
Early Start CT Overview Family Eligibility & Enrollment

June 3 & 4, 2025



Office of Early Childhood

Agenda

- Introduction
- Early Start CT Overview
- Grants & Contracts Reminders
- Where We Are
- General Policies
 - Family Eligibility and Enrollment
- Next Steps
- Questions?

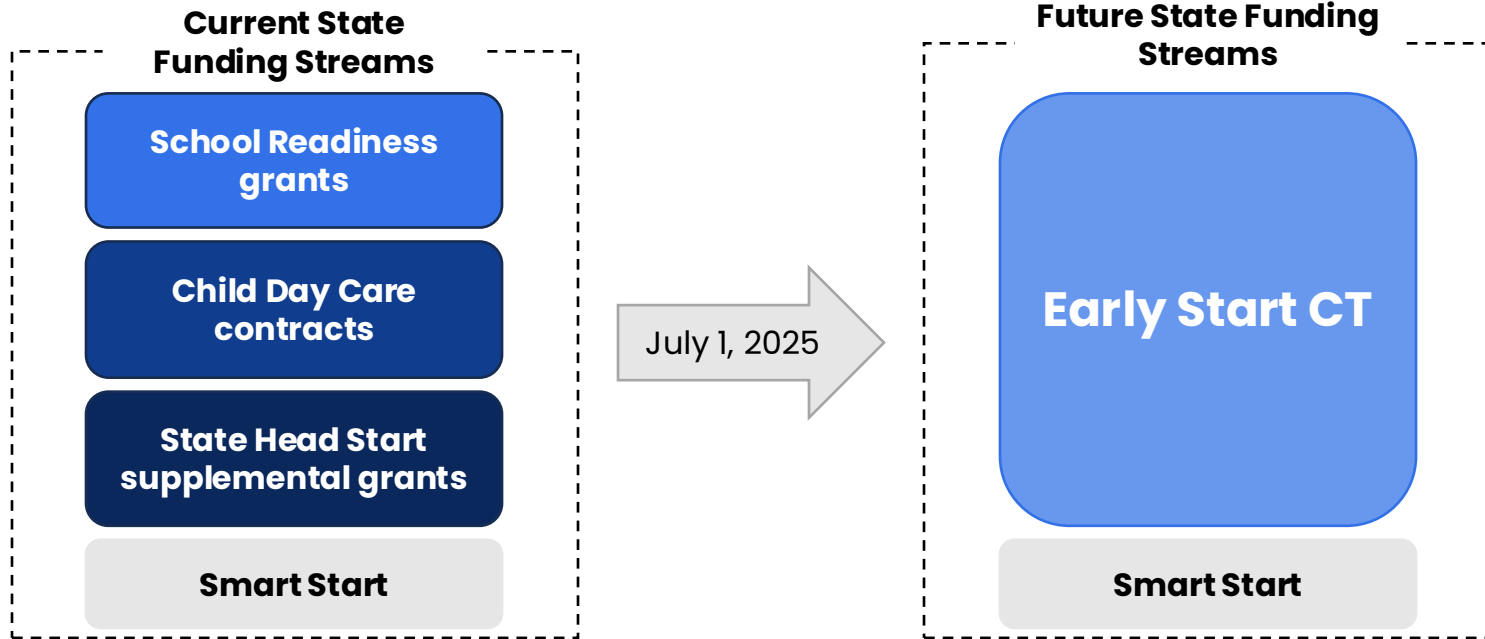
Goals for Today's Session

- 1) Have a clear understanding of the eligibility and enrollment process for Early Start CT families
- 2) Know how to access and use available resources related to eligibility and enrollment



What is Early Start CT?

Early Start CT is the new state funding stream that combines the current School Readiness grants, Child Day Care Contracts, and State Head Start supplemental grants; it goes into effect July 2025



Early Start CT Goals



Empower families and amplify parent voice to better meet the needs of Connecticut children.



Strengthen system collaboration and a shared vision to build lasting partnerships between community stakeholders.



Improve equitable access to affordable, high-quality care and early childhood services and supports that meet a range of family needs.



Promote best practices to enhance provider's ability to support children's learning and development.



Pre-Contracting Reminders

- **ALL Vendors** (new and existing) must submit the [Agency Vendor Form](#) to: erica.previti@ct.gov
- **Delay** in submission of the Agency Vendor form = **delay** in contract processing = **delay** in payment
- For a complete list of [precontracting resources](#), forms and the frequently updated Q&A document visit Early Start Resources at: <https://www.ctoec.org/early-start-ct-resources/>

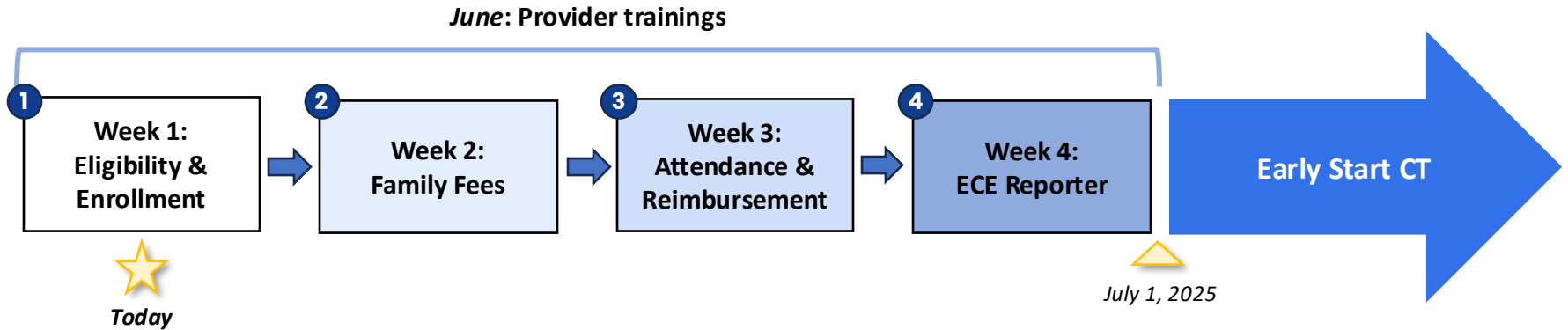


Early Start Contract Overview

- To **expedite** contract execution, the OEC has worked with the Office of Attorney General on an **approved** ESCT contract template.
- Individual contracts **do not need** to go to the OAG for final approval.
- OAG approved templates **do not allow** for individual contract language change requests.
- The Early Start CT contract template **follows the same structure** as previously executed Child Day Care contracts **BUT is more condensed** and does not contain the content that is covered in General Policies.
- This week, OEC will begin **processing and sending contracts** to Vendors who have submitted the necessary forms and for which OEC has verified the business name in all systems.



Timeline: ESCT training and launch



The Early Start CT Team will be offering additional trainings this fall.



General policies



General Policy: Enrollment

There is **NO** work requirement for families enrolled in Early Start CT

General policy language

- **Documents** programs must collect from families to enroll in **Early Start CT** spaces:
 - All required OEC Licensing documents
 - Birth certificate of child to be enrolled
 - Proof of income
 - Previous years tax return
 - Pay stubs
 - Proof of family size
 - Tax return
 - Enrollment Forms
 - Proof of residency
 - Program policy

Relevant Guidance

What do I use these documents for?

- **Birth certificate**
 - Use date of birth to determine child age (infant/toddler, preschool, or school age) for Age Eligibility
- **Income document**
 - Used to determine the gross annual income **and** family size
- **Proof of residency**
 - Use the family's town of residency to determine Residency Eligibility
 - Examples: mortgage document, rental agreement, utility bill, etc.



General Policy: Eligibility

General policy language

- **Age Eligibility**
 - **Infant/Toddler:** 6 weeks to 3 years of age
 - **Preschool:** 2 years 8 months – 5 years of age (not eligible for Kindergarten)
 - **School Age:** enrolled in Kindergarten – 12 years of age
- **Residency Eligibility**
 - Families must live in **Connecticut** **except** families who reside in Massachusetts, New York and/or Rhode Island but work in Connecticut **and** receive their states' child care subsidy which may be used in Connecticut

Relevant Guidance

*How can a 2 year 8 month old child enroll in a **preschool** Early Start CT space?*

- Per OEC Licensing, a child is eligible to enroll in a preschool space at 2 years 8 months with program director and parent approval.

What is a state child care subsidy?

- Financial assistance provided by the state for eligible families to afford child care
 - **NY** = Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
 - **MA** = Child Care Financial Assistance
 - **RI** = RI Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)



General Policy: Eligibility

General policy language

- **Income Eligibility**
 - **60%** of families in Early Start CT spaces **must** fall **at or below 75%** of the state's median income (SMI) level

Relevant Guidance

How does a program determine 60% of Early Start CT families fall at or below 75% SMI?

- Your program has **10** Early Start CT spaces.
- **6** of the families in those spaces must be **at or below 75% SMI**.
- **4** of the families in those spaces may be **over 75% SMI**.

What if an Early Start CT family's income increases to greater than 75% SMI?

- Once enrolled in an Early Start CT space, families remain income eligible until their youngest child ages out of the program, as long as the family pays all applicable fees and meets all other eligibility criteria.



General Policy: Enrolled

General policy language

What is considered **FULLY ENROLLED** in an **Early Start CT** space?

- Birth certificate
- Residency documentation
- Income and family size verification and determination of family fee
- Communication family received regarding their family fee
- Child has a start date determined and attends the program *at least one day* during a monthly reporting period

Relevant Guidance

What is a monthly reporting period?

- Each calendar month of the year is a **monthly reporting period**.
 - For example: August 2025's monthly reporting period goes from August 1, 2025 – August 31, 2025

All required eligibility and enrollment documentation **must be kept on file at the program** for each child enrolled in an Early Start CT space. This documentation must be available for review upon request from OEC, Early Start CT contractor, Liaison, etc.



Next steps



Provider Training Schedule

JUNE				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
2	3 Overview of ESCT 12-1pm on Zoom Register *here*	4 *Overview of ESCT 6-7pm on Zoom Register *here*	5 OEC Office Hours 9-10am on Zoom Register *here*	6
9	10 Family fees & sliding scale 12-1pm on Zoom Register *here*	11 *Family fees & sliding scale 6-7pm on Zoom Register *here*	12 OEC Office Hours 9-10am on Zoom Register *here*	13
16	17 Attendance & reimbursement 12-1pm on Zoom Register *here*	18 *Attendance & reimbursement 6-7pm on Zoom Register *here*	19 <i>OEC closed for Juneteenth holiday</i>	20
23 OEC Office Hours 9-10am on Zoom Register *here*	24 ECE Reporter 12-1pm on Zoom Register *here*	25 *ECE Reporter 6-7pm on Zoom Register *here*	26 OEC Office Hours 9-10am on Zoom Register *here*	27
30	31	July 1 ★ <i>Early Start CT officially launches!</i> ★	* Spanish translation services offered All events will be recorded, and materials will be shared with programs. All recordings will be available on the Early Start CT website.	



Check out these resources!

- **Early Start CT website - <https://www.ctoec.org/early-start-ct/>**
- **Current State-Funded General Policies - <https://www.ctoec.org/general-policies/>**
- **Family Fee Calculator - <https://ece-reporter.oec.ct.gov/#InstructionTab>**



Thank you!

