

School Readiness



OBJECTIVE

A state-funded initiative administered by the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) that develops a network of school readiness programs to:

- Provide open access for children to quality programs that promote the health and safety of children and prepare them for formal schooling;
- Provide opportunities for parents to choose among affordable and accredited programs;
- Encourage coordination and cooperation among programs and prevent the duplication of services;
- Recognize the specific service needs and unique resources available to particular municipalities and provide flexibility in the implementation of programs;
- Prevent or minimize the potential for developmental delays in children prior to their reaching the age of five;
- Enhance federally funded school readiness programs;
- Strengthen the family through: (A) Encouragement of parental involvement in a child's development and education; and (B) enhancement of a family's capacity to meet the special needs of the children, including children with disabilities;
- Reduce educational costs by decreasing the need for special education services for school age children and to avoid grade repetition;
- Assure that children with disabilities are integrated into programs available to children who are not disabled; and
- Improve the availability and quality of school readiness programs and the coordination with the services of child care providers.

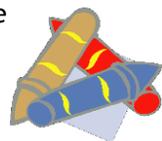
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OVERVIEW

Established in 1997 under P.A. 97-259, An Act Concerning School Readiness and Child Day Care and encoded in the CT General Statutes C.G.S. 10-16p - 10-16u, the legislation established a grant program to provide spaces in NAEYC accredited or Federal Head Start approved programs for eligible children in priority school districts and competitive grant municipalities.

Priority School Districts

All current and former priority school districts receive a grant allocation for spaces for eligible children.





Competitive Grant Municipalities

Competitive grant municipalities or regional school districts are eligible to receive a grant allocation for spaces for eligible children if the area is served by a priority school or in a town ranked 1 to 50 when all towns are ranked in ascending order according to town wealth. Each eligible municipality or regional school district may apply for a Competitive School Readiness grant.

The School Readiness grant allocation is based on the formula that uses the March 30 space count of the fiscal year prior to the fiscal year in which the grant is to be paid, plus or minus the current space requests, multiplied by the per child cost space rate.

Grant awards are made annually to eligible communities, for a period of five years. The chief elected official and the superintendent of schools jointly submit a plan for the expenditure of the funds and the responses to the local request for proposals process.

To review the RFP for Priority or Competitive School Readiness Grants, please refer to the OEC School Readiness web page.



SCHOOL READINESS COUNCIL

The chief elected official and the superintendent of schools jointly appoint and convene a School Readiness Council with the responsibility of making recommendations on issues relating to School Readiness including the application for School Readiness grants. The School Readiness Council is composed of the chief elected official or designee, the superintendent of schools or management level staff person, parents, a representative of a community health care provider, a librarian, representatives from programs such as Head Start, family resource centers, nonprofit and for profit child-care centers, group day-care homes, pre-kindergarten and nursery schools, family day care home providers and representatives from the community who provide services to children or have an interest in young children and their families.

ELIGIBILITY

Children who are ages 3 and 4 years of age and children age 5 years of age who are not eligible to enroll in kindergarten may enroll in a School Readiness program. Under C.G.S. Sec 10-16t, a School Readiness Council may elect to reserve 5 percent of its spaces for 5-year-olds eligible to enroll in school provided they have been in the program for one year and the parent or legal guardian, the School Readiness provider and local or regional school district agree that the child is not ready for kindergarten and the parent signs the public school option form exempting his/her child from attendance at the public school.

At least 60 percent of the children enrolled must be at or below 75 percent of the State Median Income.

PROGRAM TYPES

Full-day/Full-year Programs	Those programs providing services for 10 hours per day for 50 weeks per year. Reimbursed at \$8,924 per child per year.
School-Day/School-Year Programs	Those programs providing services for 6 hours per day for 180 consecutive days. Reimbursed at \$6,000 per child per year.
Part-Day/Part-Year Programs	Those programs providing services for at least 2.5 hours per day for 180 consecutive days. Reimbursed at \$4,500 per child per year.
Extended-Day Programs	This program is only available in the priority school districts. Those programs providing services that extend the hours, days and/or weeks of programming for children who are in an existing part time program not funded by School Readiness dollars. The purpose is to provide those children with a full time program of 10 hours per day for 50 weeks. Reimbursed at \$2,772 per child per year.

All programs must charge parent fees, based on the School Readiness Sliding Fee Scale, and/or use the child-care subsidy certificates from the Care4Kids program. School Readiness Councils may exempt part-day programs from charging parent fees. Exempt programs are not eligible for Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).

School Readiness



REQUIREMENTS

In the Priority and Competitive School Readiness municipalities, the School Readiness Council shall issue a local request for proposals to identify and fund local early care and education providers to provide School Readiness spaces. After a review by the Council to ensure that the proposals address all the requirements of the School Readiness legislation, the School Readiness Council shall, within their allocation, purchase capacity in public schools, for profit and non-profit early childhood programs, Head Start and state funded child care programs. All programs must either be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or complete that process within three years of being awarded the funds, or receive Federal Head Start funding. At least 50 percent of the spaces in a priority community must be full-day/full-year spaces.

In funded Competitive grant municipalities, a School Readiness Council may file a waiver application to the OEC for the purpose of seeking approval of a School Readiness schedule that varies from the minimum hours and number of days and maximizes available dollars to serve more children or address community needs. The School Readiness Council may purchase capacity in early care and education programs such as public schools, for profit and non-profit early childhood programs, Head Start and state funded child care programs. These programs must be accredited by NAEYC or complete the process within three years of being awarded the funds, or receive Federal Head Start funding.

QUALITY COMPONENTS

The legislation has identified specific requirements for School Readiness programs as part of the continuum of services in quality programs that meet the needs of children and families. These indicators include:

- A plan for collaboration with other community programs and services, including public libraries and for coordination of resources in order to facilitate full-day and year-round child-care and education programs for children of working parents and parents in education or training programs;
- Parent involvement, parenting education and outreach;
- Referrals for health services, including referrals for appropriate immunizations and screenings;
- Nutrition services;
- Referrals to family literacy programs that incorporate adult basic education and provide for the promotion of literacy through access to public library services;
- Admission policies that promote enrollment of children from different racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds and from other communities;
- A plan of transition for participating children from the School Readiness program to kindergarten and provide for the transfer of records from the program to the kindergarten program;
- A plan for professional development for staff;
- A sliding fee scale for families participating in the program;
- An annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the program; and
- A plan to ensure that children with disabilities are integrated into programs with children who are not disabled.

FY 2016 GRANTS

Priority Communities	Grant Amount	Competitive Grant Municipalities	Grant Amount
Ansonia	\$1,214,917	Andover	\$ 113,400
Bloomfield	684,184	Ashford	113,400
Bridgeport	13,070,384	Branford	121,813
Bristol	2,891,128	Brooklyn	113,400
Danbury	3,546,716	Canterbury	250,425
Derby	121,813	Chaplin	119,700
East Hartford	2,872,860	Colchester	151,200
Hartford	12,214,768	Coventry	132,300
Meriden	3,834,076	East Haven	402,919
Middletown	2,129,700	Eastford	107,100
New Britain	4,938,128	Ellington	117,407
New Haven	8,242,328	Enfield	281,106
New London	1,456,409	Greenwich	290,476
Norwalk	5,190,272	Griswold	305,449
Norwich	2,241,350	Groton	509,380
Putnam	590,604	Hamden	655,914
Stamford	4,316,244	Hampton	104,000
Waterbury	10,368,828	Hebron	113,400
West Haven	2,007,890	Killingly	368,550
Windham	1,583,946	Lebanon	113,400
Total	\$83,516,545	Ledyard	226,800

Lisbon	108,675
Manchester	374,808
Mansfield	154,808
Milford	552,842
Naugatuck	337,327
North Canaan	140,553
Plainfield	215,914
Plainville	207,102
Plymouth	131,582
Scotland	113,400
Seymour	121,813
Shelton	309,217
Sprague	141,750
Stafford	117,487
Sterling	113,400
Stratford	203,713
Thomaston	131,502
Thompson	109,771
Torrington	297,893
Vernon	334,039
Voluntown	207,900
West Hartford *	410,615
Winchester	275,764
Windsor	290,636
Windsor Locks	226,800
Wolcott	187,404
Total	\$10,528,250

* \$88,000 is funded through PSD

RESOURCES

GENERAL POLICY DOCUMENTS

These documents are issued to provide guidance to School Readiness Councils and providers regarding School Readiness policies and procedures.

CONNECTICUT HEALTH AND EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AUTHORITY

CHEFA Bonding and Loan Program

Funds are available to early childhood programs through the CHEFA to fund renovations and construction for early care and education facilities. For information concerning funding, contact CHEFA at 860-520-4001.

SCHOOL FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION GRANT PROGRAM

Each town or regional school district may apply for a grant for a school building project. If a town or regional school district's project is a new building or expansion of an existing building for an elementary school and it includes space for a School Readiness program, the percentage that the local board of education is eligible to receive shall be increased by five percentage points but shall not exceed one hundred per cent, for the portion of the building used primarily for such purpose. For further information contact the Department of Construction Services, School Facilities at 860-713-6480.



QUALITY ENHANCEMENT GRANTS

Supplemental grants are available to School Readiness municipalities to improve the quality and comprehensiveness of school readiness programs. These grants are awarded annually and require an application from the community in response to a state Request for Proposal (RFP).

FY 2016	Amount	FY 2016	Amount
Andover	\$ 3,881	Milford	3,881
Ansonia	6,447	Naugatuck	3,881
Ashford	3,881	New Britain	53,271
Bloomfield	8,035	New Haven	108,583
Branford	3,881	New London	17,226
Bridgeport	134,851	North Canaan	3,881
Bristol	25,024	Norwalk	50,282
Brooklyn	3,881	Norwich	20,120
Canterbury	3,881	Plainfield	3,881
Chaplin	3,881	Plainville	3,881
Colchester	3,881	Plymouth	3,881
Coventry	3,881	Putnam	6,447
Danbury	33,206	Scotland	3,881
Derby	3,881	Seymour	3,881
Eastford	3,881	Shelton	3,881
East Hartford	28,340	Sprague	3,881
East Haven	3,881	Stafford	3,881
Ellington	3,881	Stamford	65,335
Enfield	3,881	Sterling	3,881
Greenwich	3,881	Stratford	3,881
Griswold	3,881	Thomaston	3,881
Groton	3,881	Thompson	3,881
Hamden	3,881	Torrington	3,881
Hampton	3,881	Vernon	3,881
Hartford	150,125	Voluntown	3,881
Hebron	3,881	Waterbury	100,918
Killingly	3,881	West Hartford	3,881
Lebanon	3,881	West Haven	33,318
Ledyard	3,881	Winchester	3,881
Lisbon	3,881	Windham	13,963
Manchester	3,881	Windsor	3,881
Mansfield	3,881	Windsor Locks	3,881
Meriden	37,807	Wolcott	3,881
Middletown	25,380		
		Total	\$1,104,966

LINKAGES

Accreditation Facilitation Project - <http://www.ctcharts.org/>

This statewide initiative provides intensive support to programs seeking National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation.

Connecticut Charts-A-Course - <http://www.ctcharts.org/>

Connecticut Charts-A-Course strives to bring professionalism to the field of early education by promoting the following:

- career development ladder for individuals working in all child-care settings;
- professional recognition for training;
- training that can be applied toward a CDA credential and college credit;
- high-quality training and trainers; and
- financial assistance towards training, education and national accreditation to child-care centers.