



CONNECTICUT Early Childhood

FY25 DIGEST OF ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Connecticut Office of Early Childhood

Beth Bye, Commissioner

Elena Trueworthy, Deputy Commissioner

Established – June 24, 2013, by Executive Order No. 35

Statutory Authority – Conn. Gen. Statutes Sec. 10-500 (P.A. 14-39 – An Act Establishing the Office of Early Childhood, Expanding Opportunities for Early Childhood Education and Concerning Dyslexia and Special Education)

Central Office – 450 Columbus Boulevard, Floors 2 and 3, Hartford, CT 06103

Number of employees – 155 employees, 85 who are state funded and 70 who are federally funded.

Recurring operating expenses –

State - \$380,808,549.33

Federal - \$281,004,046.97

Bonds - \$2,942,500.00

Total - \$664,775,096.30

Organizational Structure

- **Commissioner's Office**
- **Division of Early Care and Education**
- **Division of Quality Improvement**
- **Division of Family Support**
- **Division of Birth to Three**
- **Division of Licensing**
- **Legal Office**
- **Internal Operations and Support**

Mission

To partner with families of young children to advance equitable early childhood policies, funding, and programs; support early learning and development; and strengthen the critical role of all families, providers, educators, and communities throughout a child's life. We will assertively remove barriers and build upon the strengths of historically disenfranchised people and communities to ensure fair access to OEC resources.

Vision

All young children in Connecticut are safe, healthy, learning and thriving. Each child is surrounded by a strong network of nurturing adults who deeply value the importance of the first years of a child's life and have the skills, knowledge, support, and passion to meet the unique needs of every child.

Our Guiding Principles

- Intentionally frame our organization's policies, practices, and resources through the lens of advancing equity and anti-racism
- Partner with families and communities to create family-driven programs that honor diverse languages, values, strengths, and experiences
- Conduct our internal and external relationships to promote respect, collaboration, and team growth
- Inform decisions and policies by utilizing high quality inclusive research and data interpretation
- Deliver excellence and innovation in all aspects of agency work
- Foster an efficient, coordinated, caring and professional culture throughout the agency
- Value early childhood as a critical time of learning through play and positive social and emotional connections to promote optimal development of the whole child within their family and community
- Engage in continuous quality assessment to improve outcomes for children, families, and early childhood providers
- Advocate for funding and promote partnerships to support early childhood services
- Ensure equitable access and respect for parent choice within all early childhood services

Statutory Responsibility

The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) was created through Executive Order No. 35, effective June 24, 2013, and statutorily established through Conn. Gen. Statute Sec. 10-500 (P.A. 14-39 – *An Act Establishing the Office of Early Childhood, Expanding Opportunities for Early Childhood Education and Concerning Dyslexia and Special Education*.) As a cabinet-level state agency reporting directly to the Governor, the OEC is the lead agency for early care and education, workforce development, program quality and improvement, child care licensing, home visiting, and early intervention for children with developmental delays. The OEC consolidates the funding streams, programs, and personnel of numerous

early childhood services formerly dispersed across the Departments of Education, Public Health, Social Services, Developmental Services, and the Board of Regents.

The Office of Early Childhood works to:

- Serve children and families through a two-generational approach
- Coordinate and improve the delivery of early childhood services for Connecticut children
- Ensure that child care and education programs for young children (1) are safe, healthy, and nurturing, (2) appropriately support children's physical, social and emotional, and cognitive development, and (3) are accessible to all children, particularly those at greater educational risk (including those from families in poverty, families with a single parent, families with limited English proficiency, and parents with less than a high school diploma)
- Support families raising young children to ensure the children's health, well-being and positive growth and development
- Build and support a high-quality early childhood workforce

OEC Operations and Divisions

Commissioner's Office

The Commissioner's Office ensures that agency-wide administrative activities are coordinated and accomplished in an effective and efficient manner. These services are provided across the agency:

Internal Operations and Support

The Division of Finance and Fiscal/Administrative Services manages the business of the agency, including but not limited to budgeting, general fund appropriation accounting, grant accounting and monitoring, purchasing, accounts payable and receivable, asset and inventory management, state and federal reporting, maintenance of supplier information, and various other responsibilities. Some other business operations include agency fiscal policies and procedures, management of the agency's Electronic Grant Management System (eGMS), Security Liaison for Core-CT – the State's HRMS and Financials system, internal and external audits, and payments on contracts.

The Grants and Contracts Support Unit is responsible for the procurement, development, execution, and maintenance of all Purchase of Service and Personal Service Agreements, and for tracking and ensuring programmatic compliance of all Memoranda of Understanding and Memoranda of Agreement. Rooted in Active Contract Administration and Management, the Unit ensures that staff at every level of the agency have the training and tools to effectively develop and monitor grants and contracts. In addition, the Unit plays a coordinating role and provides support in responding to Requests for Proposals and grant opportunities for which the agency applies.

Communications

Communications responsibilities include public information, media relations, public affairs, agency web content, social media, internal and external communications, community outreach and information, and crisis and emergency risk communications.

Government and Community Relations

The Government and Community Relations arm of the OEC is responsible for legislative and policy information, including:

- Serving as the OEC commissioner's liaison to the General Assembly, Executive Branch, and congressional delegation
- Outreach to early childhood organizations to build communication and collaboration
- Outreach to families with child development and child safety information
- Development and implementation of OEC legislative agenda
- Tracking and analysis of early childhood-related legislation
- Responding to legislative inquiries
- Preparing OEC legislative testimony and reports

Legal Office

Legal office staff are responsible for managing the day-to-day legal functions of the agency. Four attorneys, two paralegals, five processing technicians, one office supervisor and one office assistant support the different divisions with advice regarding background checks and other matters involving the licensing division, freedom of information (FOI) requests, policy drafting and review, contracts (including inter-agency Memoranda of Understanding and inter-agency Memoranda of Agreements), grant awards, program administration, discrimination complaints, audits, confidentiality requirements, ethics requirements, records retention, legislation, regulations, and other matters as they arise. In addition, two of the attorneys and the two paralegals serve as hearing officers for the Care 4 Kids administrative appeal hearings.

During FY24, in compliance with federal and state requirements for child health and safety, the OEC processed 19,438 background checks (of that number, 2029 applicants also had out-of-state background record checks) for child care personnel statewide. The Connecticut Criminal History Request System (CCHRS), administered by the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), continues to ensure background check completion is processed promptly. The Background Check Information System (BCIS), designed by internal OEC IT personnel for the management of child care background checks, enables child care providers to more actively manage their staff rosters and ensure compliance with background check requirements.

Live Scan technology is used for all electronic fingerprint capture and transmission. The exclusive use of Live Scan technology enables child care providers to spend less time obtaining reprints and more time

caring for children because Live Scan fingerprinting is fast, convenient, and has a much lower rate of rejection than traditional inked prints on paper cards. Consequently, paper cards for fingerprints are no longer accepted by OEC. OEC partners with the United Way of Connecticut on this live scan effort.

Effective October 1, 2022, Public Act 21-82, amending Conn. Gen. Stat. section 19a-421, mandated comprehensive background checks for youth camp staff. The summer of 2023 marked the commencement of background checks for youth camps. There are approximately 500 licensed youth camps, typically hiring approximately 15,000 staff during the summer season. During FY24, the OEC BCIS staff processed 5,008 youth camp background checks. OEC will continue to cover the \$88.25 per person criminal background check fingerprint processing fee through December 31, 2025.

During FY24, two OEC attorneys and two paralegal staff presided over 38 Care 4 Kids child care subsidy hearings. Staff also processed more than 523 hearing requests.

During FY24, the OEC resolved 74 enforcement matters – including one license revoked by hearing. (This does not include referrals received during this period but not yet resolved). Civil penalties were assessed in 18 cases for a total of \$12,250. In FY24, the legal division responded to 60 FOIAs (this does not include FOIAs received during the time period but not yet responded to with a release or denial).

Head Start State Collaboration Office

Head Start Collaboration Offices (HSCOs), authorized by [Section 642B\(a\)\(2\)\(A\) of the Head Start Act](#), promote partnerships at the local, state, and national levels to strengthen services for the Head Start community and children whose families live in poverty. Appointed by the Governor, the Head Start Collaboration Office (HSCO) Director facilitates state-level collaboration between Early Head Start and Head Start Preschool programs, state agencies, and partners to carry out activities designed to benefit income eligible pregnant women, children from birth to school entry, and their families. As Head Start is a critical component to Connecticut's early childhood system, the HSCO Director supports the OEC's strategic planning and the implementation of statewide systemic efforts.

The work of the HSCO and the partnerships are intended to:

- Assist in building early childhood systems
- Provide access to comprehensive services and support for all children living in families with low income
- Encourage widespread collaboration between Head Start programs and other programs, services, and initiatives serving young children
- Augment the Head Start program's capacity to be a partner in state initiatives on behalf of children and their families
- Facilitate the involvement of Head Start programs in state policies, plans, processes, and decisions affecting target populations and other families with low income

OEC Parent Cabinet

The OEC Parent Cabinet is a 15-member statutory advisory, *Sec. 10-500(27)*, co-created with a group of parent and community leaders as the first-ever CT OEC Parent Cabinet for the agency. Members were selected in September 2021 and officially seated in January 2022. The role of the Parent Cabinet is to elevate parent voice around barriers and needs of families, serve as a vehicle in their regions to increase awareness of OEC services and the Parent Cabinet, and advise the agency and build connections among Connecticut parent leaders, community groups, and the OEC. There are 2 to 3 members serving six regions across the state to achieve geographic representation. Regions 3 and 5, as the largest regions, have 3 members. There is 1 at-large seat to fill any gaps. The members serve a 2.5-year term to allow for staggering between the change in cohorts. Parent Cabinet members are compensated for their monthly duties at \$25 an hour, serving an estimated minimum of 104 hours a year. The mission is:

To build strong connections, listen intentionally, and partner with Connecticut families of young children, communities, and OEC to incorporate the expertise of all parents throughout the early childhood system to ensure family-driven equitable policies and programs.

The Parent Cabinet also connects to local parent ambassadors who are local leaders connected to Local Governing Partners (LGPs) to help form a local to state feedback and connection loop between local and state level. Parent Cabinet members have opportunities to serve on other leadership advisory committees such as the CT Early Childhood Cabinet, Birth to Three Interagency Coordinating Council, CT State Inclusion Team, OEC External Steering Committee, and more. The members are increasing their own knowledge of early childhood supports and strengthening their own leadership skills that they can pass on to their own families and further their own career or personal endeavors after serving. All members become Alum after serving and continue their leadership in other ways one is helping to mentor new OEC Parent Cabinet members.

The OEC Parent Cabinet was created to fill the gap the agency had after having listening sessions in 2017-2018 to help inform its Early Care and Education Action Plan to help prioritize its work toward the goals outlined in their 2020 Strategic Plan. The agency did not have the infrastructure for regular two-way communication with families, and for families to be at the OEC decision-making table. With this as a strategic priority, OEC moved forward with creating a Parent Cabinet. The OEC leaned on the rich history Connecticut has in family engagement and parent leadership.

The Parent Cabinet was added to state statute in the 2023 legislative session (effective July 1, 2023): Sec. 40. Subsection (b) of section 10-500 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective July 1, 2023): (b) The office shall be responsible for: (27) Establishing a parent cabinet to advise the office on ways to strengthen partnership and communication with families, bring awareness to gaps and barriers to services, increase access to services for families and help make improvements to the lives of young children and families in the state.

Division of Early Care and Education

The Division of Early Care and Education oversees and monitors state and federal grants, contracts, and subsidies that support early care and education programs. The division is charged with ensuring the funds are administered efficiently and are used for the purposes intended. These funds include:

1. Child Day Care Contract Program
2. School Readiness Grant Program
3. Smart Start Grant Program
4. State Head Start Supplement Program
5. Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership
7. Child Care Development Fund (including Care 4 Kids Subsidy Program)

Beginning in FY25, Child Day Care, School Readiness and State Head Start Supplement will be phased out and Early Start CT will be the new single state-funded program – combining these three. Early Start CT launched on July 1, 2025. Programs participated in a Request for Application process for currently funded programs (CDCs and School Readiness) and any providers interested in becoming Early Start CT funded. This competitive process was open to centers, group homes, and family child care providers.

School Readiness

School Readiness, in FY25, provided access to preschool programs for 3- and 4-year-old children, and legislation passed in 2023 included infant and toddler age children. At least 60% of households served must have incomes at or below 75% of the State Median Income (SMI). School Readiness is comprised of both Priority and Competitive Communities as defined in legislation and structured to:

- Promote the health and safety of children
- Provide opportunities for parents to choose among affordable and accredited programs
- Encourage coordination and cooperation among programs and services
- Recognize the specific service needs and unique resources available to municipalities; prevent or minimize the potential for developmental delays in children
- Enhance federally funded school readiness programs
- Strengthen the family through encouragement of parental involvement
- Reduce educational costs by decreasing the need for special education

Enrollment in School Readiness programs continued to increase throughout FY24, however due to staffing shortages some programs were not able to open all available classroom spaces. Based on community need, programs were able to convert full-day preschool spaces into full-day infant spaces beginning in November 2023. OEC worked to stabilize these critical programs with enhanced state and federal payments to reduce the impact of low enrollment and to support programs in the recruitment and retention of staff. School Readiness and Child Day Care Programs were given the opportunity to seek waivers to modify hours of operation to respond to the workforce issues.

SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM - FY25 TOTAL \$113,450,631 SPACES \$110,820,732 ADMIN \$ 2,629,838 QE \$892,956			
	Priority	Competitive	Total
Number of Communities	21	46	67
Number of Programs	220	86	306
Number of Sites	225	83	308
Number of Children	10,443	2,099	1,2548
Full-Day Spaces Includes Infant Toddler Full Day Spaces (161 total)	7,072	982	8,054
School-Day Spaces	2,054	434	2,488
Part-Day Spaces	912	683	1,595
Extended-Day Spaces	411	NA	411

Child Day Care Program

Child Day Care (CDC) programs, in FY25, provided early care and education to infants and toddlers, preschoolers and/or school age children who meet certain eligibility requirements. At least 60% of households served must have incomes at or below 75% of the State Medium Income (SMI). These programs are in towns and cities across Connecticut. Section 8-210 of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S. **Sec. 8-210**) specifies that the purpose of this funding is for the development and operation of child day care centers for children disadvantaged by reasons of economic, social, or environmental conditions. The services provided through the Child Day Care contracts are supported with state funds.

CHILD DAY CARE CONTRACT PROGRAM - FY25 \$47,911,631	
Number of Communities	56
Number of Contractors	77
Number of Sites	197
Sites that are also SR (43 PSR; 15 CSR)	58
Sites that are also SHS	21
Infant/Toddler Full-Time Expansion	1439

Infant/Toddler Full-Time	1450
Infant/Toddler Wraparound	225
Preschool Full-Time	1969
Preschool Wraparound	298
School-Age	229

Smart Start

Smart Start serves 3- and 4-year-old children in public school settings. It provides local and regional boards of education with funding to operate a preschool program under the jurisdiction of the board of education for the town. Smart Start services are supported through state funds. In addition, supplementary ARPA funding was designated to support 16 additional classrooms for FY22 through FY25 under the “Smart Start for Recovery” grant. Smart Start is structured to promote high-quality inclusive preschool services with certified teachers in nationally accredited public school programs.

FY25	SMART START \$3,250,000	SMART START FOR RECOVERY \$1,200,000
Number of School Districts	23	10
Number of Classrooms	44	16
Children Served	650	240

CCDF/Care 4 Kids Subsidy Program

The Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) is the primary federal funding for low-income families who are working or participating in education and training to help pay for child care. The Care 4 Kids subsidy program allows eligible families to select a provider anywhere in the state for care. The subsidy can cover full-time, part-time, quarter-time and summer care, based on the family’s work, training, or education schedule. Families earning up to 60% of the State Median Income (SMI) are eligible to apply; at the 12-month redetermination, a family can earn up to 65% of SMI and changes in income are permitted up to 85% SMI. A combination of state and federal funds supports the Care 4 Kids subsidy program. In FY25, 6,299 providers served 33,006 children. (Source: ImpaCT & ImpaCT Child Care Ad Hoc Report 7/17/2025).

CARE 4 KIDS - FY25 \$268,070,640	
Number of Care 4 Kids Providers	6,299
Number of Licensed Family Child Care Programs	1,107
Number of Licensed Center-Based Child Care Programs	989
Number of License-Exempt Child Care Providers	96
Unlicensed Relatives	4,008
Number of Children Served	33,006
Number of Families Served	22,822

State Head Start Supplement

Head Start is funded directly by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to community providers that provide comprehensive child and family support services to low-income families with children ages 3 to 5 years old. Head Start serves approximately 6,000 children in Connecticut under federal funding, with additional support through the State Head Start Supplement. OEC provides supplemental funding to 17 of the 22 federally funded Head Start grantees to increase capacity by 264 preschool-aged children. These funds also extend the day/year of federally funded Head Start spaces and support quality enhancement activities in Head Start programs.

STATE HEAD START SERVICES - FY25 \$5,083,238	
Number of Communities	27
Number of program sites	37
Full day/full year Spaces	197
Extended day/extended year Spaces	565
School Day/School Year Spaces	168

Early Head Start - Child Care Partnership

Early Head Start (EHS) is funded directly by the U.S. Department of HHS to community-based organizations to provide year-round comprehensive child and family support services to low-income pregnant women and families with children birth to 3 years old. EHS settings include child care centers, family child homes, and family home visiting. Three EHS CT grant recipients were awarded a federal

grant to partner with family child care providers and center-based child care programs to provide comprehensive services based on the EHS model. The OEC provides state funds to support children in the three federally funded EHS-CC Partnership Programs whose families are not eligible for the Care 4 Kids subsidy program.

EARLY HEAD START - CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIP - FY25 \$1,500,000	
Grant Recipients	3
Number of Providers	44
Number of Children (Monthly Average)	225

Division of Quality Improvement

The Division of Quality Improvement is responsible for advancing quality by delivering technical assistance and support for the development of the workforce and improvement of early childhood services for young children in family child care homes, centers, and school-based programs. The division's activities are unified through our emerging Quality Improvement System called Elevate.

Quality Improvement System - About Elevate

Elevate is the Office of Early Childhood's (OEC) quality improvement system for licensed and many license-exempt child care programs in family, group, and center-based settings. The Office of Early Childhood launched Elevate in FY22 to bridge licensing standards to accreditation standards, including accreditation standards for family child care homes. The system focuses on simplicity and accessibility by leveraging existing health, safety, and quality assurance systems.

Elevate offers three levels of engagement: Member, Member+, and Member Accredited. Licensed and license-exempt child care providers start out as Members. Member+ is for providers who have OEC approved Elevate program Plans to demonstrate their commitment to continuing to improve the care they offer. Becoming accredited is the highest level of engagement in Elevate. Accreditation demonstrates providers meet nationally recognized quality standards, including those from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), Head Start or Early Head Start approval. With Elevate, providers control their engagement in quality improvement and families have the information they need to make informed choices.

Elevate launched a submission process for Elevate Program Plans in August 2023. In April 2024, the Elevate Program Plan submission process was integrated into the OEC 360 Provider Portal, the online

provider portal that shows information from multiple OEC programs and systems on one dashboard. The system allows for programs to upload their Elevate Program Plans and renew them annually to maintain their Member+ status.

In March 2025, NAEYC introduced a tiered accreditation system. Programs at the foundational tier of NAEYC Recognition demonstrate quality through a family handbook, staff handbook, and description of policies. Programs at NAEYC Accreditation and NAEYC Accreditation+ demonstrate compliance with NAEYC accreditation standards. Programs at NAEYC Accreditation+ are subject to both a mandatory site visit and the potential for additional site visits. Beginning July 1, 2025, NAEYC Accreditation+ is required for Elevate Member Accredited, Early Start CT, and Smart Start programs.

ELEVATE LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT - FY25				
Program type	Total	Member	Member+	Member Accredited*
Licensed Family Child Care Homes	1,789	1,502	207	80
Licensed Centers and Group Homes	1,387	981	56	324
License exempt centers and group homes	N/A	N/A	0	170
Total	3,176	2,483	263	574

*Accreditation is reported differently across settings. For family child care homes, OEC receives accreditation data from NAFCC and Early Head Start. For centers and group homes, accreditation is self-reported by program.

*N/A – Not Available: License exempt centers and group homes are not required to report to OEC.

*At this time, we are working to build access for license exempt centers and group homes to create an Elevate Program Plan in our system.

Partnership with NAEYC

In 2021, the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) partnered with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to build Elevate. NAEYC is the national accreditation system most invested in developing and maintaining high-quality programs for young children. It has a long history of supporting quality improvement in early childhood education, both in the United States and abroad.

To advance the design and development of the system, OEC partners with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The partnership ensures alignment between national standards and OEC's supports for providers. The partnership ensures providers' needs are met by planning data-informed systems and tools and integrating existing technical assistance and workforce supports as critical infrastructure for quality improvement.

Access to the resources of the Quality Improvement System is supported by Service Navigators, who have personal communication with providers who seek resources. Service Navigators, who are OEC or Staffed Family Child Care Network staff, are available to help providers identify needs and next steps in their program improvement efforts. Service Navigators connect providers to resources including these areas of the work described below.

Accreditation Quality Improvement Supports (AQIS) provides access to a team of staff with expertise in continuous program improvement using the NAEYC assessment items as the framework for growth. AQIS supports are open to all child care providers interested in quality improvement, whether the program is actively pursuing or maintaining NAEYC Accreditation. AQIS services are implemented under contracts with each of the Regional Education Service Centers (RESCS). The OEC also provides funding to cover the cost of NAEYC Accreditation fees.

Beginning in January 2023, OEC is providing Consultation Quality Improvement Support, matching technical assistance providers to child care programs whose compliance with state and national standards is determined to need improvement. This consultation is provided in concert with AQIS providers and/or through consultants contracted to support programs. Priority for this support is given to programs with multiple/repeated licensing violations, negotiated corrective action plans, or licensing consent orders to support their efforts to regain compliance. Consultants are matched with providers based on the need of the program and the consultant's expertise. Consultation supports help develop systems unique to the program to avoid and overcome repeated violations occurring. This individualized support is implemented by CT Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC).

Through these supports, Connecticut has gained recognition as the state with the most NAEYC Accredited+ programs. The current number of NAEYC accredited+ programs as of July 2025 is 493 representing 530 sites. Including both licensed and license exempt programs, there are a total of 549 NAEYC accredited and/or and Head Start approved programs statewide.

Staffed Family Child Care Networks and a Statewide Hub offer family child care providers opportunities to network, learn together, and access community resources. Networks, providing statewide coverage, are operated by CT Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC); City of Hartford, and TEAM. These Networks provide coaching and consultation (by phone, email and in person), professional development, and networking through regularly scheduled network meetings.

The OEC funds a Statewide Hub, operated by Shine Early Learning, to serve as the convenor and infrastructure for the regional networks throughout the state. In FY25, the Networks served 999 family child care providers.

Business Supports are offered through a partnership with Women’s Business Development Council (WBDC) to provide short- and long-term support to build the health of child care businesses. Offering training, one-to-one advising, grants and business funding, these services address the fragile business side of practices that are less frequently the subject of training or preparation in the early care and education field. WBDC helps providers to strengthen their business practices, enabling expansion, sustainability, and financial security for all types of early childhood programs. WBDC also serves in a review and advisory capacity for the OEC to streamline business related training and technical assistance to providers. WBDC, through OEC funding, provided the following FY25 services to programs: 875 individuals educated through 3,083 hours of education - including 342 classes and 626 advising sessions, and 113 grants awarded totaling \$1 million. This work has supported the creation or retention of 5,251 jobs and 15,537 slots. Over the lifetime of the contract: WBDC, through OEC funding, provided the following services to programs: 3,129 individuals educated through 13,825 hours of education - including 1,381 classes and 2,462 advising sessions, and 780 grants awarded totaling \$8.28 million. This work has supported the creation or retention of 10,686 jobs and 39,474 slots.

Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment Resources support programs, families, providers, and communities to help young children grow and learn. Using a cycle of intentional teaching, children’s learning and development is supported in a purposeful manner based upon each child’s unique needs and interests. The Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (CT ELDS) provide common language around what children from birth to age five should know and be able to do. Instruction and assessment are composed of planning experiences to support children’s development, gathering information about how they are progressing, and adjusting what is being done to support them based upon this information. In FY24, 201 individuals participated in the introductory training on the CT ELDS, 73 individuals participated in the intermediate training, and 36 programs received coaching focused on standards, curriculum, and assessment.

The Pyramid Model

Pyramid is a framework helping programs implement evidence-based practices that build positive relationships, develop supportive and nurturing environments, and provide individualized supports to address persistent challenging behavior when needed. Social and emotional learning is fundamental to support children’s success in school and beyond, building a solid foundation in early years is certain to produce benefits seen later in life.

Recognizing long-term benefits social-emotional learning has for children, efforts are underway to expand Pyramid Model’s reach within Connecticut. In partnership with University of Connecticut

School of Social Work-Innovations Institute (Innovations), Parent Infant Early Childhood (PIEC) Program, OEC launched a pilot of Connecticut's first Community-Wide Implementation Site of the Pyramid Model, also referred to as *Pyramid for All*.

In this partnership, Connecticut Pyramid Partnership continued building and supporting social emotional growth and development in young children in preschool Child Care Centers and Family Child Care settings through planning, developing, and offering training. Additionally, providers had access to information on how to support behavioral health through newsletters (sharing information for families and providers), training sessions, and cohort-based training and coaching. The Pyramid Model stresses the importance of teams, coaching, and data-based decision making.

By promoting *Pyramid for All*, a goal was to strengthen and enhance expansion efforts already in place to ensure sustainability of expansion. In doing so, Pyramid sustained the existing two cohorts of implementation sites, while adding a third cohort. Implementation sites included 36 center-based/Lab School programs and family child care providers, all of whom were ready to maintain commitment to program-wide implementation. There were six Mentor Coaches supporting 13 Child Care Centers and 11 Family Child Care programs. Expansion efforts also included developing tools to support differentiation of Pyramid Model Coaching with other licensing supports within family child care settings. Adhering to Pyramid Model fidelity, Connecticut's Pyramid Partnership includes a State Leadership Team (SLT) comprised of seven subcommittees including Governance, Coaching and Training, Data Marketing, Higher Education, Family Child Care, and Family Engagement.

Connecticut Early Childhood Professional Registry tracks participation and impact of OEC workforce activities and requirements, develops projections for new initiatives, and reports Connecticut's workforce data nationally. The Registry team staff code professional development qualifications, administer scholarship funds and education attainment incentive payments, process licensing Head Teacher, and Technical Assistance Provider applications, provide career counseling, advise on program requirements, and other functions to support individuals and programs. Participation in the Registry is required for OEC-funded early care and education programs. In FY25: 7,932 new Registry accounts were created (FY24: 6,623) and there were 43,238 active accounts.

Early Childhood Workforce Professional Development activities address systems, policies, and practices to support the goal of developing a highly qualified and effective workforce for all children birth to age five. Collaborative partners include higher education institutions, professional development providers, and members of the early childhood workforce. The OEC is working closely with our higher education partners through two efforts: 1) a Lab School Investments Initiative to ensure the sustainability of Lab Schools as a delivery mechanism for early childhood services, and (2) to ensure students in early childhood higher education have high-quality accredited labs in which to learn their profession. The Lab School Initiative will also ensure that there is strong alignment between Lab School

implementation and OEC's Core Knowledge and Competencies, Early Learning and Development Standards, and other resources for teaching young children. Additionally, OEC's Higher Education Accreditation Support Initiative delivers supports to the early childhood academic programs to engage in Higher Education accreditation, to support the developing workforce in their learning and to continue to advance the pipeline of new staff. For higher ed accreditation, CT State Colleges and Universities delivers associate level coursework through its community colleges. In addition, 7 bachelor-level colleges are working on their initial NAEYC accreditation.

Technical Assistance and Quality Assurance support early childhood settings with training, coaching, and consultation. The Office of Early Childhood (OEC), in partnership with EASTCONN and the Connecticut Association for the Education of Young Children (CT AEYC), is advancing a comprehensive, systems-level approach to technical assistance and professional learning in early childhood settings. Through robust coaching, mentoring, and training initiatives—anchored by the newly finalized Coaching & Mentoring Framework—TA providers are supported in delivering consistent, high-quality practice. Engagement remains strong, with mentoring sessions averaging 35 participants and coaching cohorts using the Framework to foster reflective dialogue and peer learning. Efforts emphasize equity, collegiality, and intentional systems change, with expanded supports for CDA students, ECE Apprenticeship programs, and bilingual educators. Monthly AQIS meetings, professional development on effective presentation skills, and the launch of peer reflection boards further reinforce continuous improvement. Strategic collaborations, site visits to model programs, and the development of new training content and video resources are underway. An expanded mentoring for classroom-based TA providers forthcoming, aligning with new QSM requirements and leadership priorities. Overall, the initiative demonstrates strong momentum and alignment with statewide goals for early childhood quality and workforce development.

ECE Reporter

Beginning in 2025 work began on enhancing the system to align with Early Start CT beginning July 1, 2025. In preparation, work immediately began as OEC transitioned from the Child Day Care program, School Readiness program, State Head Start Supplement to Early Start CT, Early Start CT-State Head Start and Smart Start. Along with the new funding streams, OEC increased from 3 care levels to 12 space type care levels creating more flexibility for all of our providers and the children they serve. Program Status Summaries and Child Assessment information was added in the newly enhanced system. Additional supports include updated user guides, video tutorials and weekly interactive office hours. The ECE Reporter Application holds approximately 20,000 child records in a year.

OEC 360 Provider Portal

The OEC developed and launched the OEC 360 Provider Portal in FY24. The 360 Provider Portal is intended to ease the challenging and often confusing experience of child care providers accessing information from OEC data applications with an overall goal of empowering providers to do more with limited time.

This Provider Portal serves as a central location for providers to login and displays relevant information from each of the agency systems as well as allowing access to each of the systems. The OEC 360 Provider Portal is an online web portal created to provide OEC Providers a centralized view of their program information, provider information, child enrollment information, payment information, and background check information. This portal integrates with multiple OEC data systems and consolidates data into a single view for providers. The data systems integrated with this Provider Portal include Birth to Three (early intervention data system), Early Childcare Information System (home visiting data system), ImpaCT (Care 4 Kids data system), ECE Reporter (early care and education data system), eLicense (licensing data system), Registry (program and provider data system), CoreCT (financial data system), BCIS (background check data system), and Elevate (quality improvement data system).

Qualified Workforce Initiative

The Qualified Workforce Initiative is an initiative to help recruit and retain a qualified early childhood workforce by providing funds for achievement of formal early childhood education qualifications. Eligible teaching staff and administrators can receive \$250 to \$2,000, with bonuses up to \$600 based on the early childhood program's accreditation, location and Social Vulnerability Index rating, and age group served. As of June 30, 2025, 3,064 awards were made totaling \$5,163,575.

Division of Family Supports

The Division of Family Supports administers state and federally funded initiatives to:

- Strengthen the capacity of families to meet the developmental and health related needs of their infants and toddlers who have delays or disabilities, and
- Prevent child abuse and neglect by helping families and communities be responsive to children, ensuring their positive growth and development.

These efforts include contracting with a broad range of organizations to implement evidence-based programs with families and their children; collaborate with community stakeholders; fund and support innovations in the field; and conduct research to assess the effectiveness of programs and develop strategies for improvement.

Home Visiting Programs

Home visiting provides voluntary, evidenced-based home-based supports to at-risk parents, both prenatal and with young children. The goal is to promote positive parenting, improve maternal and child physical and socio-emotional health, and promote optimal child development. The OEC administers 18 state and federally funded evidence-based home visiting programs:

- State Funded: CT Home Visiting System includes four evidence-based home visiting models; Parents as Teachers, Child First, Nurse Family Partnership, and Healthy Families America.

- Federally Funded: Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grant program includes four models: Child First, Nurse Family Partnership, Healthy Families America, and Parents as Teachers.

Throughout FY25, the CT Home Visiting system provided support to 3,148 families and 2,891 children in a hybrid fashion conducting over 43,000 in person visits and more than 8,000 virtual visits with families. This hybrid approach created a supportive system for families and reduced disruption to services when there was illness in the home or variations in a family daily schedule. This hybrid option will continue into FY26 with no more than 25 percent of home visits being conducted virtually.

Sparkler Mobile App

Sparkler is a mobile app-based service brought to Connecticut families by the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. Sparkler mobile application helps families and early childhood educators monitor children's development milestones and provides ideas to promote learning at home. Parents can download the Sparkler app to complete the Ages & Stages Questionnaires® (ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE), answering questions about their child's development and social emotional growth. Results of the ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE indicate whether further evaluation is needed to determine if a child has a delay or disability and/or qualifies for intervention services such as Birth to Three or Preschool Special Education.

Sparkler app includes the following features:

- ASQ-3 & ASQ:SE-2 evidence-based developmental and social-emotional screening tools
- Expanded play-based learning library Sparkler offers over 1,500 play activities, with new content added regularly. Activities are tailored to children's age and developmental stage.
- Sparkler continues to offer a prenatal component since early January 2024, for expecting parents to use the application throughout pregnancy to help them prepare for their babies, support healthy pregnancies, and connect with the system of statewide support for families in Connecticut. Once babies are born, parents can continue using the Sparkler app throughout early childhood to keep learning and growing with their babies.
- Follow-up form for ASQ 3 and ASQ SE screenings providers can complete follow-up forms after the screenings to document the next steps and support referrals.
- Providers can send personalized messages to families, offering guidance, encouragement, and developmental tips.
- Printable toolkits and activity books to download resources for providers to help families get started, including poster, rack cards, and age specific activity booklets.
- Direct connection to the Help Me Grow CT at 211 Child Developmental resources and referrals through integrated pipeline to CT HMG CT system
- Various languages including English, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, French, Arabic
- Sparkler provider dashboard is available in English

- Families can switch languages within the app by accessing the setting menu and selecting their preferred language.

The OEC is currently working with approximately 90-plus local communities, including home visiting programs, child care programs, family resource centers, Birth to Three programs, public schools, pediatricians, and others that work with the parents of young children. The Sparkler initiative includes staff training, technical support, materials, and other resources to share with local families. Sparkler continues to reach and engage early childhood stakeholders in recognizing and understanding the importance of early detection. Currently there is an increased demand in 211 Child Development Help Me Grow and Birth to Three.

The Office of Early Childhood completed a statewide roll out of the Sparkler application in October of 2021. This rollout raised awareness for the importance of developmental monitoring, promotion, screening and linking to essential services. Sparkler continues to build trusting collaborative partnerships between families and early childhood educators.

Sparkler Mobile App: Fiscal Year Summary (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025)

Total Registered Users

*Adults: 31,122

*Children: 35,479

New Registrations

*Adults: 6,615

*Children: 7,844

Developmental Screenings Results and Follow-up

ASQ-3 (Ages & Stages Questionnaires® – Developmental)

*Completed Screenings: 11,804

*Follow-Up Forms Completed: 5,398

ASQ 3 Results

*59%: “On Track” in all domains (Communication, Gross/Fine Motor, Problem-Solving, Personal-Social)

*22%: “Monitor” in at least one domain (no “Refer” results)

*19%: “Refer” in at least one domain

ASQ:SE (Social-Emotional)

*Completed Screenings: 6,746

*Follow-Up Forms Completed: 3,044

ASQ SE Screening Results

*75%: “On Schedule”

*13%: “Monitor”

*11%: “Refer”

211 Child Development is the gateway and access point for caregivers with young children and early childhood providers working directly with families. 211 Child Development Care coordinators are knowledgeable and available to answer caregivers’ questions and concerns about children’s development, learning, and behaviors to ensure linkages to essential services. The goal is to support caregivers in their parenting journey to access supports to ensure Connecticut children grow healthy and thrive starting from pregnancy. 211 Child Development is a specialized unit of United Way of Connecticut that connects families and providers to the multitude of services offered across the state. It is the single source for connecting families to the Help Me Grow model.

Help Me Grow, a national model, is a statewide program that serves children and their families starting from pregnancy. Services are accessed by connecting with the centralized 211 Child Development helpline. The Help Me Grow model is built upon the idea of connecting families with a system of community resources to help them thrive, like health care, quality early learning experiences, healthy nutrition, and parent support. Connecticut is the founding state of the Help Me Grow model, now reaching 25 states.

Help Me Grow services include:

1. Free developmental screening program to monitor a child’s development from birth to age 5, via Sparkler mobile app, online or mailed questionnaire (ASQ). Access on-line at 211.ct.org/program/ages-and-stages/
2. Information about children’s typical development and behavior
3. Connections to community-based programs and services
4. Connects community providers with networking and training opportunities

Even Start Literacy Program

Even Start is a program that gives families access to the training and support they need to create a literate home environment and to enhance the academic achievement of their children. Five primary components are integrated to create a comprehensive program, with all families participating in all components. Local programs build on existing community resources to offer educational and support services to help parents and children learn and succeed together. These are the five components: 1) Early Childhood and/or School-Age Education; 2) Adult Education; 3) Parents and Children Learning Together (PACT); 4) Parent Education and Support; 5) Home Visits to Support Educational Programs.

EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM \$545,545 - FY25	
Grantees	3
Number of Families	70
Number of Adults	80
Number of Children	74

The Division of Family Supports also supports training:

Mind Over Mood Initiative (MoM): Specialized Therapist Partnership Network, Integrated Treatment Model of Home-Based Psychotherapy, and Training, Technical Assistance and Consultation to Home Visiting Program Sites

- During FY25, The Mind over Mood (MoM) Initiative developed a new 2-hour online interactive training on screening and referral for Home Visiting staff offered across five sessions and attended by 42 parent educators. The Referral Coordination Center received 192 referrals for psychotherapy and 1 paternal referral. Of these, 30 mothers were triaged to the MoM Clinical Service. Home Visiting program staff utilized the monthly Model Consultation Meetings to discuss challenges and concerns in addressing unmet needs of families in their program as well as contacting the Coordination Center for case consultation. Therapist trainings were offered across five sessions and resulted in 23 new Therapist Partners.

The Family Support Division supports a statewide multi-dimensional perinatal mental health initiative, Mind over Mood, that includes the following programmatic components:

- Training of community-based, independent practice psychotherapy providers specialized in addressing Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders. The Mind over Mood Therapist Partners accept "warm" referrals from the referral coordination team to engage mothers enrolled in Home Visiting in clinical services.
- Training and Technical Assistance on perinatal mental health screening and referral processes building confidence and quality in identifying, normalizing, destigmatizing, educating and linkage to support, treatment and care.
- Psychotherapy Referral Coordination for all Home Visiting program sites linking mothers with elevated screens to community-based therapy services. Clinical Services provided by staff clinicians are offered to mothers with insurance barriers.
- Evaluation of the Mind over Mood Initiative to compile and analyze information and data collected across programmatic components to report on findings of the MoM's innovation, impact and efficacy.
- Doctoral Program trains clinical psychology interns on PMADs, home-based psychotherapy, early childhood Home Visiting, and the COMPASS integrated treatment model.

- Family Development Training and Credentialing is a model that teaches students and human service providers a strength-based approach to working with families and communities. In collaboration with the University of Connecticut Center for the Study of Culture, Health and Human Development, the OEC provides this training to help families build skills needed to attain healthy self-reliance.
- *Touchpoints*TM is a registered training program from the Brazelton Center. This model builds on provider experience and education to enhance practice and service delivery.

Division of Birth to Three

Birth to Three supports families in enhancing their child's development and connecting to their communities when infants and toddlers have significant developmental delays or disabilities. Birth to Three is part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), specifically Part C, Early Intervention. Part C helps states operate comprehensive statewide programs of early intervention support for the families of infants and toddlers from birth to age 3. Through partnerships with families, the CT Birth to Three system is committed to supporting infants and toddlers with delays and disabilities in developing and growing through everyday routines. The system provides access to all families and connections to resources within the community. Referrals are made to the system through a single point of entry (SPOE) and OEC contracts with early intervention programs across the state to support families. The system offers support to families with children who are under age 3 and have either a:

- Significant developmental delay based on a standardized test; or
- Medical condition (diagnosed by a doctor) that's likely to result in a developmental delay.

In Connecticut, Birth to Three support is founded on three key components: using natural learning environment practices, coaching parents and caregivers, and having a primary service provider for each family. Natural learning environments emphasize meeting families where they are and focusing on identifying learning opportunities within a child's daily life. Research has shown that children learn best when they engage in activities that interest them within their everyday routines and experiences. Coaching as a style of interaction resembles Birth to Three; an early intervention provider works closely with parents and caregivers to build their confidence and skills by using coaching as a style of interaction. Through coaching, these providers share new strategies, help parents and caregivers problem-solve, and plan for actions to support the child's development and learning. Finally, a primary service provider includes a family having a whole team of people will help a child and their family. But there is always one point person — a primary service provider — who is the main source of support.

Family and other caregivers receive coaching during everyday activities with their child to address priority outcomes that the family has identified. All children referred to Birth to Three are evaluated in five developmental areas (cognitive abilities, communication skills, social or emotional behaviors, physical development, and adaptive skills). Eligible children who are 16 months old or older are also screened for autism. The family of an eligible child is offered an Individualized Family Service Plan

(IFSP) that is tailored to address the family's priorities, resources, concerns, and the child's development.

In FY 24-25, 18 agencies supported families in all 169 municipalities in Connecticut. On any given day, the families of approximately 7,446 children had IFSPs, and throughout FY24, the families of 14,467 eligible children received Birth to Three support.

A workforce shortage and fiscal challenges persist within the system. To address the workforce issue, the OEC is working closely with Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) and contracted providers to sustain student placements to recruit new staff into the field. The OEC also seeks out grant funding opportunities to support and enhance staff retention. The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) focuses on implementing evidence-based practices and collaborates with programs to scale up staff support for the implementation of Evidence-Based Practice, ensuring that families receive high-quality support and services. The state is also actively working to implement a rate increase effective July 1, 2026. Additionally, the state works continuously to support programs both financially and through streamlining processes.

Division of Licensing

The Division of Licensing administers the Child Care Licensing and Youth Camp Licensing Programs. Licensed settings include family child care homes, group child care homes, child care centers, and youth camps. The Division is staffed by a director and a state program manager, seven child care licensing supervisors, a supervising nurse consultant, more than 30 child care licensing specialists, two license and applications supervisors, three license and applications analysts, a health program associate, a processing technician, 11 seasonal youth camp inspectors, plus several vacancies. Collectively, staff in the Division work to ensure that licensed child care facilities and youth camps operate at or above the required standards established by state statutes and regulations. This is accomplished through technical assistance, application processing, facility monitoring, complaint investigation, and enforcement activities. The Division licenses more than 3,000 child care facilities and 500 youth camps. It also works with the OEC Legal Division to develop and respond to legislative initiatives that impact the division.

During FY25, the licensing division received the following number of applications for licensure or credential approval:

License Type/Credential Type	Number of Applications Received
Child Care Center	100
Group Child Care Home	7
Family Child Care Home	292
License Exempt Child Care Center	11
Youth Camp	470
License Exempt Youth Camp	4
Family Child Care Home Substitute	474
Family Child Care Home Assistant	102

During FY25, the licensing division issued the following number of new licenses:

License Type/Credential Type	Number Issued
Child Care Center	76
Group Child Care Home	6
Family Child Care Home	198
License Exempt Child Care Center	8
Youth Camp	39
License Exempt Youth Camp	0
Family Child Care Home Substitute	344
Family Child Care Home Assistant	65

During FY25, the licensing division conducted the following number of inspections or investigations:

Credential Type	Number of Inspections Conducted (Inspection type includes initial, full, follow-up, partial, and change inspections)	Complaint Investigations
Child Care Center/Group Child Care Homes	1,945	1,031
Family Child Care Home	2,008	131
License Exempt Child Care	95	12
Youth Camps	590	59 (+55 serious injury reports)
License Exempt Youth Camps	14	2

IMPROVEMENTS/ACHIEVEMENTS 2024-2025

Early Childhood Education Endowment

In June 2025, Governor Ned Lamont and state legislative leaders passed legislation to establish the Early Childhood Education Endowment, the largest expansion of early childhood education access in state history. This historic investment came out of the work of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care that outlined a roadmap for success for Connecticut's children, families, providers, businesses, and economy. With these reforms, Connecticut is not only addressing long-standing challenges in affordability, access, and quality—it is building a future where children can thrive from the very start.

OEC is committed to continuing to listen to and engaging with families and the field as we use Endowment funding to expand Early Start CT and build a better early childhood system for Connecticut families. Most of the implementation will begin in 2027 with planning work and building infrastructure currently underway.

The Early Childhood Education Endowment builds upon and puts into action recommendations from the [Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care Report](#).

Blue Ribbon Panel Goals	Early Childhood Education Endowment
<i>Workforce & Quality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Raises rates to increase wages for Early Start CT providers- Launches health insurance subsidy pilot program in FY27, open to all child care providers- Requires participation in Elevate, Connecticut's Quality Improvement System.
<i>Equitable & Affordable Access</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Adds up to 16,000 new infant/toddler and preschool spaces by FY30; significant expansion starting in FY28- Spaces assigned based on community need and child care desert status.
<i>Systems</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Expands the infrastructure needed for a streamlined, data-driven supportive, state-wide early childhood system- e.g., Online portal for family enrollment and provider listings
<i>Funding</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ongoing investment from unallocated surplus each June.- As endowment grows, the number of families served will grow. Establishes permanent, dedicated funding stream for early childhood, as recommended in the Blue Ribbon Panel report

What is the Endowment?

The Early Childhood Education Endowment is a new, permanent fund to support affordable, high-quality child care through the expansion of Early Start CT. The Endowment will grow over time and provide increased, reliable funding for early childhood education programs, beginning in communities that need it most and then expanding each year to other communities. Currently 88 of Connecticut's 169

communities receive Early Start CT and/or Smart Start funds, the two OEC-funded early care and education funding streams.

How is the Endowment funded?

In its first year, the Endowment will receive as much as \$300 million from the state's budget surplus. Each year after that, additional unallocated surplus funds will be added to keep the Endowment growing. The implementation of endowment funds will be managed by OEC and guided by an Advisory Board, which will help assure funds are used effectively.

Funding from the Endowment will cover:

- **Expansion costs**, including higher rates for providers across all Early Start CT programs and increased spaces through Early Start CT and Smart Start
- **Programmatic costs**, including funding for community planning for early childhood services, workforce scholarships, and enrollment campaigns
- **Administrative costs**, including staffing and data technology

What will the Endowment do?

In the near-term (July 2025 – June 2026):

- The Endowment will expand Connecticut's early childhood funding by up to \$36 million, equal to 12 percent of Endowment funding. These funds will be used to expand spaces in Smart Start and Early Start CT and increase Early Start CT payments to programs.
- The Endowment funding allows for community planning and local needs assessment.

In the long-term:

Expand access to child care by:

- Increasing the number of Early Start CT spaces, with up to 16,000 new infant/toddler and preschool spaces by FY30. OEC will also work with public schools to use Endowment funding to extend existing part-day offerings to school-day to support families' workforce needs for preschoolers with special needs. This historic expansion will begin July 2027 with an application process open to existing Early Start CT providers and that works to enroll new providers in Early Start CT.
- Providing a portal to streamline access to child care provider listings and information for families.
- Increasing affordability. Free/reduced family fees for families enrolled in Early Start CT spaces will start in July 2027. Families earning less than \$100,000 annually will pay \$0 and families earning more than \$100,000 annually will pay a maximum of 7% of their income.

Support early childhood educators through:

- Better pay. The Endowment will raise rates for Early Start CT programs, paving a pathway to increasing wages for early childhood educators up to the rate of kindergarten teachers.
- Increased access to health insurance. The Endowment establishes a health insurance subsidy pilot program in FY27 with \$10 million.
- Workforce development funding. The Endowment increases funding and support for workforce scholarships, apprenticeships, and professional development.

Establishment of Early Start CT

Early Start CT (ESCT) is a new state-funded early care and education program that launched in July 2025. It combines three existing programs — Child Day Care Contracts, School Readiness Grants, and State Head Start Supplement Grants — into one program. The establishment of a single, unified state-funded early care and education system is a major component of the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care.

The guiding principles of Early Start CT are the following:

- Place children and families at the center of the early care and education (ECE) system
- Invest in and support the ECE workforce by providing greater financial stability to programs
- Develop a high-quality, mixed-delivery early care and education system that is responsive to Connecticut’s needs and maximizes current resources.

Early Start CT expands child care access. Programs will be able to serve more families in areas that have had limited child care availability by matching spaces to need. Early Start CT prioritizes socio-economic diversity by removing family work requirements and creating an equitable parent co-pay. Early Start CT reduces financial and administrative burdens on providers. By directly contracting with OEC, providers will have reliable, timely payments and a consolidated reporting process. Early Start CT streamlines the early care and education system. Clear accreditation standards and standardized fee scales across subsidies make it easier for families and providers alike to navigate the early care and education system.

Early Start CT will center family and community need by establishing Local Governance Partners, the new governance body that will represent each community receiving Early Start CT. Local Governance Partners will engage families, support programs, and conduct a local needs assessment to understand a community’s needs. Local Governance Partners will serve as the foundation of the community’s early childhood infrastructure grounded in equity and shared leadership.

Child Care Facilities Improvement

OEC committed funding to improve the physical spaces used for caring for young children. These included mitigation of safety concerns, increasing the number of infant and toddler classrooms, upgrades to playscapes, furniture, fixtures, and equipment, and updating HVAC systems. There was a total of 719

applications for the grant program with \$73.8 million in requests; \$13.1 million in awards were granted to 130 sites across Connecticut. Approximately 50% of sites are in child care deserts (four or more children in census for each child care slot licensed in that area) and 88% of grantees accept Care 4 Kids. In August 2024, the State Bond Commission approved \$10 million in funding for child care facilities renovation and construction. OEC entered into a contract with LISC to develop a new funding opportunity starting in FY26.

Supporting the Provider Workforce

OEC implemented initiatives that gave stabilization bonuses to staff, incentives for free professional development completion, support networks for family child care providers, and increased the capacity for Lab schools to bring in and train new and current ECE staff.

Workforce Development Initiatives

OEC piloted a workforce development program across child care centers using ARPA funds in FY23 that was subsequently funded in FY24 and FY25. OEC convenes monthly meetings with all pilot sites to share best practices and collect data. OEC has partnered with the CT Department of Housing to include child care workers in the UniteCT rental assistance program, which has been transformational to entry-level staff. In FY25, 125 trainees participated in the program.

In August 2023, OEC contracted with SEIU Education and Support Fund to manage the Family Child Care registered apprenticeship, which allows home-based child care owners to obtain the Child Development Associate and become accredited with the National Association of Family Child Care, which entitles them to a wage increase for Care 4 Kids children in their care. For FY25 and FY26, OEC amended the contract to add funds for 50 more family child care providers to complete the apprenticeship program. Currently, there are 56 family child care SEIU apprentices. The OEC has contracted with 12 child care centers to implement an entry-level apprenticeship program at their sites. These apprentices will earn their CDA and will have a mentor, who is also compensated in this program. By December 2026, a minimum of 98 apprentices will complete this program.

Universal Nurse Home Visiting – Community Health Worker Pilot: Family Bridge

The Office of Early Childhood (OEC), Office of Health Strategy (OHS), Department of Social Services (DSS), Department of Children and Families (DCF), and Department of Public Health (DPH) continue to collaborate on the implementation of the Universal Nurse Home Visiting (UNHV)-Community Health Worker pilot, named Family Bridge. The pilot adheres to the Family Connects International (FCI) evidence-based UNHV model, which is augmented with community health workers (CHW). This model uses Registered Nurses (RN) and CHWs/doulas to strengthen Connecticut's peri/postnatal system of care. Connecticut's program is comprised of two components:

- 1) RNs adhering to the evidence-based UNHV model developed by Family Connects International, and

- 2) CHWs and doulas to identify, intervene and address social determinants of health that use community-based maternal support services (COMSS) to impact maternal/child health to strengthen Connecticut's public health infrastructure.

The Bridgeport pilot has been fully staffed, with seven home visiting RNs and eight CHWs, as well as a program administrator, program support specialist, and community alignment specialist, all of whom were hired by Bridgeport Hospital, and will also provide services to St. Vincent's Hospital. All RNs have completed the Family Connects International RN training program, and all CHWs have completed a specific upskilling curriculum created exclusively for Family Bridge by Southwestern Area Health Education Center (SWAHEC) through a subcontract with Bridgeport Hospital.

The pilot was launched in the Greater Bridgeport region in October 2023. Since the launch, Family Bridge expanded to St. Vincent's Medical Center, also in Bridgeport, as of May 2024 and together to date these locations have completed more than 1,300 home visits to families in Bridgeport, Fairfield, Easton, Shelton, Stratford, Trumbull, Monroe, and Milford. Family Bridge has provided home visits in nine languages, including English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Portuguese. Additionally, Family Bridge officially launched at Backus Hospital, located in Eastern CT in February 2025. Since the launch Eastern CT has completed over 50 visits to families in Norwich, Windham, Lisbon, Griswold, Montville, Mashantucket Tribal Nation and Mohegan Tribal Nation.

OEC has integrated a parent from their OEC Parent Cabinet Alum to the Family Bridge Parent Advisory Board and has incorporated referrals to OEC programs and presentations/trainings on Birth to Three, Sparkler, and Mind over Mood into Family Bridge staff education.

To support the foundation of the programs, the Governance Team has created and awarded two competitive procurement requests for proposals: one for the evaluation of Family Bridge and one for the program's sustainability. The evaluation contractor will provide analysis and assessment of program performance, outcomes, and impact to evaluate the overall benefit and value associated with the pilot. Contracts have been execution with the successful bidders, and both sustainability and evaluation work has begun.

Efforts to support the sustainability and expansion of Family Bridge are focused on working with contractors on diversifying revenue streams and leveraging OEC's existing home visiting system and other agency efforts. OEC is working with OHS, DPH, DSS, DCF as this is a multi-agency effort. The sustainability contractor will support the research and development of reimbursement mechanism for Family Bridge to potentially include federal grants, state funding, Medicaid bundles, and contracts with private commercial insurers.

Additional information regarding Family Bridge can be found on OEC's main web page and accessed at: <https://www.ctoec.org/family-bridge/>.

OEC Parent Cabinet 2nd Cohort Updates

In Fall 2024, the OEC welcomed and onboarded the first half of its 2nd Parent Cabinet cohort, joined by the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, OEC staff, and inaugural members. New members received laptops, state emails, hotspots, mentoring from alumni and inaugural members, and a new handbook and bylaws. They spent the fall acclimating to their roles, building relationships, and participating in OEC-led professional development. The newly filled Statewide Parent Cabinet Coordinator role began overseeing and supporting Cabinet work. In December, inaugural members completed their terms and transitioned to alumni.

The new year brought the launch of the first OEC Parent Cabinet newsletter, highlighting 2024 activities. In late January, the remaining members of the 2nd cohort were onboarded at a retreat, supported by alumni mentors through May 2025. OEC Deputy Commissioner, Staff and DAS IT staff also participated. By spring, the full cohort was strengthening its connections with each other, the OEC, and their regional communities.

From January–June 2025, the Cabinet met monthly to share local perspectives, learn about OEC services, and advise on programs and policies impacting young families. Topics included the legislative process and testimony, the Sparkler developmental screening app, licensing regulation updates, OEC Home Visiting programs, Even Start, and doula services at York Correctional Institution and more. Members provided feedback on the Early Childhood Education Endowment, Early Start CT Local Governing Partners (LGPs), the One-Point Entry Portal, the Elevate family flyer, the OEC Parent & Caregiver Survey and more.

They served on subcommittees focused on access and affordability, children with special needs, governance, data and community and family engagement. Members attended statewide events such as the Parent Leadership Learning Community, community outreach trainings, state press conferences, and national panels. They also partnered with Local Parent Ambassadors through quarterly meetings to strengthen the local–state feedback loop during the transition to Early Start CT and the Local Governing Partners model launching July 1, 2025.

Parent Cabinet alumni continued to serve as consultants, contributing to community outreach trainings, the NAEYC Public Policy Forum panel, the Parent Leadership Learning Community, and advising on the LGPs, Parent Ambassador role, and feedback loop. Their involvement has strengthened a lasting leadership network, extending the Cabinet’s impact and fostering ongoing parent advocacy across Connecticut. Parent Cabinet members were newly appointed to serve on the following advisory bodies:

- **CT Early Childhood Cabinet:** 1 Father was appointed to this body that helps inform the state’s early childhood system
- **State Inclusion Team Advisory:** a parent was added to bring parent perspective to the special education system across multiple areas to improve access and inclusion.

- **OEC External Steering Committee:** a parent was added to this body to help inform along with other partners on OEC's work.
- **CT Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) Update Advisory Committee:** @ parents with ECE background joined this committee to help advise OEC and partners around the updated to the CT ELDS and informing it from the parent lens.
- **State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) design advisory:** a parent with a child in birth to three was added to this group that would be designing the work of the grant awarded to CT SDE for 2023-2028 by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).
- A new Parent Cabinet member was already seated on the **CT Birth to Three Interagency Coordinating Council**.

Nationally, Connecticut is being called upon to present and share this work with other states. Parent Cabinet members, Parent Cabinet alum and Design team have had public role in supporting the agency's goal of increasing the voice of parents/families at local and state tables. Some of these this past year include:

- 2024 CT Parent Summit parent panel
- National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Public Policy Forum (2025) (PC Alum and OEC Staff/ former Design member)
- National Help Me Grow Forum (2025) (PC member, PC Alum and OEC Staff/ former Design member)

Parents Connecting Parents

Parents Connecting Parents is a program that aims to share support for families within six starter communities. In partnership with CT Network for Children and Youth, the communities, local early childhood collaboratives, and parent ambassadors, we will continue to build upon relationships that already exist through local outreach. This will foster further opportunities to share resources, break down barriers, listen to families, and support children's early childhood educational journey. A training framework has been developed that ensures parents have the tools needed to share valuable information within the local communities such as early childhood spaces for children, access to programs like Sparkler, Help Me Grow, Birth to 3, and local resources. In collaboration with outside organizations, a data collection tool is being developed to ensure a greater understanding of family needs and how well current systems work for families.

Parents Connecting Parents continues on-going professional development. Asset Mapping and Outreach within specific communities began in July 2024. Since August 2024, Parent Ambassadors have been doing outreach in their communities to connect families to resources, supports, and early childhood experiences through a variety of opportunities. The on-going boots-on-the-groundwork is continuous and essential to the connection of needs in the communities. The opportunity to share resources

continues to grow as partners, communities, stakeholders understand Parents Connecting Parents. Parent Ambassadors to listen to other parents, build relationships, and connect with is key to the growth of the program and concept that Parents Trust other Parents. Parents Connecting Parents allows for collaboration among communities, directors, programs, stakeholders, and external organizations to better unite in the necessary supporting of families in early childhood programs across the state which in turn enables continued partnerships with a focus on families by families.

CT Head Start on Housing Initiative

A first-in-the-nation effort, the Office of Early Childhood, Head Start Collaboration Office, Department of Housing, State Department of Education, and the CT Head Start Association partner to provide access to permanent housing vouchers and services for Early Head Start and Head Start families experiencing homelessness.

This initiative builds upon the strengths and resources of each partner. For 60 years, Head Start has promoted the school readiness of infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children from low-income families and offers high-quality comprehensive services that supports both the child and family. Head Start's model partners closely with families and provides in-depth case management to support them in reaching their goals. By working together, this partnership ensures families with young children have stable housing – a critical component to family well-being and healthy child development.

In FY22, the Connecticut Department of Housing committed 60 housing vouchers for families whose children are participating in CT's Head Start and Early Head Start programs, including an Early Head Start MIECHV program. For sustainability, the Department of Housing wrote into its administrative plan that one out of every three Section 8 housing vouchers that turn over will go specifically to Head Start families.

In December 2024, Governor Ned Lamont held a press conference, announcing the continuation of Head Start on Housing. Moving forward, the Connecticut Department of Housing will allocate 50 vouchers annually for Head Start and Early Head Start families. To date, 149 families have been housed through the program, including 327 children. More specifically, 91 school-aged children and 236 Head Start/Early Head Start aged children have been housed through HSOH.

Head Start Collaboration Office Partnership with Department of Social Services (DSS)

The CT Head Start Collaboration Office began a partnership with the State's Department of Social Service (DSS), the agency that administers Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, to ensure that SNAP recipients were aware of a 2022 federal policy change making them categorically eligible for Head Start services. This policy change allows Head Start programs to reach families better and coordinate benefit programs so that families eligible for multiple programs can more easily participate in services for which they qualify. Recipients were informed through a marketing campaign that included mailings, letters, flyers, and banners displayed in local DSS offices.

The 2023-2024 school year was the second year in which SNAP benefits were included in Head Start eligibility criteria. The Program Information Report completed by Head Start programs showed the number of enrollees whose primary type of eligibility was public assistance -SNAP documentation increased by 28% to 2,039.

ECE Workforce Registry

Scholarship: \$1,647,145 awarded (\$1,429,630 FY24; \$1,310,965.50 FY23; \$1,482,924 FY22; \$1,309,464 – FY21)

Head Teacher: as required in licensing regulation for centers and group homes. 478 awarded (462 – FY24; 535 – FY23; 452 – FY22; 371 – FY21):

- 464 center settings (448 – FY24; 508 – FY23; 427 – FY22; 355 – FY 21); 14 group home settings (14 – FY24; 22 – FY23; 23 – FY22; 4 – FY21)
- 251 Birth to Age 5 certificates (254 – FY24; 299 – FY23; 245 – FY22; 214 – FY21); 113 Birth to School Age certificates (150 – FY24; 156 – FY23; 143 – FY22; 99 – FY21); 114 School Age certificates (58 – FY24; 80 – FY23; 64 – FY22; 58 – FY21)

Technical Assistance Providers:

- Trainers: 111 total active (FY25: 54 new or started new due to expiration; 57 renewed on time)
- Education Consultants: 211 approved/matched in Registry since start fall 2023; FY25: total of 60: 30 previously approved pre-registry process and now matched to account; 30 brand new.

Wage Supplement Program (WSP): as required in legislation. Approved: \$8,001,000 representing 2,857 awards.

Qualified Workforce Incentives (QWI): To 06/30/25: \$5,163,575 representing 3,064 awards; FY25 only: \$1,070,050 representing 639 awards.

Administrative / Multi Site Administrative Access: 446 administrative access (single site approved; 125 multi-site administrative access approved.

Documents processed: 36,269 participant documents and 1,631 program documents.

Licensing Regulations

In 2022, significant changes to OEC licensing regulations for child care centers and group child care homes were proposed for the first time in nearly 15 years. The final approved regulations passed and became effective October 16, 2024. These changes support the operation of child care centers and group

child care homes while also ensuring the safety, health, and development of children receiving care in such settings.

The changes to the regulations include:

- staff child ratio requirements for school age children changed from 1:10 to 1:15
- clarified the definition of program staff to include substitutes and volunteers, amended the definition of employment, and added a definition of visitor
- clarified the definition of group child care home
- clarified training for program staff
- added a requirement that a written plan for administrative oversight must be in place which includes who is in charge in the absence of the director
- made clear requirements for education consultants
- clarified requirements regarding availability or posting of the most recent inspection reports
- made clear the posting of Developmental Milestones is not required for programs serving school age children only
- clarified video recordings must be available to the Office by the next business day
- staff hired after April 1, 2025, must complete health and safety training
- clarified requirements for children with valid religious exemptions
- clarified employment history check requirements
- repealed obsolete Department of Public Health (DPH) food regulations and replaced with current DPH regulations
- clarified usage requirements regarding indoor and outdoor space not approved by the OEC
- added requirements regarding environmental testing and water sample testing
- added updated regulations adopted by DPH regarding the emergency distribution of potassium iodide for programs within the Millstone Emergency Planning Zones
- added language to clarify that children born in September, October, November, or December who are not enrolled in kindergarten but will turn five (5) by January 1 may attend a school-age program
- clarified that fencing for infant toddler spaces approved after January 1, 2025, must be four (4) feet in height
- and made technical revisions.

The OEC licensing and legal division continues to work on changes to both the family child care home and youth camp regulations. Several changes were made to enhance the camp application and renewal process, including the creation of an online payment portal for renewals. In addition, we created fillable online forms for the notification of changes as well as applications for camp director/alternate directors.

In the 2024 legislative session, Public Act 24-49 established the Youth Camp Safety Advisory Council within the Office of Early Childhood. The council provides advice to the Commissioner on matters

relating to safety issues at youth camps and consists of members appointed by the House of Representatives, the Senate, the Governor, and the Commissioner of Early Childhood. The council meets quarterly and the Office of Early Childhood provides administrative support to the Council to facilitate its activities.

Public Act 21-171 created a family child care “incubator model,” which was later amended by Public Act 24-78. This law allows the OEC to issue a family child care home license to a person or group of persons outside a private residence in a commercial facility using a space provided by an organization, and no more than twenty facilities will be approved throughout the state. This organization supports family child care home providers through this model, offering help in meeting licensing requirements, ongoing training and mentorship. Since the initial development of the requirements, application, and inspection forms during the initial pilot program, information has been placed on the OEC website. Late in 2024, the first four incubator licenses were approved in New Britain and licensing staff continue to consult with other Connecticut cities interested in this model.

Effective July 1, 2025, Public Act 25-82 allows the OEC to issue a large family child care endorsement for up to 30 currently licensed providers in each of the next four fiscal years. These endorsements will permit eligible family child care home providers to care for up to 12 children, including their own children, provided they have adequate space, staffing, and can verify compliance with the additional requirements of the endorsement. The division is working to develop criteria to inform prospective applicants of the requirements of this type of endorsement, and are developing an endorsement application, inspection forms and will be configuring the licensing data system and mobile platform with these new requirements.

The OEC Licensing Division continues to use technology to better streamline processes. The Division continues to monitor program compliance with background checks for child care centers, group child care homes, family child care homes, and youth camps using the Background Check Information System (BCIS). Child Care Licensing Specialists continue to use iPads for mobile inspections for child care programs. This not only supports the Governor’s goal of enhancing and modernizing state services by reducing paper, but ensures more consistent documentation of violations, increases staff productivity, and enables the public to have more readily available information concerning inspections as they are posted within a day on the website. The Division also launched mobile inspections for license-exempt centers and license-exempt youth camps in the fall of 2024, and the development of mobile inspections continues with a projected date of implementation for licensed youth camps in the summer of 2026. The Division continues to work on the configuration of online applications and has made updates to the online renewal processes for several types of credentials. Additionally, we continue to work to improve the division's website. This includes restructuring content for easier navigation, adding fillable forms to allow programs and providers to easily submit changes and report accidents, illnesses, injuries, and incidents, and introducing a new section for the Incubator model and the large family child care endorsement.

The Division of Licensing completed the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) triennial audit and implemented changes necessary to comply with the audit findings. OEC is proposing changes to the family child care home regulations to complete the outstanding compliance issues based on this audit, in addition to other changes to support providers in ensuring the health, safety and development of the children in their care.

OEC Behavioral Health Initiative

The Office of Early Childhood created Behavioral Health Initiatives to support and enhance intra-agency communication and collaboration between OEC and state partners about behavioral health. Public Act 13-178 designates the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) as the primary state agency responsible for children's mental health needs. Although DCF is statutorily charged with overseeing mental health needs of Connecticut's children, interagency collaboration is essential with respect to areas of expertise and population served within each agency. Recognizing the value of a well-established continuum of care, OEC values the importance of proactively expanding partnerships with state agencies to promote overall wellness for children throughout their development. As such, OEC's behavioral health efforts are represented by participating in various statewide committees that meet monthly, including: Transforming Children's Behavioral Health Policy and Planning Committee (TCB), Children's Behavioral Health Plan Implementation Advisory Board, Children's Behavioral Health Advisory Council (CBHAC), and Behavioral Health Policy Oversight Committee (BHPOC). To promote sustainability of OEC's behavioral health efforts, OEC established a Behavioral Health Cross Agency Workgroup, as well as a Parent-Cabinet Community and Family Engagement Subcommittee.

OEC's support of behavioral health efforts has been present and evolving since the agency's conception. OEC's goal is to promote overall wellness and strengthen a system where all children and families equitably receive support, they need for success in home, school, and community. To date, there are nine behavioral health initiatives supported by OEC, as well as other state agencies. They include:

- Pyramid Model
- ECCP (Early Childhood Consultation Partnership)
- Insecure Housing Training and Support
- Suspension & Expulsion
- Mind Over Mood (MOMs)
- Connecticut Association of Infant Mental Health (CT-AIMH)
- Help Me Grow/Sparkler
- Doula Project
- Head Start Collaboration

Each initiative has a unique approach regarding behavioral health service delivery that is not mutually exclusive as their purposes are interconnected and benefit one another. The ***Pyramid Model*** is a framework that provides programs with guidance on how to promote social and emotional competence in all children and designing effective interventions that support young children with persistent challenging behavior. ***ECCP*** is a strength-based mental health consultation program designed to build capacity of caregivers by offering support, education, and consultation. ***ECCP***'s purpose is to meet the social-emotional needs and/or developmental concerns of children birth to five; this includes promoting inclusion to mitigate exclusionary discipline practices. Furthermore, ***Suspension & Expulsion*** is proactively addressed in preschool settings by educating staff and family on the importance of social and emotional learning. Promoting inclusion in early child care settings is fundamental, especially when Black and Brown children are disproportionately impacted by suspension and expulsions.

With OEC's ***Doula*** project, a goal is to reduce low birth weight babies and birth complications involving mothers or their baby, increase initiation of breastfeeding, and increase mother's self-efficacy regarding her own pregnancy outcomes. In support of a continuum of perinatal service delivery, ***Mind Over Mood*** is an initiative that helps a mother transition from birth to postnatal care by addressing maternal mental health within early childhood Home Visitation. This also relates to services provided by ***CT-AIMH*** and ***Sparkler*** as they collectively support the social and emotional development of children, while also heightening awareness of overcoming developmental milestones.

Provision of all these services presumes the child and family live in stable and secure housing, however, this is not a reality for many children and families. ***Insecure Housing Training and Support*** provides training on homelessness and housing instability to increase awareness of McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Training is intended to increase awareness on how homelessness is a traumatic experience impacting children's development in lasting ways, including malnutrition, maltreatment, multiple school placements, and exposure to violence. The ***Head Start Collaboration Office*** supports proactively addressing this matter, as well as other efforts within OEC's Behavioral Health Initiatives.

As part of OEC's Behavioral Health Initiatives, monthly webinars were held to highlight various initiatives supported by OEC while drawing attention to the importance and universal presence of mental health. All [webinars](#) were accessible to the community at large and recorded; the recordings can be found on [OEC's website](#) under [Behavioral Health Initiative](#), as well as on OEC's YouTube page. Webinars in FY24-25 included:

OEC's commitment to invest in children and families does not end once a child ages out of OEC provided services. Recognizing children grow up to become adults, investing in healthy growth and development of our youngest of young is paramount to securing a solid foundation propelling healthy growth into adulthood.

CT Two Generational Initiative (2Gen)

Ten years ago, Connecticut dared to ask a different question: *What if we looked at family well-being not in silos, but as a whole?* What if we stopped separating the needs of children from their parents—and instead, built systems that lifted up both?

The foundation of the 2Gen approach is the recognition that meaningful progress for children cannot be achieved without simultaneously supporting the adults in their lives—and vice versa. Over the past decade, this concept has developed into a nationally recognized model, strengthened by the commitment of policymakers, agency leaders, community partners, and, critically, parents themselves.

On June 18, 2025, CT 2Gen celebrated its 10th Anniversary with an in-person event, commemorating 10 years of vision, collaboration, and measurable impact on families across Connecticut. Many key accomplishments were shared by key stakeholders and additionally this year below highlights our continued successes:

- Development of cross-agency strategies to address benefit cliffs, resulting in the final report of the Benefits Cliffs Study and expanded support for pilot implementation.
- Completion of the Transportation Feasibility Study in collaboration with the Office of Workforce Strategies, with significant parent voice centered throughout the process to ensure lived experiences guided recommendations.
- Adoption of 2Gen’s screening and assessment tools by state agencies to identify opportunities where whole-family approaches can strengthen program and policy outcomes.
- Re-engagement of the Family Economic Mobility Workgroup to guide stakeholders in responding to evolving federal policy changes.
- Launch of Phase 1 of the parent evaluation in partnership with the UConn School of Social Work.
- Continued recruitment of parents to serve on the 2Gen Advisory Board and expand representation statewide.
- Advancement of internal coordination through refined processes, clarified workgroup chair roles, and a renewed direction for the initiative, including a bold new logo, an updated logic model, and the first-ever 2Gen three-year Strategic Plan.

Looking ahead, CT 2Gen remains committed to strengthening families and informing policy through whole family, solutions that promote access and opportunity.

**Additional Year in Review reports can be found at: <https://www.ctoec.org/2gen/>*

