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Quality Progress Report (QPR)
For
Connecticut
FFY 2023

QPR Status: Accepted as of 2024-03-08 20:26:41 GMT

The Quality Progress Report (QPR) collects information from states and territories (hereafter referred to as lead agencies) to describe investments to improve the quality of care available for children from birth to age 13. This report meets the requirements in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 for lead agencies to submit an annual report that describes how quality funds were expended, including the activities funded and the measures used to evaluate progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services.

For purposes of simplicity and clarity, the specific provisions of applicable laws printed herein are sometimes paraphrases of, or excerpts and incomplete quotations from, the full text. The lead agency acknowledges its responsibility to adhere to the applicable laws regardless of these modifications.

The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

QUALITY PROGRESS REPORT

The Quality Progress Report (QPR) collects information from lead agencies to describe investments to improve the quality of care available for children from birth to age 13. This report meets the requirements in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 for lead agencies to submit an annual report that describes how quality funds were expended, including the activities funded and the measures used to evaluate progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services. Lead agencies are also required to report on their Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) quality improvement investments through the CCDF Plan, which collects information on the proposed quality activities for a three-year period; and through the ACF-696, which collects quarterly expenditure data on quality activities.

The annual data provided by the QPR will be used to describe how lead agencies are spending a significant investment per year to key stakeholders, including Congress, federal, state and territory administrators, providers, parents, and the public.

Specifically, this report will be used to:

- Ensure accountability and transparency for the use of CCDF quality funds, including a set-aside for quality infant and toddler care and activities funded by American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act
- Track progress toward meeting state- and territory-set indicators and benchmarks for improvement of child care quality based on goals and activities described in CCDF Plans; and
- Understand efforts in progress towards all child care settings meeting the developmental needs of children
- Inform federal technical assistance efforts and decisions regarding strategic use of quality funds.

What Period Must Be Included: All sections of this report cover the federal fiscal year activities (October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023), unless otherwise stated. Data should reflect the cumulative totals for the fiscal year being reported, unless otherwise stated.

What Data Should Lead Agencies Use: Lead agencies may use data collected by other government and nongovernment agencies (e.g., CCR&R agencies or other TA providers) in addition to their own data as appropriate. We recognize that lead agencies may not have all of the data requested initially but expect progress towards increased data capacity. The scope of this report covers quality improvement activities funded at least in part by CCDF in support of CCDF activities. Lead agencies must describe their progress in meeting their stated goals for improving the quality of child care as reported in their FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

How is the QPR Organized?

The first section of the QPR gathers basic data on the population of providers in the state or territory and goals for quality improvement and glossary of relevant terms. The rest of the report is organized according to the ten authorized uses of quality funds specified in the CCDBG Act of 2014:

- 1) Support the training and professional development of the child care workforce
- 2) Improve the development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines
- 3) Develop, implement, or enhance a quality rating improvement system for child care providers
- 4) Improve the supply and quality of child care for infants and toddlers
- 5) Establish or expand a lead agency wide system of child care resource and referral services
- 6) Support compliance with lead agency requirements for licensing, inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety
- 7) Evaluate the quality of child care programs in the state or territory, including how programs positively impact children
- 8) Support providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation
- 9) Support the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development
- 10) Other activities to improve the quality of child care services supported by outcome measures that improve provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten-entry.

The Office of Child Care (OCC) recognizes that quality funds may have been used to address the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. These activities should be reflected in the relevant sections of the QPR.

Reporting Activities Related to ARP Act Child Care Stabilization Grants

The ARP Act included approximately \$24 billion for child care stabilization grants, representing an important opportunity to stabilize the child care sector and do so in a way that builds back a stronger child care system that supports the developmental and learning needs of children, meets parents' needs and preferences with equal access to high-quality child care, and supports a professionalized workforce that is fairly and appropriately compensated for the essential skilled work that they do. Lead agencies must spend stabilization funds as subgrants to qualified child care providers to support the stability of the child care sector during and after the COVID-19 public health emergency. Please refer to the information memorandum [ARP Act Child Care Stabilization Grants](#) (CCDF-ACF-IM-2021-02) for further guidance on the child care stabilization grants made available through the ARP Act.

While the OCC has established a new data collection form, the ACF-901 – American Rescue Plan (ARP) Stabilization Grants Provider-Level Data, as the primary data collection mechanism for reporting related to ARP stabilization grants, Section 13 of the QPR asks about activities related to stabilization grants made possible through ARP funding. The OCC will inform lead agencies if the data reported through the ACF-901 is complete enough to warrant skipping Section 13 of the QPR. The following information is requested in Section 13:

- If the lead agency ran more than one grant program;
- How stabilization grants were used to support workforce compensation; and
- Methods to eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse when providing stabilization grants

Section 13 should be used to report on ARP Stabilization Grants ONLY. Other child care sustainability or stabilization grant programs established or ongoing using other funding mechanisms (i.e., CCDF or other supplemental funding e.g., CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary Funds) should be reported in Section 11.

When is the QPR Due to ACF?

The QPR will be due to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) by the designated lead agency no later than December 31, 2023.

Glossary of Terms

The following terms are used throughout the QPR. These definitions can also be found in section 98.2 in the CCDBG Act of 2014. For any term not defined, please use the lead agency definition of terms to complete the QPR.

Center-based child care provider means a provider licensed or otherwise authorized to provide child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child in a non-residential setting, unless in care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)' work. Associated terms include "child care centers" and "center-based programs."

Director means a person who has primary responsibility for the daily operations and management for a child care provider, which may include a family child care provider, and which may serve children from birth to kindergarten entry and children in school-age child care.

Family child care provider means one or more individuals who provide child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child in a private residence other than the child's residence, unless care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)' work. Associated terms include "family child care homes."

In-home child care provider means an individual who provides child care services in the child's own home.

License-exempt means facilities that are not required to meet the definition of a facility required to meet the CCDF section 98.2 definition of “licensing or regulatory requirements.” Associated terms include “legally exempt” and “legally operating without regulation.”

Licensed means a facility required by the state to meet the CCDF section 98.2 definition of “licensing or regulatory requirements,” which explains that the facility meets “requirements necessary for a provider to legally provide child care services in a state of locality, including registration requirements established under state, local or tribal law.”

Programs refer generically to all activities under the CCDF, including child care services and other activities pursuant to §98.50 as well as quality activities pursuant to §98.43.

Provider means the entity providing child care services.

Staffed family child care (FCC) networks are programs with paid staff that offer a menu of ongoing services and resources to affiliated FCC educators. Network services may include individual supports (for example, visits to child care homes, coaching, consultation, warmlines, substitute pools, shared services, licensing TA, mental health services) and group supports (for example, training workshops, facilitated peer support groups).

Teacher means a lead teacher, teacher, teacher assistant or teacher aide who is employed by a child care provider for compensation on a regular basis, or a family child care provider, and whose responsibilities and activities are to organize, guide and implement activities in a group or individual basis, or to assist a teacher or lead teacher in such activities, to further the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of children from birth to kindergarten entry and children in school-age child care.

1) Overview

To gain an understanding of the availability of child care in the state or territory, please provide the following information on the total number of child care providers.

1.1 State or Territory Child Care Provider Population

1.1.1 Total Number of Licensed Providers:

Enter the total number of licensed child care providers that operated in the state or territory as of September 30, 2023. These counts should include all licensed child care providers, not just those serving children receiving CCDF subsidies.

Licensed center-based programs **1372**

Unable to provide number. Indicate reason:

Additional clarification: Based on most recent submission of the FY 2023 ACF-800 data there were 968 licensed center-based programs receiving CCDF funding. Please report the number of ALL licensed center-based programs operating in the state here, regardless of receipt of CCDF funding.

Licensed family child care homes **1828**

Unable to provide number. Indicate reason:

Additional clarification: Based on most recent submission of the FY 2023 ACF-800 data there were 1073 licensed family child care homes receiving CCDF funding. Please report the number of ALL licensed family child care homes operating in the state here, regardless of receipt of CCDF funding.

2) Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce

Goal: *Ensure the lead agency's professional development systems or framework provides initial and ongoing professional development and education that result in a diverse and stable child care workforce with the competencies and skills to support all domains of child development.*

2.1 Lead Agency Progression of Professional Development

2.1.1 Professional Development Registry:

Did the lead agency use a workforce registry or professional development registry to track progression of professional development during October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023?

Yes. If yes, describe: **The Office of Early Childhood administers the Early Childhood Professional Registry to track early childhood professionals and programs for young children. The Registry is not required of all staff; however, membership is required of all teaching and administrative staff of OEC funded programs and those funded by Care4Kids subsidy (though the latter is not currently required to submit all education obtained).**

No. If no, what alternative does the lead agency use to track the progression of professional development for teachers/providers serving children who receive CCDF subsidy? Describe:

2.1.2 Participation in Professional Development Registry:

Are any teachers/providers required to participate?

Yes. If yes, describe: **The Office of Early Childhood administers the Early Childhood Professional Registry to track early childhood professionals and programs for young children. The Registry is not required of all staff; however, membership is required of all teaching and administrative staff of OEC funded programs and those funded by Care4Kids subsidy (though the latter is not currently required to submit all education obtained).**

As of Sept 30, 2023 the Registry had approximately 22,100 renewed accounts, with 36,088 total accounts having any activity from Oct 1, 2022 to Sept 30, 2023 (renewed, file uploaded on behalf of, etc.), and an additional 44 accounts with confirmed employment at an OEC funded program but inactive, no activity (counted due to

requirement of OEC funded programs).

No. If no, describe:

2.1.3 Number of Participants in Professional Development Registry:

Total number of participants in the registry as of September 30, 2023 **36,088 Active accounts in the Registry with interaction with Registry Consultants or online services to update accounts. An Additional 44 accounts with confirmed employment for total of 36,132 participants in FFY23.**

2.1.4 Spending - Professional Development Registry:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

2.2 Workforce Development

2.2.1 Professional Development and Career Pathways Support:

How did the lead agency help teachers/providers progress in their education, professional development, and/or career pathway between October 1, 2022 and September 30, 2023 (check all that apply)? If selected, how many staff received each type of support?

- Scholarships (for formal education institutions) **372**
- Financial bonus/wage supplements tied to education levels **61**
- Career advisors, mentors, coaches, or consultants **12,231 staff in licensed and license exempt programs received online training. 36,088 participants with active Registry**

accounts interacted with OEC Registry Consultants work with participants via phone consultation and actions online in the Registry

Reimbursement for training

Loans

Substitutes, leave (paid or unpaid) for professional development

Other. Describe: In FFY23: Online training via Registry accounts (through contract with CCEI) included 219,171 training hours by 12,231 staff in 1,786 programs. Staff with confirmed employment in licensed and license exempt programs in the Registry have free unlimited access to the online training library.

Scholarships: 2,910 awards (FFY23) to 372 individuals totaling \$1,348,561 awarded;
Financial Bonus/Wage Supplement: 61 awards (FFY23) totaling \$88,250 through Qualified Workforce Incentives, a program tied to nationally recognized education benchmarks;

The Registry team supported 36,088 active accounts during this timeframe.

The following represent the total usage...note that some providers took training in English and Spanish so there is overlap across the first 2 tables. The final table is unduplicated counts.

The Early Care and Education/Quality Improvement division manages funds contracted out to entities that provide technical assistance services such as training, coaching, mentoring and consultation. Across the various activities in these contracts, some embed coaching within the professional learning design. In addition, one of our contractors provides coaching support to develop the skills of incoming technical assistance providers. Connecticut is also a Pyramid state so we implement the Pyramid model across the state for as many programs as funding allows.

Activities that embed coaching or consultation in the professional learning design for this reporting period:

Technical Assistance Provider Supports: 7 new coaches received their own coaching in the form of a professional learning community and one-on-one coaching. 23 technical assistance providers were offered or received coaching and consultation in the form of a community of practice to address successes and challenges in their coaching and consultation. 9 facilitators associated with the accreditation facilitation work meet for coaching support specific to the accreditation topic.

Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment: 32 programs received up to 72 hours of individualized coaching and training support related to this activity. 10 of those programs are continuing to receive a limited number of coaching hours to sustain and build upon practices. An additional 26 new programs also began their engagement in coaching in September 2023.

Pyramid Model:

Accreditation Quality Improvement Support (AQIS): 21 AQIS facilitators provided individualized quality improvement technical assistance to 173 early childhood programs seeking initial (66) and/or renewal (107) NAEYC Accreditation. Individualized technical assistance consists of: monthly on-site technical assistance sessions at each program, working to achieve and document the steps of the NAEYC Accreditation process; and monthly support group meetings to ensure program has current NAEYC Accreditation updates and content best practices. The primary functions of the facilitator include providing clear and accurate information on the NAEYC Accreditation process and best practices, working with programs to identify opportunities for improvement, and connecting program needs with resources to advance improvement. A facilitator will utilize many consultative tools to guide a program through accreditation/quality improvement. These tools include the use of best practice literature, networking, and linking programs to one another to share strategies and ideas; and providing guidance, provocations, and resources to stimulate the development of improvement plans and activity.

Insecure Housing?

Consultation Quality Improvement Supports: This activity, currently under development, augments the work of other CT OEC initiatives such as AQIS (Accreditation Quality Improvement Support) and Elevate with a strengths-based approach, an emphasis on system building and continuous quality improvement. The goal of the CQIS initiative is to expand and deliver consultation support available to early care and education programs. Consultation Support shall be tailored to each program's unique needs, delivered by knowledgeable consultants, and will utilize the many OEC funded initiatives designed to support continuous quality improvement. The consultant is a collaborative partner to any program's quality improvement. The primary functions of the consultant include providing clear and accurate information on the OEC licensing statutes and regulations, NAEYC and NAFCC Accreditation Standards and Assessment Items, OEC grant/contract funding requirements and working with programs to identify

opportunities for improvement, by connecting program needs with resources to advance improvement.

Staff Family Childcare Networks: The Staffed Family Child Care Networks employ eleven network staff who provide consultation to family child care providers on topics related to licensing, becoming a licensed provider and completing the national accreditation process through the National Association of Family Child Care. As of September 30, 2023 SFCCN reported 710 active members of those active members, 64 were supported in the NAFCC process. 179 FCC providers were provided technical assistance related to licensing compliance and three unlicensed individuals become licensed through their SFCCN.

N/A. Describe:

2.2.2 Spending - Professional Development and Career Pathways Support:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

CCDF quality funds

Non-CCDF funds

CARES funds

CRRSA Funds

ARP Supplemental Discretionary

ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

2.3 Child Care Provider Qualifications

2.3.1 Number of Licensed Child Care Programs Qualifications:

Total number of staff in licensed child care programs with the following qualification levels as of September 30, 2023:

- Child Development Associate (CDA) **430 (368 are directors, teachers, licensed family providers in CCDF Subsidy child care programs)**
- Associate's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g. psychology, human development, education) **1362 (1,120 are directors, teachers, licensed family providers in CCDF Subsidy child care programs)**
- Bachelor's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g. psychology, human development, education)
- State child care credential **127 (ECTC B Level) (100 are directors and teachers in CCDF Subsidy child care programs)**
- State infant/toddler credential
- Unable to report this data. Indicate reason: **"Any other related degree"**
31 (20 CCDF) = 22 directors + 9 teachers with "Any other related degree"

In addition, there are:

300 (180 CCDF) Licensed Center Directors/Admin with Credential regardless of education type. Total all = 1,520.

40% of all Directors/Admin with Credential (42% of CCDF)

10,261 (8,218 CCDF) Licensed Center Teachers with Credential regardless of education type. Total all = 14,681

1,427 (996 CCDF) Licensed Family Child Care with Credential regardless of education type. Total all = 1,775

2.3.2 Number of Licensed CCDF Child Care Programs Qualifications:

Total number of staff in licensed CCDF child care programs with the following qualification levels as of September 30, 2023:

- Child Development Associate (CDA) **368**
- Associate's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g. psychology, human development, education) **1120**
- Bachelor's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g. psychology, human development, education) **783**
- State child care credential **100 (ECTC B Level)**
- State infant/toddler credential
- Unable to report this data. Indicate reason: **"Any other related degree"**
20 CCDF = 14 directors + 6 teachers with "Any other related degree"

In addition, there are:

180 CCDF Licensed Center Directors/Admin with Credential regardless of education type.

8,218 CCDF Licensed Center Teachers with Credential regardless of education type.

996 CCDF Licensed Family Child Care with Credential regardless of education type.

2.4 Technical Assistance for Professional Development

2.4.1 Technical Assistance Topics:

Technical assistance on the following topics is available to providers as part of the lead agency's professional development system (can be part of QRIS or other system that provides professional development to child care providers):

Business Practices

Mental health for children

Diversity, equity, and inclusion

Emergency Preparedness Planning

Other. Describe other technical assistance available to providers as part of the professional development system: **Business Practices - Through contract with the Connecticut Women's Business Development Council, business related training is available in English and Spanish on a variety of topics. Additionally, individualized program support is provided that included development plan training. 677 individuals and 661 programs received business training and/or technical assistance. (Note: This includes aspiring, licensed, license-exempt, and center staff that came for business assistance, such as an Asst. Director.)**

The OEC works in collaboration with the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management and Public Protection on child care emergency preparedness through co-chairing the Child Emergency Preparedness Committee. This year we offered a training from the CT State Police Training Academy called "Run, Hide, Fight: Options for Emergency Response to Active Shooter Situations" which was attended by 300 early childhood providers who participated in the sessions delivered by the CT State Police Training Academy. We also developed a corresponding planning resource called "Emergency Preparedness begins with You" which is available in English and Spanish on the OEC website.

2.4.2 Spending - Technical Assistance for Professional Development:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

CCDF quality funds

Non-CCDF funds

CARES funds

CRRSA Funds

ARP Supplemental Discretionary

ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

2.5 Spending – Training and Professional Development

2.5.1 Spending – Training and Professional Development:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) to support the training and professional development of the child care workforce during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? **\$16284312**

Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported. **Funding spent on The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) Quality Division and Registry staff and operations, Child Care provider Scholarships, Women's Business Development Council work, funding reimburse/shift, CTAEYC CT Shares Resource Program, Eastern Connecticut (EastConn) provider resources, training and supports, CTAEYC CTShares Resource Program, CTAEYC Job Board, public media campaigns and communications support by Odonnell company , University of Connecticut PreK-3 Leadership training, Lab School workforce Development, CCEI Qualified Workforce Incentive and other OEC agency work.**

2.6 Progress Update

2.6.1 Progress Update – Training and Professional Development:

Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 6.3.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

The Office of Early Childhood recognizes the NAEYC Workforce Blueprint and elements of the Build It Better Survey as guides for the development of a state professional development system. Since the last survey of Connecticut’s system was performed, the OEC has taken steps to address each element through the four policy lenses: compensation; integration of professional development across OEC divisions serving various child care and education sectors and settings; equity and workforce diversity; and quality assurance. As a first step in this work, the OEC contracted with the CT RESC Alliance, CTEAYC and Early Childhood Associates (ECA) to conduct a multi-tiered needs assessment to determine technical assistance providers' learning needs, program setting consultation needs, program setting professional learning needs, and preferred delivery mechanisms. The report illustrated the needs assessment results on Technical Assistance (TA) providers' learning needs and their available support. ECA administered the needs assessment survey to individuals who are currently or in the past year have provided technical assistance across settings serving young children and their families, specifically targeting the OEC funded QIS activities. In November 2020, a user-friendly survey was distributed to 84 technical assistance providers throughout the State. The overall response rate was approximately 75% (with 63 individual respondents). The findings illustrate the needs of the TA providers' in areas such as professional growth and the design, delivery, and assessment of professional learning opportunities. These findings will inform modifications for technical assistance strategies for all OEC TA vendors and contractors. The CT’s Early Childhood Professional Registry also tracks providers’ continuing education and completion of professional development for programs and staff who have a registry account.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 6.3.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **The OEC recognizes the NAEYC Workforce Blueprint and elements of the Build It Better Survey as guides for the development of a state professional development system as well as the Unifying Framework.**

Progress this reporting year includes:

Compensation: A compensation scale was developed and is now an integral part of the Governor appointed Blue Ribbon Panel plan to fund state funded programs utilizing the scale as salary goals.

Professional Development: The OEC invested in ProTraxx, a registration platform, and Canvas, a learning management system, to address access to our professional learning offerings open to the public and a way to expand asynchronous offerings and collection of participant data. The CQIS contract for \$11 million and the higher education contract for \$2.5 million expands the selection of offerings and the target audience to include program leaders and technical assistance providers.

Professional Standards: The \$1.1 million for higher education accreditation will bring our public and private colleges in alignment with utilizing common professional standards through the NAEYC institution accreditation process. Students enrolled in these institutions will benefit from the accountability the accreditation systems expects and the assurance of common knowledge and skill development. Current data suggests about 255 students graduate from our early childhood programs in higher education institutions each year.

Data: With the addition of ProTraxx, we will soon be able to provide data regarding the number of participants per offering and evaluation information as feedback to inform our system moving forward.

The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood developed a Quality Improvement System, Elevate, that bridges licensing standards to accreditation standards, including accreditation standards for family childcare settings. Connecticut programs are licensed, accredited, or moving toward accreditation. Elevate focuses on simplicity, accessibility and leveraging existing health, safety, and quality assurance. Elevate offers a supportive structure for programs, increases transparency and clarity for families, and reduces state overhead expenses.

Technical Assistance Providers engaged under the QIS contract utilize the information presented here, and the resources offered in the provider support meetings, to: support connections across initiatives with program administrators so they may see these activities as inter-related and not singular events; promote reflective thinking with program staff to bring awareness to how their beliefs about their practice influence and shift over time toward enhanced competence and confidence. Coaching strategies used

to compare their understandings about practice across concepts and between QIS activities supports seeing the bigger picture rather than singular parts or events; engage all participants to think about their role in advancing the early childhood profession beginning with their learning experiences. Then, practice thinking about their impact on the systems they live within. For example, their impact on family, community, and state goals for all young children and families to be safe, healthy, learning and thriving. (See OEC vision, mission, and guiding principles). Their level of effort in their personal learning influences the quality of their practice, their program/setting, and beyond; and reflect upon their personal knowledge, as a technical assistance provider, on each activity to gain understanding of the various activities. This will spark awareness, connections and support their ability to seek opportunities to build bridges not previously constructed between technical assistance opportunities.

Elevate will also be the home for the states' access point to professional development opportunities provided to the field. Any person in the state who is looking for training to further develop their program, personal skills, or meet minimum requirements in the field, will be able to access information regarding professional development and learning opportunities through Elevate. This is being built into the new Quality Improvement System and will provide a more easily accessible access point for the field to view professional development and learning opportunities available to them. Technical Assistance Providers will be able to guide programs to this tool to help support programs in their growth.

1. Degrees and credentials earned during Oct 1 2022-Sept 30, 2023:
 - a. CDA credential = 178
 - b. Associate degree ECE = 89
 - c. Bachelor's degree or higher ECE = 83

2. Online health and safety orientation completions:
 - 6,552 completed Care4Kids Oct 1, 2022 to Sept 30, 2023
 - 405 FCC Owner in English / 197 FCC Owner in Spanish
 - 2,497 Partial Required Topics in English / 234 Partial Required Topics in Spanish
 - 3,083 All Required Topics in English /136 All Required Topics in Spanish
 - 35,806 completed Care4Kids total to date through Sept 30, 2022
 - 2,577 FCC Owner in English / 779 FCC Owner in Spanish
 - 20,159 Partial Required Topics in English / 425 Partial Required Topics in Spanish
 - 11,528 All Required Topics in English / 338 All Required Topics in Spanish

3. Scholarships = 2,910 awards (FFY23) to 372 individuals totaling \$1,348,561 awarded

4. Financial bonus/wage supplements: 61 awards (FFY23) totaling \$88,250 through Qualified Workforce Incentives, a program tied to nationally recognized education benchmarks

5. Career advising / support: 5 full time education advisors, one part time temp to 6/30/23, one full time temp, and one administrator processed the following:

- 24,105 education and training entries
- 37,514 documents (35,947 documents to individual accounts and 1,567 to program files)
- 415 approved OEC licensing head teacher applications
- 36 approved ECTC (Early Childhood Teacher Credential) applications
- 34,094 automatic uploads for successful training completions through partners: these include first aid / CPR / med admin / anaphylaxis med training completions through United Way for family home providers, and completions of training via OEC's ProTraxx feed, and online training via Registry accounts (Every confirmed staff member in a program has unlimited access to a full online training library which includes the Care4Kids health and safety trainings).

3) Improving early learning and development guidelines

Goal: To ensure the lead agency has research-based early learning and development guidelines appropriate for children birth to age 12, including children with special needs and dual language learners that are used to inform practice and professional development.

3.1 Early Learning and Development Guidelines

3.1.1 Spending - Early Learning and Development Guidelines:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to improve early learning and development guidelines during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

CCDF quality funds

Non-CCDF funds

CARES funds

CRRSA Funds

ARP Supplemental Discretionary

ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

Unable to report. Indicate reason:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on improving upon the development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines? **\$411004**

Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not capture in the item already reported: **QIS Division Education Consultant supported CT ELDS, CT DOTS, curriculum and assessment work and coordination efforts, as part of their responsibilities - this expense is not shown in the total.**

No

3.2 Progress Update

3.2.1 Progress Update - Early Learning and Development Guidelines:

Improving upon the development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 6.4.3 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

The Office of Early Childhood recognizes the NAEYC Workforce Blueprint and elements of the Build It Better Survey as guides for the development of a state professional development system. Since the last survey of Connecticut’s system was performed, the OEC has taken steps to address each element through the four policy lenses: compensation; integration of professional development across OEC divisions serving various child care and education sectors and settings; equity and workforce diversity; and quality assurance. As a first step in this work, the OEC contracted with the CT RESC Alliance and Early Childhood Associates (ECA) to conduct a multi-tiered needs assessment to determine technical assistance providers' learning needs, program setting consultation needs, program setting professional learning needs, and preferred delivery mechanisms. The report illustrated the needs assessment results on Technical Assistance (TA) providers' learning needs and their available support. ECA administered the needs assessment survey to individuals who are currently or in the past year have provided technical assistance across settings serving young children and their families, specifically targeting the OEC funded QIS activities. In November 2020, a user-friendly survey was distributed to 84 technical assistance providers throughout the State. The overall response rate was approximately 75% (with 63 individual respondents). The findings illustrate the needs of the TA providers' in areas such as professional growth and the design, delivery, and assessment of professional learning opportunities. These findings will inform modifications for technical assistance strategies for all OEC TA vendors and contractors.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 6.4.3 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **In order to facilitate the distribution and implementation of the CT Early Learning and Development Standards (CT ELDS), we printed and/or reprinted several key related documents. Printing of foundational OEC documents related to the early learning standards to provide to the ECE field included: Documents printed and shipped for distribution at trainings and via online order form (distribution process funded through other sources):CT ELDS-12,000 copies; CT ELDS Action Guide-25,000 copies; CT ELDS Poster: 18x24-10,500 copies (7500 in English, 3000 in Spanish)CT Documentation and Observation for Teaching System (CT DOTS) Manual-12,000 copies; CT DOTS Flipchart-12,000 copies; CT DOTS Observation Progression Books-12,000 copies; Kindergarten Brochure-25,000 copies in English, 10,000 in Spanish;**

In addition, work began on two introductory videos outlining the purpose, use, and layout of

the CT Early Learning and Development Standards (CT ELDS) and the aligned framework for formative and summative assessment, the CT Documentation and Observation for Teaching System (CT DOTS). It is expected that these videos will be completed in the fall of 2023.

Improvement efforts focused on providing ongoing training and coaching to programs, including both center-based and family child care providers, related to standards, curriculum, and assessment practices. Training opportunities included specific sessions on the CT ELDS, and the CT Documentation and Observation for Teaching System (CT DOTS), which serves as an authentic, observation-based assessment tool based on the CT ELDS. Scheduling of trainings has been adjusted in response to ongoing staffing challenges, with an added mechanism for programs to request program-wide trainings instead of sending individual teachers to previously scheduled trainings. This has helped to increase attendance at trainings. Data regarding participants trainings offered and participant completions are listed below:

Training Title: # of Trainings, # of Participants

Using CT ELDS in the Cycle of Intentional Teaching: Introduction: 9 trainings, 108 participants

Using CT ELDS in the Cycle of Intentional Teaching: Intermediate: 5 trainings, 60 participants

Using CT DOTS in the Cycle of Intentional Teaching: Introduction: 9 trainings, 144 participants

Using CT DOTS in the Cycle of Intentional Teaching: Intermediate: 5 trainings, 72 participants

Meaningful Curriculum: What is it? Why does it matter?: 8 trainings, 101 participants

Using Data to Improve Outcomes: 1 training, 4 participants

Supporting Diverse Learners: 1 training, 12 participants

32 programs received up to 72 hours of individualized coaching and training support related to standards, curriculum, and assessment practices between July of 2022 and June of 2023. 10 of those programs are continuing to receive a limited number of hours of coaching to sustain and build upon practices, beginning in September of 2023. An additional 26 new programs also began their engagement in coaching in September of 2023 and will be allocated up to 72 hours of coaching and training support through July of 2023. Programs engaged in coaching include public schools, license center-based programs, state funded programs, Head Start funded programs. Each year 2 programs were paired with a bilingual, Spanish-speaking coach. Half of the programs that receive coaching serve infant/toddlers, in addition to preschool. More than half of the programs engaged in coaching are not currently utilizing another OEC quality improvement supports.

4) Developing, implementing, or enhancing a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) and other transparent system of quality indicator

Goal: To ensure the lead agency implements a quality rating and improvement system, or other quality rating system, to promote high-quality early care and education programs.

4.1 Quality rating and improvement system status

4.1.1 QRIS or other system of quality improvement status:

Indicate the status and include a description of the lead agency's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) or other system of quality improvement during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

The lead agency QRIS is operating state- or territory-wide.

- General description of QRIS:

Quality Improvement System Status: Operating

Elevate is the Office of Early Childhood's (OEC) quality improvement system for licensed and license-exempt child care programs in family, group, and center-based settings. Our system gives child care providers the tools and guidance they need to improve their programs over time. Elevate is a Voluntary (not mandatory program with three (3) levels of engagement. Connecticut does not consider these tiers but is showing as 3 below.

Three (3) Levels of Engagement (Voluntary Program):

"Member" _by meeting OEC Licensing Requirements;

"Member+" _with commitment to setting goals with support from Service Navigators and access to continuous improvement

"Member Accredited" _achieve and maintain nationally recognized quality standards NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children), NAFCC (National Association for Family Child Care), Office of Head Start. Engage in a continuous improvement plan. Meet the requirements of the accrediting organization.

With Elevate, we don't evaluate or rate providers. Instead, we meet you where you are and help you grow your program however you want.

Elevate builds on Connecticut's licensing requirements and links to national accreditation standards. It also brings together OEC's existing technical

assistance and professional development opportunities with exciting new resources. Choose goals and set your own pace.

Get customized support from our Service Navigators: Service Navigators are the core of our system. They're experienced guides who can talk about your program's needs and direct you to resources.

Plan your progress as an Elevate member: Elevate offers 3 levels of engagement Member, Member+, and Member Accredited. As you work toward your goals, you can showcase your hard work and commitment to families.

Explore an Elevate focus area: How do you want to improve your program? Refresh your curriculum? Hire new staff? Upgrade your classroom? We've grouped our resources into 7 focus areas.

Build your team: No matter the size of your program, recruiting staff and building skills are key to its success.

Connect with families: Families are at the heart of your work as a child care provider. Find ways to communicate and resources you can share.

Enhance your environment: Explore ways to make sure your facility is safe, offer healthy meals, enrich the environment, and more.

Find resources for children and families: Sometimes families and children need support beyond what your program offers like help with developmental delays or mental health issues.

Get accredited: OEC strongly encourages programs to become nationally accredited. It means you're aiming for the highest level of quality in the care you provide.

Manage your business: Child care programs are businesses and we want to help yours succeed.

Support child development: Elevate offers resources that will deepen your understanding of how children learn and grow. You'll also learn practical

approaches you can apply right now in your classroom."

- How many tiers/levels? **3** [insert number of tiers below as required and describe each tier and check off which are high quality]
 - Tier/Level 1: **"Member" Level: Meeting OEC Licensing Requirements. Voluntary, not mandatory.**
[] High Quality
 - Tier/Level 2: **"Member+" Level: Commitment to setting goals with support from Service Navigators and access to continuous improvement. Voluntary, not mandatory.**

[] High Quality
 - Tier/Level 3: **"Member Accredited" Level: Achieve and maintain nationally recognized quality standards NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children), NAFCC (National Association for Family Child Care), Office of Head Start. Engage in a continuous improvement plan. Meet the requirements of the accrediting organization. Voluntary, not mandatory.**
[x] High Quality
 - Tier/Level 4:
[] High Quality
 - Tier/Level 5:
[] High Quality
 - Tier/Level 6:
[] High Quality
 - Tier/Level 7:
[] High Quality
 - Tier/Level 8:
[] High Quality
 - Tier/Level 9:
[] High Quality
 - Tier/Level 10:
[] High Quality
- Total number of licensed child care centers meeting high quality definition: **516**
- Total number of licensed family child care homes meeting high quality definition: **35**

- Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition: **384**
- Total number of children served by providers meeting high quality definition: **8,925 Children in CCDF programs (3,549 Infant/Toddlers + 4,350 Preschool Age + 1,026 Scholl Age children)**

The lead agency QRIS is operating a pilot (e.g., in a few localities, or only a few levels) but not fully operating state- or territory-wide.

- General description of pilot QRIS (e.g., in a few localities, or only a few levels):
- Which localities if not state/territory-wide?
- How many tiers/levels? [insert number of tiers below as required and describe each tier and check off which are high quality

- Tier/Level 1:
 High Quality
- Tier/Level 2:
 High Quality
- Tier/Level 3:
 High Quality
- Tier/Level 4:
 High Quality
- Tier/Level 5:
 High Quality
- Tier/Level 6:
 High Quality
- Tier/Level 7:
 High Quality
- Tier/Level 8:
 High Quality
- Tier/Level 9:
 High Quality
- Tier/Level 10:
 High Quality

- Total number of licensed child care centers meeting high quality definition:
- Total number of licensed family child care homes meeting high quality definition:
- Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition:
- Total number of children served by providers meeting high quality definition:

The lead agency is operating another system of quality improvement.

- General description of other system:

- Describe assessment scores, accreditation, or other metrics associated with this system:
 - Describe how “high quality” is defined in this system?
 - Total number of licensed child care centers meeting high quality definition:
 - Total number of licensed family child care homes meeting high quality definition:

 - Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition:
 - Total number of children served by providers meeting high quality definition:
- The lead agency does not have a QRIS or other system of quality improvement.
- Do you have a definition of high quality care?
 - Yes, define:
 - Total number of licensed child care centers meeting high quality definition:
 - Total number of licensed family child care homes meeting high quality definition:
 - Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition:
 - Total number of children served by providers meeting high quality definition:
 - No

4.1.2 Spending - Quality rating and improvement system status:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

4.2 Quality Rating and Improvement Systems participation

4.2.1 QRIS or other system of quality improvement participation:

What types of providers participated in the QRIS or other system of quality improvement during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023 (check all that apply)?

- Licensed child care centers
- Licensed family child care homes
- License-exempt providers
- Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy
- Early Head Start programs
- Head Start programs
- State Prekindergarten or preschool programs
- Local district-supported Prekindergarten programs
- Programs serving infants and toddlers
- Programs serving school-age children
- Faith-based settings
- Tribally operated programs
- Other. Describe:

Connecticut ECE providers have access to resources shared by the Office of Early Childhood. The current Quality Improvement Support (QIS) contract and the alignment to OEC supported efforts, such as the CCDF plan, NAEYC Power to the Profession initiative, and NAEYC accreditation support for childcare settings and higher education programs. This below listing only represents QIS contracted activities. Other initiatives such as Pyramid Model, WIDA, Staffed Family Child Care Networks, etc. play an important role in OEC professional learning offerings. As we continue to develop an all-inclusive OEC professional development system, a more comprehensive guide to all OEC professional learning opportunities and alignment connections may be developed.

1. Accreditation Quality Improvement Support (AQIS) is to offer technical assistance to selected program and public assistance regarding the NAEYC process and the NAEYC ten standards for accreditation.
2. Environment Rating Scales Capacity Building
3. Standards, Curriculum and Assessment
4. Fiscal Management Training
5. Trauma & Insecure Housing Training
6. CT Core Knowledge and Competency Framework (CKCs)
7. Early Childhood Teacher Credential (ECTC) - Individual Review Route or via CT's ECTC Approved Institutions
8. Adult Learning theory and practices are the backbone competencies that support all

professional learning design and implementation
9. Quality Assurance & Technical Assistance"

Additional details for Q. 4.1.1

Q. 4.1.1 Total number of CCDF providers meeting high quality definition: Total = 384

- a) Licensed child care centers # 280
- b) Licensed Group Home: # 1
- c) License exempt child care centers # 35
- d) Licensed Family child care homes # 68
- e) License exempt family child care home :# NA.
- f) In Home (care in child's home: #NA

Q. 4.1.1 Total number of (CCDF) children served by providers meeting high quality definition:

Total Number of CCDF children in high quality care:

Infant = 3,549 Define Age Group: B-35 months

Toddler: # (included above in B-35 months)

Preschool: = 4,350 Define Age Group: 3 yrs to kindergarten.

School Age: =1,026 Define Age Group: Post Kindergarten Other: NA

High Quality Care = National Accreditation from NAEYC, NAFCC, NEASC and LF's with an associate degree. Source: Impact - Integrated Eligibility System

- a) National Assoc. for the Education of Young Children, (NAEYC), New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)
- b) National Assoc. for the Education of Young Children, (NAEYC), New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)
- c) National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)

4.3 Quality Rating and Improvement Systems Benefits

4.3.1 Quality Rating and Improvement Systems Benefits:

What types of financial incentives or technical assistance are available for providers related to QRIS or other system of quality improvement? Check as many as apply.

- One-time grants, awards or bonuses
 - Licensed child care centers

- Licensed family child care homes
- On-going or periodic quality stipends
 - Licensed child care centers
 - Licensed family child care homes
- Higher CCDF subsidy rates (including tiered rating)
 - Licensed child care centers
 - Licensed family child care homes
- Ongoing technical assistance to facilitate participation in QRIS or improve quality of programs already participating in QRIS (or some other technical assistance tied to QRIS)
- Other. Describe

Ongoing Technical Assistance was provided during FFY 2023.

Elevate, the Office of Early Childhood’s (OEC) Quality Improvement System for licensed and license-exempt child care programs in family, group, and center-based settings, gives child care providers the tools and guidance they need to improve their programs over time. Elevate builds on Connecticut’s licensing requirements and links to national accreditation standards. It also brings together OEC’s existing technical assistance and professional development opportunities with exciting new resources. The system is built to provide ongoing technical assistance to providers in developing their Elevate Program Plans with Service Navigator support, as well as the ability to utilize the human connection of the Service Navigation team to connect to resources around needs defined by the program on an as needed and ongoing basis.

4.3.2 Spending - Quality Rating and Improvement Systems Benefits:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

4.4 Spending – Quality Rating and Improvement Systems

4.4.1 Spending – Quality Rating and Improvement Systems:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) related to QRIS or other quality rating systems during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? **\$1067348**

Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported.

CT Office of Early Childhood Quality Enhancement Staff , United Way of Connecticut Hub, and NAEYC Quality Rating Information System. Funding for staffing shown in other sections.

4.5 Progress Update

4.5.1 Progress Update – Quality Rating and Improvement Systems:

Developing, implementing, or enhancing a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) or other transparent system of quality indicators.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.3.6 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.
N/A

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.3.6 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **Elevate is the Office of Early Childhood’s (OEC) quality improvement system for licensed and license-exempt child care programs in family, group, and center-based settings. Our system gives child care providers the tools and guidance they need to improve their programs over time. With Elevate, we don’t evaluate or rate providers. Instead, we meet programs where they are and help them grow their program however they want, by supporting goal planning and action step development.**

Technical Assistance is provided to providers in developing their Elevate programs plans and connecting them to resources needed as defined by their own programmatic needs. With the Launch of Elevate in August 2023, 50 programs we supported with Technical Assistance through September 2023.

Technical assistance is provided during all inspections leading to program / provider improvement opportunities by the Licensing Specialist teams. During this year 1,801 (out of 4,892 total or 37%) of licensing inspections conducted had no violations found. In the previous year 45% of licensing inspections conducted (1,661 out of 3,032 total) had no violations found during their inspections. These numbers include license and license exempt providers and camps.

As of fall 2023 516 programs have their NAEYC Accreditation and 35 Family child care programs have their NAFCC accreditation. The main objective of Accreditation Quality Improvement Support (AQIS) is to offer technical assistance to selected programs and public assistance regarding the NAEYC process and the NAEYC ten standards for accreditation: Relationships, Curriculum, Teaching, Assessment of Child Progress, Health, Staff Competencies, Preparation, and Support Families, Community Relationships, Physical Environment, Leadership and Management. Technical assistance for these activities take on many forms, such as training, study groups, consultation, and coaching.

While the ten NAEYC standards provide an anchor to ground the majority of the QIS contract activities and other key initiatives also provide a foundation for quality improvement such as CT's CCDF plan where AQIS is connected to the CCDF plan regarding: CT CCDF Plan: improving the quality of childcare (CCDF 4.1.8), the use of CCDF funds toward accreditation support (CCDF 7.2.1(h)), and section 7.8 of the CCDF plan for pursuit of accreditation.

Rating Scales Capacity Building: The use of environment rating scales are common tools to look at a setting using a common scale in order to gain perspective from a third party. The QIS contract allows for building Connecticut's capacity of reliable raters for the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-3), Infant and Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS-3), and the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS-3). Funds allow for building a cadre, remaining reliable through practice across programs, and overviews for early childhood programs on the scales. This work supports the following criteria: NAEYC Standards: Physical Environment, Curriculum CT CCDF Plan: Systems of quality improvement (CCDF 7.3).

5) Improving the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers

Goal: Ensure adequate and stable supply of high quality child care with a qualified, skilled workforce to promote the healthy development of infants and toddlers. Please report on all activities funded by quality dollars and infant toddler set-aside.

5.1 Infant/Toddler Specialists

5.1.1 Infant/Toddler Specialists:

Did providers have access to infant/toddler specialists during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

Yes

- Number of specialists available to all providers
- Number of specialists available to providers serving children who receive CCDF
- Number of specialists available specifically trained to support family child care providers
- Number of providers served
- Total number of children reached

No, there are no infant/toddler specialists in the state/territory.

N/A. Describe: **In FFY2023, Connecticut did not have any OEC direct funded Infant/Toddler Specialists. Connecticut's Office of Early Childhood Quality Improvement and Licensing staff support and work with providers, as well as vendors in the state, including the six Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) provide guidance to child care providers on Infant/Toddler Relationship-caregiving practices, and health and safety practices. Birth to Three supports families when they have concerns about their children's development. The Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health (CT-AIMH) is a professional statewide non-profit organization that offers education and expertise in infant and early childhood mental health.**

5.1.2 Infant/Toddler Specialists Supports Provided:

If yes, what supports do the infant/toddler specialists provide?

Relationship-caregiving practices (or quality caregiving/developmentally appropriate practices)

On-site and virtual coaching

Health and safety practices

- Individualized professional development consultation (e.g., opportunities for or awareness on career growth opportunities, degreed/credential programs)
- Group professional development
- Family engagement and partnerships
- Part C early intervention services
- Mental health of babies, toddlers, and families
- Mental health of providers
- Behavioral Health
- Other. Describe **Connecticut's Office of Early Childhood Quality Improvement and Licensing staff support and work with providers, as well as vendors in the state, including the six Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) provide guidance to child care providers on Infant/Toddler Relationship-caregiving practices, and health and safety practices. Birth to Three supports families when they have concerns about their children's development. The Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health (CT-AIMH) is a professional statewide non-profit organization that offers education and expertise in infant and early childhood mental health.**

5.1.3 Spending – Infant/Toddler Specialists:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

5.2 Staffed Family Child Care Networks

5.2.1 Number and Description of Staffed Family Child Care Networks:

How many staffed family child care networks operated during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

[x] Number of staffed family child care networks: **6**

- o Describe what the network/hub provides to participating family child care providers:

Family Child Care Networks are one of OEC's key quality improvement supports for family child care programs. The Staffed Family Child Care Networks (SFCCN) are an identified strategy the OEC is using to increase the supply of infant and toddler care; improve the quality of licensed home-based child care; and expand the child care options available to working parents.

The Office of Early Childhood contracts with United Way of Connecticut (UWC) to serve as the superstructure, hub, augmenting, scaling, and coordinating the services of the regional staffed family child care networks. Operating under this master contract with OEC, the hub contracts directly with the regional networks and regularly convene to plan, coordinate, and deliver a suite of service. These community initiatives have paid staff with expertise helping family child care providers and they offer ongoing support services and resources.

The six SFCCN regional networks work closely with local providers and families. SFCCNs supports for providers includes: consultation through ongoing contact with network staff by phone and email; access to health consultations provided by nurse consultants; access to behavioral health experts from the Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP), professional development, licensing and national accreditation support.

The SFCCN also help licensed providers reduce the amount of time and effort they spend managing their business, so they can focus more on learning and communicating with children and families. These shared service agreements offer access to: group purchasing, tax preparation and access to Health Consultations.

[] No staffed family child care networks operate in state/territory

5.2.2 Spending - Staffed Family Child Care Networks:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

CCDF quality funds

Non-CCDF funds

CARES funds

CRRSA Funds

ARP Supplemental Discretionary

ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

5.3 Spending - Programs and services for infants and toddlers

5.3.1 Spending - Programs and services for infants and toddlers:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside), above and beyond to the 3% infant and toddler set-aside, to improve the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? **\$916391520**

Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported. **\$9,163,915 = \$717,500 East Conn for Quality RFP support QA Standards Trauma Informed CKC Reflection. \$1,000,000 Accredited Direct Services, \$1,010,841.50 includes work by TEAM, Hope for New Haven, Ed Advance, Social and Environmental Entrepreneurs, United Way of Western Connecticut, Pyramid Professional Development Coordinator, Family Child Care Network Coordinator, \$1,000,000 Workforce Pipeline Release 2; \$2.5M Connecticut State University Workforce Pipeline, \$9,930 Zoom Licenses, \$1.2M United Way Staffed Family Child Care Networks Hub, Westend Program for Infant Toddler Care (PITC), & Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health. \$947,000 Stabilization Payments round 3, United Way Hub, \$750,000 United Way Care 4 Kids.**

Direct Funding was not spent for Infant/Toddler specialists.

5.4 Progress Update

5.4.1 Progress Update - Programs and services for infants and toddlers:

Improving the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.4.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan. **Through a competitive bidding process the OEC awarded contracts for technical assistance activities to assist in the building of our Quality Improvement System. These activities include NAEYC Accreditation Support; Quality Assurance and Technical Assistance Provider Support; Implementation of Standards, Curriculum and Assessment Support; Environment Rating Scales Capacity Building; Trauma Informed Practice; Early Childhood Teacher Credential (ECTC) Individual Review Route; Fiscal and Business Management; Adult Learning In-Service Training; and Core Knowledge and Competency (CKC) Technical Assistance and Reflection Tools Support. Collectively, these professional learning and support activities provide an integrated and interdisciplinary system of supports for the development of individual skills and competencies and continuous program quality improvement. The OECs licensing requirements and enforcement are a foundation of the system, as well as indicators of base-line health and safety practices. The OECs developing QIS will identify three levels of program quality supported by an array of resources including those listed above to be delivered by the awarded contractors. Working with our research partner, the UConn School of Social Work, the OEC is developing data collection tools using learning management systems, data dashboards, and participant feedback to track and inform our system. While the QIS activities are being implemented, ongoing data collection and evaluation will be utilized from to improve services, inform resource development and to better target activities and resources to meet provider and program needs. The evaluation component of the 12 Family Child Care Networks (SFCCNs) is also under development to align with the three- level QIS system. During the fall of 2021, the SFCCNs will collect data aligned to metrics in five areas of service delivery including: Membership Level; Service Navigation and Participation; Licensing Supports and Recruitment; Business Supports and Practices; Family Engagement Outreach and Services; and Professional Development. The implementation of the BridgeCare software at CTs CCR & R 211 will expand metrics in the areas of early care and education supply and demand, family and provider demographics, resource and referral processes, and data collection related to emergency response functions. Data dashboards will provide succinct access to information for OEC, 211 and other relevant partners.**

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.4.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **The Staffed Family Child Care Networks (SFCCN) are an identified strategy the OEC is using to increase the supply of infant and toddler care; improve the quality of licensed home-based child care; and expand the child care options available to working parents. The Office of Early**

Childhood contracts with United Way of Connecticut (UWC) to serve as the superstructure, hub, augmenting, scaling, and coordinating the services of the regional staffed family child care networks. Operating under this master contract with OEC, the hub contracts directly with the regional networks and regularly convene to plan, coordinate, and deliver a suite of service. These community initiatives have paid staff with expertise helping family child care providers and they offer ongoing support services and resources. The six SFCCN regional networks work closely with local providers and families.

SFCCNs supports for providers includes: consultation through ongoing contact with network staff by phone and email; access to health consultations provided by nurse consultants; access to behavioral health experts from the Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP), professional development, licensing and national accreditation support. The SFCCN also help licensed providers reduce the amount of time and effort they spend managing their business, so they can focus more on learning and communicating with children and families. These shared service agreements offer access to: group purchasing, tax preparation and access to Health Consultations.

The Staffed Family Child Care Networks employ eleven network staff who provide consultation to family child care providers on topics related to licensing, becoming a licensed provider and completing the national accreditation process through the National Association of Family Child Care. As of September 30, 2023 SFCCN reported 710 active members of those active members, 64 were supported in the NAFCC process. 179 FCC providers were provided technical assistance related to licensing compliance and three unlicensed individuals became licensed through their SFCCN.

In FFY2023, Connecticut did not have any OEC direct funded Infant/Toddler Specialists or specialist work. Connecticut's Office of Early Childhood Quality Improvement and Licensing staff support and work with providers, as well as vendors in the state, including the six Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) provide guidance to child care providers on Infant/Toddler Relationship-caregiving practices, and health and safety practices. Birth to Three supports families when they have concerns about their children's development. The Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health (CT-AIMH) is a professional statewide non-profit organization that offers education and expertise in infant and early childhood mental health.

6) Establishing, expanding, modifying, or maintaining a statewide system of child care resource and referral services

Goal: Lead agency provides: services to involve families in the development of their children, information on a full range of child care options, and assistance to families in selecting child care that is appropriate for the family's needs and is high quality as determined by the lead agency.

6.1 Spending – Child Care Resource and Referral Services

6.1.1 Spending – Child Care Resource and Referral Services:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to establish, expand, modify, or maintain a statewide CCR&R during October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

CCDF quality funds

Non-CCDF funds

CARES funds

CRRSA Funds

ARP Supplemental Discretionary

ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

Unable to report. Indicate reason:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) to **establish, expand, modify, or maintain a statewide CCR&R** during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? **\$2410473**

Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent **Funding used for 2-1-1 Child Care staff specialist support at United Way of Connecticut, technology improvements by Deloitte with better user accessibility for families to the Care 4 Kids Parent Portal, and Odonnell company social media campaigns and outreach to families.**

No

6.2 Progress Update

6.2.1 Progress Update – Child Care Resource and Referral Services:

Establishing, expanding, modifying or maintaining a statewide system of child care resource and referral services.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.5.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

Connecticut's CCR & R provides a robust website which provides information to families and providers on a large array of resources aligned to CCDF requirements and other statewide relevant activities and topics. The CCR & R tracks website traffic and updates information based on views and history. The CCR & R also supports family childcare providers through training and technical assistance on licensing and health and safety standards. Statewide data on the numbers of providers who receive the technical assistance and other related health and safety training supports.

In addition, monthly internal meetings are held with OEC program managers to review the CCR&R activities they are directly involved with, the expectation of the activities and deliverables. Program managers provide a detailed account of progress and performance. Monthly external meetings with the CCR&R are then held where all activities of the UCOA are reviewed including deliverables. At this time the CCR&R is provided specific feedback on performance, activities and deliverables. The UCOA and statement of work is adjusted as needed. Several new processes have been implemented so that both the OEC and the CCR&R have a shared understanding of the processes and all steps of the process can be checked to ensure fidelity of implementation. For example, with new initiatives, the OEC is tasked with drafting the outline and goal of the project, and transmittal when necessary. The CCR&R is then tasked with drafting the language for messaging. The CCR&R then provides the draft announcement and FAQs to OEC to review. At this meeting, the OEC and CCR&R confirm the messaging, and the modes for messaging to the public. The CCR&R then develops training sequence for their staff and the materials needed for training for implementation of the new project. The CCR&R sends these to the CCDF team for approval prior to the start of training. The OEC provides feedback and final approval of the training outline and materials. The OEC then provides the final approval for outward messaging and CCR&R's training and subsequent business practices related to the new initiative. Documented processes like this allow for time-sensitive information to get out to families and providers, as well as stand up the necessary business practices in a timely manner so families and providers receive what they need. A

recent example of this would be the standing up the internal business practices needed for rolling out Stabilization Funds' information, application, and payments. These were in place and funds were wired directly to providers at record rate.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.5.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: Connecticut's CCR & R provides a robust website which provides information to families and providers on a large array of resources aligned to CCDF requirements and other statewide relevant activities and topics. The CCR & R tracks website traffic and updates information based on views and history. The CCRR provides real time supply and demand data, aiding in helping families find available openings in child care programs.

The CCR & R also supports family child care providers through technical assistance on licensing, health and safety standards and child care subsidy provider requirements.

Early Care providers count on 211 Child Care to access trainings and supports to improve their program and business operations and to navigate state and federal funding opportunities. 211 Child Care delivered Health and Safety trainings (CPR/First Aid: (240) Providers, (50) Classes, Med Admin(236) Providers, (38) Classes, and Epi Pen Refresher (188) Providers, (98) Classes, ~9000 providers received licensing background checks as a service provided through the CCRR. ~1900 home based providers attended mandatory child care subsidy provider orientation training delivered through the CCRR.

The CCR & R providers statewide data, on quarterly basis, on the number of providers who receive the technical assistance and other related health and safety training supports.

The CCRR provided referrals and information via voice, chat and email to 236 providers on topics related to licensing and accessing health and safety trainings.

In addition, monthly internal meetings are held with OEC program managers to review the CCR&R activities they are directly involved with, the expectation of the activities and deliverables. Program managers provide a detailed account of progress and performance. 211 Child Care: fulfills the Child Care Resource and Referral mandate and handles child care referrals and requests 102,630 service request referrals including and pertaining to: Infant (40,025), toddler (21,573), preschool (24,255), and school-age (10,802) child care; (3873) provider training, (1424) child care subsidies (140) licensing/certification/accreditation

7) Facilitating compliance with lead agency requirements for inspection, monitoring, health and safety standards and training, and lead agency licensing standards

Goal: To ensure child care providers maintain compliance with lead agency licensing, inspection, monitoring, and health and safety standards and training.

7.1 Complaints about providers

7.1.1 Number of Complaints about providers:

How many complaints were received regarding providers during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? **967**

7.1.2 Spending - Complaints about providers:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity (including maintaining a hotline)?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

CCDF quality funds

Non-CCDF funds

CARES funds

CRRSA Funds

ARP Supplemental Discretionary

ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

7.2 Licensing Staff

7.2.1 Number of Licensing Staff:

How many licensing staff positions were there in the state or territory during October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023? Number of staff **33**

7.2.2 Spending – Licensing Staff:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

7.3 Health and Safety Standards Coaching and Technical Assistance

7.3.1 Coaching or technical assistance on health and safety standards as a result of inspection:

How many child care programs received coaching or technical assistance to improve their understanding and adherence to CCDF health and safety standards as a result of an inspection or violation during October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023? **6,426**

Connecticut does provide Technical Assistance during all inspections, and for FY23 we conducted a total of 6,426 inspections. Note: Youth Camp Exempt or Licensed Youth Camp inspections are not included in this number.

7.3.2 Spending - Coaching or technical assistance on health and safety standards as a result of inspection:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

7.4 Spending - Compliance with health, safety, and licensing standards

7.4.1 Spending - Compliance with health, safety, and licensing standards:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on facilitating compliance with lead agency requirements for inspections, monitoring, health and safety standards and training, and lead agency licensing standards during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? **\$4668345**

Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported.

Staff and compliance effort for inspections, background checks, monitoring, health and safety standards and training. Funding used for the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) Licensing Staff, in office and in the field, temporary staff support, Background Checks, Fingerprinting of child care providers, OEC Early Care and Education staff, OEC Legal Staff, National Association for Regulatory Administration Seminar and other health and safety related activities.

7.5 Progress Update

7.5.1 Progress Update - Compliance with health, safety, and licensing standards:

Facilitating compliance with lead agency requirements for inspection, monitoring, health and safety standards and training, and lead agency licensing standards.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.6.3 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan. **Through competitive bidding process the OEC awarded contracts for Quality Improvement Supports to assist in the building of our quality improvement system. Licensing requirements and enforcement are the foundation in our system and used as an indicator of base-line level of health and safety. The three levels of the QIS will identify the amount and level of engagement providers have with the system and track access and use of supports as progress of continuous improvement. The data collected during onsite licensing monitoring and inspection and the data collected from programs as they participate in quality improvement supports will be utilized to measure progress in improving program quality. In addition OEC tracks the contractors' ability to manage this work through regular reporting on the implementation of contract activities, quarterly fiscal reports on expenditures, and bi-monthly face -to face-**

meetings to review data on all components of the contract and make necessary mid-course adjustments.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.6.3 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: Licenses Issued This Year: Child Care Centers = 62; Group Child Care Homes = 3; Family Child Care Homes =171 ; Youth Camps = 50 ; During this year, 36.81% of inspections conducted (1,801 out of 4,892 total) had no violations found. In the previous year, 45% of inspections conducted (1,867 out of 4,113 total) had no violations found. These numbers include license exempt providers and camps.

The Office of Early Childhood Licensing staff include: 1 Division Director; 6 Child Care Licensing Supervisors; 33 Child Care Licensing Specialists; 1 Temporary Worker Retiree; 2 License & Applications Analysts; 1 Secretary. These numbers do not include the Youth Camp staff (1 Supervising Nurse Consultant, 1 Health Program Associate, 1 Processing Tech, 1 Nurse Consultant (VACANT)

8) Evaluating and assessing the quality of child care programs and services, including evaluating how programs positively impact children

Goal: Lead agency investment in effective quality improvement strategies using reliable data from evaluation and assessment

8.1 Evaluation and assessment of center-based programs

8.1.1 Evaluation and assessment of center-based programs:

What measure(s) or tool(s) were used to evaluate and assess the quality of and effective practice in center-based programs during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

QRIS

CLASS

ERS

FCCERS

ITERS

State evaluation tool. Describe **We do not Evaluate and Assess quality and effective practice. However the above and below tools are available to Center-based programs.**

Core Knowledge and Competency Framework

Other. Describe 'Elevate (<https://www.ctoec.org/elevate>) is the Office of Early Childhood's (OEC) quality improvement system for licensed and license-exempt child care programs in center-based settings, as well as licensed family and group child care homes. Our system gives child care providers the tools and guidance they need to examine and reflect upon their program's current state and level of quality as well as support plans to improve the quality of their programs over time. Meeting our state's standards for licensing is one measurement of quality, while meeting and maintaining NAEYC Accreditation Standards is another measurement of quality. In addition, programs have the opportunity for using self-reflection tools to evaluate their program's quality and effectiveness. The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) worked with NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) to develop a number of these self-reflection tools. They included: For center-based programs: Curriculum Planning: How your program supports children's learning; Program Professional Development Plan: Your professional growth plans; Connecting with Families: How your program communicates with families; Facility: Your space and setting

The Environment Rating Scales (ERS) are a series of tools designed to assess process quality

in settings serving young children. Process quality refers to children’s experiences in the observed care setting, The ITERS is a classroom assessment tool designed to measure the quality of group programs for infants and toddlers (birth-age 3) through classroom observations and staff interviews. This tool is used in state funded infant/toddler classrooms to assess quality.

Connecticut’s Documentation & Observation for Teaching System (CT DOTS) is a framework to guide early care and education providers in a process of monitoring children’s progress on the developmentally appropriate skills, abilities, and behaviors in the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (CT ELDS).

Used in conjunction with the CT ELDS, CT DOTS is a foundation for: Gathering data about children’s skills, abilities, and behaviors; Planning additional supports (e.g., curriculum, instruction, professional development, family activities, adult support); Summarizing evidence of children’s progress; Communicating around common goals. CT DOTS supports early care and education providers to: Observe children in naturally occurring situations; Plan engaging experiences for children and observe their behavior and skills; Partner with families to share information about their children; Plan additional supports (e.g., curriculum, instruction, professional development, family activities, adult support) Communicate about common goals for children. CT OEC also encourages programs and families to download and access Sparkler, a mobile app that helps parents to check in on how their child is doing against key milestones and provides activities to spark their early learning. <https://www.ctoec.org/sparkler/>

Do not evaluate and assess quality and effective practice

8.1.2 Spending - Evaluation and assessment of center-based programs:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

CCDF quality funds

Non-CCDF funds

CARES funds

- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

8.2 Evaluation and assessment of family child care programs

8.2.1 Evaluation and assessment of family child care programs:

What measure(s) or tool(s) were used to evaluate and assess the quality of and effective practice in family child care programs during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

- QRIS
- CLASS
- ERS
- FCCERS
- ITERS

State evaluation tool. Describe

Connecticut’s Documentation & Observation for Teaching System (CT DOTS) is a framework to guide early care and education providers in a process of monitoring children’s progress on the developmentally appropriate skills, abilities, and behaviors in the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (CT ELDS).

Used in conjunction with the CT ELDS, CT DOTS is a foundation for: Gathering data about children’s skills, abilities, and behaviors; Planning additional supports (e.g., curriculum, instruction, professional development, family activities, adult support); Summarizing evidence of children’s progress; Communicating around common goals.

CT DOTS supports early care and education providers to: Observe children in naturally occurring situations; Plan engaging experiences for children and observe their behavior and skills; Partner with families to share information about their children; Plan additional supports (e.g., curriculum, instruction, professional development, family activities, adult support) Communicate about common goals for children.

CT OEC also encourages programs and families to download and access Sparkler, a mobile app that helps parents to check in on how their child is doing against key milestones and

provides activities to spark their early learning. <https://www.ctoec.org/sparkler/>

Core Knowledge and Competency Framework

Other. Describe

Measure or Tool evaluate quality-

1) Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale (FCCERS) funded OEC Staffed Family Child Care Networks used the FCCERS rating tool.

Business Administration Scale (BAS) used by the OEC funded Staffed Family Child Care Networks.

The Staffed Family Child Care Networks are one of OEC's key quality improvement supports for family child care programs.

The overall vision for the Networks is ensure that: 1) more Family Child Care (FCC) providers become licensed in their regions;

2) existing Family Child Care (FCC) providers continue to operate their programs; and,

3) Family Child Care (FCC) providers in their regions access the specialized services that they need in order to improve and maintain program quality.

Each of the funded networks offers providers services in a Tiered Service delivery model.

Tier 1 Services are offered by all Networks. All Networks are expected to grow, retain and engage members. Networks are expected to support interested individuals in attaining licensure as Family Child Care (FCC) providers, and to support existing FCC members to maintain licensure.

Networks are expected to offer training and coaching designed to support quality improvement, and to make their members aware and refer members to a myriad of more intensive state wide business and pedagogical services.

The Staffed Family Child Care Networks are one of OEC's key quality improvement supports for family child care programs. The overall vision for the Networks is ensure that: 1) more Family Child Care (FCC) providers become licensed in their regions; 2) existing Family Child Care (FCC) providers continue to operate their programs; and, 3) Family Child Care (FCC) providers in their regions access the specialized services that they need in order to improve and maintain program quality.

Each of the networks offers providers services. All Networks are expected to grow, retain and engage members. Networks are expected to support interested individuals in attaining licensure as Family Child Care (FCC) providers, and to support existing FCC members to maintain licensure. Networks are expected to offer training designed to support quality improvement including achieving NAFCC accreditation. Networks also refer members to a myriad of more intensive state wide business and pedagogical services.

The OEC contractors directly with the United Way of CT (UWC) to serve as the Hub, an intermediary organization that operates as the superstructure for SFCCN service delivery system. The UWC is responsible for augmenting, scaling, and coordinating the services of the regional staffed family child care networks; and for managing the performance of this system and the individual networks. United Way of Connecticut (UWC) released a request for proposal to select agencies to serve as the SFCCN operator in six regions.

The networks began serving providers in Oct 2022

Networks supported: 710 Active SFCCN members Active membership defined as: signed an MOU describing interest in and commitment to participating in the SFCCN by: - attended at least one Network meeting, - been in telephone contact with the Network at least once during the quarter, and - attended at least one Network training in the past two quarters - created an account in the OEC's Early Childhood Professional Registry (www.ccacregistry.org) - created an account in CtShares _

528 provider members referred for nurse consultation.

320 provider members referred to Early Childhood Consultation Partnership.

539 provider members referred for business support.

3 provider members who became licensed

QRIS _ ELEVATE:

Elevate (<https://www.ctoec.org/elevate>) is the Office of Early Childhood's (OEC) quality improvement system for licensed and license-exempt child care programs in center-based settings, as well as licensed family and group child care homes. Our system gives child care providers the tools and guidance they need to examine and reflect upon their program's current state and level of quality as well as support plans to improve the quality of their programs over time. Meeting our state's standards for licensing is one measurement of quality, while meeting and maintaining NAEYC Accreditation Standards is another measurement of quality. In addition, programs have the opportunity for using self-reflection

tools to evaluate their program’s quality and effectiveness. The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) worked with NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) to develop a number of these self-reflection tools. They included: For center-based programs: Curriculum Planning: How your program supports children’s learning; Program Professional Development Plan: Your professional growth plans; Connecting with Families: How your program communicates with families; Facility: Your space and setting.

FCCERS_Measure or Tool evaluate quality-

1) Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale (FCCERS) funded by OEC Staffed Family Child Care Networks used the FCCERS rating tool. Business Administration Scale (BAS) used by the OEC funded Staffed Family Child Care Networks. The Staffed Family Child Care Networks are one of OEC's key quality improvement supports for family child care programs. The overall vision for the Networks is ensure that: 1) more Family Child Care (FCC) providers become licensed in their regions; 2) existing Family Child Care (FCC) providers continue to operate their programs; and, 3) Family Child Care (FCC) providers in their regions access the specialized services that they need in order to improve and maintain program quality.

Each of the funded networks offers providers services in a Tiered Service delivery model. Tier 1 Services are offered by all Networks. All Networks are expected to grow, retain and engage members. Networks are expected to support interested individuals in attaining licensure as Family Child Care (FCC) providers, and to support existing FCC members to maintain licensure. Networks are expected to offer training and coaching designed to support quality improvement, and to make their members aware and refer members to a myriad of more intensive state wide business and pedagogical services.

Do not evaluate and assess quality and effective practice

8.2.2 Spending - Evaluation and assessment of family child care programs:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

CCDF quality funds

Non-CCDF funds

- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

8.3 Spending - Evaluation and assessment of child care programs

8.3.1 Spending - Evaluation and assessment of child care programs:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on evaluating and assessing the quality of child care programs, practice, or child development during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?
\$0

Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason: **Amount included in other categories for Connecticut Office of Early Childhood staff and Quality Rating and Improvement System staff and materials.**

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported. **Amount included in other categories for Connecticut Office of Early Childhood staff and Quality Rating and Improvement System staff and materials.**

8.4 Progress Update

8.4.1 Progress Update - Evaluation and assessment of child care programs:

Evaluating and assessing the quality of child care programs and services, including evaluating how programs positively impact children.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.7.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan. **The OECs Quality Improvement System includes the development of a logic model to define inputs, outputs and outcomes, grounded in our definition of quality as it is operationalized at the system, program, classroom and provider levels. With the logic model finalized, our evaluation will begin by honing in on program quality at the system level. Evaluation of program quality will be aimed at the features that represent each of the three levels: Level 1- Licensing**

Status; Level 2 - Benchmarks of Quality; and Level 3 -Accreditation Status. Our Quality Improvement System will focus on empowering and training providers, staff, and program leaders to engage in continuous improvement around monitoring children’s learning and development and adult-child interactions. Data collection on the quality and variability of individual classrooms will not be monitored at the state level. Initially, we will evaluate the overall system of early care and education quality through descriptive analyses of program quality at the state level. We believe this is important foundational work for evaluating system quality. Once this foundation is established, the OEC will incorporate data systems integration, compliance monitoring systems, and evaluation of the use of state funds, in addition to the alignment of early learning and development standards to early childhood assessment.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.7.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: Elevate is the Office of Early Childhood’s (OEC) quality improvement system for licensed and many license-exempt child care programs in family, group, and center-based settings.

Elevate offers 3 levels of engagement: Member, Member+, and Member Accredited. Licensed and license-exempt child care providers start out as Members. Member+ is for providers who created an Elevate Program Plan to demonstrate their commitment to continuing to improve the care they offer. Becoming accredited is the final level of engagement in Elevate. Accreditation demonstrates providers meet nationally recognized quality standards, including those from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) as well as Head Start approval. With Elevate, providers control their engagement in quality improvement and families have the information they need to make informed choices.

Connecticut OEC built Elevate to leverage existing infrastructure for state licensing and national accreditation. Our original conceptualization of the bridge between licensing and accreditation was focused on the development of a set of quality benchmarks for providers. These benchmarks were based on curriculum planning, professional development, family connections, and facilities. In March 2022, we shared this approach with approximately 500 providers through focus groups, webinars, surveys, and emails. Providers asked for access to supports for continuous improvement regardless of setting or accreditation status. Based on this feedback, we moved toward a three-level system based on provider engagement (Member, Member+, Member Accredited), with a focus on improving access to quality improvement resources for all providers. We created Service Navigation, a team of OEC staff devoted to talking to providers about their needs and identifying resources to support their work.

Connecticut OEC launched the Elevate Program Plan for the Member+ Level of Engagement in July 2023. As of December 2023, there were 554 License and License Exempt Member Accredited programs, 119 Member+ programs, and 2,741 Licensed and License Exempt Member programs in Connecticut. Prior to that the December counting, the numbers of programs at licensing (Member) and accredited (Member Accredited) levels were not tracked by Elevate. In the future, we will track programs for all Elevate Levels of Engagement.

OEC Service Navigators offered technical assistance by supporting programs with Elevate Program Plan development with defining SMART goals and action steps and connecting providers to resources. OEC Service Navigators provided 394 Technical Assistance supports between August and December 2023 via phone calls, emails, and site visits. Later in 2024, the OEC will launch a data collection system for Elevate Program Plans. This system will bolster our efforts to report on and support continuous quality improvement for all child care programs.

Elevate (<https://www.ctoec.org/elevate>) is the Office of Early Childhood's (OEC) quality improvement system for licensed and license-exempt child care programs in center-based settings, as well as licensed family and group child care homes. Our system gives child care providers the tools and guidance they need to examine and reflect upon their program's current state and level of quality as well as support plans to improve the quality of their programs over time.

Meeting our state's standards for licensing is one measurement of quality, while meeting and maintaining NAEYC Accreditation Standards is another measurement of quality. In addition, programs have the opportunity for using self-reflection tools to evaluate their program's quality and effectiveness. The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) worked with NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) to develop a number of these self-reflection tools. They included: For center-based programs: Curriculum Planning: How your program supports children's learning; Program Professional Development Plan: Your professional growth plans; Connecting with Families: How your program communicates with families; Facility: Your space and setting.

Data on ERS, BAS, CT DOTS tools is not available at this time. Connecticut will be sure to include this data for future reports related to Evaluation and Assessment.

9) Supporting child care providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation

Goal: Support child care programs and FCCs in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation by a national accrediting body with demonstrated, valid, and reliable program standards of quality

9.1 Accreditation Support

9.1.1 Accreditation Support:

How many providers did the lead agency support in their pursuit of accreditation (e.g., financial incentives, technical assistance with the accreditation process, coaching/mentoring by accredited programs) during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

Yes, providers were supported in their pursuit of accreditation

- a. Licensed center-based programs **124**
- b. License-exempt center-based programs **49**
- c. Licensed family child care homes **64**
- d. License-exempt family child care homes (care in providers' home) **0**
- e. Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy **113**

No lead agency support given to providers in their pursuit of accreditation.

N/A. Describe:

9.1.2 Spending – Accreditation Support:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on accreditation during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? **\$37626**

Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent
**EastConn Accreditation Support AQIS, NAEYC Books, CTAEYC Sponsorship,
-\$238,287.76 Reimburse (subtraction from) accreditation fees paid in prior year.**

No

9.2 Progress Update

9.2.1 Progress Update – Accreditation Support:

Supporting providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.8.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan. **CTs Early Childhood Professional Registry monitors progress and achievement of NAEYC and NAFCC accreditation. The data tracked includes benchmarks in each accreditation system including submission of required documents to national accrediting bodies, achievement of staff qualifications requirements in each system and for CT's qualifications requirements, and the number of individuals who have achieved compliance with CCDF Professional Development Requirements. Specific progress indicators related to Accreditation include: (1) Increased number of NAEYC and NAFCC accreditations (2) Increased number of qualified staff enrolled in Workforce registry (3) Increased number of providers meeting workforce requirements. OEC is expanding monitoring of accreditation metrics for state funded programs as a precursor to more robust data collection in CT's Quality Improvement System.**

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.8.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **Connecticut's Accreditation Quality Improvement Supports is a statewide initiative that provides programs access to a team of staff (facilitators) with expertise in continuous program improvement using the NAEYC standards and assessment items as the framework for growth.**

Accreditation Quality Improvement Support (AQIS) is free and open to all child care providers engaged in quality improvement, even providers not actively pursuing or maintaining NAEYC Accreditation with the understanding that best practices are the foundation of quality.

The CT AQIS is established under CT General Statutes to provide a "system of accreditation facilitation to assist early childhood education and child care programs in achieving national standards and program improvement". The Office of Early Childhood establishes this system of

support through contracts with agencies that hire staff to implement the CT AQIS model. The contract details the duties and responsibilities of the contractor (grantee agency); the OEC; and the joint responsibilities of the two; fiscal provisions; and contractual requirements for both entities.

The regional facilitators are employed by agencies across the state and ensure a local/regional presence within a statewide system related to high quality as defined by NAEYC Accreditation. These staff have a direct relationship with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), participating in regular conference calls, National AQIS Meetings, and trainings at the NAEYC Annual Conference and Professional Learning Institute. CT AQIS staff is trained in facilitation, accreditation, and best practices to assist early childhood programs in the important and ongoing process of quality improvement.

Programs pursuing NAEYC accreditation for the first time or those going through the reaccreditation process may apply at specific times for individualized quality improvement support. Accepted programs are matched to a designated AQIS facilitator, for the duration of their supports to foster relationship-based coaching and continuity. Under the guidance of the AQIS Facilitator, the program documents the NAEYC Accreditation process through the establishment of both a timeline and a program improvement plan to drive progress toward the goal of achieving and/or maintaining NAEYC Accreditation. Programs receiving individualized technical assistance get:

Monthly visit to work on program's NAEYC Accreditation timeline and action plan.

Monthly support group meetings with other program administrators from the region, led by AQIS facilitators to provide NAEYC updates and share best practices content.

Phone and email access to AQIS facilitator for NAEYC Accreditation support.

Priority enrollment for program staff in free professional development offerings.

AQIS also provides free professional development opportunities for providers state-wide. The topics and activities below are discussed and planned collaboratively with the OEC and statewide facilitation group to ensure consistent content and format statewide. These offerings include:

NAEYC Accreditation Overview: Provides overview of accreditation process, details revised

system changes, and information on AQIS application process. For programs new to accreditation and those currently accredited.

Study Group Sessions: Free professional development opportunities, open to all providers, that takes a deep dive into NAEYC's best practice standards, system, and accreditation readiness.

Satellite Activities: Free professional development activities, open to all providers, that connect to best practices and incorporate at least 2 NAEYC standards.

Administrator Forum: For providers engaged in accreditation renewal process who are not receiving individualized support to share practices, success, and problem-solve challenges related to NAEYC Re-Accreditation process and standards.

Office Hours: Providers may connect with facilitation staff from their region to answer questions, address concerns, and provide resources related to NAEYC standards and assessment items, NAEYC Accreditation process or AQIS. Office hours and contact information published on website.

During the last fiscal year the following occurred:

- Increased AQIS capacity from 7 FTE AQIS Facilitators to 13 FTE AQIS Facilitators.

- 173 programs received individualized technical assistance through AQIS.

- 124 are licensed center-based providers and 49 are licensed-exempt programs.

- 113 of the programs accept and/or serve children who receive CCDF subsidy.

- 66 programs were seeking NAEYC Accreditation for the first time and

- 107 were renewing their NAEYC Accreditation.

AQIS Facilitators had contact with 132 providers during their office hours, the most common concerns/issues raised/addressed were:

- NAEYC Accreditation process general questions

- Clarification on NAEYC standards and assessment items

- NAEYC Portfolio questions

- AQIS Application

- 45 AQIS professional development offerings were available to providers.

- 265 Early Childhood staff participated in AQIS offerings.

To assist providers to achieve and maintain NAEYC Accreditation, the OEC is funding the cost of associated fees by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). This alleviates the burden of these costs, allowing providers to focus their efforts on achieving and maintaining compliance with standards and directing their funds to quality improvement. Programs are eligible for funds if they are physically located in Connecticut and are currently accredited by NAEYC or new to NAEYC accreditation. 429 programs located in CT utilized these

funds to cover NAEYC fees.

Through CT's Quality Improvement System, Elevate, providers can utilize the Elevate Program Plan to develop program goals. The plan can be utilized as the foundation to start the process of moving through the Accreditation process by developing action steps with the goal of accreditation, or the plan can be utilized as a the NAEYC program plan for ongoing quality improvement, as it is aligned. Providers can work with the Service Navigation team to develop their goals and action steps to best met their program needs and obtain resources to support them along the way.

Supports and success of the work of the SFFNC for Licensed Family Child Care providers may be seen through a subset of providers that achieved NAFCC Accreditation and participate in the Care 4 Kids - Child Care Subsidy program. The unduplicated number of Accredited Licensed Family Providers in SFY2022 = 65 and in SFY 2023 = 69 (6% increase). With an average monthly number of these Accredited Licensed Family Providers in SFY2022 = 53 and in SFY 2023 = 60 (13% increase).

10) Supporting providers in the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development

Goal: Assist programs to meet high-quality comprehensive program standards relating to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development

10.1 High-Quality Program Standards

10.1.1 High-Quality Program Standards:

How did the state or territory help providers develop or adopt high quality program standards during October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023?

QRIS, check which indicators the lead agency has established:

- Health, nutrition, and safety of child care settings
- Physical activity and physical development in child care settings
- Mental health of children
- Learning environment and curriculum
- Ratios and group size
- Staff/provider qualifications and professional development
- Teacher/provider-child relationships
- Teacher/provider instructional practices
- Family partnerships and family strengthening
- Other. Describe:

Early Learning Guidelines

State Framework. Describe

Core Knowledge and Competencies

Other. Describe

Service Navigators, the human connection in CT's Quality Improvement System, Elevate, provided technical assistance to 50 programs around developing program goals, building action steps and submitting Elevate Program Plans for leveling up in the states new Quality Improvement System between June 2023 and September 2023.

N/A – did not help provider develop or adopt high quality program standards

10.1.2 Spending - High-Quality Program Standards:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) to support providers in the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? **\$16692436**

Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported.

\$863,600 for Pyramid Materials and supports, conferences, \$900,000 (CRRSA) on Sparkler ASQ child screenings and support for families, \$550,000 (CRRSA) Connecticut Head Start, \$500,000 (CCDF) in Accreditation for Direct Services and \$7.36M (ARPA Disc) in the 20% percent increase "accreditation Bonus" to equal 25% for Licensed Center Care 4 Kids CCDF Subsidy providers, \$1.17 (ARPA Disc) for Connecticut Department of Children and Families, Early Childhood Consultation Project (ECCP) with providers and families, and \$1.27M (CRRSA)+ \$1.15M + \$6.2M in NAEYC & NAFCC Accreditation supports and fees and AQIS Contracts. Total of \$19,947,954.19 spent minus \$3,255,518.42 (CRRSA) in the below 'reimbursements' = \$16,692,435.77.

Reimbursement of -\$2,779,870.70 in funds from Summer Enrichment expansion prior payments for SEEP-FRC and SEEP=HS, not eligible for this funding.

Reimbursement of -\$475,647.72 in funds initially paid to summer family fee for Child Day Care and School Readiness, not eligible for CRRSA funding.

No

10.2 Progress Update

10.2.1 Progress Update - High-Quality Program Standards:

Supporting the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.9.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan. **The OEC currently tracks metrics for licensing and accreditation. As our QIS develops, the OEC will build more advanced metrics directly linked to the three levels of the system that document provider improvements at each level. We will track progress from Level 1 to Level 2 and from Level 2 to Level 3; the corresponding use of quality improvement supports such as AQIS, Standards, Curriculum and Assessment supports, Trauma Informed Practice implementation, and fiscal and business management resources; and associated barriers to progress across the levels.**

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.9.2 of the FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **The OEC currently tracks metrics for licensing and accreditation. As our QIS develops, the OEC will build more advanced metrics directly linked to the three levels of the system that document provider improvements at each level. We will track progress from Level 1 to Level 2 and from Level 2 to Level 3; the corresponding use of quality improvement supports such as AQIS Accreditation supports to child care programs through EASTCONN; Standards, Curriculum and Assessment supports, Trauma Informed Practice implementation, and fiscal and business management resources; and associated barriers to progress across the levels.**

Our new Quality Improvement System, ELEVATE, is the bridge to licensing standards and accreditation standards for center and home-based providers. The Member level of engagement is to be a licensed or licensed exempt center or group home or family child care enter. Providers work with the Service Navigation team to develop their Elevate Program Plans by building on the required licensing standards to improve program quality.

The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood works with programs and families and shares the following online and printed versions upon request for:

The Office of Early Childhood's Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKCs) are expectations for Connecticut's child care workforce. They focus on:

Content ☐ what every professional should know

Skills ☐ what every professional should be able to do

The frameworks provide the foundation for all state efforts to improve the lives of young

children and their families. OEC collaborated with several agencies to develop 2 frameworks for different audiences:

For professionals working directly with children ☑ like teachers and administrators

For professionals who provide technical assistance ☑ like trainers, coaches, consultants, and mentors

The Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (Spanish) document includes Essential Dispositions, Guiding Principles, and stages in learning and development across eight domains of learning.

11) Other activities to improve the quality of child care services

Goal: To improve the quality of child care programs and services related to outcomes measuring improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten-entry

11.1 Sustainability funding to child care providers

11.1.1 Sustainability funding to child care providers:

Did the state or territory continue to provide stabilization grants to child care providers using funds other than the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Stabilization funds during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

Yes. If yes, describe and check which types of providers were eligible and number served. **The Women's Business Development Council (WBDC) set up multiple grant programs, funded by an OEC contract, to financially assist providers in starting, sustaining, or growing their business. As part of this, providers received pre-grant technical assistance (classes & advising sessions) to assist them in applying; awardees received post-grant technical assistance to managing the funds; and ineligible providers received other business development support. The data below reflects all providers that received WBDC grant program technical assistance and/or received a grant. Support through WBDC continues to the field.**

Direct supports are noted for **87 licensed center + 300 Licensed homes + 1 in-home providers.**

Connecticut provided targeted grants to support early childhood programs and through additional bonus funding for accredited center based programs serving children in the Care 4 Kids subsidy program allowed opportunities to help stabilize early care and education provider businesses.

Licensed center-based programs **87**

License-exempt center-based programs

Licensed family child care homes **300**

License-exempt family child care homes (care in providers' home)

In-home (care in the child's own home) **1**

Other (explain)

No.

N/A. Describe:

11.1.2 Spending – Sustainability funding to child care providers:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

11.2 Data Systems Investment

11.2.1 Data Systems Investment:

Did the state/territory invest in data systems to support equitable access to child care (e.g., modernizing and maintaining systems; technology upgrades and data governance improvements to provide more transparent and updated information to parents; a workforce registry; updated QRIS systems; CCR&R updates; monitoring systems) from October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

Yes. Describe:

The Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) system made changes to the child care database:

Response to First Responders: Added field to capture First Responder role. Conducted enhanced referrals to this population of professionals to aid them in search of child care services.

In effort to provide more transparent and updated information, Licensing Inspection and Complaint History visit type now includes ☑Initial Credential Inspection☑

Added additional languages to ☑provider spoken language field☑ . Portuguese and Albanian."

The Care 4 Kids Child Care Subsidy Program enhanced the Parent Portal giving families access to their Application and Renewal (prefilled) forms to submit online. With direct links into the Case Management system for saving data entry time by Care 4 Kids staff when forms are received. The system also prompts the applicant/renewal for documentation required in response to answers entered in the online forms. It also accept interim changes during the eligibility period to household information, income, address, employment changes, etc. and it allows the applicant / family to access their notices and documents that were submitted online.

The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) created the OEC 360 Provider Portal that connects data into one place for review by individual Early Care and Education providers from other OEC systems for payments, enrollments, program information, from Licensing, Workforce Registry, Care 4 Kids payments and enrollments, Early Childhood Information System for Home Visiting, Early Care and Education system for School Readiness, Child Day Care Grants, and State Head Start, and Background Check Information System. The system gives the provider a view of the information related to their program from the various systems at the Office of Early Childhood.

No

11.2.2 Spending - Data Systems Investment:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

CCDF quality funds

Non-CCDF funds

CARES funds

CRRSA Funds

ARP Supplemental Discretionary

ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

11.3 Supply and Demand Analysis

11.3.1 Supply and Demand Analysis:

Did the state/territory conduct an analysis of supply and demand or other needs assessment to identify areas of focus to build supply or target funding from October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023?

Yes. Describe findings:

CT Early Childhood (EC) Cabinet, Blue Ribbon Commission spent several month researching, meeting and developing "A Blueprint for Connecticut's Child Care Future Connecticut" which outlines the assessment of supply and demand for child care. In this it is stated that "Connecticut has substantial preschool supply; its needs are concentrated around infants and toddlers. Connecticut has a paid family leave program that enables parents to care for their new babies. Like other states, Connecticut's early care sector is experiencing significant workforce shortages due to low wages."

In the 2023 Connecticut's Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care Report, "The Panel acknowledges that the optimal development and long-term success of Connecticut's children is influenced by a wide array of factors/systems and will require a carefully coordinated effort to:

- Invest in and support a high-quality, appropriately compensated professional workforce.**
- Expand access to affordable child care for families.**
- Increase the supply of high-quality care that meets the needs of all families and children, including cultural preferences and work schedules"**
- Elevate family and community voice in system design and implementation.**
- Enhance early childhood systems and funding to build on recent investments, maximize use of the current system, and build a high-quality, sustainable ECE system."**

"This will require collaboration at the federal, state, and local level; partnerships with the K-12 and higher education systems; and public private partnerships with community-based organizations, businesses, and philanthropy."

Please see full report for additional recommendations and findings at <https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/oec-blue-ribbon-panel-report-2023-12.15.pdf>.

In addition the Office of Early Childhood continues to work with its partners from the University of Connecticut School of Social Work and the United Way of Connecticut on data analysis of the child care supply across the state by type, region, age and rates. And through the Child Care Resource and Referral services to outline needs of families.

No

11.3.2 Spending - Supply and Demand Analysis:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

- CCDF quality funds
- Non-CCDF funds
- CARES funds
- CRRSA Funds
- ARP Supplemental Discretionary
- ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside
- Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

11.4 Supply and Demand Initiatives

11.4.1 Supply and Demand Initiatives:

Did the state/territory implement initiatives designed to address supply and demand issues related to child care deserts and/or vulnerable populations (such as infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, English language learners, and children who need child care during non-traditional hours) during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? Check all that apply.

- Child care deserts
- Infants/toddlers
- Children with disabilities
- English language learners
- Children who need child care during non-traditional hours

Other. Describe:

11.4.2 Spending - Supply and Demand Initiatives:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

CCDF quality funds

Non-CCDF funds

CARES funds

CRRSA Funds

ARP Supplemental Discretionary

ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

11.5 Provider Compensation and Benefits

11.5.1 Spending - Provider Compensation and Benefits:

What compensation and benefits improvements did teachers/providers receive between October 1, 2022 and September 30, 2023 (check all that apply)? If indicated, how many providers received each type of support?

Financial bonuses (not tied to education levels)

Salary enhancements/wage supplements

Health insurance coverage

Dental insurance coverage

Retirement benefits

Loan Forgiveness programs

Mental Health/Wellness programs

Start up funds **57**

Other. Describe:

- Expansion grants **7** 30 providers

- Emergency facilities grants- 19 providers

- Business incentives (including technology grants) **7** 22 providers

- Emergency operating grants **7** 1 provider

- Professional services grant (pilot program) 1 provider (can be rolled into Business incentives if needed)

CCEI Qualified Workforce Incentives (ARPA Stabilization 10% Set-aside Funds) \$500,000. Qualified Workforce Incentives (QWI) is an initiative to help recruit and retain a qualified early childhood workforce. QWI scholarships and retention bonuses.

UConn Research and Evaluation Work

Provider Portal 360 Initiative and System work

ODonnell Provider and Family Communication

N/A. Describe:

11.5.2 Spending - Provider Compensation and Benefits:

Were funds from any sources (e.g., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, or ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) spent to support this activity?

Yes, if so which funding source(s) were used?

CCDF quality funds

Non-CCDF funds

CARES funds

CRRSA Funds

ARP Supplemental Discretionary

ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside

Unable to report. Indicate reason:

No

11.6 Spending – Other Activities to Improve the Quality of Child Care Services

11.6.1 Spending – Other Activities to Improve the Quality of Child Care Services:

What is the total amount spent across all funding sources (i.e., CCDF quality set aside, non-CCDF funds, CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% set-aside) on other activities to improve the quality of child care services during October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023? **\$3988040**

Unable to report total amount spent. Indicate reason:

Optional: Use this space to tell us any additional information about how funds were spent that is not captured in the items already reported.

Spending on Other Activities to improve the Quality of Child Care includes funding from CCDF Quality Funds, CRSSA, ARP supplemental Discretionary, and ARP Stabilization 10% Set-aside for technology and operations, policy development, University of Connecticut research, evaluation and provider surveys, support from Harvard Government Performance Lab, technical Registry support by CCEI, data systems development and launch of Care 4 Kids Parent Portal with renewals and improved automation, the OEC 360 Provider portal, Communication and public relations, social media campaigns through Odonnell company, Apple iPads and other materials and supports for child care.

The Preschool Development Grant funds to support evaluation and data systems. The University of Connecticut, as part of its contract under the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) for Birth-3 and PDG-3 Planning Grant performed program evaluation, surveys, data collection and analysis across the state for early care and education and Care 4 Kids services.

OEC has partnered with WIDA Early Years to improve the quality of child care for young multilingual learners and their families in Connecticut. This initiative has included providing a training-of-trainers, and statewide access to online learning modules and resources. In addition, the OEC is working with WIDA Early Years to develop a logic model to include measurable goals related to supporting young multilingual learners and their families.

11.7 Progress Update

11.7.1 Progress Update – Other Activities to Improve the Quality of Child Care Services:

Other activities to improve the quality of child care services supported by outcome measures that improve provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten-entry.

Measurable indicators of progress the state/territory reported in section 7.10.1 of the 2022-2024 CCDF Plan:

Note: The information displayed is from the most recent approved FFY2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

OEC has partnered with WIDA Early Years to improve the quality of child care for young multilingual learners and their families in Connecticut. This initiative has included providing a training-of-trainers, and statewide access to online learning modules and resources. In addition, the OEC is working with WIDA Early Years to develop a logic model to include measurable goals related to supporting young multilingual learners and their families.

Please include information on the outcomes and numerical targets achieved based on the measurable indicators of progress specified in section 7.10.2 of the 2022-2024 CCDF Plan: **OEC**

has partnered with WIDA Early Years to improve the quality of child care for young multilingual learners and their families in Connecticut. This initiative has included providing a training-of-trainers, and statewide access to online learning modules and resources. The OEC has limited resources in its work with WIDA Early Years but continues to work toward supporting young multilingual learners and their families. Online courses and resource may be found at https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Connecticut_EYeLearningFlyer-Fall2022-UpdatedJan2023.pdf. Connecticut cannot report numbers served for WIDA in FFY 2023.

For Child Care supply and Demand, OEC staff and consultants worked with data resources including the U.S. Census, American Community Survey, Program Child and family record for Care 4 Kids Child Care subsidy, Child Day Care and School Readiness programs household income, size, age of children, and work and training activities to determine past and current trends and number of families served against estimates from the Census for similar family composition and incomes. Child Care Provider analysis includes use of the Market Rate Analysis data, Licensing data, Care 4 Kids, School Readiness, Child Day Care and State Head Start provider information, with the Child Care Resource and Referral online and data pulls, matched against Licensing information to provide analysis for CCDF work and as part of overall OEC and state's Blue Ribbon Panel studies in 2023.

12) Annual Report

Lead agencies must submit an annual report, as required at 45 CFR § 98.53(f) (4), describing any changes to lead agency regulations, enforcement mechanisms, or other lead agency policies addressing health and safety based on an annual review and assessment of serious child injuries and any deaths occurring in child care programs receiving CCDF, and in other regulated and unregulated child care centers and family child care homes, to the extent possible.

12.1 Annual Report and Changes

12.1.1 Annual Report:

Describe the annual review and assessment of serious injuries and any deaths occurring in child care programs receiving CCDF, and in other regulated and unregulated child care centers and family child care homes, to the extent possible.

There were 71 serious injuries reported during this year. None occurred in a license exempt program receiving CCDF. Of the 71 serious injuries, 61 occurred at youth camps and 59 injuries were self-reported. All self-reported camp incidents were reviewed by a licensed registered nurse.

There were no deaths that occurred in a licensed family child care home and no deaths that occurred in an illegal operating child care program reported during this year.

The Compliant Investigation Unit responds to all complaints on both licensed and unlicensed facilities throughout the state. Complaints are received from a variety of sources that include parents, staff, neighbors, the Department of Children and Families (DCF), law enforcement officials, local health departments, and other providers. Each day a person is assigned to be the complaint intake person. The intake person is responsible for logging the allegations into the computer. The complaint is then assigned by the complaint investigation supervisor to a child care licensing specialist. If an allegation of abuse/neglect is reported from a source other than DCF, the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) makes a report to the DCF Careline. In all cases in which there is an allegation of abuse or neglect, the investigation is coordinated with the DCF. DCF focuses on the specific allegations of abuse/neglect and OEC focuses on compliance with the child care/youth camp statutes and regulations. All complaints, which fall within the jurisdiction of OEC, are investigated. Each investigation includes a site visit, in which the specialist/inspector makes observations throughout the facility, reviews records, and speaks to staff. If violations are cited, the investigator discusses the

violations with the provider and leaves a corrective action plan form for the provider to complete within the required time frame. In addition to the site visit, the investigation may also include interviews, parent reviews, facility observations, and a review of reports from medical facilities, police departments, DCF, and other agencies.

12.1.2 Annual Report Changes:

Describe any changes to lead agency regulations, enforcement mechanisms, or other lead agency policies addressing health and safety based on the annual review and assessment.

The Licensing Division has adopted a policy whereby not only will all self-reported camp incidents be reviewed by a registered nurse, but we will also investigate self-reported serious injuries when necessary.

13) American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Child Care Stabilization Grants

Goal: To ensure the lead agency implements an equitable stabilization grant program. The American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act included approximately \$24 billion for child care stabilization grants, representing an important opportunity to stabilize the child care sector and do so in a way that builds back a stronger child care system that supports the developmental and learning needs of children, meets parents' needs and preferences with equal access to high-quality child care, and supports a professionalized workforce that is fairly and appropriately compensated for the essential skilled work that they do. Lead agencies must spend most stabilization funds as subgrants to qualified child care providers to support the stability of the child care sector during and after the COVID-19 public health emergency. Section 13 should be used to report on ARP Stabilization Grants ONLY.

13.1 Multiple Grant Programs

13.1.1 ARP Act Stabilization multiple grant programs:

Did you run more than one grant program? If so, list the number of separate grant programs and describe their uses.

Yes. Describe:

Workforce Pipeline Pilot goal is to address the current workforce shortage through recruitment and on the job training. Grant funds will cover administrative costs and participant salary, travel, CPR training, 3 credit college course and materials.

Stabilization Round 3 was sent to providers with the option to support wages and compensation but, was not required.

No

13.2 ARP Act Stabilization Grants workforce compensation

13.2.1 ARP Act Stabilization Grant strategies for workforce compensation:

Which of the following methods were used to support workforce compensation (e.g., bonuses, stipends, increased base wages, or employee benefits) with stabilization grants? (check all that apply)

Targeted grants to support workforce compensation (no other allowable uses)

Providing bonus funds to providers that increased child care staff compensation through stabilization grants

Requiring a specific percentage or amount of stabilization grant funding go toward child care staff compensation increases. Percent or amount for staff compensation:

Other (Describe):