

Commissioner's Update

School Readiness & Child Day Care Programs

June 23, 2021



Connecticut Office of Early Childhood

OUR 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.

OUR 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.

WHAT WE WILL DISCUSS TODAY:

- Legislative and Commissioner's Updates
- Priority District Enrollment Stipend
- Program Updates & Reminders
- Care 4 Kids Family Fee Payment Reporting
- ECE Reporter
- Waiver for Operating Schedule Variance
- Monitoring Visits

Please mute yourself. Feel free to utilize the chat to ask a question.

Legislative & Commissioner's Updates

Legislative and Commissioner's Updates

After ongoing conversations with OPM, 4 legislative changes were put forth for this session

OEC Key Legislative Changes

- 1 Modify School Readiness Council Membership
- 2 Allow SR Councils to Allocate Funds for Licensed Family Child Care Providers (*within available appropriations*)
- 3 Allow OEC to administer SR funds through Contracts
- 4 Add Explicit Goal Around Importance of Promoting Diversity



ECE Long-Term Vision



Community Voice

Elevate the voices of families with young children to ensure state-funded ECE is meeting community needs



Equitable System

Advance racial equity & transparency for accessing child care through changes to SR Councils



Increased Access

Create mechanisms to address the dire shortage of high-quality infant and toddler child care in the state



Provider Stability

Increase financial stability for child care providers that access state & federal funding

Legislative and Commissioner's OEC Updates

- **HB 6559 (File 784) – An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Office of Early Childhood**
- **HB 6558 (File 774) – An Act Concerning Issues Related to the Provision of Early Childhood Education and Services in Connecticut**
- **Special Act 21-15 – Budget Bill and Budget Language Specific to OEC:**
 - **Transfer of \$1,000,000 from Part B to Part C – Birth to Three**
 - \$1,000,000 in federal Part B IDEA funds are transferred to the Office of Early Childhood for the Birth to Three program, effective July 1, 2021.
 - **Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) to Private Provider of Human Services**
 - The Office of Policy & Management shall provide cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for identified private providers of human services, including some programs within the Office of Early Childhood, effective July 1, 2021. OEC funded programs eligible for the COLA not yet confirmed.

Priority District Enrollment Stipend

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FY20 and FY21 School Readiness Priority and Competitive District
Enrollment Comparison

| Priority | FY 20 | FY 21 |
|-----------|-------|-------|
| September | 92% | 57% |
| February | 98% | 61% |

| Competitive | FY 20 | FY 21 |
|-------------|-------|-------|
| September | 96% | 85% |
| February | 98% | 86% |

Priority District Enrollment Stipend

Payments made directly to CDC and SR programs in priority districts.*

Calculation:
 $\$145 \times 2$
children x #
classroom
equivalents x
6 months

Program Managers will email programs in advance.

Payments are expected to be processed by June 30th.

*Per [Memo #35](#) to be updated from Family Fee Replacement Payment

Program Updates & Reminders Updates

Program Updates & Reminders

- Per [Memo #42](#) FY22 funding:
 - Calculations will revert to the pre-COVID funding model based on per child reimbursement rates for children receiving **on-site** services;
 - Reimbursement for school age care shall align with contracted services; and
 - 25% Operational Expense supplement will no longer be implemented.
- Programs will no longer be reimbursed for hybrid/remote learning. However, if a program experiences a classroom or program closure, the OEC encourages programs to engage with families whenever possible.
- New monthly reporting templates will be distributed to programs in July.

Care 4 Kids Family Fee Payments Reporting



C4K Family Fee Payment Reporting Requirements

Care 4 Kids family fees paid directly to programs for children in state-funded spaces must be reported to the OEC.

Program Responsibilities:

- Track Care 4 Kids family fee payment collected for children enrolled in a state-funded slot for each month, April – September 2021.
- Submit a Care 4 Kids family fee payment report to the OEC with monthly report due in November.
 - The template for the report will be sent to programs.
- Care 4 Kids family fee payment collected should **NOT** be included in the monthly reports going forward.

ECE Reporter

Early Care and Education (ECE) Reporter

<https://ece-reporter.ctoec.org/>

What do programs need to do?

- Input required data elements for all children served in state-funded spaces on a **MONTHLY** basis *AND* validate.

Do programs have to do this?

- YES! State-funded programs must comply with the Agency's data collection processes.

Why is it important?

- Having complete state-funded child enrollment data helps OEC understand how programs are doing, how we can best advocate for you, and how to better serve children and families in Connecticut.

Waiver for Operating Schedule Variance



Waiver for Operating Schedule Variance

Authority to submit waivers for School Readiness programs is in legislation. Child Day Care Programs' contract language requires legal review.

How the process will look:

- Program requests waiver.
- Complete waiver application.
 - Evidence of need for change in operating schedule.
 - Council approval required for all School Readiness funded program sites.
- Submit completed waiver application to appropriate ECE Program Managers.
- Approved or denied waiver will be returned to program and/or SR liaison.

Monitoring Visits

Monitoring Visits

Why are programs monitored?

- To ensure that services are delivered in compliance with state-funded requirements and that state funds are being used appropriately and according to their intended purpose.
- To identify opportunities for program and leadership improvement in partnership with the OEC.

How are programs selected to be monitored?

- Office of Internal Audit findings
- Known issues of non-compliance
- Computer generated random selection

The OEC team is currently developing monitoring plans for FY22.

Questions?





THANK YOU!