



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Connecticut Administered State-Funded Program General Policy E-01

Quality Enhancement Funds

- X OEC Early Start CT Programs
 OEC Smart Start CT Programs
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POLICY

The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) provides *Quality Enhancement* (QE) funding to the *Local Governance Partner* (LGP) *Intermediary* (*Shine Early Learning, Inc.*) to improve the quality of Early Start CT (ESCT) programs. The Intermediary subcontracts with LGPs to provide QE funds which are used to improve the health, safety and learning of children from birth to five years of age.

Each *LGP Fiduciary* is eligible to apply for QE funds on behalf of its community. A minimum of 60% of any QE funds awarded by the LGP shall be dedicated to the implementation of LGP's *community plan*, informed by the local needs assessment. OEC encourages regionalized collaboration to broaden accessibility and reduce duplication of services.

Acceptable uses of QE funds may include, but are not limited to:

- establishing new and strengthening current partnerships to improve access to early childhood services for families;
- hosting events that provide opportunities for families to build community;
- offering professional development opportunities for providers and families;
- providing additional coaching support;
- hiring staff or consultants to meet identified needs of educators and families and to reduce staff-child ratios;
- training staff to serve as coaches and mentors;
- supporting initiatives to improve staff retention;
- improving parent engagement and leadership;
- developing and implementing curriculum; and
- providing additional activities that benefit children and families.



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Unacceptable uses of QE funds include:

- quality improvement technical assistance or training activities that are generally available at the local, regional, or state level;
- increases in staff salaries; and
- administrative or strategic planning tasks.

Applying for QE Funds

The LGP Intermediary shall establish the process for applying for QE funds and communicate to LGP Fiduciaries. The LGP Fiduciary, in collaboration with the LGP Liaison, will apply for QE funds on behalf of programs and families within its community. A complete LGP Fiduciary application will include:

- Child care program level information (e.g., program name, address, registry and license numbers, program contact, fiscal agent);
- An explanation of how the QE funds will be used to achieve program objectives;
- An explanation of how the QE funds will be used to support the implementation of LGP's community plan, informed by the local needs assessment, as applicable;
- A proposed timeline of actions by the Program and/or LGP to meet the stated objectives;
- The identified target audience (e.g., children who receive state funding, parents, community members) of the proposed program objectives;
- The proposed methods and procedures that will determine if the objectives have been achieved;
- Comprehensive proposed budget, including narrative descriptions of each projected activity, timeline, and corresponding expenses.

The LGP Fiduciary will receive funds from the LGP Intermediary and disburse these funds in accordance with their approved application. The Intermediary shall provide information related to the approved use of QE funds and distribution of funds in accordance with its contract.

OTHER POLICY INFORMATION

In addition to the allowable uses outlined above, QE funds may be used to:



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- Assist directors and administrators in obtaining training relevant to their role or position;
- Improve administrative tools (e.g., adding or improving child care management systems, updating financial software, upgrading computers);
- Provide comprehensive services to families (e.g., enhanced access to physical and mental health care, speech and language therapy, nutrition guidance, family support services, housing supports, parent education and literacy programs, home outreach programs);
- Provide training to educate parents on child development and social emotional learning (such as the [Pyramid Model](#));
- Upgrade educational equipment or furniture (including adaptive equipment for children with special needs);
- Improve physical spaces for family gatherings (including lactation rooms or community spaces);
- Provide training to enable staff to assume roles of greater responsibility (e.g., mentor, supervisor, coach) in the program;
- Repair fire, health and safety issues in existing facilities to achieve compliance with national safety standards;
- Make necessary improvements to program site to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), OEC licensing regulations, Head Start Program Performance Standards, *The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)* and/or *The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)* accreditation standards;
- Train child care providers on injury and illness prevention;
- Provide educational and professional development opportunities to staff, including opportunities to implement OEC professional development activities and goals; and
- Other approved activities as determined by OEC and the LGP Intermediary.

DEFINITIONS

- I. **Community Plan:** proposal submitted by each LGP Fiduciary to the LGP Intermediary that details community needs and the steps necessary to address those needs.
- II. **Local Governance Partners Fiduciary:** the organization that contracts with the LGP Intermediary and OEC to receive funding to support the LGP Liaisons, Parent Ambassadors, and LGP Community Table meetings.
- III. **Local Governance Partner Intermediary:** Entity that contracts with OEC to manage and support LGPs under ESCT.



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- IV. **Shine Early Learning, Inc.:** The LGP Intermediary that oversees the awarding of QE funds to LGPs to support ESCT programs.
- V. **The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC):** a professional membership organization that works to promote high-quality early learning for all young children, birth through age 8, by connecting early childhood practice, policy, and research.
- VI. **The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC):** a nationwide non-profit organization dedicated to promoting high quality child care by strengthening the profession of family child care.
- VII. **Quality Enhancement:** improvements made to the instruction or services offered by a program.

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/>