Update of Education Qualifications for Teachers
(QSM: Qualified Staff Member) in OEC-Funded Early Childhood Programs

---

Sec. 10-520a. Report re staff qualifications requirement compliance. Not later than January first, annually, the Office of Early Childhood shall submit a report regarding the status of school readiness program providers' compliance with the staff qualifications requirement, described in subsection (b) of section 10-16p, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a.

Note: Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Section 10-16p revised most recently through Public Act 19-34.

The legislation referenced above requires that every early childhood program receiving OEC funds to assign an employee in the role of Teacher as a designated qualified staff member (DQSM) in every classroom (regardless of the classroom's funding) serving infants through preschoolers. See General Policy A-01 Early Childhood Educator Requirements in State-Funded Programs. Data is captured in the Connecticut Early Childhood Professional Registry (the Registry).

As of December 1, 2023 there were 435 state-funded programs (May 2017: 399; Dec 2018: 386; Dec 2019: 394; Dec 2021: 388; Dec 2022: 384) serving any combination of infants through preschoolers in 1,738 classrooms (May 2017: 1,692; Dec 2018: 1,639; Dec 2019: 1,690; Dec 2021: 1,637; Dec 2022: 1,682). 40% of those programs meet the current benchmark for the Qualified Staff Member (Dec 2019: 69%; Dec 2021: 52%; Dec 2022: 51%; different benchmarks pre 2019 - see Tables A and B).

"OEC-funded" is defined as those early childhood programs receiving one or more types of the following funds through the Office of Early Childhood:
- School Readiness
- Child Day Care
- State Head Start
- Smart Start / Smart Start for Recovery
- Preschool Development Grant (2016 to 12/2019 due to OEC Quality Enhancement fund use)

This report provides workforce and compliance detail relevant to the legislation.

Data Notes
Data included in this report is derived from the Connecticut Early Childhood Professional Registry.
- Verified education qualification data is used from individual account holders with confirmed employment in verified OEC-funded early childhood programs.
- Each program is required to identify all classrooms within the program, and designate a QSM for each relevant classroom within the Registry. Additional detail as well as the program and individual implementation benchmarks can be found in General Policy A-01 Early Childhood Educator Requirements in State-Funded Programs, and General Policy A-03 Early Childhood Professional Registry.
- Projections for the 2025 and 2029 benchmarks utilize the logic for those legislated benchmarks against the current data.

Tracking Benchmark Data

Tables A and B (below) depict program-level compliance with the QSM legislation over time: Table A shows benchmarks that were in place until 06/30/2019, replaced by Table B benchmarks 07/01/2019.

Table A: QSM program compliance data: January 2015 to May 2019

Date	# programs	**Prior Benchmark A:** Programs met minimum for one designated Qualified Staff Member(QSM) per classroom or group: current CDA credential plus 12 ece credits		**Prior Benchmark B:** July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2023 goal: at least 50% of designated QSMs have qualifying bachelor degree and remaining percentage meet associate degree option		**Prior Benchmark C:** Programs meet July 1, 2023 goal: 100% of designated QSMs have a qualifying bachelor degree option	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
01/27/15	400	236	59%	170	42%	100	25%
06/30/15	384	307	80%	247	64%	166	43%
12/03/15	399	256	64%	196	49%	124	31%
12/27/16	398	300	75%	219	55%	138	35%
11/27/17	398	275	69%	230	58%	146	37%
06/27/18	399	321	80%	263	66%	165	41%
12/01/18	386	286	74%	230	60%	145	38%
05/27/19	390	314	81%	258	66%	164	42%

Table B: QSM Program compliance data: July 1, 2019 legislation (CURRENT)

Date	Total # OEC funded programs	**EXPIRED Benchmark A:** Program meets current minimum for one designated Qualified Staff Member (QSM) per classroom or group with a CDA credential or higher (until June 30, 2022)		**Benchmark B:** Program meets July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2025 goal: at least 50% of designated QSMs have associate degree or higher and remaining percentage has CDA credential		**Benchmark C:** Program meets July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2029 goal: at least 50% of designated QSMs have qualifying bachelor degree and remaining percentage meet associate degree option		**Benchmark D:** Program meets July 1, 2029 goal: 100% of designated QSMs have a qualifying bachelor degree option	
		# meet	% meet	# meet	% meet	# meet	% meet	# meet	% meet
12/10/2019	394	270	**69%**	258	**65%**	162	**41%**	140	**36%**
2020 – COVID Waiver	NA	NA	**NA**	NA	**NA**	NA	**NA**	NA	**NA**
12/20/2021	388	201	**52%**	183	**47%**	127	**33%**	106	**27%**
12/15/2022	384	213	**55%**	194	**51%**	133	**35%**	111	**29%**
12/01/2023	435	193	**44%**	176	**40%**	124	**29%**	99	**23%**

Deciphering the Data

COVID-19 Waiver: QSM requirements were waived during 2020 due to COVID-19.

Timing: Table A's highlighted rows identify the most compliant dates historically. The trend shows the highest compliance just prior to a benchmark, and then a drop in compliance directly after – which corresponds to legislation changes extending the benchmarks. As soon as the legislation changes, the compliance begins to fall. These "falls" are a combination of (1) programs failing to keep the system updated, (2) individuals slowing their degree progression based on the new time cushion, and (3) lack of a carrot / stick for compliance / noncompliance, including lack of compensation.

Current Benchmarks: The July 1, 2019 benchmarks not only changed three benchmarks to four and again extended the deadlines, but also redefined what can count in the non-qualifying degree portion and for how long. This reduced the overall compliance in Table B from benchmark B to C by dropping anyone with a degree outside the ECE field plus 12 ece credits (now expiring 06/30/2025).

Classroom Data

Data below details the breakout over time of classrooms serving any combination of infants through preschoolers in relation to Designated Qualified Staff Member (DQSM). 5/2017 was the most complete.

6/16	5/17	12/18	12/19	12/21	12/22	12/23	
97	97	93	92	83	96	113	Total # of Infant Classrooms
77	88	75	76	58	64	60	Total # of Infant Classrooms with DQSM
79%	91%	81%	83%	70%	67%	53%	**% of Infant Classrooms with DQSM**
20	9	18	16	25	32	53	**# of Infant Classrooms without DQSM**
219	218	217	219	205	232	268	Total # of Toddler Classrooms
179	203	187	186	139	154	152	Total # of Toddler Classrooms with DQSM
82%	93%	86%	85%	68%	66%	57%	**% of Toddler Classrooms with DQSM**
40	15	30	33	66	78	116	**# of Toddler Classrooms without DQSM**
1,279	1,283	1,229	1,273	1,235	1,231	1,216	Total # of Preschool Classrooms
1,158	1,192	1,120	1,125	995	993	925	Total # of Preschool Classrooms with DQSM
91%	93%	91%	88%	81%	81%	76%	**% of Preschool Classrooms with DQSM**
121	91	109	148	240	238	291	**# of Preschool Classrooms without DQSM**
43	63	71	74	90	98	109	Total # of Mixed Age - Infant and Toddler/Twos Classrooms
39	58	53	57	66	71	65	Total # of Mixed Age - Infant and Toddler/Twos Classrooms with DQSM
91%	92%	75%	77%	73%	72%	60%	**% of Mixed Age - Infant and Toddler/Twos with DQSM**
4	5	18	17	24	27	44	**# of Mixed Age - Infant and Toddler/Twos Classrooms without DQSM**
26	17	18	18	9	8	10	Total # of Mixed Age - Infants thru Preschool Classrooms
20	14	11	11	5	5	5	Total # of Mixed Age - Infants thru Preschool Classrooms with DQSM
77%	82%	61%	61%	56%	63%	50%	**% of Mixed Age - Infants thru Preschool Classrooms with DQSM**
6	3	7	7	4	3	5	**# of Mixed Age - Infants thru Preschool Classrooms without DQSM**
3	2	3	3	3	4	6	Total # of Mixed Age - Toddler/Twos and Preschool Classrooms
2	2	3	3	1	3	1	Total # of Mixed Age - Toddler/Twos and Preschool Classrooms with DQSM
67%	100%	100%	100%	33%	75%	17%	**% of Mixed Age - Toddler/Twos and Preschool Classrooms with DQSM**
1	0	0	0	2	1	5	**# of Mixed Age - Toddler/Twos and Preschool Classrooms without DQSM**
12	12	8	11	12	13	16	Total # of Mixed Age - Preschool and Kindergarten Classrooms
12	10	8	11	6	9	9	Total # of Mixed Age - Preschool and Kindergarten Classrooms with DQSM
100%	83%	100%	100%	50%	69%	56%	**% of Mixed Age - Preschool and Kindergarten Classrooms with DQSM**
0	2	0	0	6	4	7	**# of Mixed Age - Preschool and Kindergarten Classrooms without DQSM**
1,679	1,692	1,639	1,690	1,637	1,682	1,738	Total # of Classrooms serving Infant - Preschool
1,487	1,567	1,457	1,496	1,270	1,299	1,217	Total # of Classrooms serving Infant - Preschool with DQSM
89%	92%	89%	87%	78%	77%	70%	**% of Classrooms serving Infant - Preschool with DQSM**
192	125	182	221	367	383	521	**Total # of Classrooms serving Infant - Preschool without DQSM**

Total Teaching Staff in OEC Funded Programs: <u>Eligible</u> QSMs

There are 4,002 (Dec 2021: 3,994; Dec 2022: 4,187) teaching staff members in 4,329 (Dec 2021: 3,658; Dec 2022: 3,838) teaching staff positions in OEC-funded programs. The difference reflects duplicates when a teaching staff member works in more than one classroom – i.e. assistant teacher in the Monday through Friday *morning* preschool room and also the M-F afternoon *preschool* room; data below is unduplicated.

<u>Of all teaching staff</u> in OEC-funded programs:
- **986 or 25%** (# up from Dec 2022 but % stable: 957 or 25%) meet a qualifying bachelor degree option.
- **1,969 or 49%** (Dec 2021: 1,987 or 54%; Dec 2022: 1,988 or 52%) are <u>QSM eligible</u>. Tables D and E show the education qualifications of these individuals by legislated expiration date (% of eligible QSMs).

Table D: Benchmark data from 2016-2018 for **eligible QSMs** in any teaching role in OEC funded programs; highlighted row represents those individuals meeting goal of qualifying bachelor degree option

2016	2017	2018	Eligibility Expiration	Education Detail
12.68%	11.62%	10.95%	06/30/2020	Ladder level 7/8 (CDA credential plus 12 ece credits)
22.46%	41.12%	38.33%	06/30/2023	Ladder level 9/10 (associate degree plus 12 ece credits) or non-qualifying bachelor degree or higher
64.46%	46.76%	50.72%	12/31/2099	Qualifying bachelor degree option

Table E: Benchmark data from **2019 on for eligible QSMs** in any teaching role in OEC funded programs; highlighted row represents those individuals meeting goal of qualifying bachelor degree option

2019	2021	2022	**2023**	Eligibility Expiration	Education Detail
27.30%	27.88%	27.57%	**25.04%**	06/30/2025	• Ladder level 7/8 (CDA credential plus 12 ece credits); • Ladder level 9 (non ece associate degree plus 12 ece credits); • Ladder level 11 (non ece bachelor degree plus 12 ece credits); or • Non-qualifying master's degree or higher
23.21%	23.86%	24.30%	**24.89%**	06/30/2029	Associate's degree in ECE or A-level ECTC
49.49%	48.26%	48.14%	**50.08%**	12/31/2099	Qualifying bachelor degree option

Status of DQSMs (Designated Qualified Staff Member)

Individuals who <u>are currently placed in the role of DQSM</u> in a classroom now have expiration dates ranging from 06/30/2025 to 12/31/2099 (meeting the qualifying bachelor degree). Tables F and G outline the spread of DQSM expiration dates.

- Note the 15.55% drop from **2018** to **2023** for those Designated QSMs meeting the bachelor degree goal.

Table F: DQSM by Expiration Date **2016-2018**

Descriptor	Percentage of total # DQSM		
	2016	2017	2018
Designated QSMs expiring 06/30/20	6.87%	4.61%	3.31%
Designated QSMs expiring 6/30/23	30.22%	35.19%	30.74%
Designated QSMs expiring 12/31/99	62.91%	60.20%	65.95%

Table G: DQSM by Expiration Date – **2019 on**

Descriptor	Percentage of total # DQSM			
	2019	2021	2022	**2023**
Designated QSMs expiring 06/30/25	18.21%	19.21%	20.67%	**33.36%**
Designated QSMs expiring 6/30/29	15.99%	19.23%	19.85%	**16.24%**
Designated QSMs expiring 12/31/99	65.79%	61.42%	59.47%	**50.4%**