



**Connecticut Administered State-Funded Program
General Policy B-05 Addendum
Meeting Quality Assurance Requirements**

- OEC Child Day Care Contractors
 - OEC Competitive School Readiness Municipalities
 - OEC Priority School Readiness Districts
 - OEC State Head Start Supplement
 - OEC Smart Start
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Connecticut Administered State-Funded Program [General Policy B-05](#) outlines quality assurance requirements for state funded programs, including National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation, Head Start approval, and the Alternative Interim Quality Assurance Process. Due to the impact of COVID-19 on the accreditation process and the availability of approved ERS raters, the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) is issuing this temporary addendum to General Policy B-05. This addendum will remain in effect until such time that OEC rescinds this addendum and/or revises General Policy B-05. All provisions of General Policy B-05 not addressed in this addendum remain in effect. In addition, all reporting requirements remain in place as outlined in General Policies and OEC-Funded Early Childhood Grants and Contracts Reporting.

Accreditation

All state-funded programs

- The OEC does not prohibit programs from allowing NAEYC assessors to enter funded programs. As with any visitor, enhanced health and safety practices must be implemented. The availability of vaccines further supports the opportunity to include in-person assessors in OEC funded programs, as described in OEC [Memo 37](#), Guidelines for Fully Vaccinated Individuals.

Programs that currently hold NAEYC Accreditation or Head Start approval

- OEC will recognize any extensions communicated to the specific program by NAEYC or the Office of Head Start. Documentation of this extension must be provided to OEC as required in the General Policies.
- Programs that have not received a formal timeline extension and that have extenuating circumstances affecting their ability to meet accreditation timelines due to COVID-19 and who anticipate a lapse in accreditation may submit a written request for a temporary waiver of the accreditation requirement to the OEC Program Manager, and the School Readiness Liaison if applicable. Waiver requests must be submitted prior to the end of the current period of accreditation and must include specific timelines and steps addressing the process to achieve accreditation. Approval of such requests will be

contingent upon programs being licensed or license-exempt, and in compliance with other funding requirements.

- If a program is unable to accommodate an on-site assessor due to COVID-19, OEC will accept NAEYC Provisional Accreditation as temporarily meeting quality assurance requirements provided the program meets the following circumstances:
 - The program holds valid NAEYC Accreditation.
 - The program has a policy in place that prohibits outside visitors, including those related to oversight activities, during the pandemic;
 - The program is licensed or license-exempt, and is in compliance with funding requirements.
 - The program must notify the OEC Program Managers (Child Day Care, and Smart Start funded programs) and the School Readiness liaison (School Readiness only; the liaison then reports to the School Readiness Program Manager) of the choice, which cohort if applicable, and any subsequent changes to this status.
 - The program will participate in the Alternative Interim Quality Assurance Process once OEC-approved Environmental Rating Scale raters are available to conduct on-site observations. Programs will work with OEC Program Managers to determine the appropriate timeline for the ERS rating based upon current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state guidelines, accreditation timelines, and availability of reliable raters.
- Currently accredited programs are not eligible to select Provisional Accreditation to meet OEC quality assurance requirements if they:
 - Are in breach of the Child Day Care Contract (a letter is issued by OEC notifying the program of this status); or
 - Are a satellite site that has not been through the NAEYC Accreditation process as a primary site.

Programs that do not currently hold NAEYC Accreditation or Head Start approval

- Programs seeking NAEYC Accreditation as a newly funded program are not eligible to select Provisional Accreditation to meet OEC quality assurance requirements.
- Programs that are newly funded and seeking accreditation for the first time may apply for a one-time extension of the three year time frame as outlined in [General Policy B-05](#), Section II.B.
 - Approval of such requests will be contingent upon programs being licensed or license-exempt, and in compliance with other funding requirements.
 - Programs must request an extension prior to the end of the three-year window from becoming a state funded program per [General Policy B-05](#) Section II.A.
 - Upon approval, extension requests will be granted for an automatic one-year period; however, programs are required to submit specific timelines addressing the process to achieve accreditation.

- Programs that have had OEC funding withdrawn or reduced as a result of the loss of accreditation must achieve NAEYC Accreditation with a site visit (not through the Provisional option) before being awarded OEC funds.

Accreditation Support

- Programs seeking initial accreditation or reaccreditation are encouraged to apply for support through the Accreditation Quality Improvement Supports (AQIS) when applications are made available.
- Programs should reach out to their regional AQIS facilitation staff with questions about specific program details and Provisional Accreditation.
- For more information, please visit the [AQIS page of the OEC website](#)

Alternative Interim Quality Assurance Process

Per GP B-05, all programs receiving School Readiness, Child Day Care, or Smart Start funding that are not NAEYC Accredited or Head Start approved must participate in the Alternative Interim Quality Assurance Process.

COVID-19 restrictions have prevented the ongoing reliability training and calibration necessary to maintain a cadre of environment rating scale (ERS) raters. Until such time as OEC is able to provide a list of approved ERS raters to conduct on-site visits, the following provisions will be in effect:

- Programs that have had their NAEYC Accreditation site visit or have received their window for an on-site assessor visit will be exempt from the Alternative Interim Quality Assurance Process. Correspondence regarding these situations should be emailed to the OEC Program Manager and/or the School Readiness Liaison.
 - If accreditation for programs in this category is deferred or denied, they will be required to have an ERS visit as soon as reliable raters are available.
- All other programs not NAEYC Accredited or Head Start approved have two options for completing the self-assessment process that will serve as the Alternative Interim Quality Assurance Process.
 - Programs approved and meeting the agreement definition of active in AQIS may count this work as their self-assessment and quality improvement process.
 - All other programs must complete an ERS self-assessment and quality improvement process as outlined below.

Once OEC is able to provide a current list of raters, all programs will be alerted to the time frame for meeting the requirement to have an ERS conducted by an OEC approved rater at the program's expense.

Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) Self-Assessment and Quality Improvement Process

1. The Connecticut Association for the Education of Young Children (CTAEYC) contacts programs based upon a list provided to them by OEC.
2. CTAEYC provides programs with:
 - a. Priority registration in ERS overview sessions.
 - b. ERS books relevant to the ages served through state funding in your program
 - i. Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scales, Third Edition (ITERS-3) for programs receiving state funding to serve infants and toddlers
 - ii. Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales, third Edition (ECERS-3) for programs receiving state funding to serve preschoolers

- iii. Programs funded to provide school-age care will continue to follow the School-Age Continuous Improvement Plan process but can request a copy of School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale-Updated (SACERS-U) for use in this process.
 - c. Three to five hours of consultation with the CT ERS State Anchor regarding the use of the ERS tool(s) for self-assessment
 - d. Access to \$500-\$1000 in materials aligned to the Program Improvement Plan. The amount of funding available for materials is based upon program size and needs identified during the self-assessment process. Purchasing of materials will occur through CTAEYC.
3. Programs are expected to:
 - a. Complete a self-assessment using the ERS scales relevant to the ages served through state funding.
 - b. Complete the Program Improvement Plan, which shall include 1-3 program improvement goals based upon the ERS self-assessment and actions to meet these goals.
 - c. Programs that have not yet been accredited must submit the Program Improvement Plan to OEC by May 31, 2021 and report progress on the Program Improvement Plan to OEC by October 15, 2021. These reports are to be sent by email to OEC.StateFunded@ct.gov and copied to the School Readiness Liaison when applicable.
4. OEC will document the date of completion of this requirement.

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