

**CONNECTICUT'S
DRAFT PLAN**

For the

**FEDERAL
CHILD CARE AND
DEVELOPMENT FUND**

**A STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR
SUPPORTING FAMILIES, CHILDREN, AND
CAREGIVERS**

**FEDERAL FISCAL YEARS 2008 & 2009
(OCTOBER 1, 2007 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2009)**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The federal Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 as amended (hereafter referred to as the Child Care and Development Fund or CCDF), has raised significant national attention to the issue of child care in the United States. Over the past several years, there were significant increases in federal funding to support state child care systems. CCDF is only one source of federal funds that supports early care and education services in Connecticut. This draft plan only addresses the CCDF funds available to Connecticut (Section V). However, the guiding principles, objectives and strategies of the plan (Section IV-A, B, C) comprise a more comprehensive view of the Connecticut child care system, which is supported by other private, federal and state funds. Combined and coordinated with the other funding sources, the CCDF funds significantly contribute to the Connecticut child care delivery system.

While there have been significant enhancements and improvements in the Connecticut child care system since the inception of CCDF in 1990, this strategic plan recognizes that there must be continued efforts to address areas that need further attention. In particular, we have included excerpts and reference from the Early Childhood and Education Cabinet and Governor M. Jodi Rell's Early Childhood Policy & Research Council's Early Childhood Investment Plan whereby a number of new, expanded and enhanced efforts to sustain the growth attained to-date in Connecticut's early childhood system have begun.

As the lead agency for child care, welfare reform, children's health, and a host of other critical health and human services networks in the state, the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) is committed to supporting children, their families, and caregivers to access services that assist families in attaining self-sufficiency. Significant work in areas of availability, affordability and quality improvements has been started within DSS, other state agencies and in Connecticut communities and will progress with continued financial support from the federal government.

The federal **Child Care and Development Fund Plan** presents the strategies and direction for Connecticut to strive toward high quality early care and education programs and services for all children, from birth through their school-age years. The goal is for Connecticut families to be able to select from a wide range of programs designed to meet their unique needs while children receive the critical foundation they need for healthy development and lifelong learning.

We encourage you to review Attachment 3. Attachment 3 identifies other organizations that support early care and education and provides telephone numbers and web addresses for those organizations. This is not a comprehensive list. Please share information about your organization and we will add it to our DSS web site.

II. OVERVIEW OF FEDERAL CHILD CARE LEGISLATION

This section provides an overview of the essential provisions as contained in the approved federal CCDF rules and regulations issued on July 24, 1998 (Federal Register - Vol. 63, No. 142). There is current discussion in the Federal Congress that may change the CCDF statutes and state requirements. Until that occurs, states will continue to follow the guidance as issued in 1998.

A. GOALS

The goals of the CCDF are to:

- allow each state maximum flexibility in determining child care policies that best suit the needs of children and parents within the state
- promote parental choice in making decisions on child care that best suits their family's needs
- encourage states to provide consumer information to help parents make informed child care choices
- assist states in providing child care to parents trying to become independent of public assistance
- assist states in implementing the health, safety, licensing and registration standards established in state regulations

B. PURPOSE

The purpose of the CCDF is to increase the availability, affordability and quality of child care services in order to:

- provide low-income families with the financial resources to find and afford quality child care for their children
- enhance the quality and increase the supply of child care for all families, including those who receive no direct assistance under CCDF
- provide parents with a broad range of options to address their child care needs
- strengthen the role of the family
- improve the quality of and coordination among child care programs and early childhood development programs
- increase the availability of early childhood development and school-age services

Further, the CCDF directs DSS to:

- maximize parental choice through the use of certificates and/or contracts
- use a broad range of child care providers that include center-based, family child care, informal home care, relative care and sectarian child care providers
- coordinate planning and delivery of child care services
- design flexible programs that provide for the changing needs of recipient families
- administer CCDF funds responsibly
- design programs that provide uninterrupted service to families and providers

C. KEY FUNDING AND SERVICE PROVISIONS

The federal CCDF legislation sets forth guidelines to allow states to construct a unified, seamless child care system that will assist families that are transitioning off public assistance and other low income working families. In addition, it provides funding to support consumer education, capacity building and provider training opportunities.

CCDF comprises the following funding streams (see Section V):

- **Mandatory Funds** - states receive a comparable federal share determined by the actual funds expended in 1995 for federal welfare (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families -TANF) child care.
- **Matching Funds** - states receive a share of available national funds after allocation to Tribes and Territories. The state allocation is based on a formula defined for the former At-Risk, TANF child care program which is based on the number of children under age thirteen (13) in Connecticut as a percentage of the national total of children under age thirteen (13). Connecticut's share is .015%. States must provide matching funds at the federal fiscal year 1995 Medicaid rate (50% for Connecticut) to receive this share of funds and must maintain child care spending at the 1995 level.
- **Discretionary Funds** - states receive a share of available national funds after allocation to Tribes and Territories. The formula is based on the states' percentage of children under age five (5), percentage of children receiving free or reduced school lunches, and per-capita income.

- **Targeted Expansions** - states receive specific allocations that target essential child care service areas such as school-age, resource and referral, and infant/toddler assistance. These expansions are uncertain from year to year since they require federal congressional approval on an annual basis.

The CCDF provides the following budget guidance for service provision:

| | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Child Care Services | at least | 70 % |
| Administration | capped at | 5 % |
| Quality Services | at least | 4 % |
| Other - undefined | up to | 21 % |
| Total | | 100 % |

- **Child Care Services** – ensures that at least 70% of total funds are used for families receiving state cash assistance, families transitioning off cash assistance and low-income working families at-risk for needing such assistance.
- **Administration** - establishes a 5% cap on services that are not an integral part of child care service provision. Administration **does not** include services such as eligibility determination, market rate methodology, management information systems, recruitment etc. that are directly related to the provision of child care services.
- **Quality Services** - requires that at least 4% of funds received be used for activities designed to provide a variety of state selected quality activities such as: consumer and provider education, provider training and skill development, capacity expansion, scholarship assistance.
- **Other** - the balance of funds (21%) can be used for child care services or quality services.

The CCDF also allows states to:

- adopt an eligibility family income guideline at 85% of the state median income level;
- establish health and safety standards for the prevention of infectious diseases, building and physical premises, safety and training for child care providers;
- determine payment rates that are sufficient to insure equal access;
- set different rates for unlicensed caregivers than those set for licensed child care providers.

For the 2007-2009 CCDF Plan, states are required to report on their efforts to reduce improper payments, improve emergency preparedness activities for child care and develop Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers.

D. ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

The following statements are specific federal assurances and certifications that DSS is required to follow as the administrator of the federal CCDF funds.

DSS, as designated CCDF lead agency, assures that:

- Connecticut will have a program that complies with the provisions of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, as amended;
- the parent(s) of each eligible child within Connecticut is provided the option either:
 - (a) to enroll such child with a child care provider that has a grant or contract for the provision of service; or
 - (b) to receive a child care certificate;
- in cases in which the parent(s) elect(s) to enroll the child with a provider that has a grant or contract with the Lead Agency, the child will be enrolled with the eligible provider selected by the parent to the maximum extent practical.
- the child care certificate offered to parent(s) shall be of a value commensurate with the subsidy value of child care services provided under a grant or contract.
- state or local rules, procedures, or other requirements promulgated by CCDF will not significantly restrict parental choice from among categories of care or types of providers with respect to regulatory requirements, health and safety requirements, payment rates and registration requirements.
- that children are age-appropriately immunized.
- that CCDF Discretionary funds are used to supplement, not supplant state general revenue funds.

DSS, as designated CCDF Lead Agency, certifies that:

- DSS has procedures in place to ensure that providers of child care services afford parents unlimited access to their children.
- DSS maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints and makes information regarding such complaints available to the public on request.
- DSS will collect and disseminate to parents of eligible children and the general public, consumer education information that will promote informed child care choices.

- Connecticut has licensing requirements applicable to child care services provided within the state.
- Connecticut has requirements designed to protect the health and safety of children and that these requirements are applicable to child care providers that provide services made available under the CCDF.
- procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers that provide services for which assistance is provided under the CCDF comply with all applicable State or local health and safety requirements.
- payment rates will be sufficient to ensure equal access for eligible children to comparable child care services in the state that are provided to children whose parents are not eligible to receive assistance under this program or under any other Federal or State child care assistance programs.

III. SUMMARY OF CONNECTICUT'S PRIOR USE OF CCDF

The Department of Social Services issues an annual report on child care services in Connecticut. The DSS annual report provides a summary of state and federal funds and the child care initiatives administered by the Department of Social Services. We recommend that you review our recently completed report, *The Status of Child Care in Connecticut*, for state fiscal year 2005-2006. This report is available by accessing **PUBLICATIONS** from the DSS web site at www.ct.gov/dss or directly at http://www.ct.gov/dss/lib/dss/pdfs/child_care_annual_report_for_sfy_2005-2006.pdf. Prior annual reports are available by calling 1-800-811-6141 and pressing 6 at any time during the message to be connected to the Child Care Team.

CCDF funds are allocated by the Connecticut General Assembly through the state General Fund budget process and continue to contribute to a variety of child care and early education programs and services in Connecticut. The CCDF funds, when combined with other federal and state funding sources, enhance the overall support of Connecticut's child care system. Following are a summary of those activities:

- **Child Care Subsidies (certificates or vouchers)** - supports eligible families in the Connecticut *Care 4 Kids* program by providing payment to child care providers chosen by parents.
- **School-Age Child Care Programs** - supports operational expenses and child care spaces at school-age settings. This includes approximately 10 before and after school programs throughout Connecticut.
- **Early Childhood Programs and Enhancements** - supports the DSS Child Day Center contracted program to serve infant/toddlers, preschool and school-age children and the School Readiness Quality Enhancement program for selected communities to provide a variety of services that support child care providers, families and children.
- **Resource and Referral Services** - assists families with consumer education materials and information on available child care providers and provides data management and reporting services. This effort is undertaken primarily by the United Way of Connecticut's 211-Child Care program.
- **Licensing Personnel** – supports the hiring of state personnel at the Connecticut Department of Public Health to license and monitor child care facilities.
- **Provider Training and Professional Development** - supports the community college's Connecticut Charts-a-Course career development system, which includes a scholarship program for child care personnel that provide training opportunities for both formal and informal child care providers and the statewide Accreditation Facilitation Project.

In addition, funds supported the Training Program in Child Development and the University of Connecticut to distribute a newsletter for all Connecticut child care providers.

- **Facilities Expansion** - supports the Child Care Facilities Loan Fund (CCFLF), which manages three loan fund programs. All three are coordinated by the DSS partner, the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA). CCFLF provides appropriations to create new or expand/modify existing child care facilities.
- **Administrative Services** - supports DSS administrative functions to manage the CCDF funds
- **Research and Evaluation Services** - supports various research studies and surveys to assist the Department and policy makers with important information. We have also contributed to a variety of reports developed by our partner, the Early Childhood Data CONNections project, operated by the Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut.

The State Department of Education, the Department of Social Services, and the Connecticut Head Start State Collaboration Office collaborated on a joint Survey Project to interview shelter staff and heads of household to determine the effectiveness of existing programming and determine how children and youth experiencing homelessness are faring in these systems of care and to help mitigate the negative impacts of these experiences. The findings from this survey have been incorporated into discussions by a statewide committee that has been meeting to address issues facing families with young children who are homeless or have experienced or witnessed domestic violence.

IV. DRAFT CCDF PLAN PROVISIONS

This section describes essential components, as proposed by DSS, for inclusion in Connecticut's draft plan that will eventually be submitted [*due by July 1, 2007*] to the Boston and Washington D.C. offices of the United State Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance Child Care Bureau. DSS has prepared this draft plan based on prior collaborative work and discussions with a variety of state, local, and private organizations and Connecticut citizens. The actual federal plan document that DSS is required to submit will contain information that may be in this draft plan and/or collected as a result of the formal public hearing process. We advise you that the federal Child Care Bureau requires states to present information in a prescribed format, which will be different from the format of this draft plan. The current approved Connecticut federal CCDF plan, which expires on September 30, 2007, is accessible in PUBLICATIONS as available on the DSS web site at www.ct.gov/dss. This will provide you the opportunity to review the federal prescribed format and expected content.

We have prepared this section as follows: Guiding Principles, Objectives, and Strategies.

A. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles were adopted in 1990 when DSS completed the first CCDF federal plan. Numerous child care providers, advocates and other constituents participated in that process. While not a requirement for federal plan approval, we have always included this information in each submission. We added a principle that addressed workforce issues in our plan submitted in 2001, added a principle to support President Bush's **Good Start, Grow Smart** initiative in 2003, added a principle that addresses fraud and improper payments in 2005, and this year we continue to work on fraud and improper payments, further develop the Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers for distribution, begin to develop emergency preparedness activities for child care settings, and emphasize the principles identified by the Early Childhood Education Cabinet and Governor Rell's Early Childhood Investment Plan (Attachment 1). The Governor's Early Childhood initiatives were included in the 2005 plan.

The Connecticut Child Care and Early Education system will:

- offer families a broad range of accessible, affordable, comprehensive and quality child care services.
- allow families to choose the most appropriate child care service and be informed about how to locate and evaluate child care opportunities.
- allow for a smooth transition when families change child care services.
- provide appropriate services and training opportunities for caregivers, including caregivers exempt from licensing.

- ensure that caregivers maintain basic health and safety standards.
- ensure that all available federal funds are maximized and combined into one universal child care program to support targeted families and children.
- establish eligibility guidelines which address income and child care need.
- establish a payment system, which addresses family co-payments, provider payments differentiated by licensed and unlicensed caregivers, and age of child.
- ensure the coordination and on-going planning for all local, state and federal early childhood services and programs.
- establish various incentives and cost models to address teacher turnover and compensation levels that will expand and retain the number of early education professionals.
- establish guidelines and content standards to promote early learning skills that will help children be ready for school.
- establish guidelines to assure that all state and federal funds are properly paid to those clients and child care providers, which meet the eligibility and payment requirements, and to establish preventive mechanisms to avoid improper payments from being made at all.
- establish coordinated emergency planning and crisis response training opportunities for center based and family/home child care providers, to address safety issues that impact children in child care, after-school, recreational and summer-camp settings.
- establish a conceptual framework for Early Readiness for Children from Birth to Age Three that would support and complement the work of the Connecticut Early Childhood and Education Cabinet.
- continue to refine the **Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers** draft and seek to reach, inform, and support infants and toddlers' primary caregivers—whether parents or child care providers—aligned Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers with SDE's Preschool Curriculum Framework.
- Establish pilot programs to test the early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers document content, format and application at various child care settings serving infants and toddlers, including child care centers, family day care providers, and kith and kin settings.

B. OBJECTIVES

DSS proposes the following objectives that support the federal CCDF goals, the Connecticut Guiding Principles and Governor Rell's Early Childhood Investment Plan. The objectives remain essentially the same as included in the prior two-year federal plan except as they pertain to Governor Rell's Early Childhood Investment Plan and the new federal initiative to address improper payments, Homeland Security and Infant/Toddler Early Learning Guidelines.

- **increase child care capacity** - the establishment, expansion or recruitment of new child care facilities/providers and support for existing child care providers in order to expand the number of child care "arrangements" available to families seeking child care assistance. Governor Rell has proposed additional *debt service financing* to expand the Child Care Facilities Loan Fund which would potentially leverage \$40 million in construction costs to renovate or build new child care facilities.
- **increase financial assistance** to families in order to make child care affordable - the efficient provision of affordable child care subsidies (certificates or vouchers) and/or contracts to early childhood programs in order to assist low income working families and families transitioning off public assistance.
- **enhance quality and school readiness services** - the establishment of critical support services to enhance developmentally appropriate educational opportunities for children and professional opportunities for caregivers.
- **provide opportunities for children** in the state to 1) reach appropriate developmental milestones from birth to age 5; 2) begin kindergarten with the knowledge, skills and behaviors needed for success in school; and 3) have K-3 education experiences that extend children's birth-to-5 learning and ensure consistent progress in achieving reading mastery.
- **enhance health and safety provisions** - the establishment of policies and support services to assure children have access to healthy and safe child care settings
- **identify and address the safety, crisis response and emergency preparedness** issues affecting children in schools, child care providers, after school programs, youth camps and other settings and to inventory emergency preparedness activities, address the communication, training and practice/exercise needs of the providers
- **expand linkages and leveraging of available funds** - the coordination of child care and early childhood education services among state agencies, state and local community organizations, businesses and child care providers.
- **increase number of early care and education professionals and promote**

retention - the establishment of incentive and cost models to increase and retain early education teachers in order to address the high turnover rate. Governor Rell proposes to *“train early care and education center staff in the state’s preschool framework, investing in workforce scholarships, and piloting several strategies to promote early care and education workforce retention.”*

- **reach, inform, and support primary care givers of infants and toddlers’** in Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers. The statewide Accreditation Facilitation Project (AFP) will administer dissemination, training and other implementation tasks.
- **establish guidelines and standards that support early learning for children ages 0-5** - the development, implementation and evaluation of standards on early literacy, language, pre-reading and numeracy skills that help children to succeed in preschool, kindergarten and beyond. The Early Childhood Education Cabinet has supported DSS’ recent work on early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers.
- **establish preventive mechanisms to avoid improper payments** and establish guidelines to assure that all state and federal funds are properly paid to those clients and child care providers, which meet the eligibility and payment requirements.
- **ensure the coordination and on-going planning for all local, state and federal early childhood services and programs.** Governor Rell has established the ***Early Childhood Research and Policy Council*** to create a *“point of common accountability”* for state-level strategic planning, service coordination and integration. The ***Early Childhood Research and Policy Council*** serves as the research and development arm of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet and guide us in key areas of policy-relevant early childhood research and evaluation, strategic data management, performance measurement, best practices identification and knowledge dissemination.

C. STRATEGIES

DSS proposes the following strategies to address the service objectives:

Increase Child Care Capacity

The state and federal welfare reform initiative will continue to require families with children to find employment or participate in employment activities. The supply of child care providers and/or child care spaces must continue to expand in order to meet this demand.

Proposed strategies include:

- continue to educate the business community about **tax credits** that can be accessed for establishing new child care facilities and subsidizing employee child care needs.
- continue to coordinate the **Child Care Facilities Loan Fund** program to assist with the new construction, acquisition or expansion of child care facilities.
- continue to convene caregiver recruitment sessions throughout the state to **increase the number of family day care home providers.**
- coordinate with **local community, public housing and economic development projects** to include child care as a community development project and explore micro-enterprise and small business funding opportunities.
- educate cash assistance recipients about child care as a career opportunity and **expand child care occupational training programs.**
- expand **linkages with Head Start and other early care and education programs** to coordinate various funding streams that can finance full-day, full-year programs.
- expand programs and spaces for children under age 13 through the state's **State Child Day Care Center Program** and **School Readiness programs.**
- support **kith and kin providers** with necessary educational and training opportunities and link them with the formal child care community.
- expand linkages with **Schools of the 21st Century** programs that provide services for school-age children.

Increase Financial Assistance to Families

The ability for families to afford the fees charged by caregivers is a major factor that continues to determine the families' participation and selection of certain caregivers.

Proposed strategies include:

- expand **child care financial assistance opportunities for low-income working families** with earnings up to 75% of the state median income level and with children under the age of 13 (under 19 if they have special needs).
- increase the number of **families transitioning from cash assistance to work** who use public funded child care including the Care 4 Kids Program, state-supported centers and school readiness programs.
- continue to administer a **school-age child care contract program** targeting available state and federal funds to eligible organizations that provide before and after school child care at school and community settings for working families earning less than 75% of the state median income level.
- continue to administer a **child care center contract program** directing available state and federal funds to eligible child care centers that provide **infant / toddler, preschool and school-age** services. Activities funded by this initiative are designed to provide high quality, safe, age-appropriate environments and a full range of social, educational, recreational and nutritional services to children and support services to their families. Enrollment will be targeted to families earning less than 75% of the state median income level.
- encourage families to pursue **child support**.
- continue to partner with the Connecticut Department of Education in the administration of the state's **School Readiness program** to selected communities.
- promote the Ready By 5 & Fine By 9 - Connecticut's Early Childhood Investment Framework - Appendix A Action Item Updates and Appendix B 40 Additional Action Plan Items (Attachments 5, 6 & 7)

Enhance Quality and School Readiness Services

CCDF funds have supported quality initiatives since its inception in 1990 and currently supports several thousand Connecticut children (ages 13 and under) in comprehensive, quality early learning and school readiness programs.

Proposed strategies include:

- continue to provide **consumer education and information materials** that educate current and potential child care consumers
- continue to support the state's **child care resource and referral** program to provide the following services:
 - ◆ counseling and consumer information
 - ◆ data on the types of child care opportunities, fees, special service considerations, etc
 - ◆ technical assistance and information for child care providers
 - ◆ community education and collaboration activities
- continue to provide **technical support and training opportunities** for new and existing child care providers with an emphasis on infant/toddler and school-age child care providers
- continue to establish strategies **effectively to use the media** to provide information and education to parents and child care professionals.
- continue to support a **voluntary professional development system** for early caregivers.
- continue to support to the **statewide program to assist caregivers to achieve accreditation** status by appropriate national organizations.
- continue to support **quality enhancements for the priority school communities** as defined in the state's school readiness legislation in collaboration with the State Department of Education.
- continue to support a **newsletter** that is distributed to all child care providers, libraries, legislators, schools, etc.
- continue to implement **background checks for informal child care providers** seeking approval to participate in the Care 4 Kids program in collaboration with the Departments of Public Safety and Children and Families.

- continue to implement training and educational opportunities for **relative and other license-exempt providers**.
- **promote the development of all of the state's young children** by providing opportunities for children in the state to 1) reach appropriate developmental milestones from birth to age 5; 2) begin kindergarten with the knowledge, skills and behaviors needed for success in school; and 3) have K-3 education experiences that extend children's birth-to-5 learning and ensure consistent progress in achieving reading mastery.
- promote the development and implementation of the **50 actions agreed on by the Early Childhood Education Cabinet** as necessary to support the development of Connecticut's young children, with initial focus on the 10 issues that were ranked as high priorities requiring the immediate attention of those who care for children directly and those who make public policy, design and operate programs, and provide funding for services and supports. *Ready By 5 & Fine By 9 - Connecticut's Early Childhood Investment Framework - Appendix A Action Item Updates and Appendix B 40 Additional Action Plan Items* (Attachments 5, 6 & 7). Additional details may be found at the following websites:

Early Childhood Cabinet

<http://www.ecpolicycouncil.org/cabinet.php>

Governor's Early Childhood Research and Policy Council

<http://www.ecpolicycouncil.org>

Ready By 5 & Fine By 9

Connecticut's Early Childhood Investment Framework

http://www.ecpolicycouncil.org/docs/ready5_fine9.pdf

FY08/FY09 Early Childhood Investment Plan Recommendations Summary

http://www.ecpolicycouncil.org/docs/Summary_report_w_apps.pdf

Full Report

http://www.ecpolicycouncil.org/docs/Summary_report_w_apps.pdf

Enhance Health and Safety Provisions

DSS must assure that procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers that provide services for which assistance is provided under the CCDF comply with all applicable state or local health and safety requirements.

Proposed strategies include:

- continue to fund **child care licensing personnel** at the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) to monitor child care facilities. Please access the web sites (Attachment 3) for DPH and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care to review the Connecticut licensing and regulatory requirements.
- strengthen Connecticut's regulations with regard to children's health and safety in childcare. The Department of Public Health is proposing changes to the regulations that govern child day care centers and group day care homes. These proposed changes include revisions and technical corrections, an expansion of the list of acceptable providers for cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training, and the addition of requirements that facilities accommodate children that have a prescription of glucagon, a diagnosis of asthma, or a prescription for an inhalant medication to treat asthma.
- continue to work with the Departments of Public Safety (**coordinate criminal background checks**) and Children and Families (**coordinate child abuse and neglect checks**) for child care providers exempt from licensing requirements.
- continue to implement health and safety provisions for child care providers exempt from licensing requirements who apply for assistance from the Care 4 Kids Program. (Attachment 4).
- continue to participate in discussions with the Connecticut Department of Public Health's maternal and child health professional staff concerning the state development of the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems plan.
- continue to develop the plans to coordinate emergency planning and crisis response training opportunities for center based and family/home child care providers, to address safety issues that impact children in child care, after-school, recreational and summer-camp settings.

Expand Linkages and Leveraging of Available Funds

As the child care services lead agency, DSS is responsible for many coordination and planning activities.

Proposed strategies include:

- participate in the Early Childhood Education Cabinet.
- continue to coordinate efforts with sister state agencies, the Connecticut Head Start State Collaboration office, Head Start Directors Association, State Directors Forum, Connecticut After School Network, Connecticut Child Day Care Council, Birth to Three Interagency Coordinating Council, Medicaid Managed Care Council, child care provider memberships groups, Early Childhood Alliance, Connecticut Voices for Children, Connecticut Association for Human Services, etc.
- continue strategic discussions on infant-toddler issues.
- continue the work of the Early Childhood DataCONNECTIONS project, and the Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut. This project is exploring the data collection and research capacity needs for Connecticut, developing school readiness indicators and examining child care workforce issues.
- continue to review the economic impact of the child care industry.
- continue to coordinate recruitment efforts with the United Way of Connecticut 211 Child Care INFOLINE and the Department of Public Health child care licensing staff and with several state and local organizations to increase the supply of child care providers.
- continue to work with the Department of Labor and the Job First Employment Services program to enhance opportunities for parents through job opportunities training, transportation, and child care.
- continue to establish linkages with employment and training organizations and businesses to provide necessary supports for their employees seeking child care assistance.
- continue to coordinate efforts with the DSS Fraud Recovery Division to mitigate client fraud and improper payments through Quality Control - review of payment and eligibility accuracy.
- continue to develop strategies to link state and local agencies with early childhood programs for children with special needs, in collaboration with the Connecticut

Department of Mental Retardation, Connecticut Department of Public Health and the Connecticut Department of Education Special Education Bureau.

- continue to coordinate with the Department of Children and Families and other appropriate state and local agencies to create strategies around family support initiatives.
- continue to coordinate efforts with the various DSS units: Family Support (services to TANF eligible families), Child Support (encourage single mothers to seek financial assistance from the absent parent), Housing (services for homeless families with children), Community Services (build links between child care services and Domestic Violence programs), Elderly Services (coordinate intergenerational programs and educate and train grandparents who are child care providers), Client Fraud (improper payments pilot review), Quality Control (review of payment and eligibility accuracy) and Medical Care Administration (coordinate activities that assure all children in child care have access to health care)

Increase the Number of Early Care Workforce

From anecdotal and some limited study data, it is clear that Connecticut, like the nation as a whole, is experiencing significant turnover in child care staffing. We know that turnover results both from "program hopping" and from "staff flight" from the field altogether, but the extent of this phenomenon and the pattern of it are not so clear. Likewise, the causes may include depressed levels of compensation and benefits, working conditions, advancement opportunities and inadequate recruitment, along with many competing opportunities available in the larger economy, but the magnitude of those factors is unknown. We do know that the child care market cannot remedy the low wage scale for staff merely through family fees, but rather requires targeted, multiple funding mechanisms. Additional research and statewide conversations have been supported by the Governor's Early Childhood Research and Policy Council which supports and delves further into the strategies identified below.

Proposed strategies include:

- continue to study the extent and nature of the turnover of child care staff in the state
- continue to research the credentials and pattern of compensation of caregivers.
- continue to examine mechanisms to supplement compensation and benefits for caregivers in connection with levels of professional development
- continue to examine apprenticeship opportunities as they apply to the child care workforce.
- continue to develop the Early Childhood Workforce Plan and create opportunities for highly-skilled early childhood education staff as proposed by the Early Childhood Research and Policy Council. Details shown in the ECE Attachments.

Establish Early Learning Guidelines

The *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative, as proposed by President Bush, is intended to create a state-federal partnership that creates linkages and coordinates services and funding levels among CCDF, other federal early care and education programs and state early care initiatives in order to promote early learning principles and school readiness. There is sufficient research underway throughout the United States to support this objective and Connecticut has already addressed much of this as a result of past state legislation and work completed by the Connecticut Department of Education.

Proposed strategies include:

- continue to disseminate the *Preschool Curriculum Framework for Children in Preschool Programs* document and present workshops, as necessary, to discuss the content
- continue to require the use of the *Preschool Curriculum Framework for Children in Preschool Programs* document in Connecticut funded school readiness programs and encourage other early care programs to adopt it
- continue to disseminate the *Connecticut Preschool Assessment Framework* document for assessing preschool children and present workshops to early care programs in order to discuss the content, objectives and benefit to supporting early learning
- further develop the committee work to establish a conceptual framework for Early Readiness for Children from Birth to Age Three that would support and complement the work of the Connecticut Early Childhood and Education Cabinet.
- continue to refine the Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers draft and seek to reach, inform, and support infants and toddlers' primary caregivers—whether parents or child care providers—aligned Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers with SDE's Preschool Curriculum Framework.
- support pilot programs to test the early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers document content, format and application at various child care settings serving infants and toddlers, including child care centers, family day care providers, and kith and kin settings.
- administer dissemination, training and other implementation tasks for the Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers through the statewide Accreditation Facilitation Project (AFP).

Improper Payments

In response to President Bush's Management Agenda, the federal Child Care Bureau began studying methods that could help states identify, measure and prevent errors in the administration of federal child care funds. In 2003, Connecticut was selected as one of several *partner states* for this project. On March 2, 2007, after more than three years of planning, the Child Care Bureau published a formal Notice of Intent to implement a national quality control system for measuring CCDF improper payments. The program will measure administrative errors discovered by reviewing a statewide sample of cases. Generally, states will be required to reimburse the federal government for errors found during the review process. Implementation is scheduled to begin in October 2007 and will take three years to complete. Connecticut will not be affected until the third year, starting in October 2009.

In 2006, DSS implemented a state-wide fraud early detection (FRED) program to comply with requirements of Public Act 05-280. The purpose of this program is to identify, investigate and determine if an application is fraudulent prior to granting assistance. The FRED project began operating in February 2005. The four DSS field investigators assigned to the project regularly make site visits to the parent's home or the child care location as part of their investigations. During the first partial year of operation, five-hundred eighty cases were found ineligible and a total of \$2,764,692 in overpayments was avoided. In addition, twenty-four Care 4 Kids recipients and child care providers received criminal convictions and were order to reimburse the state for \$165,000 in improper payments. Due to the overwhelming success of the FRED project, DSS is expanding its fraud detection efforts to cover active cases. In May 2007, DSS will begin implementing the Active Case Assessment Program (ACAP).

The Department and the United Way conduct numerous activities that are designed to assure quality and reduce the number and amount of administrative and client-caused errors. Some of these activities include the following:

- case reviews of actions taken on active and closed cases;
- worker performance assessments;
- electronic data matches with DSS and other state databases;
- state and federal criminal background checks for day care providers;
- matching providers to the state's child abuse and neglect registry;
- ongoing worker training;
- data integrity reporting; and
- matching provider Social Security Numbers with the IRS.

V. ESTIMATED CCDF FUNDS FOR FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2008

DSS has received preliminary funding estimates for available federal CCDF funds. The planning estimate is based on the CCDF federal fiscal year 2007 appropriation, which is **\$51,584,914**. This estimate represents only those funds available from the Child Care and Development Fund for the period October 1, 2007 to September 30, 2008. It does not include other state and federal funds.

The available federal funds as defined in the funding categories in Section II-C for FFY 2008 are:

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Mandatory Funds..... | \$18,738,357 |
| State Share of Matching Funds..... | \$18,682,227 |
| (State MOE Matching Funds \$18,738,358) | |
| Discretionary Funds..... | \$12,149,135 |
| Targeted - Quality Expansion Funds..... | \$1,198,225 |
| Targeted - Infant-Toddler Funds | \$693,931 |
| Targeted - School-Age/R&R Funds..... | <u>\$123,039</u> |
| Total Federal Only | \$51,584,914 |

For the purposes of this draft CCDF Plan, DSS has prepared the following preliminary allocation plan:

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Child Care Subsidies/Services | \$46,474,621 |
| Administrative Services | \$1,031,698 |
| Quality Services..... | \$2,063,400 |
| Targeted - Quality Expansion Funds..... | \$1,198,225 |
| Targeted - Infant-Toddler Services..... | \$693,931 |
| Targeted - School-age Services..... | <u>\$123,039</u> |
| FFY 2008 Estimate | \$51,584,914 |

We propose to use the funds for “quality services” and “earmarked quality expansion funds” to supplement state funds that support initiatives, including resource and referral services, identified in Section IV-C. The earmarked funds for infant/toddler services will support child care spaces at state supported centers. The earmarked funds for school-age or resource and referral services will continue to support only school-age contracted programs.

Other Federal Funds Used for Child Care Services

Under the federal welfare law, "The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996", Connecticut receives a **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant**. DSS administers the TANF block grant and the General Assembly appropriates sufficient state general funds in order to claim the available federal

TANF funds. The TANF block grant provides states with the option to transfer, "up to 30% of the TANF block grant" for child care assistance and other human service related needs the state deems a priority. Connecticut does not transfer TANF direct funds for child care but does transfer TANF funds to the Social Services Block Grant to support the DSS child day center program and child care licensing personnel at the CT Department of Public Health.

Connecticut also receives federal **Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)** funds, which can be used for child care services and a host of other critical human service needs. DSS administers the SSBG block grant and the General Assembly provides approval for funds disbursed. The SSBG block grant plan is being developed as this draft plan is distributed. We will identify such funds once the plan is approved.

Certain Connecticut early care providers directly receive federal **Head Start** funds from the federal office in Boston, MA. The CCDF plan does not address the available Head Start funds in Connecticut. Such funds are identified in the DSS annual report on child care. Connecticut provides state Head Start funds that supplement the federal Head Start funds. The Connecticut Department of Education administers these funds along with the state school readiness funds.

ATTACHMENT 1

VI. GLOSSARY

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| ACF | Administration for Children and Families - This is the federal office with oversight to the Child Care and Development Fund. |
| CCAP | Child Care Assistance Program - The state's regulatory name for the existing child care subsidy programs. Now known as the Care 4 Kids program. |
| CCDBG | Child Care and Development Block Grant - This is the official federal statutory name for CCDF. |
| CCDF | Child Care and Development Fund - This is the name adopted by ACF to describe the child care federal legislation and funding program. |
| CSCRC | Connecticut 's Child Safety & Crisis Response Committee - established to improve communication and training for emergency planning response issues for schools and child care providers. |
| C4K | Care 4 Kids. This name became effective January 1, 2002, for Connecticut's child care subsidy program. |
| DSS | Connecticut Department of Social Services - The state designated agency to prepare and submit the federal CCDF plan. |
| ECE | Early Childhood Education Cabinet – established by the Connecticut Legislature in 2006. |
| ELG | Connecticut's Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers |
| HEAD START | A federal program created in 1965 that provides economically disadvantaged children with comprehensive child development services. |
| PRWORA | Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. This is also known as the federal welfare reform legislation. |
| SSBG | Social Services Block Grant - This is a source of federal funds that states can target for child care services. |
| TANF | Temporary Assistance for Needy Families - This is the federal name for available funds to support a variety of services to individuals eligible to receive cash assistance. TANF replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. |

ATTACHMENT 2

CHILD CARE SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT – PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) Family Services & Child Care Team*, in collaboration with the State Child Day Care Council is convening five public hearings to provide Connecticut residents an opportunity to comment on child care services in Connecticut. DSS must prepare the state’s Child Care Plan to access federal funds. The plan must be submitted to Washington, D.C. by July 1, 2007. Your participation in this process is welcomed. Please share this schedule with others and encourage their involvement.

The draft plan will be available after April 27, 2007 on the DSS web site www.ct.gov/dss
 Go to Publications and click on *CT Draft Federal Plan 2007-2009*.
 Use the [Child Care Comment Form](#) (under Contact Us, just below Publications) to submit comments.

| LOCATION | DATE | TIME | MEETING SPONSOR | ADDRESS |
|------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|--|---|
| WATERFORD | Thursday, May 3, 2007 | 4:00 – 7:00 PM | Visiting Nurse Association of Southeastern Connecticut | 403 North Frontage Road, Waterford (860) 444-1111 |
| HAMDEN | Wednesday, May 16, 2007 | 4:00 – 7:00 PM | Connecticut Charts-A-Course | 2321 Whitney Avenue, Hamden (800) 832-7784 |
| HARTFORD | Tuesday, May 23, 2007 | 12:00 – 2:00 PM | Head Start Directors Forum | 555 Windsor Street, Hartford (860) 560-5600 |
| WATERBURY | Thursday, May 24, 2007 | 4:00 – 7:00 PM | New Opportunities, Inc. Auditorium | 232 North Elm Street, Waterbury (203) 759-0841 |
| NORWALK | Monday, June 18, 2007 | 4:00 – 7:00 PM | Stepping Stones Museum | 303 West Avenue, Norwalk (203) 899-0606 |

* The DSS Family Services & Child Care Team is prepared to answer questions concerning this information. Reach them by calling in-state toll-free 1-800-811-6141 and press 6 at any time during the message to be connected or (860) 424-5598 from within the local calling area or from out of state.

ATTACHMENT 3

**DIRECTORY OF CHILD CARE RELATED SERVICES
DIRECTORIO DE SERVICIOS RELACIONADOS CON CUIDADO INFANTIL**

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <i>Family Services Servicios para Familias</i> | <i>Department of Social Services (DSS)</i> | <i>1-800-811-6141</i> http://www.dss.state.ct.us/ccare/index.htm |
| <i>Child Care Licensing Licencias para Cuidado de Niños</i> | <i>Department of Public Health (DPH)</i> | <i>1-800-282-6063</i> http://www.dph.state.ct.us/Licensure/licensure |
| <i>Bureau of Early Childhood , Career and Adult Education/ Oficina de Educación Infantil Temprana y Educación para Adultos</i> | <i>State Department of Education (SDE)</i> | <i>860-807-2050</i> http://www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/readiness/index |
| <i>211 Child Care Servicios de Referencia para Personas que buscan Cuidado Infantil</i> | <i>United Way of Connecticut</i> | <i>1-800-505-1000</i> www.childcareinfoline.org |
| <i>care 4 Kids Programa de Asistencia de Cuidado Infantil</i> | <i>United Way of Connecticut</i> | <i>1-888-214-5437</i> http://www.ctcare4kids.com/ |
| <i>Accreditation Facilitation Project (AFP) Proyecto de Facilitación de Acreditación</i> | <i>Connecticut Charts-A-Course (CCAC)</i> | <i>1-800-832-7784</i> <i>860-257-1104</i> http://www.ctcharts-a-course.org |
| <i>Scholarship Assistance Program & Career Advisement Programa de Becas y Consejería Académica</i> | <i>Connecticut Charts-A-Course (CCAC)</i> | <i>1-800-832-7784</i> <i>203-287-3906</i> http://www.ctcharts-a-course.org |
| <i>Training Program in Child Development Academia de Entrenamiento y Recursos de Educación Temprana</i> | <i>The Wheeler Clinic</i> | <i>1-888-793-3500</i> <i>1-800-793-3588</i> http://www.wheelerclinic.org |
| <i>Child Care Facilities Loan fund (CCFLF) Fondo de Préstamos para Instalaciones de Cuidado Infantil</i> | <i>Connecticut Health and Education Facilities Authority-CHEFA</i> | <i>1-800-750-1862</i> <i>860-520-4700</i> http://www.chefa.com |
| <i>Child Care Tax Credits Créditos de Impuesto para Empleadores por Contribuciones a Cuidado</i> | <i>Department of Revenue Services (DRS) (Forms) Infantil (Information)</i> | <i>860-297-5698</i> <i>860-297-4932</i> http://ct.gov/drs |
| <i>Early Childhood DataCONNECTIONS 'DataCONNECTIONS' sobre la Niñez Temprana</i> | <i>Child Health and Development Institute (CHDI)</i> | <i>860-679-1519</i> http://www.chdi.org |
| <i>HUSKY Plan (Health Care for Uninsured Kids and Youth)/ Cuidado de Salud para Niños y Jóvenes sin Seguro Médico</i> | <i>Department of Social Services (DSS)</i> | <i>1-877-Connecticut-HUSKY</i> <i>1-877-284-8759</i> http://www.huskyhealth.com |
| <i>Child Support Information Hotline Línea de Información sobre Mantenimiento de Niños</i> | <i>Department of Social Services (DSS)</i> | <i>1-800-228-5437</i> http://www.dss.state.ct.us/csdc/csdc.htm |
| <i>Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline Línea para Reportar Casos de Abuso y Descuido de Niños</i> | <i>Department of Child and Families (DCF)</i> | <i>1-800-842-2288</i> http://www.state.ct.us/DCF |

ATTACHMENT 4

**HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR PROVIDERS
EXEMPT FROM LICENSING REQUIREMENTS**

The proposed DSS plan must address the following CCDF health and safety provisions:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

The DSS requirements are as follows:

In the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), known as the Care 4 Kids program, the eligible parent must provide the provider exempt from licensing requirements with information on the Provider/Parent Agreement form. Such provider must complete and sign the Provider/Parent Agreement attesting to the following:

- the provider is 18 years of age or older;
- the total number of children in care;
- local town code enforcement and minimum health and safety standards are met, including the availability of a working telephone, fire extinguisher and smoke alarm at the childcare location;
- the absence of an arrest or conviction for a felony, violent crime, injury to a minor or other crimes against persons;
- the absence of a DCF protective services for child abuse or neglect and that all instances of suspected child abuse or neglect will be reported to the state child welfare agency;
- all children in care are age-appropriately immunized;
- the parent has provided the name and address of the child's primary care physician and health insurance carrier;
- the provider is not working another job during the hours the child is in care; and
- changes in the site or location of care will be reported promptly to DSS.

In addition, DSS has an agreement with the Connecticut Department of Children and Families to conduct child abuse and neglect background checks for all unlicensed providers at the time of initial application and at least one time per year thereafter. State and federal criminal background checks are mandated for all non-relative providers that provide care in the child's home and for any provider suspected of having committed a sex crime or crime against persons in Connecticut or any other state. Information concerning the results of criminal and child abuse/neglect background checks is released to the parent to the extent necessary to provide the parent with the ability to make an informed choice about continuing care with the provider.

Parents and providers must also certify that the provider is capable of providing safe and competent care as a condition of eligibility, including the ability to feed, bathe and toilet the child as appropriate and the ability to respond to emergencies and provide adequate care and supervision.

ATTACHMENT 5

READY BY 5 & FINE BY 9
CONNECTICUT'S EARLY CHILDHOOD INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

APPENDIX A

ACTION ITEM UPDATES

1. **Assure fiscal support for high-quality preschool for all 3- and 4-year-olds in families at or below 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, and increase this income eligibility standard as state resources permit**
 - Data on eligible children by community will be reviewed by the Cabinet's Implementation Team and the Early Childhood Research and Policy Council in September.
 - Data on the costs associated with "high-quality" programs are available through the ECE Cost Modeling Tool. This tool, available from the CT Health and Education Facilities Authority (CHEFA), can produce a variety of cost scenarios for center-based preschool programs, taking into account the nature of the work force and the costs of facility modification or expansion. The modeling template was presented to the Cabinet in the fall of 2005 and to the Council in the spring of 2006.
 - The Council is examining strategies and timelines for expansion of the School Readiness Program, as well as delivery models in which the funding is more directly associated with individual children, giving families more choice among quality providers. Also, this spring the chairs of the Council engaged in a one-hour briefing call with Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank Senior Vice President Art Rolnick to learn about the Minnesota preschool scholarship and mentoring program.
 - Technical assistance is currently being provided to two cities that have presented early childhood strategic blueprints: Hartford and Bridgeport. CHEFA is providing this assistance with a focus on facility development costs and strategies.
 - Work to review and update the Cabinet on Quality Rating Systems now being developed across the nation will begin in August, led by Council staff person Dr. Carlotta Schechter and the Director of Data CONNECTIONS, Susan Wilson. A plan to develop a Connecticut Quality Rating Scale for center-based ECE programs — as requested in the Governor's 2005-07 Biennial budget — will be presented over the fall. Parental access to a public Quality Rating System allows families to make better program choices based on program quality and provides a basis to link infrastructure funding support to the development and sustainability of high-quality programs.
2. **Address state reimbursement inequities for center-based preschool programs**
 - An analysis will be undertaken in August and September by the Early Childhood Research and Policy Council to identify current reimbursement patterns and develop a cost model for addressing existing state reimbursement inequities. Partners in this work include the Department of Social Services, State Department of Education and Office for Policy and Management.
3. **Develop a multi-year early childhood work force professional development plan to assure compliance with state law and selected national certification programs**
 - Using the state's seven educationally most-at-risk communities⁷³ as a case study, a working group is creating an estimate of costs and programs necessary to ensure availability of a preschool work force in compliance with state statutes and national certification requirements. This case study will be used by the Early Childhood Research and Policy Council to estimate costs and timelines for other communities as well, and is expected by mid-September.
 - A proposal to begin development of a first-ever Connecticut ECE work force data registry is in progress. The Cabinet will review the proposal in the fall for support in the current fiscal year, 2006-07.

ATTACHMENT 5

- The Connecticut Department of Higher Education, along with other partners, is reviewing alternative routes to a bachelor's degree and certification for professionals who are or will be working in the ECE sector.
- 4. Provide health, mental health and education consultation to preschool programs to enhance the skills of directors and teachers for meeting the comprehensive needs of children**
- As the staff agent of the Early Childhood Research and Policy Council, the United Way of CT will work with organizations, beginning with the Child Health and Development Institute, to develop a cost model for multi-year expansion to these services. The proposal will then come to the Council, and be shared with the Cabinet in the early fall.
- 5. Support the design and implementation of the kindergarten assessment**
- The State Department of Education (SDE), working with other Cabinet members, is developing an entry to kindergarten "school readiness proxy assessment" for implementation in the fall of 2006. The survey is based on kindergarten teacher perceptions and will be used within the first month of school. A similar survey will be used in the spring to provide information on children's progress, as required by legislation enacted in the 2006 legislative session.
 - Conversations with the CT Association of Public School Superintendents, the CT Association of Boards of Education and other stakeholders in the field of elementary education are taking place to review and provide guidance on the use of the "school readiness proxy assessment" and analysis of proxy data. The proxy assessment will be used in 2006, 2007 and 2008.
 - In February 2006, SDE identified a series of policy issues requiring resolution and offered a working group process for development of the statewide, developmentally appropriate kindergarten assessment. That work will begin in earnest in the fall of 2006 for full implementation no later than the fall of 2009. Legislation passed in 2006 requires that the final assessment be developed and administered "within available resources." The SFY 2006-07 budget provides \$400,000 for this task.
- 6. Develop a comprehensive strategic plan for serving infants and toddlers**
- Recognizing that children's learning begins at birth, Cabinet members and others who are participants in the Cabinet's Implementation Team will begin work on this action item by late summer. The first area of focus will be on a proposal for development and appropriate support of a family-based early care and education "system" capable of meeting the child-care needs and preferences of families for their children, ages birth through age 3. The Commissioner of the Department of Social Services will lead this work and involve a broad-based and representative group of agencies and individuals.
 - A second area of focus will be on cross-agency care coordination at the state and local levels, with an emphasis on targeted outreach, family involvement and education, improved information exchange across organizations, and more effective data gathering, analysis and use regarding child and family outcomes. This work will draw on the draft plan of Early Childhood Partners.
 - The full comprehensive strategic plan will be completed by June 2007, However, the working group will provide initial detail and intent to the Early Childhood Research and Policy Council in the early fall 2006 for preliminary costing and management purposes.
- 7. Ensure that HUSKY children receive regular well child visits and an annual developmental assessment**
- Preliminary cost estimates and policy issues inherent in this action item will be addressed over the next 60 days. As staff to the Research and Policy Council, the United Way of Connecticut will work with the Department of Social Services to assure access to necessary information and the involvement of key stakeholders.

ATTACHMENT 5

8. Provide all families and caregivers (including non-custodial parents) with information about child development, prenatal through age 8

- The Children's Trust Fund, working with the United Way of Connecticut, which hosts Connecticut's Help Me Grow program, has a developed preliminary cost estimates for an expansion of the Help Me Grow program, along with the use of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, already available free to Connecticut families who request it.
- The State Department of Education has begun to identify resources for parents that specify academic expectations for children in the early elementary school years.

9. Expand eligibility categories in the Birth-to-Three Program to include mild developmental delays and environmental risks

- The Department of Mental Retardation has preliminary cost estimates and an analysis of policy implications for this action item. Cost information will be further developed in partnership with the Research and Policy Council.
- Ongoing work, including cross-agency linkages to better serve children transitioning from the Birth-to-Three Program to preschool special education, will be guided by the Cabinet's Implementation Team.

10. Support local communities in developing birth-to-5 councils (e.g., using School Readiness Councils) for planning and monitoring early childhood services

- Results of a preliminary survey of School Readiness Councils were reported earlier in this document. Ongoing work on this action item will be guided by the Cabinet's Implementation Team in partnership with the School Readiness Council network, Discovery community representatives, and other key stakeholders, including the Early Childhood Funders Affinity Group.

Footnote

73 These are the districts in Demographic Reference Group I: Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Waterbury and Windham.

ATTACHMENT 6

READY BY 5 & FINE BY 9

CONNECTICUT'S EARLY CHILDHOOD INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

APPENDIX B

40 ADDITIONAL ACTION PLAN ITEMS

Ready Families

- Provide all families with information about how to choose high-quality early care and education programs for children ages birth to 5.
- Increase family access to child development monitoring and early identification systems.
- Provide all families with information about developmental and academic expectations for children in grades K-3.
- Increase family access to training for parent engagement and leadership development.
- Expand access to home visitation programs.
- Increase access to adult literacy programs and other support services for parents and caregivers of young children.

Ready Communities: Building Community Capacity

- Build local capacity to create an early childhood investment plan for each community.
- Review “family service hub” models to determine their effectiveness in engaging families, making successful referrals to service providers, and providing interagency case coordination and program monitoring; and expand these models as appropriate.
- Research and support implementation of successful practices at the local level that assure efficient cross-agency information sharing, case management, and family involvement in service planning and delivery.

Ready Communities: Healthy Development

- Engage healthcare providers and community groups to increase screening of at-risk children.
- Ensure that all HUSKY-eligible children are enrolled.
- Pilot and evaluate the effectiveness of “medical homes” for at-risk children.
- Expand pediatric offices’ use of outreach programs to encourage parents to read to their children.

Ready Communities: Quality Family Care for Infants and Toddlers

- Revise and implement Connecticut’s draft Infant and Toddler Guidelines for early-care providers.
- Provide sufficient state payment rates for licensed family care for infants and toddlers in families that are at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level, and increase this income eligibility standard as state resources permit.
- Expand support networks for licensed and kith & kin family child-care providers.
- Assist unlicensed family care providers to become licensed.

Ready Communities: High-Quality Preschool

- Foster educational models in at-risk communities that link preschool and early elementary education, including magnet and charter schools.
- Require that all centers receiving state funds implement this Framework or state-approved curriculum within three years.
- Provide all preschool programs with the *Connecticut Preschool Curriculum Framework* and with state supported training opportunities.
- Develop a center-based preschool facility expansion plan that supports public-private development.
- Promote cross-income enrollment and family choice of providers.
- Support co-location of preschool and kindergarten sites in eligible communities that do not have full-day kindergarten.
- Provide technical assistance and venture funding for centers that develop innovative management and fiscal strategies.

ATTACHMENT 6

Ready Schools: Transition to School

- Ensure vertical alignment of preschool curriculum with K-3 framework.
- As a readiness proxy measure, conduct an annual survey of kindergarten teachers' perceptions of child readiness (2006 through 2008).
- Implement a standard process for transition from preschools to kindergartens.
- Provide incentive funds for all-day kindergarten for all students.

Ready Schools: Every Child a Successful Reader

- Include parents as partners in their child's education and provide opportunities to enhance adult and family literacy skills through access to proven program models.
- Track and report on children's grade-appropriate reading progress at the end of kindergarten, and first and second grades.
- Expand the role of community and school libraries in public engagement.

Ready State

- Create a process for ongoing collaboration among all state agencies with early childhood responsibilities.
- Develop a data system that integrates student-specific information on preschool and other early childhood experience(s) into the Connecticut Public School Information System or other data management system.
- Implement an accountability system that clearly communicates results to the general public.
- Implement a public quality rating system for early care and education.
- Develop a process – in partnership with higher education — by which research and other “knowledge development” activities related to early childhood investment can be shared with parents, providers and policymakers.
- Explore pilot strategies that would permit funding to follow the child.

Ready work Force

- Implement scientifically based reading research, including the teacher mentor model, and train all Connecticut preschool and kindergarten teachers on how children learn to read.
- Provide training in developmental assessment and the importance of early intervention for health care, child care and social service providers.
- Increase professional development opportunities for licensed family-care providers.

ATTACHMENT 7

Excerpt from
**Governor's Early Childhood Research & Policy Council
Early Childhood Investment Plan Recommendations Summary
FY08 (7/07-6/08) & FY09 (7/08-6/09)**

This document is a summary of each of the priorities and additional challenges the Early Childhood Research & Policy Council were asked to consider for recommendations and financing for Connecticut's upcoming biennium. The table below is a quick reference of the items contained in the document, the pages they can be found and the cost associated with them.

| Priority/Additional Challenge FY08 and FY09 | Total Cost | Page |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <i>Assure fiscal support for high quality preschool for all 3 and 4 year olds in families at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level, and increase this income eligibility standard as state resources permit.</i> | \$50,644,992 | 2 |
| <i>Address state reimbursement inequities for state-funded center-based preschool programs.</i> | \$6,620,295 | 6 |
| <i>Develop a multi-year early childhood workforce professional development plan to assure compliance with state law and selected national certification programs.</i> | \$4,647,090 | 7 |
| <i>Provide health, mental health, and education consultation to preschool programs to enhance the skills of directors and teachers for meeting the comprehensive needs of children.</i> | \$610,000 | 9 |
| <i>Expand eligibility categories in the Birth-to-Three program to include mild developmental delays and environmental risks.</i> | \$9,523,307 | 10 |
| <i>Ensure HUSKY children receive regular well-child visits and an annual developmental assessment.</i> | No Cost Recommendations | 11 |
| <i>Provide all families and caregivers (including non-custodial parents) with information about child development, prenatal through age eight.</i> | \$2,101,767 | 13 |
| <i>Support the design and implementation of the kindergarten assessment (Statewide implementation due Fall 2009).</i> | \$2,000,000 | 14 |
| <i>Support local communities in developing birth-to-five councils (e.g., using School Readiness Councils) for planning and monitoring early childhood services.</i> | \$10,496,130 | 15 |
| <i>Develop a comprehensive strategic plan for serving infants and toddlers.</i> | Developed through existing funds | 17 |

ATTACHMENT 7

| | | |
|--|-------------|----|
| <i>How can the state integrate currently “silo-ed” datasets maintained by a variety of state and local governmental agencies to create a readily accessible data system to support public policy, organizational management and individual case management decisions? What other data not currently captured needs to be maintained in a new integrated data system?</i> | \$6,700,000 | 17 |
| <i>State structural and management issues in expanding programs and expenditures</i> | \$1,352,600 | 18 |
| <i>Advise on establishment of a Quality Rating Scale for early care and education center-based programs, including requisite component elements such as a data registry for the early care and education (ECE) workforce.</i> | \$5,968,500 | 19 |
| <i>Propose the establishment of a functioning network of early childhood researchers.</i> | \$1,762,500 | 2 |