



Connecticut Administered State-Funded Program  
General Policy B-06

State Funded Early Care and Education Spaces for Children with an  
Individualized Education Program (IEP), special health care needs or other disabilities

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

**OEC Inclusion Statement**

The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) expects that all children and families have a sense of full belonging and are valued, respected, and supported. OEC policies, funding and services address the needs of children and families to ensure the right conditions for every child to achieve their full potential. This occurs through full participation in everyday activities at home, school, and in the community. The OEC, providers, communities and schools adopt and promote the culture, practices, and relationships necessary to foster inclusion and meaningful access and participation for the benefit of ALL children. All children, with and without disabilities or differences, their families and their caregivers benefit from inclusive environments.

For further guidance, please review the OEC and the CT State Department of Education (CSDE) joint statement regarding [Children who Attend Child Care and Receive Support Services.](#)

**Policy**

School Readiness, Child Day Care, and Smart Start Programs will treat children with and without Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), those with special needs and identified disabilities equitably with regard to enrollment. No child should be excluded from a state-funded early care and education program solely because of his or her special education status, health care need, or disability. When these services are offered at a location other than the state-funded early care and education program--that is the child’s primary general education program--this is referred to as a “shared placement.”

A child enrolled in a state-funded early care and education program receiving special education services as determined by a planning and placement team shall be considered to receive *supplemental* and NOT *supplanted* funding when combining these two funding streams.

State-funded early care and education classrooms are general education programs and should strive to enroll an equitable proportion of children with disabilities. Equitable proportions should be determined by the city or town’s K-12 special education percentage.

## **Responsibilities of School Readiness Councils (SRCs)**

SRCs shall establish a local policy that ensures adherence to the requirements of this OEC General Policy. The local policy should incorporate the following:

- A process to ensure that the percentage of children with an IEP in a School Readiness classroom is similar to the percentage of K-12 students enrolled in special education by the local education agency (LEA).
- Strive to develop a collaborative agreement with the LEA to provide services within School Readiness classrooms unless a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) has determined that the services will not benefit the child unless they are in a separate location.
- Provisions to ensure that all children with an IEP will be provided with a program that ensures continuity and consistency in the least restrictive environment. The parent(s), the School Readiness Program, and the LEA will collaborate to plan a program best suited to meet the goals in the IEP in the least restrictive environment. If the delivery of special education services is at a location other than the School Readiness program, a specific process for ongoing communication will be coordinated to ensure consistency of services in the least restrictive environment. Written parental consent must be obtained and maintained on file to allow two-way communication between the program and the LEA.
- A statement indicating that children with an IEP who are receiving special education and related services are entitled to all the School Readiness services as defined by the School Readiness legislation regardless of the space type.

It is the responsibility of the SRCs and the School Readiness Liaisons to share this information with their sub-grantees and ensure that each program is in compliance with the nonsectarian guidelines ([GP C-05](#)) in order for sub-grantees to receive funding as a School Readiness Program.

### **Smart Start**

A local or regional board of education must treat children with and without IEPs equally regarding enrollment in Smart Start. Priorities for enrollment that were approved by OEC as a part of the Smart Start application (e.g., children from families with incomes at or below 75% of the state median income, children who are dual language learners) shall be implemented for all children to be enrolled in the Smart Start program. Districts may include special education status as a basis for prioritizing enrollment and/or may reserve the 3 additional spaces allowable under this grant funding for children with IEPs who do not meet other priorities for enrollment.

The percentage of children with an IEP in a Smart Start classroom should meet or exceed the percentage of K-12 students enrolled in special education in the district to receive Smart Start funding.

Smart Start spaces are intended to increase district capacity for providing a general education preschool experience and **MUST** be in addition to the district's preschool enrollment at the time that the grant was first awarded.

**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/>**