



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Connecticut Office of
Early Childhood

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**Connecticut Administered State-Funded Program General Policy
B-03**

- Child Day Care Contractors
- Priority School Readiness Districts
- Competitive School Readiness Municipalities
- Smart Start

TO: Mayors, Superintendents, School Readiness Council Chairs/Co-Chairs and Liaisons, Child Day Care Contractors

FROM: Harriet Feldlauer, Director
Early Care and Education
Office of Early Childhood
(OEC) 

SUBJECT: Eligibility for program enrollment including income, residency and work

I. DEFINITIONS

A. "Family" is:

1. A parent(s), a parent's spouse, and their minor children who reside together.
2. A parent is a person of majority age who has legally been granted "in loco parentis" status or who is a child's parent by blood, marriage or adoption.
3. Additionally, **for School Readiness**, parents who pay more than half the support of their minor child(ren) living with another family, as reported to the federal Internal Revenue Service (IRS) at their last annual IRS filing, may include such child(ren) as a member of their family (i.e., family size) for determining the family's fee.
4. A child for whom Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) is received, living with a supervising relative for whom no TFA is provided¹. Such a child shall be considered as a family of one.
5. A child in foster care authorized by the Connecticut Department of Children and Families. Such a child shall be considered a family of one.
6. **For Child Day Care**, those families funded by Federal TANF funds must meet the following definition: The parent(s), a parent's spouse and minor child(ren) who

reside together. Additionally a “parent” can be a person of majority age who has been legally granted “in loco parentis” status.

Child Day Care

B. “Enrolled” shall mean:

1. The contractor has determined that the family is eligible for program services;
2. The child has been scheduled to attend the program;
3. During the report period in which said child was scheduled to attend the program, the child attended at least one calendar day; and
4. The child shall remain enrolled so long as:
 - a. Neither the contractor nor the family member terminate the child’s enrollment,
 - b. The child attends at least one calendar day in each report period, or
 - c. The child does not attend at least one calendar day but the contractor holds the slot for the child and the family pays the established Weekly Fee for the slot.

II. POLICY

A. Income Eligibility

Child Day Care

Programs shall enroll families whose gross income is less than 75% of the state median income guideline. The Office of Early Childhood shall notify the contractor, in writing, of the state median income guideline. When a family’s gross income reaches or exceeds the 75% state median income level, the family’s currently enrolled child(ren) may remain in the program so long as the family pays the applicable fees and remains eligible under all other conditions. If a family’s gross income exceeds 100% of the state median income, programs will consult with the Child Day Care Program Manager regarding continuing eligibility and applicable fees.

Programs shall determine family income eligibility before enrollment and will re-determine child fees at least annually thereafter. The contractor shall also require families to report changes in gross family income of fifty dollars or more per week and shall be required to re-determine child fees based on and following receipt of the reported changes.

Federal funding that partially supports the Child Day Care Contracts requires that families enrolled are on or below 200% of the federal poverty level. Information reported on the Program Status Report (PSR) regarding family size and income allows the Office of Early Childhood to monitor enrollment of families falling on or below 200% of the federal poverty level and to ensure compliance with the federal funding requirements.

School Readiness

Of the School Readiness children enrolled in a program, 60% must be from families that are below 75% of the State median income.

Smart Start

Preference for funding of Smart Start programs is given to those that allocate spaces in the following manner:

- At least 60% of the spaces are allocated for children who are members of families that are at or below 75% of the state median income, or

- 50% of the spaces are allocated for children who are eligible for free and reduced price meals.

Programs MUST allocate spaces as they were proposed in their application for funding.

B. Residency Requirements

Child Day Care

Programs shall limit the provision of services to families who reside in the State of Connecticut, except that families who reside in the states of Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island, who work in Connecticut and receive a child care subsidy from their state of residence which may be used in Connecticut, may receive services under the Child Day Care Contract.

School Readiness

Local School Readiness Councils shall establish a written policy regarding whether to allow sub-grantee School Readiness programs to enroll non-resident children. Please refer to GP C-06 School Readiness Non-Residency Option.

Smart Start

Students enrolled in a Smart Start program must be residents of the town(s) served by the local or regional board of education. Proof of residency is required for enrollment.

C. Age Requirements

Child Day Care

Children from six weeks up to twelve years of age are eligible for services under the Child Day Care contracts. See General Policy B-04 for age requirements for the various space types outlined in the Child Day Care contracts.

School Readiness

Children three and four years of age, and children five years of age who are not eligible to enroll in school pursuant to section 10-15c or who are eligible to enroll in school and will attend a School Readiness program pursuant of section 10-16t, are eligible for enrollment.

Smart Start

Children three and four year of age are eligible for Smart Start. A child who will be three on or before January 1st is able to apply to enroll in Smart Start. Districts are allowed to prioritize admissions based on the needs of the community.

D. Work Requirements

Child Day Care

Under the Child Day Care Contract, 80% of families enrolled shall be earning income through employment. If a family's work status changes, programs can continue to provide services if:

1. The family can be included in the 20% of families not required to be earning income through employment
2. The program enters into an agreement with the family regarding their efforts to find work and/or enter into a training or education program with an ultimate goal of employment. It will be the program's responsibility to set expectations regarding documentation and follow-up regarding adherence to this agreement.

School Readiness

There are no requirements regarding work status.

Smart Start

There are no requirements regarding work status.

E. Circumstances Outside of this Policy Statement

When cases arise that do not fit into the circumstances described within this policy, programs, liaisons and/or contractors should contact the appropriate program manager for individual guidance regarding the situation.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHILD DAY CARE CONTRACTORS AND SCHOOL READINESS COUNCILS (SRCS)

Child Day Care Contractors and/or School Readiness Councils (SRC) are responsible for ensuring that the practices and policies related to enrollment and eligibility are followed by all subcontractors.

For further information concerning this GENERAL POLICY please contact:

CHILD DAY CARE	SCHOOL READINESS	STATE HEAD START and SMART START
<p>Michelle Levy Program Manager 860-713-6756 Michelle.Levy@ct.gov</p>	<p>Gerri Rowell Program Manager 860-713-6774 Gerri.Rowell@ct.gov</p>	<p>Andrea Brinnel Program Manager 860-713-6771 Andrea.Brinnel@ct.gov</p>