



**Connecticut Administered State-Funded Program**  
**General Policy B-04**  
**State-funded Space Types, Categories of Care**  
**Utilization of Spaces, Reimbursement and Overpayment**

- OEC Child Day Care Contractors
- OEC Competitive School Readiness Municipalities
- OEC Priority School Readiness Districts
- OEC State Head Start Supplement
- OEC Smart Start

The School Readiness, Child Day Care and Smart Start programs fund different types of spaces in programs to meet the needs of families. These space types are defined by specific criteria, and programs should utilize their spaces in a manner consistent with the identified needs of their community.

**I. DEFINITIONS**

- A. **State-funded program** shall mean: An entity that operates one or more sites approved for state-funding.
- B. **State-funded space** shall mean: A space in which an approved state-funded program is eligible to receive reimbursement for services provided.
- C. **State-funded capacity** shall mean: The total number of state-funded spaces allocated to a program through the Office of Early Childhood.
- D. **Utilized Space** shall mean: A state-funded space in which an enrolled child attends the program at least one-day during the monthly reporting period.
- E. **Unutilized space** shall mean: A state-funded space in which a child is not enrolled, or the child enrolled in the space does not attend at least one day during the monthly reporting period.
- F. **Maximum utilization** shall mean: At least 90% of a program or community’s funded spaces are utilized during the monthly reporting period.
- G. **Chronically unutilized space** shall mean: A space that is unutilized for 3 or more consecutive reporting periods.
- H. **Monthly Reporting Period** shall mean: Period of time that has specific start and end dates established by the Office of Early Childhood. State-funded programs are required to collect and submit the data for each reporting period to demonstrate eligibility for reimbursement for that period.

## II. SPACE TYPES AND CATEGORIES OF CARE

### A. SCHOOL READINESS

- **Full-Day/Full Year-Program/Infants, Toddlers and Preschool** (referred to as Full-Day program)  
Provides early care and education services for children 10 hours per day, five days per week, for a minimum of 48 weeks per year. Children eligible for these programs must be consistently in need of services for a minimum of six hours per day, five days per week for 48 weeks per year.
- **School-Day/School-Year Program/ Preschool Only** (referred to as School-Day Program)
  - Provides early care and education services for six (6) hours per day, five (5) days per week for a minimum of 180 days. Children eligible for this type of space must be consistently in need of services for a minimum of five hours per day, five days per week for 180 days. School-Day programs operate within the public-school calendar.
- **Part-Day/Part-Year Program/ Preschool Only** (referred to as a Part-Day program)  
Provides early care and education services for two and one-half hours per day, five (5) days a week for a minimum of 180 days per year for children not enrolled in any other program. Part-Day programs generally operate within the public-school calendar, however; Part-Day programs may operate for more than two and one-half hours per day and more than 180 days per year.
- **Extended-Day Program/ Preschool Only** (referred to as a Wrap-Around program - Priority School Readiness only)  
Provides early care and education services that extend the hours, days and/or weeks of programming for children who are in an existing Part-Day/Part-Year or Part-Day/Full-Year program, not funded by the School Readiness grant, in order to provide the equivalent of Full- Day services for these children for ten (10) hours per day, five (5) days per week for a minimum of 48 weeks. Children eligible for these programs must be consistently in need of services from the combined Part-Day and Extended-Day programs for a minimum of six hours per day, five days per week for 48 weeks.

**School Readiness Full-Day/Full-Year, School-Day/School-Year and Part-Day/Part-Year** programs are intended to serve as the child's primary educational experience. These space types may *not* be utilized to extend the hours, days and/or weeks of programming for children who are in an existing Full-Day, School-Day or Part-Day programs not funded by the School Readiness Grant.

Priority and Competitive School Readiness Districts must ensure the following criteria is met:

- At least 50 percent of the *community* spaces must meet the requirements for Full- Day/Full-Year or a combination of Full-Day/Full-Year and School-Day/School-Year. A waiver may be granted for distribution of spaces outside this policy based on community need. (see program manager).
- The remaining spaces may be any combination of School-Day/School-Year, Part-Day/Part-Year, or

Extended-Day.

- Full-Day/Full-Year, Part-Day/Part-Year, School-Day/School-Year and Extended-Day Programs must meet all minimum requirements regarding hours, days, and weeks.
- Spaces may not be funded under School-Day/School-Year, the Part-Day and Extended-Day rate. Existing Part-Day spaces, funded by another source such as Head Start or the Board of Education, may receive School Readiness funding as an extended day program in Priority School Readiness communities only. Such programs may not combine funding rates (e.g., as in receiving the extended rate during the school year when the core program is operating and then the Full-Day rate during vacation or summer period).

It is the responsibility of the SRCs and the School Readiness Liaisons to share this information with sub-grantees and ensure that each program meets compliance with all guidelines, including nonsectarian guidelines, for sub-grantees to receive School Readiness funding.

#### A. CHILD DAY CARE

- **Full Time Infant/Toddler--**Care for children from six weeks to three years of age that is provided for at least 30 hours per week. Care for these slots shall be made available for 10 hours per day for five days per week.
- **Infant/Toddler Wrap-around--**Care for children from six weeks to three years of age that extends the hours, days and/or weeks of child care to children who are in an existing part time program in order to allow care to be provided full time. Wrap-around care provides sufficient hours to insure the provision of care for a minimum of 10 hours per day for five days per week.
- **Full Time Preschool--**Care for children from three years to six years of age that is provided for at least 30 hours per week. Care for these slots shall be made available for 10 hours per day for five days per week. This category of care includes children who attend half-day kindergarten, but does not include children, regardless of age, who attend elementary school for three hours or more per day.
- **Preschool Wrap-around--**Care for children from three years of age to six years of age that extends the hours, days and/or weeks of child care to children who are in an existing part time program in order to allow care to be provided full time. Wrap-around care provides sufficient hours to insure the provision of care for a minimum of 10 hours per day for five days per week.
- **Part-time school age--**Care for children up to 12 years of age who attend elementary school for a full-day. This care extends the day beyond school hours and is provided for at least 15 hours per week when school is in session. This care shall be made available for at least three hours per day for five days a week. Children who are five and attend elementary school for three or more hours per day (including full and/or extended day kindergarten) shall be included in this category.
- **Full-time school age--**Care for children up to 12 years of age who attend elementary school for a full-day. This category of care shall be provided for at least 30 hours per week when school is not in session. This care shall be made available for 10 hours per day for five days per week when school

is not in session.

The contractor may request, in writing, a waiver of an age requirement for a child who should be, based on age, in one category of care but who, based upon the needs of the child, should be included more appropriately in another category.

### **C. SMART START**

- **School-Day/School-Year Program**

Provides preschool services for six hours per day, five days per week for a minimum of 180 days.

## **III. OPERATING WAIVERS**

### **A. SCHOOL READINESS, CHILD DAY CARE AND SMART START**

Programs experiencing operational challenges may request a waiver to operate for less hours than the required number of hours for each space type.

1. A daily operating schedule of no fewer than 8.5 hours per day for full day programs; or no fewer than 5 hours for school day spaces may be requested. There are no waivers of daily operating schedule for part-day or extended-day schedules.
2. Programs seeking an operating waiver must complete the “OEC State-funded Waiver Application for Operating Schedule Variance” and submit and receive approval prior to changes being implemented. OEC approval is required for all “OEC State-funded Waiver Applications for Operating Schedule Variance.”
  - a. Waiver applications for programs funded through School Readiness are submitted to the OEC by the School Readiness Liaison.
3. Prior to approval by the OEC, programs must attest to the following:
  - a. That they have surveyed their families for access to services, and must confirm that changes requested will not limit families’ access to the services requested;
  - b. An assessment of needs will be conducted at least quarterly to specify:
    - i. General factor(s) that necessitates an operating schedule waiver;
    - ii. Action(s) taken by the program to limit the need for an operating schedule waiver;
    - iii. How families’ needs for services assessed were assessed; and
    - iv. How change(s) in program’s operating schedule will align with identified families’ needs.
    - v. With submission of the operating waiver request, the program will provide timeline and plan to return to the full operating schedule as required
    - vi. Upon receipt of approval of the operating waiver request from OEC, changes in operating schedules must be reported to the OEC Licensing Division, in accordance with licensing regulations, and be reflected in the Early Childhood Professional Registry Profile for each site impacted.

## **IV. UTILIZATION OF SPACES**

### **A. SCHOOL READINESS AND CHILD DAY CARE**

1. Requests to convert space types, redistribute spaces or relocate a state-funded site must be approved by the OEC prior to implementation.
  - i. Emergency situations which do not allow for prior notification of the relocation of state-funded spaces must be brought to the attention of the OEC Program Manager within forty-eight (48) hours.
  - ii. The OEC may implement a process for redistributing chronically unutilized spaces among communities to provide access to eligible families to enroll children who can benefit from these services. Refer to [General Policy B-07 Reallocation of Unutilized State-Funded Spaces](#) for additional information regarding this process.

## **B. SMART START**

Districts receiving the Smart Start grant must continue to advertise and recruit students to fill all funded spaces. Priority must be given to students from low-income families (either based on free and reduced lunch eligibility or on family income), and other priority factors identified in the district's approved Smart Start application.

## **V. REIMBURSEMENT**

### **A. SCHOOL READINESS AND CHILD DAY CARE**

1. Funds earned are calculated by multiplying the number of utilized spaces by the monthly reimbursement rate for the space type in which each child is enrolled and attended at least one-day during the monthly reporting period.
  - a. A state-funded space can be counted as utilized only once during each monthly reporting period. If more than one child is enrolled and attends at least one day in the same space during the monthly reporting period, the program is eligible to receive reimbursement for services provided to only one child.
  - b. If a child transitions enrollment from one funded space-type to a different funded space-type within the same funding stream in the same program site, the program is eligible to be reimbursed for the space in which the child was enrolled and attended the majority of the monthly reporting period.
  - c. If a child transitions enrollment from one funded space-type to a different space-type in a different funding stream in the same program site, the program is eligible to be reimbursed for the space in which the child was enrolled and attended the majority of the monthly reporting period.
  - d. If a child transitions enrollment from one funded space-type to a state-funded space in a different program during the monthly reporting period and attends at least one day in each space, both programs are eligible to be reimbursed for that monthly reporting period.

### **B. SMART START**

1. Smart Start and Smart Start for Recovery grants are awarded based on \$75,000 per classroom for a classroom of 15 children, with an option to enroll up to 3 additional children in those classrooms without additional Smart Start funding.
2. Districts may enroll fewer students for a decreased grant award, based upon an annual award of \$5000 per space.

## **VI. OVERPAYMENTS**

### **A. SCHOOL READINESS & CHILD DAY CARE**

1. If it is determined that the District or Contractor is overpaid, at the discretion of the OEC Commissioner, the OEC may:
  - a. apply a reduction to future payments under this contract;
  - b. request the District/Contractor at the end of the contract period (or earlier if the contract is terminated) to return to the OEC unexpended funds within thirty (30) days; or
  - c. allow the District/Contractor to retain refunds for recurring operation expenses reasonably attributed to the delivery of contractual services.

**For further information concerning this GENERAL POLICY  
please contact the OEC program manager.  
If you're not sure who that is, visit: <https://www.ctoec.org/contact-us/>**