Office of Early Childhood 2024 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.

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 Legislative Requirements for Staff Qualifications in State-Funded Programs. Data is captured in the Connecticut Early Childhood Professional Registry (the Registry).

As of December 1, 2024, there were **427** state-funded programs serving any combination of infants through preschoolers in **1,799** classrooms. **40%** of those programs meet the current benchmark for the Qualified Staff Member.

"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 Legislative Requirements for Staff Qualifications in State-Funded Programs, and General Policy A-03 Data Submission and Reporting Requirements.
- 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	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
01/27/2015	400	236	59%	170	42%	100	25%
06/30/2015	384	307	80%	247	64%	166	43%
12/03/2015	399	256	64%	196	49%	124	31%
12/27/2016	398	300	75%	219	55%	138	35%
11/27/2017	398	275	69%	230	58%	146	37%
06/27/2018	399	321	80%	263	66%	165	41%
12/01/2018	386	286	74%	230	60%	145	38%
05/27/2019	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)		Current: 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		Ultimate Goal: 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%
12/01/2024	427	181	42%	169	40%	113	26%	97	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, legislation not only changed three benchmarks to four and again extended the deadlines, but also redefined what education can count. This inadvertently 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; versus the compliance rates noted in Table A: Prior Benchmark B).

Classroom Data

Data below details the breakout over time of the number of classrooms at each age category and the number of these rooms with designated QSMs. The data highlights gap areas in data and/or QSM shortage areas. Note: 2017 was the most complete data.

Table C: Classroom and corresponding QSM data

6/2016	5/2017	12/2018	12/2019	12/2021	12/2022	12/2023	12/2024	
97	97	93	92	83	96	113	122	Total # of Infant Rooms
77	88	75	76	58	64	60	55	Total # of Infant Rooms with DQSM
79%	**91%**	**81%**	**83%**	**70%**	**67%**	**53%**	**45%**	**% of Infant Rooms with DQSM**
20	**9**	**18**	**16**	**25**	**32**	**53**	**67**	**# of Infant Rooms without DQSM**
219	218	217	219	205	232	268	291	Total # of Toddler Rooms
179	203	187	186	139	154	152	146	Total # of Toddler Rooms with DQSM
82%	**93%**	**86%**	**85%**	**68%**	**66%**	**57%**	**50%**	**% of Toddler Rooms with DQSM**
40	**15**	**30**	**33**	**66**	**78**	**116**	**145**	**# of Toddler Rooms without DQSM**
1,279	1,283	1,229	1,273	1,235	1,231	1,216	1,241	Total # of Preschool Rooms
1,158	1,192	1,120	1,125	995	993	925	916	Total # of Preschool Rooms with DQSM
91%	**93%**	**91%**	**88%**	**81%**	**81%**	**76%**	**74%**	**% of Preschool Rooms with DQSM**
121	**91**	**109**	**148**	**240**	**238**	**291**	**325**	**# of Preschool Rooms without DQSM**
43	63	71	74	90	98	109	111	Total # of Mixed Age: Infant / Toddler Rooms
39	58	53	57	66	71	65	50	Total # of Mixed Age: - Infant / Toddler Rooms with DQSM
91%	**92%**	**75%**	**77%**	**73%**	**72%**	**60%**	**45%**	**% of Mixed Age - Infant / Toddler Rooms with DQSM**
4	**5**	**18**	**17**	**24**	**27**	**44**	**61**	**# of Mixed Age: Infant / Toddler Rooms without DQSM**
26	17	18	18	9	8	10	11	Total # of Mixed Age: Infants - Preschool Rooms
20	14	11	11	5	5	5	4	Total # of Mixed Age: Infants - Preschool Rooms with DQSM
77%	**82%**	**61%**	**61%**	**56%**	**63%**	**50%**	**36%**	**% of Mixed Age: Infants - Preschool Rooms with DQSM**
6	**3**	**7**	**7**	**4**	**3**	**5**	**7**	**# of Mixed Age: Infants - Preschool Rooms without DQSM**
3	2	3	3	3	4	6	11	Total # of Mixed Age: Toddler / Preschool Rooms
2	2	3	3	1	3	1	4	Total # of Mixed Age: Toddler / Preschool Rooms with DQSM
67%	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**33%**	**75%**	**17%**	**36%**	**% of Mixed Age – Toddler / Preschool Rooms with DQSM**
1	**0**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**5**	**7**	**# of Mixed Age – Toddler / Preschool Rooms without DQSM**
12	12	8	11	12	13	16	12	Total # of Mixed Age: Preschool and Kindergarten Rooms
12	10	8	11	6	9	9	7	Total # of Mixed Age: Preschool and Kindergarten Rooms with DQSM

100%	83%	100%	100%	50%	69%	56%	58%	**% of Mixed Age: Preschool / Kindergarten Rooms with DQSM**
0	2	0	0	6	4	7	5	**# of Mixed Age: Preschool / Kindergarten Rooms <u>without</u> DQSM**
1,679	1,692	1,639	1,690	1,637	1,682	1,738	1,799	Total # of Rooms serving Infant - Preschool
1,487	1,567	1,457	1,496	1,270	1,299	1,217	1,182	Total # of Rooms serving Infant - Preschool with DQSM
89%	92%	89%	87%	78%	77%	70%	66%	**% of Rooms serving Infant - Preschool with DQSM**
192	125	182	221	367	383	521	617	**Total # of Rooms serving Infant - Preschool <u>without</u> DQSM**

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

There are **4,012** teaching staff members in **4,320** 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:
- **870 or 22%** meet a qualifying bachelor's degree option (down from 986 or 25% in 2023).
- **1,761 or 44%** are <u>QSM eligible (down from 1,969 or 49% in 2023)</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's degree or higher
64.46%	46.76%	50.72%	12/31/2099	Qualifying bachelor's 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's degree option

2019	2021	2022	2023	**2024**	Eligibility Expiration	Education Detail
27.30%	27.88%	27.57%	25.04%	**26%**	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's degree plus 12 ECE credits); or • Non-qualifying master's degree or higher
23.21%	23.86%	24.30%	24.89%	**25%**	06/30/2029	Associate's degree in ECE or A-level ECTC
49.49%	48.26%	48.14%	50.08%	**49%**	12/31/2099	Qualifying bachelor's 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's degree)**. Tables F and G outline the spread of DQSM expiration dates.

Note the increase in DQSMs meeting a qualifying bachelor's degree option of almost 10% from 2023 to 2024. This is significant because the number of bachelor's degree qualifying teaching staff dropped overall, but more were placed in DQSM positions,

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	**2024**
Designated QSMs expiring 06/30/25	18.21%	19.21%	20.67%	33.36%	**19.59%**
Designated QSMs expiring 6/30/29	15.99%	19.23%	19.85%	16.24%	**20.06%**
Designated QSMs expiring 12/31/99	65.79%	61.42%	59.47%	50.4%	**60.35%**