site for the total number of hours required by their specific space type. | | |
| D-04 | Reallocation of Unutilized Child Day Care Spaces — Describes how a CDC program's empty spaces could be used by other programs if left empty for more than three months. | | Unutilized contracted Child Day Care Spaces will not be reallocated during the declared state of emergency | |