

**Appropriations Subcommittee Work Session
OEC Responses to Questions from February 15
February 27, 2-3 pm**

1.How many children and families are currently enrolled in Care 4 Kids?

19,467 children / 13,837 families

2.What is the estimated number of children affected by the change in the kindergarten start age that may seek care?

It is estimated that there will be more than 9,000 students impacted by the change to enroll in kindergarten in Fall 2024 because they will not have turned age 5 by September 1. Many districts are allowing a portion of the children who will not be age 5 by September 1, 2024 into kindergarten based on a parent request or assessment. It is estimated that approximately 71% of all entering Kindergarten students in Alliance districts access preschool before kindergarten. At the highest level, more than 9,000 students do not turn 5 by September 1 and would not be able to enroll in school in the fall of 2024. Potentially, an additional 6,300 students would need preschool spaces somewhere. Based on current enrollment trends, 2,700 could have no formal education for additional year.

3. How many families who will be eligible to stay on Care 4 Kids at redetermination up to 75% of SMI? Please include backup to how this estimate was calculated.

All current families are eligible for the program. There is a federal requirement for states to have a tiered “phase out” and requires a second higher eligibility threshold. Currently, our SMI at application is 60% and families remain on at renewal if their SMI is under 65%. If the proposed legislation passes, new families will need to meet the 65% SMI at application, but once they are on, at each renewal the family will remain eligible until they exceed 75% SMI. This is to provide continuity of care for the children and relief for families who experience a small-modest raise in the year. Approximately 76 current families will remain eligible for Care 4 Kids that would get discontinued at the current 65% phase out threshold. To be conservative, OEC planned on double that number if increasing by 10% SMI. And the planned enrollment was increased to 20,150 (from 20,000) to assure that those remaining will not interrupt others from entering.

Care for Kids Utilization by Income Band

SFY2024 1st 6 Months, Jul-Dec

C4K SFY24 (Jul-Dec) # of Families by Income as % SMI	# Active Families July 2022- June 2023	# Active Children July 2022- June 2023	%
% State Median Income (SMI)	# Families	# Children	% of Families
0-10% SMI	745	1,084	4%
10-20% SMI	2,019	3,004	11%
20-30% SMI	4,198	6,720	22%
30-40% SMI	5,227	7,539	28%
40-50% SMI	3,967	5,357	21%
50-60% SMI	2,247	2,949	12%
60-65% SMI	382	539	2%
65-70% SMI	37	53	0%
70-80% SMI	37	52	0%
80-85% SMI	6	10	0%
N/A in this data match	43	22	0%
Grand Total *	18,900	27,300	100%

Source: C4K ImpaCT AdHoc Expenditure 2024-01-01 Service Mos & C4K Monthly SMI Reports SFY 2023 sent from UWC to OEC. Jb * Rounded

SFY2023

C4K SFY23 # of Families by Income as % SMI	C4K SFY23 # Active Families July 2022- June 2023	C4K SFY23 # Active Children July 2022- June 2023	%
% State Median Income (SMI)	# Families	# Children	% of Families
0-10% SMI	1,021	1,467	5%
10-20% SMI	2,553	3,785	11%
20-30% SMI	5,086	8,147	23%
30-40% SMI	6,133	8,891	27%
40-50% SMI	4,536	6,122	20%
50-60% SMI	2,612	3,411	12%
60-65% SMI	430	609	2%
65-70% SMI	43	62	0%
70-80% SMI	46	69	0%
80-85% SMI	10	16	0%
N/A in this data match	106	79	0%
Grand Total *	22,600	32,700	100%

Source: C4K ImpaCT AdHoc Expenditure 2024-01-01 Service Mos & C4K Monthly SMI Reports SFY 2023 sent from UWC to OEC. Jb * Rounded

SFY2022

C4K SFY22 # of Families by Income as % SMI	C4K SFY22 # Active Families July 2021- June 2022	C4K SFY22 # Active Children July 2021- June 2022	%
% State Median Income (SMI)	# Families	# Children	% of Families
0-10% SMI	683	1,005	3%
10-20% SMI	1,817	2,772	9%
20-30% SMI	3,804	6,236	18%
30-40% SMI	4,589	6,853	22%
40-50% SMI	3,389	4,703	16%
50-60% SMI	1,850	2,484	9%
60-65% SMI	354	501	2%
65-70% SMI	27	35	0%
70-80% SMI	29	39	0%
80-85% SMI	8	12	0%
N/A in this data match	4,237	5,571	20%
Grand Total *	20,800	30,200	100%

Source: C4K ImpaCT AdHoc Expenditure 2024-01-01 Service Months & C4K Monthly SMI Reports SFY 2023 sent from UWC to OEC. Jb * Rounded

4. A written explanation of how Care 4 Kids waitlist works.

The waitlist was created as an enrollment management tool so that we can track caseload and spending. Currently, the caseload is being managed at 18,500. That is the amount budgeted for 2024-25. The Governor's proposal will increase enrollment to 20,125. Parents in JFES, TANF, teen parents, and those that qualify for protective services (DCF foster, DCF adopted for the first year, and families experiencing homelessness) bypass the waitlist and have their applications processed for eligibility. If a parent who is working, in a job training program, adult education or higher education (not master's degree level) applies and is determined eligible, they will be placed on the waitlist. Currently, families are on the waitlist for approximately 8 weeks. Currently, there are approximately 800 families on the wait list, and 1,300 applications are pending. OEC has authorized 14 new positions at the United Way to address the number of pending applications.

5. What are the trends and utilization rates since 2020 for OEC programs (Birth to Three, School Readiness, Child Day Care, Head Start)?

Spreadsheets for School Readiness, Child Day Care and Head Start are added at the end of this document. Smart Start data is found under #14 with the Smart Start fact sheet.

Birth to Three Data:

Referral: The number of children who have completed the referral process with 211 and consent has been given to bring in a provider for evaluation.

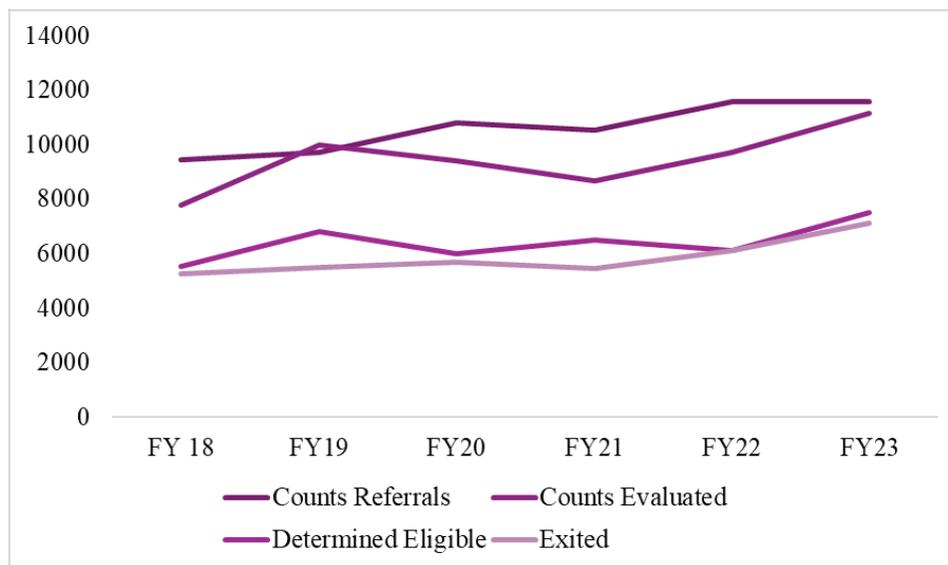
Eligibility: The number of children who have completed the referral process and have a completed evaluation to determine eligibility in Birth to Three.

Determined Eligible: The number of children who had an evaluation and results lead to an eligible determination in the designated time period.

Exit: The number of children who ended services, for any reason, in the designated time period.

	7/1/17- 6/30/18	7/1/18- 6/30/19	7/1/19- 6/30/20	7/1/20- 6/30/21	7/1/21- 6/30/22	7/1/22- 6/30/23	
	FY 18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	Trendlines
Counts Referrals	9462	9704	10806	10530	11601	11593	
Counts Evaluated	7765	9977	9425	8695	9722	11151	
Determined Eligible	5526	6796	6014	6492	6115	7498	
Exited	5281	5490	5673	5439	6126	7107	

COVID-19 Began



Federal Early Head Start and Head Start Enrollment

This data is a subset of the annual Program Information Report (PIR) submission by Connecticut grant recipients and delegates to the Office of Head Start.

The Office of Head Start did not require grant recipients and delegates to complete the 2020 PIR. The Office of Head Start wanted to eliminate the reporting burden of the PIR as well as remove any confusion on how certain elements of the PIR could be collected and interpreted when programs were closed due to COVID-19.

Program Year	Program	Funded Enrollment	Cumulative Enrollment
2021	Early Head Start	1,357	1,744
2022	Early Head Start	1,345	1,740
2023	Early Head Start	1,316*	1,695

*Includes pregnant women

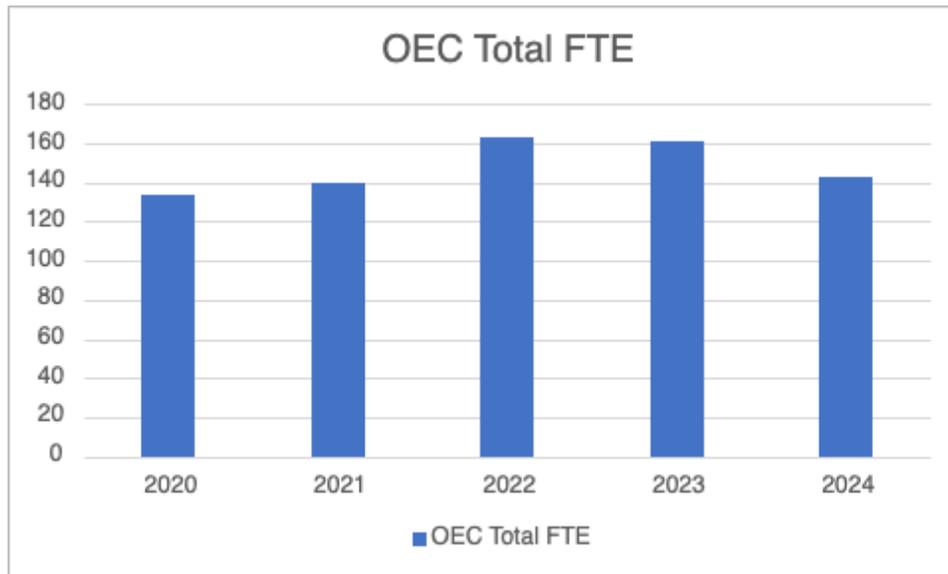
Program Year	Program	Funded Enrollment	Cumulative Enrollment
2021	Head Start	4,316	3,296
2022	Head Start	4,274	3,946
2023	Head Start	4,346	4,046

Funded enrollment: Number of enrollments slots the programs are funded to serve.

Cumulative Enrollment: Actual number of children and pregnant women served by the programs throughout the entire program year, inclusive of enrollees who left during the program year and the enrollees who filled those empty places.

6. Please provide an explanation of staffing levels since 2020.

OEC Staffing levels are funded by both federal and state dollars. The graph below shows total employees. 2024 FY is still in process. We anticipate it will reach 2023 count by year's end.

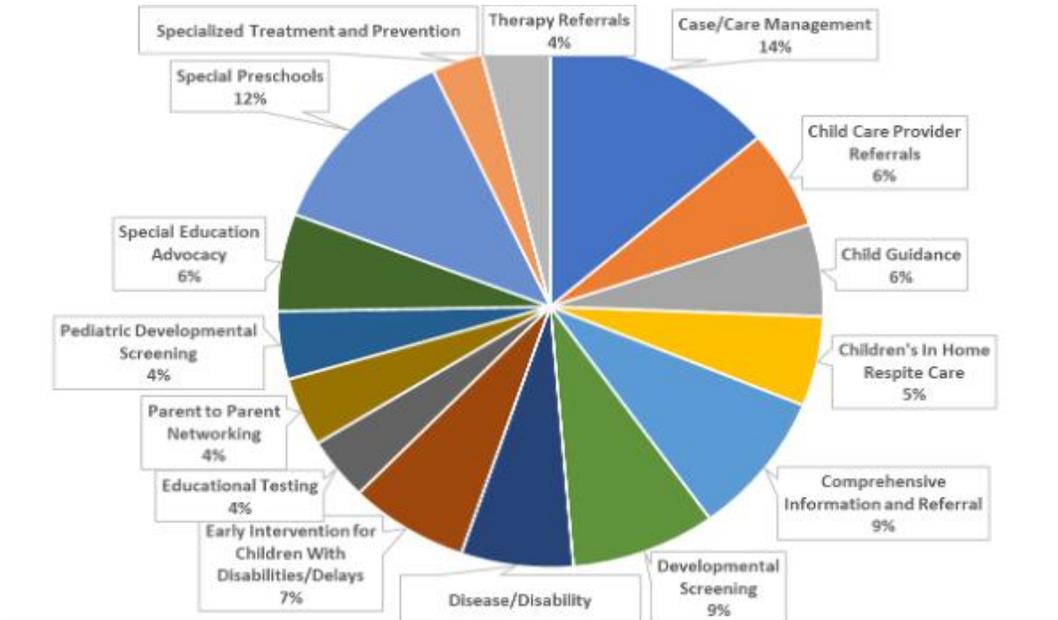


7. What are the utilization rates for the Sparkler app since its inception?

Sparkler utilization chart is found at the end of this document.

8. Describe the breakdown of the \$1.8M in the budget for management of the Sparkler app.

In the year last year 2023, 80.3% of screenings in Connecticut were completed using Sparkler's mobile app, compared with 10.3% who completed screenings online and 9.3% who completed screenings on paper.



Developmental Screening: \$80,000

Up to 60,000 people screened with ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2, and provide enhanced online screening functionality for Connecticut providers and deeper two-way integration with ASQ Online to support OEC's screening implementation and data integration efforts. Additionally, Brookes Publishing charges the OEC for Sparkler site fees (\$100 per physical site) and other various fees associated with utilizing the ASQ, ASQ-SE.

Family and Community Engagement: \$200,000

Currently Sparkler works with over 700 community programs. Community, program, family, and government engagement in order to onboard and engage Connecticut families and the organizations serving them: cities, Family Resource Centers, and schools, healthcare providers, as well as other agencies and organizations serving CT families, including the State Department of Education and the Department of Children and Families. Onboarding includes setting up local

communities to use Sparkler as a tool to engage families. Ongoing engagement entails trainings, learning communities, office hours, newsletters, in person meetings, and more.

Community Engagement Support Grants: \$400,000

Conduct a competitive process where up to 16 communities receive funds to support local family engagement and implementation with an award of \$25,000 per community.

United Way: Care Coordinator – 2FTE \$250,000

Care coordination at 211 Child Development to engage with and support families who have completed the ASQ via Sparkler and need/want support.

Family & Community Engagement Specialists: \$350,000

Four Family & Community Engagement Specialists have worked with more than 32 different communities across the State to focus on developmental screening, play, and family engagement. The Specialist’s reach and engage both providers and families across the state to promote healthy early childhood development and support and link to 211 Child Development.

Technology Integration and Customization: \$250,000

Maintaining Sparkler and building new features/functions to support local rollout and engagement. This will include User Experience/User Interface improvements to the mobile app and the Partner Dashboard, feature upgrades to accommodate the statewide expansion, and API integrations. The funds will pay for work by the following developers: backend engineer/architect, mobile engineer, project management, quality assurance (QA), and User Experience/User Interface designer.

Sparkler CT Content Development: \$130,000

Continue refreshing content so that it aligns with CT ELDS. This includes consultants’ time to plan, write, edit, translate, upload, and tag content. Each new play card costs about \$500 to create and each new parenting tips costs about \$2,000. Refreshing content (adding media like videos/audio/images has different costs depending on the required refresh).

In total, this will purchase: 10 new parenting tip decks, 100 new play cards, 1000 updates to existing play cards (adding new images/media to enhance the display/parent experience), Tagging of 1000 play cards with CT ELDS so that CT educators can find activities based on Connecticut early learning standards.

Support and Project Management: \$135,000

Fee of \$11,000/month which covers:

1. Strategy and planning
2. Training and Professional Development

- 3. 2-4 week messaging
- 4. Routine maintenance and upkeep
- 5. Support: Responding to the needs of school staff and families

Staffing will include:

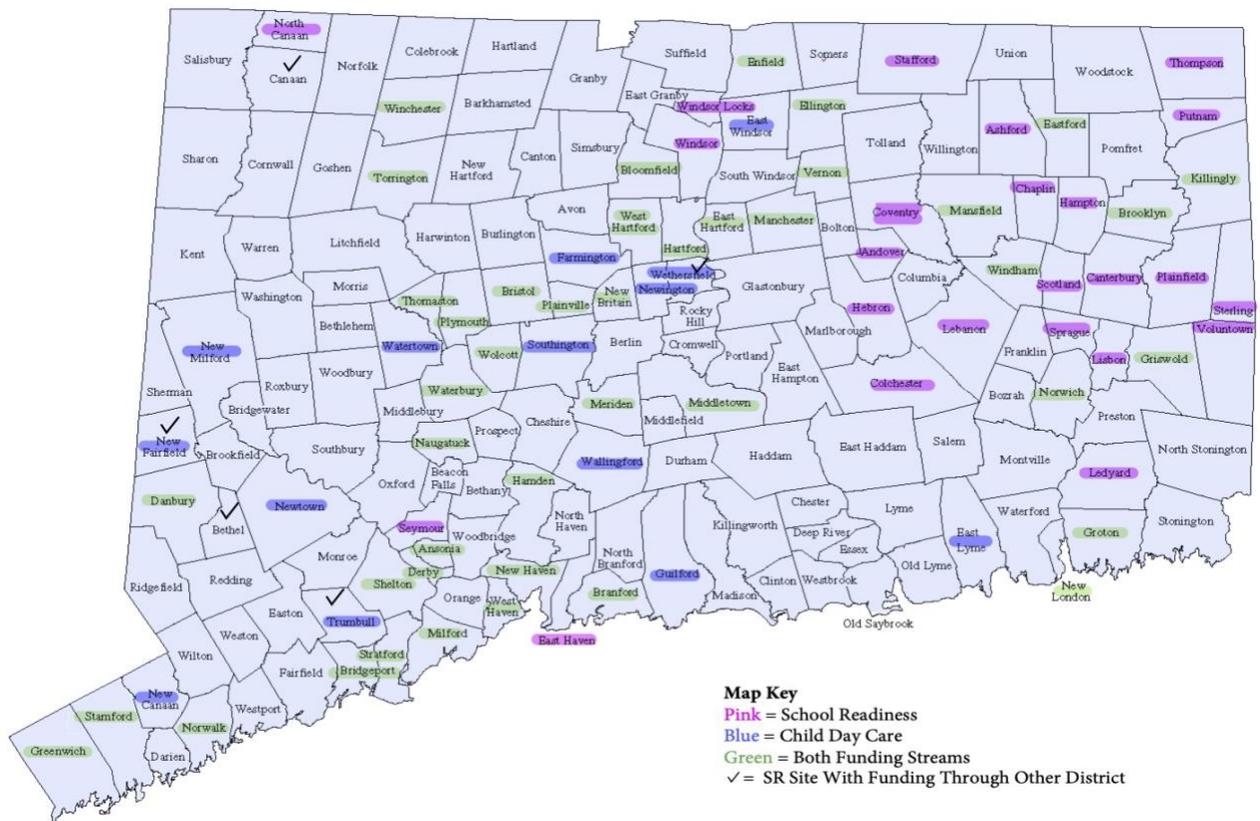
- 1. 0.8 FTE Sparkler executive director and other consultants @ \$9,500/month
- 2. \$9,000 for taxes, legal, insurance, occupancy, accounting, and other business expenses

Current Operating Total: \$1,800,000

9. What is the location of the management company for the Sparkler app?

Sparkler was located in Ridgefield CT when OEC originated the contract.

10. Please provide a map of local councils and proposed municipalities with new councils.



11. How many benefit navigators are anticipated to be utilized by OEC?

OEC will contract with three individuals to provide outreach and assistance in securing health insurance coverage through Covered CT, the Exchange, and private insurance.

12. How many providers received stabilization payments last year (FY23), including which providers and the amount received, including Birth to Three, and how many will receive benefits this year?

5,233 stabilization payments were made to child care programs, totaling \$74,335,000 in FY 2023. They were in virtually every town and city in Connecticut. These were state dollars. OEC added in about \$4 million in ARPA discretionary due to the high application rate exceeding projections. Please see attached flyer that explains the program and who was eligible, etc. Any provider who wished to apply could do so. Some chose not to due to fear of losing benefits such as SNAP and health care and child care.

In SFY 2023 there were \$9.3 million in Enrollment Grants to state-funded child care with SFR ARPA. These went to all state-funded child care programs.

In SFY 2024, OEC sent out the last of the ARPA Stabilization to programs in the highest SVI. OEC sent out \$22.9 million in Stabilization funds. The governor’s budget includes \$18.8 million in ARPA to continue this program for FY 25.

Birth to Three

19 Birth to Three providers received two stabilization payments in 2023 (July and November).

The funds used for these payments were part of Birth to Three American Rescue Plan (ARP) Early Intervention Services Over 3 funds. These payments were based on programs with children supported through the summer extension option in Birth to Three, which was a requirement of the specific ARPA funds utilized for the payment.

Program	July 2023	November 2023
Abilis	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 37,599.88
American School for the Deaf	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 29,599.88
Beacon Services of CT	\$ 172,000.00	\$ 93,599.88
Benchmark Infant and Toddler Services	\$ 194,000.00	\$ 81,599.88
Building Bridges, LLC	\$ 152,000.00	\$ 29,599.88
Cheshire Public Schools - Darcey School	\$ 28,000.00	\$ 25,599.88
Children's Therapy Services	\$ 78,000.00	\$ 25,599.88
Creative Interventions	\$ 182,000.00	\$ 45,599.88
CREC Birth to Three	\$ 104,000.00	\$ 63,599.88
EASTCONN Birth To Three	\$ 48,000.00	\$ 21,599.88
Easter Seal Birth to Three	\$ 38,000.00	\$ 33,599.88
EdAdvance	\$ 118,000.00	\$ 17,599.88
HARC - Steppingstones	\$ 112,000.00	\$ 21,599.88
Mentor South Bay	\$ 24,000.00	\$ 17,599.88
Project Interact, Inc.	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 29,599.88

Reachout, Inc.	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 141,599.88
Rehabilitation Associates of CT, Inc.	\$ 360,000.00	\$ 61,599.88
SARAH, Inc. - KIDSTEPS	\$ 192,000.00	\$ 33,599.88
TheraCare	\$ 130,000.00	\$ 21,599.88
System Total	\$ 2,132,000.00	\$ 832,397.77

13. Please provide a summary about the Tri-Share Pilot Program.

Tri-Share Child Care Matching Program Fact Sheet

- Pilot program where child care costs are shared equally between the parent, their employer, and the state.
- This initiative will be piloted in New London County. Eastern Connecticut is home to some major industries, such as Electric Boat and home to a significant child care desert.
- This proposal would support approximately 250 children in a child care program.
- The OEC will select a regional or state-wide educational or business organization to collaborate with employers and participating licensed child care providers to provide child care placement for participating employees.
- The administrator will serve as an intermediary among participating employers, employees and licensed child care providers and perform fiduciary, administrative and outreach services to recruit employer participation in the program.
- No more than 10 percent of the administrator's award may be used for administrative costs.
- Electric Boat, located in Groton, CT has committed to participating in the program, with support from the Navy.
- Proposed \$1.8 million in ARPA funds.
- If passed in the state budget, effective July 1, 2024,

14. Please provide a fact sheet on Smart Start.

Smart Start Fact Sheet

The Connecticut Smart Start Program supports local and regional boards of education in establishing or expanding a preschool program under the jurisdiction of the board of education for the town. Districts were required to demonstrate a community need for preschool at the time of initial application and were provided with capital improvement funds in the initial year of funding. Grants for ongoing operating expenses support services for preschool children ages 3-5 who are not yet eligible to enter kindergarten. Teachers in Smart Start classrooms must hold CT teacher certification with an endorsement appropriate for early childhood.

Smart Start programs are:

- Supported through state funds.
 - \$5,000 per child for up to 15 children in the same classroom, allowing for 3 additional children to also be served without additional Smart Start funding.
 - Districts may alternatively distribute Smart Start funded spaces across multiple classrooms in order to braid funding and provide inclusive, integrated services.
- Prioritized for target populations, including low-income families and other priorities set by the district (e.g., children who are dual language learners, children receiving special education services, families experiencing housing insecurity).
- Required to meet similar requirements as other state-funded preschool programs.
 - Required to be Head Start approved or become accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) within 3 years of funding.
 - Report data on child enrollment and staffing in OEC data systems.

	SMART START \$3,250,000
Number of School Districts	23
Number of Classrooms	44
Children Served	650*

*During FY 22-24 utilization of available spaces has ranged from 96 to 99%.

Through ARPA funding for FY 22, 23, and 24, the OEC has supported an additional 16 “Smart Start for Recovery” classrooms to address an ongoing shortage of preschool spaces in the wake of the pandemic.

	SMART START FOR RECOVERY \$1,200,000 FOR OPERATIONS, \$800,000 FOR ONE-TIME CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS
Number of School Districts	10*
Number of Classrooms	16
Children Served	240

* 8 of the 10 Smart Start for Recovery Grantees are also Smart Start Grantees that expanded their preschool program with the additional funding

Month	State Fiscal Year	Smart Start Capacity	Utilization	% Utilization
July	2021	Smart Start does not operate in the summer months. It is a school-year, school-day program		
August	2021	Smart Start does not operate in the summer months. It is a school-year, school-day program		
September	2021	650	549	76.0
October	2021	650	554	79.8
November	2021	650	586	84.3
December	2021	650	587	84.5
January	2021	650	603	86.8
February	2021	650	602	72.9
March	2021	650	608	87.5
April	2021	650	623	89.6
May	2021	650	622	89.5
June	2021	650	622	89.5
July	2022	Smart Start does not operate in the summer months. It is a school-year, school-day program		
August	2022	Smart Start does not operate in the summer months. It is a school-year, school-day program		
September	2022	650	627	96.5
October	2022	650	633	97.4
November	2022	650	630	95.9
December	2022	650	630	95.9
January	2022	650	630	95.9
February	2022	650	632	97.2
March	2022	650	634	97.5
April	2022	650	642	98.8
May	2022	650	642	98.8
June	2022	650	642	98.8
July	2023	Smart Start does not operate in the summer months. It is a school-year, school-day program		
August	2023	Smart Start does not operate in the summer months. It is a school-year, school-day program		
September	2023	650	640	98.5
October	2023	650	642	98.8
November	2023	650	642	98.8
December	2023	650	640	98.5
January	2023	650	641	98.6
February	2023	650	640	98.5
March	2023	650	643	98.9
April	2023	650	644	99.1
May	2023	650	646	99.4
June	2023	650	645	99.2
July	2024	Smart Start does not operate in the summer months. It is a school-year, school-day program		
August	2024	Smart Start does not operate in the summer months. It is a school-year, school-day program		
September	2024	650	628	96.6
October	2024	650	632	97.2
November	2024	650	636	97.8
December	2024	650	639	98.3

Month	State Fiscal Year	CDC Infant/Toddler Full-Time Capacity	CDC Infant/Toddler Full-Time Utilization	CDC Infant/Toddler Full-Time Utilization %	CDC Infant/Toddler Wrap-Around Capacity	CDC Infant/Toddler Wrap-Around Utilization	CDC Infant/Toddler Wrap-Around Utilization %	CDC Preschool Full Time Capacity	CDC Preschool Full Time Utilization	CDC Preschool Full Time Utilization %	CDC Preschool Wrap Around Capacity	CDC Preschool Wrap Around Utilization	CDC Preschool Wrap Around Utilization %	CDC School Age Capacity	CDC School Age Utilization	CDC School Age Utilization %
July	2021	1338	n/a	n/a	211	n/a	n/a	2091	n/a	n/a	96	n/a	n/a	203	n/a	n/a
August	2021	1338	n/a	n/a	211	n/a	n/a	2091	n/a	n/a	96	n/a	n/a	203	n/a	n/a
September	2021	1338	956	71%	211	63	30%	1927	1260	65%	297	180	61%	203	141	69%
October	2021	1338	968	72%	211	69	33%	1927	1262	65%	297	184	62%	193	157	81%
November	2021	1346	976	73%	211	70	33%	1918	1278	67%	297	181	61%	193	153	79%
December	2021	1346	981	73%	211	81	38%	1918	1270	66%	297	128	43%	202	162	80%
January	2021	1346	971	72%	211	97	46%	2141	1396	65%	297	174	59%	330	183	55%
February	2021	1346	970	72%	221	99	45%	1918	1308	68%	297	178	60%	202	172	85%
March	2021	1346	1009	75%	211	101	48%	1918	1375	72%	297	182	61%	193	155	80%
April	2021	1346	1036	77%	211	107	51%	1903	1415	74%	297	181	61%	295	261	88%
May	2021	1346	1043	77%	211	114	54%	1903	1421	75%	297	184	62%	295	261	88%
June	2021	1351	1061	79%	211	122	58%	1898	1469	77%	297	182	61%	286	269	94%
July	2022	1339	1113	83%	186	120	65%	2091	1595	76%	96	85	89%	194	171	88%
August	2022	1339	1126	84%	186	120	65%	2091	1678	80%	96	85	89%	218	184	84%
September	2022	1371	1137	83%	186	115	62%	1868	1344	72%	319	192	60%	163	149	91%
October	2022	1371	1158	84%	186	132	71%	1868	1392	75%	319	233	73%	163	151	93%
November	2022	1379	1147	83%	186	131	70%	1868	1430	77%	319	235	74%	177	165	93%
December	2022	1379	1160	84%	186	132	71%	2091	1562	75%	319	243	76%	229	216	94%
January	2022	1379	1115	81%	186	124	67%	1868	1430	77%	319	232	73%	163	138	85%
February	2022	1379	1138	83%	186	143	77%	1868	1473	79%	319	246	77%	177	164	93%
March	2022	1379	1143	83%	186	151	81%	1868	1505	81%	319	247	77%	163	150	92%
April	2022	1382	1195	86%	186	146	78%	2091	1694	81%	319	259	81%	310	294	95%
May	2022	1363	1144	84%	186	145	78%	2091	1717	82%	319	258	81%	182	165	91%
June	2022	1363	1159	85%	186	140	75%	2091	1733	83%	96	91	95%	239	228	95%
July	2023	1390	1163	84%	208	161	77%	2078	1686	81%	74	26	35%	191	153	80%
August	2023	1390	1165	84%	208	159	76%	2078	1652	79%	74	69	93%	191	183	96%
September	2023	1417	1188	84%	208	144	69%	1823	1397	77%	297	159	54%	169	162	96%
October	2023	1438	1203	84%	208	151	73%	1823	1402	77%	297	161	54%	169	157	93%
November	2023	1448	1234	85%	208	156	75%	1823	1428	78%	297	164	55%	169	157	93%
December	2023	1464	1246	85%	208	159	76%	1823	1434	79%	297	163	55%	169	160	95%
January	2023	1525	1285	84%	208	154	74%	1823	1449	79%	297	168	57%	191	167	87%
February	2023	1555	1315	85%	208	155	75%	1823	1458	80%	297	174	59%	191	169	88%
March	2023	1555	1336	86%	208	168	81%	1823	1479	81%	297	132	44%	191	173	91%
April	2023	1581	1372	87%	208	168	81%	1836	1478	81%	297	182	61%	191	179	94%
May	2023	1591	1404	88%	208	168	81%	1836	1492	81%	297	188	63%	191	175	92%
June	2023	1601	1417	89%	208	176	85%	2043	1667	82%	74	31	42%	213	200	94%
July	2024	2418	1718	71%	225	175	78%	2023	1652	82%	74	50	68%	209	151	72%
August	2024	2418	1794	74%	225	169	75%	2023	1649	82%	74	49	66%	209	149	71%
September	2024	2418	1869	77%	225	179	80%	1800	1368	76%	297	188	63%	187	177	95%
October	2024	2418	1958	81%	225	186	83%	1800	1395	78%	297	210	71%	187	171	91%
November	2024	2418	2005	83%	225	184	82%	1800	1402	78%	297	211	71%	187	172	92%
December	2024	2418	2002	83%	225	189	84%	1800	1449	81%	297	211	71%	187	172	92%

*n/a = Programs did not report utilization July or August 2020 as funding was under COVID Emergency Order

	Month	State Fiscal Year	Priority SR Full Day/Full Year Capacity	Priority SR Full Day/Full Year Utilization	Priority SR Full Day Utilization %	Priority SR School Day/School Year Capacity Sept to June only	Priority SR School Day/School Year Utilization Sept to June only	Priority SR School Day/School Year Utilization %	Priority SR Part Day/Part Year Capacity Sept to June only	Priority SR Part Day/Part Year Utilization Sept to June only	Priority SR Part Day/Part Year Utilization %	Priority SR Extended Day Capacity	Priority SR Extended Day Utilization	Priority SR Extended Day Utilization %	Priority SR INFANT TODDLER * Started Nov 2023	Priority SR Priority Infant Toddler Utilization	Priority SR Infant Toddler Utilization %
	July FD/FY and ED only	2021	7125	Not collected due to Covid		Not collected due to Covid	Not collected due to Covid			Not collected due to Covid		Not collected due to Covid	Not collected due to Covid				
	August FD/FY and ED only	2021	7125	Not collected due to Covid		Not collected due to Covid	Not collected due to Covid			Not collected due to Covid		459	Not collected due to Covid				
	September	2021	7073	4124	58%	1575	791	50%	1327	782	59%	456	246	54%			
	October	2021	7093	880	12%	1579	849	54%	1329	849	64%	456	254	56%			
	November	2021	7093	4102	58%	1535	864	56%	1373	904	66%	456	247	54%			
	December	2021	7093	4049	57%	1539	529	34%	1369	1277	93%	456	248	54%			
	January	2021	7093	4137	58%	1539	768	50%	1369	1072	78%	456	244	54%			
	February	2021	7072	4224	60%	1441	885	61%	1487	1000	67%	456	265	58%			
	March	2021	7042	4441	63%	1507	1030	68%	1426	920	65%	456	274	60%			
	April	2021	7043	4746	67%	1510	1129	75%	1410	966	69%	456	296	65%			
	May	2021	7051	4900	69%	1506	1186	79%	1403	842	60%	456	297	65%			
	June	2021	7042	5114	73%	1507	1147	76%	1426	863	61%	456	302	66%			
	July FD/FY and ED only	2022	7056	5370	76%							456	337	74%			
	August FD/FY and ED only	2022	7056	5502	78%							456	337	74%			
	September	2022	7056	4712	67%	2060	1640	80%	879	655	75%	456	298	65%			
	October	2022	7056	4887	69%	2060	1760	85%	879	721	82%	456	326	71%			
	November	2022	7056	5014	71%	2060	1757	85%	879	734	84%	456	334	73%			
	December	2022	7056	5075	72%	2060	1762	86%	879	735	84%	456	343	75%			
	January	2022	7056	5005	71%	2060	1769	86%	879	713	81%	456	347	76%			
	February	2022	7056	5218	74%	2060	1786	87%	879	741	84%	456	353	77%			
	March	2022	7056	5367	76%	2060	1808	88%	879	772	88%	456	369	81%			
	April	2022	7056	5448	77%	2060	1814	88%	879	781	89%	456	375	82%			
	May	2022	7056	5595	79%	2060	1802	87%	879	786	89%	456	375	82%			
	June	2022	7056	5682	81%	2060	1776	86%	879	777	88%	456	375	82%			
	July FD/FY and ED only	2023	7087	5756	81%							456	361	79%			
	August FD/FY and ED only	2023	7087	5267	74%							456	356	78%			
	September	2023	7065	4816	68%	2025	1544	76%	843	658	78%	461	269	58%			
	October	2023	7065	5843	83%	2025	2003	99%	843	723	86%	461	334	72%			
	November	2023	7065	5924	84%	2025	1750	86%	843	732	87%	461	348	75%			
	December	2023	7053	5387	76%	2028	1763	87%	842	715	85%	461	358	78%			
	January	2023	7063	5621	80%	2028	1773	87%	842	748	89%	491	360	73%			
	February	2023	7069	5912	84%	2028	1800	89%	842	756	90%	467	367	79%			
	March	2023	7077	6084	86%	2028	1896	93%	842	816	97%	491	374	76%			
	April	2023	6802	6143	90%	2017	1852	92%	823	772	94%	491	374	76%			
	May	2023	6802	6180	91%	2017	1825	90%	823	767	93%	491	380	77%			
	June	2023	6802	6287	92%	2017	1800	89%	823	756	92%	491	389	79%			
	July FD/FY and ED only	2024	6854	6032	88%							456	354	78%			
	August FD/FY and ED only	2024	6862	6068	88%							456	357	78%			
	September	2024	6802	5483	81%	2058	1680	82%	901	772	86%	456	326	71%			
	October	2024	6802	5531	81%	2058	1729	84%	901	785	87%	456	333	73%			
	November	2024	6776	5756	85%	2063	1758	85%	907	795	88%	456	339	74%	39	9	23%
	December	2024	6782	5772	85%	2063	1798	87%	907	804	89%	456	346	76%	39	38	97%

Month	State Fiscal Year	State Head Start School Day/School Year Capacity	State Head Start School Day/School Year Utilization	State Head Start School Day/School Year Utilization %	State Head Start Full Day/Full Year Capacity	State Head Start Full Day/Full Year Utilization	State Head Start Full Day/Full Year Utilization %	State Head Start Extended Day/Extended Year Capacity	State Head Start Extended Day/Extended Year Utilization	State Head Start Extended Day/Extended Year Utilization %	State Head Start Part Day/Part Year Capacity	State Head Start Part Day/Part Year Utilization	State Head Start Part Day/Part Year Utilization %
July	2024	34	0	0%	211	104	49%	649	150	23%	16	0	0%
August	2024	34	0	0%	211	95	45%	649	149	23%	16	0	0%
September	2024	34	34	100%	211	156	74%	649	273	42%	16	0	0%
October	2024	34	34	100%	211	181	86%	649	319	49%	16	0	0%
November	2024	34	34	100%	211	135	64%	649	281	43%	16	0	0%
December	2024	34	34	100%	211	167	79%	649	335	52%	16	0	0%

State Head Start did not begin collecting utilization data until July 1, 2023
Not all grant recipients are up to date with report submission

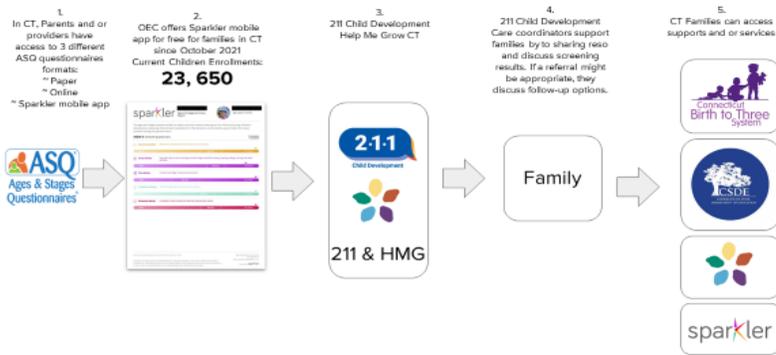
Item	2021	2022	2023	CUMULATIVE TOTAL (AS OF FEB. 21, 2023)
# New adults who created accounts	4,228	6,858	7,762	21,793
# New children who joined	4,537	7,672	9,128	24,563
# Plays completed	2,893	8,730	11,112	26,760
Recorded app touches in CT	74,268	188,768	232,372	594,925
#ASQ 3 completed	2,299	5,699	9,433	20,583
Screening Results	1,326 (58%) on track 560 (24%) Monitor 411 (18%) Refer 	3,108 (55%) on track 1,375 (24%) monitor 1,210 (21%) refer 	5,285 (56%) on track 2,188 (23%) monitor 1,889 (20%) refer 	11,548 (56%) on track 4,807 (23%) monitor 4,133 (20%) refer 
# ASQ SE completion	1,806	4,079	5,995	13,302
ASQ:SE-2 results	1,402 (78%) on schedule 210 (12%) monitor 193 (11%) refer	2,993 (73%) on schedule 558 (14%) monitor 519 (13%) refer	4,313 (72%) on schedule 903 (15%) monitor 739 (12%) refer	9,751 (73%) on schedule 1,855 (14%) monitor 1,636 (12%) refer
#Trainings/TA/Office of Hours etc.	52 Trainings - 132 People	2 Sessions of Office hours: 32 Participants 337 Trainings and TA - Total 1017 trainees and TA provided 1 Conference - 125 Participants	10 Session of Office Hours - 57 Participants 421 Trainings and TA : 1203 Participants 1 Conference - 150 Participants	

Sparkler mobile application is a free modern technology engagement tool giving families greater and more equitable access to child development information, parent tips, evidence-based developmental screening questionnaires, and a direct pipeline to 211 Child Development. 211 Child Development is accessible to parents through the call center and website and is a point of entry to many services including but not limited to Home Visiting, **Help Me Grow CT**, Birth to Three, Pre-school Special Education, and Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs.

Developmental Screening efforts is not new in our state. Connecticut has a long-standing history since the beginnings of the Help Me Grow Connecticut in 1997, by Dr. Paul Dworkin. Help Me Grow is now a national model replicated across 33 states showing efficacy on building a comprehensive early childhood system and developmental promotion and screening toward early detection in young children (birth to 5 years old) <https://helpmegrownational.org/hmg-system-model>

The Office of Early Childhood provides funding to 211 Child Development which administers Help Me Grow CT and Birth to Three Services under one umbrella. Help Me Grow CT makes it possible for Connecticut families and providers to have greater access to developmental screenings in three formats (a) paper version (b) online © **Sparkler mobile app** and most importantly linkages to essential services. CT is first state to make available to families the Sparkler mobile app for free to parents and programs.

Increase Access to Support CT Families



Currently there are over 25,000 children enrolled in the Sparkler mobile app and serving 90 local communities in our state. Sparkler is a mobile app-based service brought to Connecticut families by the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. Sparkler mobile application helps families and early childhood educators monitor children's development milestones and provides ideas to promote learning at home. Parents can download the Sparkler app to complete the Ages & Stages Questionnaires® (ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE), answering questions about their child's development and social emotional growth. Results of the ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE indicate whether further evaluation is needed to determine if a child has a delay or disability and/or qualifies for intervention services such as Birth to Three or Preschool Special Education.

Additionally, in January 2024 Sparkler launched the prenatal component of the application. It includes a prenatal yoga and Pilates series and a content lineup that will help expecting parents get ready for their new babies! Click [yoga and pilates series](#) to preview of some of the content. Sparkler also worked with the Learning Tapestry to develop new functions/features of Sparkler's app and partner dashboard — improving the experience based on feedback from our partners and the families we serve.

Sparkler app includes (but not limited to) the following features:

- ASQ-3 & ASQ:SE-2 evidence-based developmental and social-emotional screening tools
- Digital library containing over 1,000 play activities to promote child development
- Coaching by early childhood experts for families and community partners
- Information, resources, and referrals by accessing 211 Child Development/Help Me Grow CT

The OEC is currently working with 90 local communities, including home visiting programs, childcare programs, family resource centers, Birth to Three programs, public schools, pediatricians, and others that work with the parents of young children. The Sparkler initiative includes staff trainings, technical support, materials, and other resources to share with local families.

Sparkler counted more than 202,000 app touches by Connecticut families related to play, parent tips, and coaching, with families completing more than 14,000 play-based learning activities using Sparkler. More than 700 individual schools, daycares, family resource centers, home visiting agencies, healthcare clinics, early intervention programs, and other providers across the State are now using Sparkler, and more than 1,700 local providers have been trained and set up to use Sparkler to support and engage with the families they serve.

The Office of Early Childhood completed a statewide roll out of the Sparkler application in October of 2021. This rollout raised awareness for the importance of developmental screening and to promote partnerships between families and early childhood educators. Sparkler Learning Inc. has engaged with many parents and early childhood providers in developmental promotion and screenings towards early detection efforts across our state.

SPARKLER CT PROGRAM AND ADMINISTRATOR SETUP (2021-2023)

From 2021 - 2023, Sparkler set up 1,594 groups/cohorts in Sparkler CT. We've also trained a total of 1,664 providers who work at programs across the state so that they're ready to (1) explain the app to families and (2) use the dashboard to engage with and support the families that link with them on Sparkler. The breakdown is as follows:

	Newly set up in 2021	Newly set up in 2022	Newly set up in 2023	2021-2023 Totals
Children's Museum	1		1	2
State agency	1	1		2
FCC Network	2	1		3
Lab School	2	1	1	4
Library		4	2	6
Healthcare provider		1	7	8
New home visiting agency	12	2	1	15
Community-Based Organization	1	10	13	24
Community	24	9	3	36
B23		13	25	38
Kindergarten Cohort	2	43	5	50
FRC	41	5	6	52
FCC	54	71	2	127
Public School District	32	5	95	132
Additional Home Visiting Cohort	92	66	62	220
Preschool/Nursery/Daycare	108	80	45	233
Classrooms	265	230	147	642
TOTAL GROUPS/COHORTS ADDED	637	542	415	1,594
TOTAL ADMINS ADDED/TRAINED	588	619	457	1,664

WAGE SUPPORTS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS ENTERS PHASE 2

Child Care Centers

Governor Lamont and the CT State legislature have given funding to the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) to give one-time wage supplements to early childhood educators through **Wage Supports for Early Childhood Educators**. The OEC understands and appreciates how hard early childhood educators are working for our children, and they deserve to be applauded and rewarded for their dedication. There are two phases within this initiative. We are in Phase 2.

ELIGIBILITY:

All licensed programs, as well as license-exempt programs that receive School Readiness funds, are eligible. Eligible staff must:

- be employed at the time of application;
- be regularly scheduled to provide direct service to children (this includes cleaning/cooking staff and admin/receptionists on the program payroll, but shall not include volunteers, substitutes, etc.); and
- be supervisors of those who provide direct service to children, provided they work with teachers or parents regularly, and their salary does not exceed more than \$100,000 per year.

APPLICATION & PAYMENT:

OEC will give these funds directly to programs for each eligible staff member via an application process. Look for an email from childcarefunding@ctunitedway.org with your custom application and follow the application steps. Once funds are received, programs will give funding to each staff member:

- **\$1,700** for full-time (minimum of 30 hours per week or 130 hours per month)
- **\$650** for part-time (defined as less than 30 hours per week or 130 hours per month)
- Additional **18%** on top of staff payments for administrative processing costs

Potential bonuses available for programs and individuals based on additional criteria.

Thank you and your staff for your continued effort in educating and caring for Connecticut's youngest children.



Learn more at
www.ctoec.org/wage-supports-for-early-childhood-educators/

If you have any questions about this process, please contact 211 Child Care at **1-800-505-1000** or email childcarefunding@ctunitedway.org and include your license number for faster assistance.

