

School Readiness



OBJECTIVE

A state-funded initiative administered by the Department of Education that develops a network of school readiness programs to:

- Significantly increase the number of spaces in accredited and/or approved programs for young children to provide access to high quality school readiness programs;
- Significantly increase the number of full-day, full-year spaces to meet family needs; and
- Shared cost for school readiness and child-care programs among the state and its various agencies, the communities and families.



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 accredited or approved school readiness programs for eligible children in priority school districts and competitive grant municipalities.

Priority School Districts

These districts receive a grant allocation for spaces for eligible children who reside in priority school districts, that 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.

Competitive Grant Municipalities

This is a competitive grants program for spaces for eligible children who reside in an area served by a priority school (severe need 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 system may apply for a grant in an amount of \$107,000 dollars.

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 School Readiness for Priority School Districts or Competitive Grants, please refer to the RFP button on the School Readiness web page.



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School Readiness



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 and family day care home providers representatives from the community who provide services to children.

ELIGIBILITY

Resident children in an eligible community who are ages 3 and 4 years of age and children age 5 years of age who are not eligible to enroll in school 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 \$8,346 per child.

School-Day/School-Year Programs

Those programs providing services for 6 hours per day for 180 consecutive days. Reimbursed at \$6,000 per child.

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.

Extended-Day Programs

This program is only available in the priority school districts. Those programs who provide 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, in order to provide those children with a full time program of 10 hours per day for 50 weeks. Reimbursed at \$2,772 per child.

All programs must charge parent fees, based on the DSS 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).



REQUIREMENTS

In the Priority School Districts, 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 and child day care 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 day 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 be approved by Head Start. At least 50 percent of the spaces in a priority community must be full-day/full-year spaces.

Funded competitive grant municipalities must provide a minimum of 13 full-day, full-year spaces for children in the town enrollment area. A town or school readiness council may file a waiver application to the Department of Education 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 day care programs. These programs must be accredited by NAEYC or complete the process within three years of being awarded the funds, or be approved by Head Start.

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 service, 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 2012 GRANTS

Priority Communities	Grant Amount	Competitive Grant Municipalities	Grant Amount
Ansonia	\$937,232	Andover	\$ 107,000
Bloomfield	544,698	Ashford	107,000
Bridgeport	10,455,289	Beacon Falls	107,000
Bristol	2,127,475	Brooklyn	107,000
Danbury	2,776,762	Canterbury	107,000
East Hartford	2,224,736	Chaplin	107,000
Hartford	11,283,231	Colchester	107,000
Meriden	2,660,218	Coventry	107,000
Middletown	1,925,782	Derby	107,000
New Britain	4,001,142	East Haven	107,000
New Haven	7,454,774	Eastford	107,000
New London	1,067,792	Ellington	74,500
Norwalk	3,887,373	Enfield	107,000
Norwich	1,668,980	Greenwich	107,000
Putnam	325,882	Griswold	107,000
Stamford	3,702,308	Groton	107,000
Waterbury	9,386,256	Hamden	107,000
West Haven	1,633,794	Hampton	107,000
Windham	1,149,524	Killingly	107,000
		Lebanon	107,000
Total	\$69,213,248	Ledyard	107,000
		Lisbon	107,000
		Manchester	107,000
		Mansfield	107,000
		Milford	107,000
		Naugatuck	107,000
		North Canaan	107,000
		Plainfield	107,000
		Plainville	107,000
		Plymouth	107,000
		Scotland	107,000
		Seymour	107,000
		Shelton	107,000
		Sprague	107,000
		Stafford	107,000
		Sterling	107,000
		Stratford	107,000
		Thomaston	107,000
		Thompson	107,000
		Torrington	107,000
		Vernon	107,000
		Voluntown	85,500
		West Hartford	107,000
		Winchester	107,000
		Windsor	107,000
		Wolcott	107,000
		Total	\$4,868,000

RESOURCES

GENERAL POLICY AND PROGRAM OPERATION DOCUMENTS

These documents are issued to provide guidance to councils and providers around school readiness policies and procedures.

Technical Assistance documents are issued to give guidance to programs on early childhood topics such as ADA and IDEA in preschools, Transition to Kindergarten, Parent Involvement and Nutrition.

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 BONDING 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 Division of Grants Management, 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 2012	Amount	FY 2012	Amount
Andover	\$ 4,000	Naugatuck	4,600
Ansonia	6,447	New Britain	53,271
Beacon Falls	4,000	New Haven	108,583
Bloomfield	8,035	New London	17,226
Bridgeport	134,851	North Canaan	4,600
Bristol	25,024	Norwalk	50,282
Brooklyn	4,000	Norwich	20,120
Chaplin	4,000	Plainfield	4,000
Colchester	4,000	Plainville	4,000
Coventry	4,000	Plymouth	4,600
Danbury	33,206	Putnam	6,447
Derby	4,000	Scotland	4,000
Eastford	4,000	Seymour	4,000
East Hartford	28,340	Shelton	4,000
East Haven	4,000	Sprague	4,000
Ellington	3,000	Stafford	4,000
Enfield	4,600	Stamford	65,335
Greenwich	4,600	Sterling	4,000
Griswold	4,000	Stratford	4,000
Groton	4,600	Thomaston	4,600
Hamden	4,000	Thompson	4,600
Hampton	4,000	Torrington	4,600
Hartford	150,125	Vernon	4,000
Killingly	4,000	Voluntown	3,000
Lebanon	4,000	Waterbury	100,918
Ledyard	4,600	West Hartford	4,000
Lisbon	4,000	West Haven	33,318
Manchester	4,000	Winchester	4,600
Mansfield	4,600	Windham	13,963
Meriden	37,807	Windsor	4,000
Middletown	25,380	Wolcott	4,600
Milford	4,000		
		Total	\$ 1,100,478

LINKAGES

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

Connecticut Charts-A-Course strives to bring professionalism to the field of early education and school-age care 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.