



Connecticut Administered State-Funded Program General Policy
B-06

- OEC Child Day Care Contractors
- OEC Competitive School Readiness Municipalities
- OEC Priority School Readiness Districts
- OEC State Head Start Supplement
- OEC Smart Start

TO: Mayors, Superintendents, School Readiness Council Chairs/Co-Chairs and Liaisons

FROM: Harriet Feldlaufer, Director
Division of Early Care and Education

SUBJECT: School Readiness and Smart Start Spaces for Children with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), special health care needs or other disabilities

School Readiness

The Connecticut General Statutes C.G.S. Section 10-160 (9) requires that the School Readiness Grant Program (SR) “**Assure that children with disabilities are integrated into programs available to children who are not disabled...**” The purpose of this policy is to give guidance to School Readiness Councils (SRCs), School Readiness Liaisons and School Readiness providers on the space type and reimbursement rate for children with disabilities who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) from a school district.

Some preschool children who are enrolled in a SR program may have a diagnosed disability that requires special education and related services. A child enrolled in SR must be physically located at the program site for the total number of hours required by their specific space type. Time for services in a location other than the SR program are not reimbursable for any slot type. Children on an IEP are eligible for all types of SR spaces that encompass the amount of hours spent at the School Readiness location.

SR Programs must treat children with and without IEPs, those with special health care needs and identified disabilities equally with regard to enrollment. No child should be excluded from a SR Program solely as a result of his or special education status, health care need or disability. A child in enrolled in a SR Program receiving special education services as determined by a planning and placement team shall be considered to be receiving supplemental and NOT supplanted funding when combining these two funding streams.

School Readiness classrooms are required to be general education programs and should strive to enroll a natural proportion of children with disabilities. Natural proportions should be determined by the city or towns K-12 special education percentage.

SRCs shall establish a local policy that ensures adherence to the requirements of this OEC General Policy. The local policy should incorporate the following:

- Ensure that the percentage of children with an IEP in a School Readiness classroom is similar to the percentage of K-12 students enrolled in special education by the local education agency (LEA).
- Development of a collaborative agreement with the LEA to provide services within School Readiness classrooms unless a PPT has determined that the services will not benefit the child unless they are in a separate location.
- All children with an IEP be provided with a program that ensures continuity and consistency in the least restrictive environment. The parent(s), the School Readiness Program, and the LEA will collaborate to plan a program best suited to meet the goals in the IEP in the least restrictive environment. If the delivery of special education services is at a location other than the School Readiness program a specific process for ongoing communication between the two programs should be coordinated to ensure consistency of services in the least restrictive environment. Parental consent must be obtained to allow two-way communication between the program and the LEA.
- All children with an IEP who are receiving special education and related services are entitled to all the School Readiness services as defined by the School Readiness legislation regardless of the space type.

It is the responsibility of the SRCs and the SR Liaisons to share this information with their sub-grantees and ensure that each program is in compliance with the nonsectarian guidelines in order for sub-grantees to receive funding as a School Readiness Program.

Smart Start

The percentage of children with an IEP in a Smart Start classroom must meet or exceed the percentage of K-12 students enrolled in special education in the district to receive Smart Start funding.

A local or regional board of education must treat children with and without IEPs equally with regard to enrollment in Smart Start.

Smart Start spaces are intended to increase district capacity and **MUST** be in addition to existing enrollment.

For further information concerning this GENERAL POLICY please contact:

SCHOOL READINESS and SMART START
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