



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Connecticut Administered State-Funded Program General Policy A-08

Spaces for Children with Individual Education Plans (IEPs)

- X OEC Early Start CT Programs
 - X OEC Smart Start CT Programs
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The Office of Early Childhood (OEC)’s inclusion statement:

“The Office of Early Childhood expects that all children and families have a sense of full belonging and are valued, respected and supported. OEC policies, funding and services address the needs of children and families to ensure the right conditions for every child to achieve their full potential.

This occurs through full participation in everyday activities at home, school and in the community. OEC, providers, communities and schools adopt and promote the culture, practices and relationships necessary to foster inclusion and meaningful access and participation for the benefit of **all** children. All children, with and without disabilities or differences, their families and their caregivers benefit from inclusive environments.”

POLICY

OEC recognizes that some children have Individualized Educational Plan (IEPs). Early Start CT (ESCT) and Smart Start Programs treat all children equitably regardless of their IEP, special needs, or disability. No child is excluded from a state-funded early care and education program because of their special needs or disability.

SMART START

Smart Start-funded spaces are intended to increase a district’s capacity to provide a general education preschool experience

An OEC-approved Smart Start application may give priority for enrollment based on the following:

- Families with incomes at or below 75% of the state median income;
- Children who are dual language learners



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- Children in foster care
- Children with IEPs
- Children experiencing unstable housing.

OTHER POLICY INFORMATION

- Public Act 24—91 requires child care centers, group child care homes, and family child care homes to permit children who are eligible for Birth to Three services to receive early intervention services from the provider designated in the IFSP.
- State-funded early care and education programs seek to enroll approximately the same percentage of children with disabilities as the percentage of children with disabilities enrolled in the districts K-12 general education classes.
- When a child enrolled in a state-funded early care and education program also receives special education or early intervention services, this represents an additional or supplemental service. OEC does not consider the enrollment of a child in a state funded early care and education space who also receives special education or early intervention services as supplanting (using two sources of funding for the same service).
- Children enrolled in ESCT and also receiving services in an educational program offered by the Local Education Agency (LEA) in association with an IEP should be offered the type of ESCT space that best fits with the family's need for care, including their needs for care when the LEA program is not in session. When possible, programs should enroll children in the space type that matches the actual hours of care needed; however, when necessary a child may be enrolled in a space type that provides hours in excess of their need for care when the LEA program is in session.
- State-funded programs are expected to collaborate with school districts and Birth to Three programs to support families and children.
 - For further guidance, please review the [OEC and the CT State Department of Education \(CSDE\) joint statement regarding Children who Attend Child Care and Receive Support Services](#).
- OEC permits districts that receive Smart Start funding to consider special education status as one factor when prioritizing enrollment. Districts are permitted to reserve additional spaces provided for by Smart Start funding for children who have IEPs but do not meet other priorities for enrollment.

DEFINITIONS

- I. **Individualized Education Program:** a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in a meeting in accordance



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with federal law, and that must include several components which can be found [here](#).

- II. Individualized Family Services Plan:** Individualized family service plan or IFSP means a written plan for providing early intervention services to an infant or toddler with a disability under this part and the infant's or toddler's family that has several components which can be found [here](#).

In the unlikely event that any provision of this General Policy is found to be inconsistent with any contract or grant provision, the contract or grant shall govern.

For further information concerning this GENERAL POLICY please contact your OEC Program Manager or visit <https://www.ctoec.org/contact-us/>