

What is Connecticut's School Readiness Preschool Program?

OBJECTIVE

A state-funded initiative administered by the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) that develops a network of school readiness programs in order 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 high-quality programs;
- Encourage coordination and cooperation among programs and prevent the duplication of services;
- Recognize the specific service needs and unique resources available to municipalities and provide flexibility in the implementation of programs;
- Prevent or minimize developmental delays in children prior to their reaching the age of five;
- 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;
- Enhance federally funded school readiness programs;
- Strengthen the family through:
 - encouragement of parental involvement in a child's development and education; and
 - enhancement of a family's abilities to meet the special needs of the children, including children with disabilities; and
- Improve the coordination of services of child care providers.

OVERVIEW

The School Readiness Program was established in 1997 under P.A. 97-259, An Act Concerning School Readiness and Child Day Care and codified in the CT General Statutes (CGS) 10-16p–10-16u. This legislation established a state grant program to provide spaces for eligible children in priority school districts and competitive grant municipalities in high-quality programs either accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or Head Start approved.

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 30th space count of the prior 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, within available appropriations, 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 a summary of the responses to the local request for proposals for programs that will serve 3- and 4-year olds.

To review the RFP for Priority or Competitive School Readiness Grants, please refer to the OEC website at [School Readiness RFP's](#).

ELIGIBILITY

Children who are ages 3 and 4, and children 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 (SRC) may elect to reserve five 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. The parent **MUST** sign the public school option form exempting his/her child from attendance at the public school. This is an individual decision based on a specific child. In general, the OEC does not recommend delaying the start of kindergarten when a child is age eligible.

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 Program:	Provide services for 10 hours per day for 50 weeks per year. Reimbursed at \$8,924 per child per year.
School-Day/School-Year Program:	Provide services for 6 hours per day for 180 consecutive days. Reimbursed at \$6,000 per child per year.
Part-Day/Part-Year Program:	Provide services for at least 2.5 hours per day for 180 consecutive days. Reimbursed at \$4,500 per child per year.

Extended-Day Program:

Only available in the priority school districts. This space type is to provide services that extend the hours, days, and/or weeks of programming for children who are enrolled part-time in a program not funded by School Readiness. The purpose is to provide these children with a full-time program of 10 hours per day for 50 weeks per year. 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 Care4Kids Program. School Readiness Councils may exempt part-day programs from charging parent fees. Families in exempt programs are not eligible to receive a Care4Kids subsidy. Specific information about fee guidance is available in [General Policy B-02](#).

SCHOOL READINESS COUNCIL

The chief elected official and the superintendent of schools jointly appoint and convene a School Readiness Council (SRC) with the responsibility of making recommendations on issues related to the School Readiness Grant Program, including the application for School Readiness grants. The SRC is composed of the chief elected official or designee, the superintendent of schools or a 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 child care homes, pre-kindergarten and nursery schools, family child care home providers, representatives from the community who provide services to children or have an interest in young children and their families, and the school district's McKinney-Vento liaison.

REQUIREMENTS

In the Priority and Competitive School Readiness municipalities, the SRC shall issue a local request for proposals to identify and fund high-quality local early care and education providers to provide School Readiness spaces. After a review by the SRC to ensure that the proposals address all the requirements of the School Readiness legislation, the Council shall, within their allocation, purchase capacity in public schools, for profit and non-profit early childhood programs, Head Start and state-funded Child Day Care programs. All programs must either be accredited by the NAEYC or become NAEYC accredited 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, an SRC 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 SRC may purchase capacity in high-quality early care and education programs such as public schools, for profit and non-profit early childhood programs, Head Start

and state funded Child Day Care programs. These programs must be accredited by NAEYC or become NAEYC accredited within three years of being awarded the funds, or receive Federal Head Start funding.

QUALITY COMPONENTS

The legislation identifies specific requirements for School Readiness programs as part of the continuum of services in high-quality programs to best meet the needs of children and families. These indicators require SRCs to:

- Develop a plan for collaboration with other community programs and services, including public libraries;
- Coordinate resources in order to facilitate full-day and full-year child care and education programs for children of working parents and parents in education or training programs;
- Encourage family involvement, parenting education and outreach;
- Provide referrals for health services, including referrals for appropriate immunizations and screenings;
- Provide nutrition services;
- Provide referrals to family literacy programs that incorporate adult basic education and provide for the promotion of literacy through access to public library services;
- Develop admission policies that promote enrollment of children from different racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds and from other communities;
- Develop a transition plan for children moving from the School Readiness program to kindergarten. This includes provisions for the transfer of records from the program to the kindergarten program;
- Develop a plan for professional development for staff;
- Use the OEC designated sliding fee scale for families participating in the program;
- Implement an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the program; and
- Develop a plan to ensure that children with disabilities are integrated into programs with children who are not disabled.

FY 2017 GRANT AWARDS

Priority Communities

Community	Grant Award		Community	Grant Award
Ansonia	\$ 1,120,417		New Britain	5,054,140
Bloomfield	684,184		New Haven	8,263,536
Bridgeport	12,853,740		New London (LEARN)	1,557,209
Bristol	2,900,052		Norwalk	5,391,860
Danbury	3,515,216		Norwich	2,277,046
Derby	141,012		Putnam	589,487
East Hartford	2,863,936		Stamford	4,282,464
Hartford	11,664,252		Waterbury	10,052,992
Meriden	3,815,848		West Haven	1,996,924
Middletown	2,201,092		Windham	1,568,435
			Total	\$ 82,793,842

Competitive Municipalities

Municipality	Grant Award		Municipality	Grant Award
Andover	\$ 100,800		Milford	524,731
Ashford	113,400		Naugatuck	337,327
Branford	121,813		North Canaan	140,553
Brooklyn	113,400		Plainfield	215,914
Canterbury	198,450		Plainville	207,102
Chaplin	119,700		Plymouth	128,432
Colchester	151,200		Scotland	113,400
Coventry	132,300		Seymour	121,813
East Haven	402,919		Shelton	309,217
Eastford	100,800		Sprague	141,750
Ellington	136,147		Stafford	116,550
Enfield	262,366		Sterling	113,400
Greenwich	290,476		Stratford	203,713
Griswold	305,449		Thomaston	131,422
Groton	509,380		Thompson	109,771
Hamden	655,914		Torrington	297,893
Hampton	89,000		Vernon	321,439
Hebron	113,400		Voluntown	207,900
Killingly	368,550		West Hartford *	322,615
Lebanon	113,400		Winchester	275,764
Ledyard	226,800		Windsor	281,106
Lisbon	80,325		Windsor Locks	226,800
Manchester	374,808		Wolcott	187,404
Mansfield	125,122		Total	\$ 10,241,935
			* \$88,000 is funded through the PSD Grant	

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 2017 QE GRANT AWARDS

Municipality	Grant Award		Municipality	Grant Award
Andover	\$ 3,881		Milford	3,881
Ansonia	6,447		Naugatuck	3,881
Ashford	3,881		New Britain	39,928
Bloomfield	8,035		New Haven	81,386
Branford	3,881		New London (LEARN)	17,226
Bridgeport	101,074		North Canaan	3,881
Bristol	18,756		Norwalk	37,688
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	24,889		Scotland	3,881
Derby	3,881		Seymour	3,881
Eastford	3,881		Shelton	3,881
East Hartford	21,242		Sprague	3,881
East Haven	3,881		Stafford	3,881
Ellington	3,881		Stamford	48,970
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	112,523		Voluntown	3,881
Hebron	3,881		Waterbury	75,641
Killingly	3,881		West Hartford	3,881
Lebanon	3,881		West Haven	24,973
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	28,337		Wolcott	3,881
Middletown	19,023		TOTAL	\$ 892,955

RESOURCES

GENERAL POLICY DOCUMENTS (GP's)

These documents are issued to provide guidance to SRC's and providers regarding School Readiness policies and procedures. They can be found on the website at [School Readiness GP's](#).

For more information about the School Readiness Preschool Program, contact:

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