

NLSRC Policies

August 2022



All New London children birth through age eight are healthy, safe, thriving, and successful

<https://www.nlschoolreadiness.com>

New London School Readiness Council

Local Policies

For each local policy, all tenets of the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) General Policies apply as well as New London School Readiness Policies.

The OEC policies can be viewed at <https://www.ctoec.org/general-policies/>

It is expected that all School Readiness Providers read and understand all guiding policy and program operation policies.

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A-01 Early Childhood Educator Requirements in State-Funded Programs

Subject: School Readiness Staff Qualifications

Policy: All School Readiness programs shall adhere to OEC staff qualifications outlined in GPA01 including identifying the QSM (Qualified Staff Member) for each classroom.

https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GP_A-01_Legislative-Requirements-for-Staff-Qualifications-in-State-Funded-Programs-2020-05.pdf

Notes: • Individual QSM eligibility is automatically calculated for every OEC Registry account holder. Detail of status is found on the user's Education and Training Report AND Registry membership card. • Program compliance is automatically calculated in the OEC Registry, and is visible in the Designated QSM Compliance Report for State Funded Programs (extra detail) and the Designated QSM Summary Report for State Funded Programs (short form), accessible by authorized administrative access users. Office of Early Childhood General Policy GP A-01 Revised September 2019 Page 4 For Staff Not Currently meeting a Qualifying Bachelor Degree Programs should actively support staff to achieve QSM requirements: provide guidance and track progress in individual and program-wide professional development plans [also see NAEYC Program Standards and Accreditation Assessment Items – Standard 6 Topic Area D – Ongoing Professional Development; and OEC licensing regulations – Staffing 19a79-4a(g)]. Staff enrolled in degree programs have a plan of study (POS) developed and regularly updated with the staffer's college advisor. The POS should be regularly reviewed and referenced during professional development plan check ins. Staff should make measurable progress toward qualification goals, keeping in mind that the ultimate goal is for 100% DQSM staff to have their ECE bachelor degree by July 1, 2029.

All education documentation must be on file in the Connecticut Early Childhood Professional Registry <http://www.ccacregistry.org>

The School Readiness Liaison, will verify staff qualifications in funded programs during monitoring and using the Early Childhood Professional Development Registry.

A-03 Early Childhood Professional Development Registry

Subject: Early Childhood Professional Registry

Procedure: All teaching and administrative staff in state-funded programs must have a Registry account with current transcripts and diplomas on file

1. Each program receiving state funds must designate one leadership-level staff person to request Administrative Access to the program's Registry account to oversee compliance. This person must be an employee of the program (consultants are specifically not eligible).
2. Effective May 31, 2018, Each program receiving state funds must enter information in the registry to reflect NAEYC Accreditation criteria for Administrators 10.A.02. regarding Operational Administrator and Pedagogical Administrator (refer to naeyc.org for full details.)
3. The program's Registry Administrative Access designee shall:
 - a. Confirm the Program Details page at least twice per year and as program data changes.
 - b. Identify every classroom/group (regardless of funding).
 - c. For every classroom or group: identify its funding source(s), all associated staff and designated roles, and one Qualified Staff Member (QSM)*
 - d. Ensure newly hired eligible staff members hold a Registry account within 30 days of hire, including submission of up to date transcripts and diplomas to the Registry.
 - e. Update the Staff Confirmation page monthly, completing all fields with current data (including salary).
4. The School Readiness Liaison will hold a Registry account, which will be linked by OEC to the relevant funded programs for monitoring purposes. The Liaison will conduct a quarterly check of each funded program's education qualifications (specifically head teacher) and progress toward meeting and maintaining compliance with NAEYC Accreditation and the state-legislated education requirements (via the Staff Qualifications Detail Report and Staff Education and Training Reports).
5. The Liaison will work with the program administrator to create action plans for those programs that do not meet and maintain NAEYC requirements and/or do not meet the legislated education requirements. Updated action plans will be reviewed quarterly by the Liaison. The OEC may request updates from the Liaison at any time.

*See GP A-01 State-Funded Program Staff Qualifications

https://www.ct.gov/oec/lib/oec/GP_A-01_final_09-24-2019.pdf

Subject: Professional Learning Opportunities

Policy: Each School Readiness classroom staff member must have a written professional development plan that includes education and training in early childhood. The Professional Development Plan should include requirements outlined by NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria (found at naeyc.org)

Programs are strongly encouraged to refer to the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood Core Knowledge and Competency Framework for Professionals Working with Young Children and their families. www.ct.gov/oec/ckcs

- Programs are required to maintain a record of individual staff development plans, transcripts, and documentation of seminars/trainings attended by staff (or Registry reports).
- Each School Readiness classroom staff member has a written individual professional development plan
 - Level of education/certification/credits in early childhood education or child development
 - Specifics of 2 workshops in Early Childhood Education and Child Development
 - Dates of Literacy and Diversity Training
 - Specifics of the annual training in serving children with special needs
 - Career goals

All school readiness staff must be trained in Pre-literacy skill development and Diversity in the classroom. These trainings are required to be done within the first year of employment. These training sessions must be at minimum 2 hours in length.

All school readiness staff must be trained annually regarding serving children with disabilities, and the training must be at minimum 2 hours in length.

All School Readiness classroom staff participates in a minimum of two (2) workshops, conferences, or in-service training sessions each year that are identified in their professional development plan, and focused on the following:

- a. Early Childhood Development
 - b. Curriculum
 - c. Other topics directly related to the field of Early Childhood Education and Care
- AND 1 training in
- d. Serving children with identified special needs

These trainings should be a minimum of 2 hours each and conducted by a person with expertise in that subject matter.

- Administrators have professional development in A-D or have a professional development plan in place that includes:
 - a. Best Business Practices
 - b. Administration
 - c. Supervision of Early Childhood Programs
 - d. Topics directly related to quality Early Childhood Practices

See Appendix 1: Sample Staff PD Monitoring form

A-04 Commitments to CHEFA Financed Tax-Exempt Loans:

All loan applicants under the jurisdiction of a local or regional SRC, as defined by C.G.S. section 10-16r, must provide a commitment letter that includes the following:

- Signatures of the mayor/elected official and superintendent;
- Identification of the child care provider being supported;
- Identification of the facility being supported;
- Acknowledgement of the SRCs understanding that OEC will intercept (see Section IV) from the local School Readiness allocation for the term of the loan;
- Specific identification of the minimum number of School Readiness spaces committed to the child care provider for the identified facility, and that such commitment is guaranteed for the term of the loan and may not be reduced except as permitted in Section III-B of this general policy; and
- Copies of the "commitment" proposal presented at the SRC meeting and the portion of the meeting minutes confirming the SRC decision, including the final vote.

The School Readiness Council will ensure that the Liaison monitors space utilization for all local contracted programs in their community and document the following conditions in order for a SRC requested space reassignment to be considered by the OEC and CHEFA:

- At least six months of noncompliance can be demonstrated;
- The loan recipient has been notified successively of the non-compliance and has failed to correct the problems; and
- Appropriate technical assistance to correct non-compliance issues has been offered or provided to the loan recipient.

The information, above, is an excerpt of GP A-04. For complete information please use the link below.

https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GP_A-04-Commitments-to-Connecticut-Health-and-Educational-Facilities-Authority-CHEFA-Financed-Tax-Exempt-Loans-2020-05.pdf

A-05 Requirements for conducting research involving OEC funded programs:

The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) understands the importance of research to improve the field of early childhood care and education. The OEC is also committed to the protection of families, staff and children served in programs funded in full or in part by the OEC. To this end, the OEC has established the OEC Office of the Commissioner Institutional Review Board (IRB) whose responsibility is to review activities categorized as research that involve human subjects or their personal information. All research conducted in early care and education programs that are funded in full or in part by the OEC or directly promoted as an opportunity for families receiving OEC funded services must be approved by the IRB. This applies to all

researchers including OEC employees, contractors and non-OEC researchers (e.g. university faculty, staff, graduate students and undergraduate students). The goal of the IRB review process is to safeguard the rights, welfare and confidentiality of children, families and staff, and their personal information. The following provides information to activities regarding research that must be reviewed by the IRB. Whenever there is any doubt about the need for the IRB approval, contact your program manager.

For the complete explanation of GP A-05 please use link listed below.

https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GP_A-05_Requirements-for-conducting-research-involving-OEC-funded-programs-2020-05.pdf

B-01 and B-02 Fee Schedule and Fee Guidance

Subject: Fees and Subsidies

Policy: School Readiness programs are required to collect parent fees based on the School Readiness Sliding Fee Scale and/or Child Care Subsidies to compliment the State's reimbursement for School Readiness. The funds collected by each program are to be utilized in the School Readiness program to enhance the program and/or services for children and families in order to ensure high quality. All Full Day Full Year programs shall collect parent fees based on the guidelines listed below:

The most current Income Guidelines for School Readiness Grant Funded Programs and for Child Day Care Contractors shall be used (June 1, 2019). These income guidelines are based on the State Median Income (SMI) levels published annually in the Federal Register. Please refer to GP B-02 for explicit information on implementation of the fee scale.

- Programs shall enroll families whose gross income is less than 75% of the state's median income guideline. The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) shall notify the contractor, in writing, of the state's median income guidelines. 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 per 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 per child fees based on and following receipt of the reported changes.

- The Income Guidelines for School Readiness Grant Funded Programs and for Child Day Care Contractors are effective June 1, 2019. Please remember that families must be notified 30 days in advance before changing the fee.

All fees from families received by School Readiness programs (this includes school readiness parent share and Care4Kids collections) shall be used to support the School Readiness program within the same fiscal year they are collected, except May and June may be used in the next fiscal year, and submit the requests for OEC approval to carry over family fees. Sub grantees will set up a separate non-interest bearing account to hold family fees collected by the school readiness program.

Family income and family size need not be determined when a family agrees to pay the cost of care.

Care4kids policy states guidelines on how to charge families. **All eligible families are encouraged to apply for Care4kids.**

School Readiness programs are required to establish written fee policies and disseminate them to families and staff. Such policies shall address:

- how family contribution is determined;
- how fees are assessed and collected;
- how income, family size, DSS cash assistance status, and any other eligibility factors are determined and verified;
- how confidentiality of family information is maintained;
- procedures addressing fee forgiveness, failure to pay, any process for temporary reduction in assessed fees, the process for appealing a fee determination, and non-payment of fees, and must share them with School Readiness families.
- How a family hardship will be considered, including outlining procedures not limited to: fee determination and waiver, failure to pay, process for the temporary reduction in assessed fees, timeline applied, and the process for appealing a fee determination. Any reduction in the amount collected should be documented as fee waived.

School Readiness programs must document how the parent share is determined.

School Readiness programs will follow OEC guidelines regarding deposits and registration.

The fee policies and procedures, approved by the SRC and signed by the mayor and superintendent, must be attached to the annual local school readiness application.

Determining Family Income, Family Contribution and Fee

- A. Family Income and size:
 - 1. Are used to calculate the family contribution; and
 - 2. Must be determined at the time of initial enrollment and yearly.
- B. Family contribution and fee shall be determined by using the gross annual family income and aligning it to the most recent OEC Fee Schedule.

Part-Day Program Fee Determination

NLSR gives part-day programs the ability to waive parent fees. If a parent fee is charged, it cannot exceed the programs regular monthly fee and the School Readiness fee schedule used by the part-day program must be approved by the NLSR prior to implementation.

Outstanding Parent Balance

If a parent/guardian/family has an outstanding balance at any state and/or federally funded program and refuses to pay this outstanding balance, then they are not eligible for any state and/or federally funded slot until the balance is paid in full. If a state and/or federally funded program has a parent who leaves, or is withdrawn for an outstanding balance, the program must immediately report the information to the School Readiness liaison.

NLSR Council responsibilities:

The SRC shall encourage its sub-grantees to advise eligible families to participate in Care4Kids, but may not require application for Care4Kids as a condition of enrollment.

Applying for child support is not a requirement for the Care4Kids Program.

The SRC shall require its sub-grantees to submit a monthly report on actual Care4Kids income to be reviewed by the liaison.

The SRC shall require the submission of accurate data on Care4Kids payments earned each month on the Monthly Service Delivery Report and shall review that data for consistency with established policy.

More information about parent fees can be accessed

https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GP_B-01_Fee-Schedule-2020-05.pdf

https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GP_B-02_Fee-Guidance-2020-05.pdf

B03**Eligibility for Program Enrollment including Income, Residency and Work:**

To determine eligibility for a School Readiness Slot, Family is defined as:

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 provided. Such a child shall be considered as a family of one.
5. A child in foster care authorized by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Such a child shall be considered a family of one.

Transition/Homelessness: New London School Readiness Programs will adhere to the McKinney Vento Assistance Act Serving Students in Transition

The McKinney Vento Act defines "homeless children and youth" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes--children and youth who are:

- sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometime referred to as doubled-up)
- living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, bus or train station, or camping ground due to lack of alternative adequate accommodation
- living in emergency or transitional shelters
- abandoned in hospitals; or similar settings

State Code/Category Description

1	Shelters - Children and youth who are living in homeless shelters, emergency shelters, transitional shelters or similar settings and are in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
2	Doubled up - Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason and are in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
3	Unsheltered - Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings and are in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
4	Hotel/Motel - Children and youth who are living in motels, hotels, or camp grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations and are in the physical custody of a parent or guardian."
11	Sheltered/Unaccompanied Youth - Children and youth who are living in homeless shelters, emergency shelters, transitional shelters or similar settings and are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
12	Doubled up/Unaccompanied - Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason and are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
13	Unsheltered/Unaccompanied - Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings and are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
14	Hotel-Motel/Unaccompanied Youth - Children and youth who are living in motels, hotels, or camp grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations and are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Income Eligibility: Sixty percent (60%) of enrolled School Readiness families must fall below 75% of the state median income.

Work Requirements: School Readiness. There are no requirements regarding work status.

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 OEC School Readiness Program Manager for individual guidance.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL READINESS COUNCILS: Child Day Care contractors and/or SRC's are responsible for ensuring that the practices and policies related to enrollment and eligibility are followed by all sub-grantees and sub-contractors.

To read the complete GP B-03, use link below

https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GP_B-03_Eligibility-for-program-enrollment-including-income-residency-and-work-2020-05.pdf

B04**Definition of space types, categories of care**

Subject: Utilization and Attendance

Policy: School Readiness programs shall strive to maintain a full enrollment of School Readiness slots and assure the enrolled children are attending the program.

Procedure:

1. Each center shall strive to reach 100% utilization.
 - a) Once the NLSR Council informs each School Readiness program of the number and type of spaces allocated to each site, individual sites will have up to 60 days to fill those spaces with eligible children.
 - b) If the spaces are not filled within 90 days, the School Readiness program must submit to NLSR a written plan to fill those spaces.
 - c) Upon approval of this plan, NLSR Council may allow the program up to 30 additional days to fill all spaces.
 - d) If a space remains vacant for 90 days, NLSR Council may choose to meet and discuss reallocation of the space. If spaces are to be reallocated all approved sub grantees will be offered the opportunity to request the unused slots. The NLSRC will vote on slots as outlined in C01 4. Consideration will be given to the SR program prior grant application score and submission of required reports.
 - e) The School Readiness liaison shall report utilization to NLSR council. Directors will share information about unused slots at each NLSRC Meeting.
2. Each School Readiness program shall have an attendance policy. Parents/guardians must be informed of the policy at time of enrollment.
3. At a minimum, the policy must include the following:
 - a) Staff will call the family after a child has been absent without communication for two consecutive days.
 - b) If the family is unreachable after multiple varied attempts (for example: by phone, email, text) asking the family to contact the center within 5 days and letting them know that if the center does not hear from the parent within 5 days, the child will be discharged from the program.
 - c) The child's file must contain documentation of all contact regarding attendance, including notes of attempts to reach the family by phone and copies of all correspondence.

The attendance policy should be included in the parent handbook.

School Readiness Grant RFP Process

As per defined in section 10-16p, 10-16u, 17b-749 and 17b-749c of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS). The New London School Readiness Council follows a two-year competitive bid process with a Public Notice inviting programs to submit local proposals to the NLSRC. Local programs submit applications to be scored with a rubric by NLSRC grant readers and they make recommendations to the NLSR council for voting and approval. The NLSR Community application is submitted to the Office of Early Childhood for approval. OEC reviews the community application and awards the total slot allocation. Funding for one two-year cycle does not guarantee funding in subsequent years. School Readiness slot funding is contingent on funding from the Office of Early Childhood.

Listed below is the link for more information:

https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GP_B-04_Definition-of-Space-Types-Categories-of-Care-2020-05.pdf

B-05

Meeting Quality Assurance Requirements

Subject: Quality Assurance Requirements

Policy: School Readiness programs must be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation and Head Start Approval.

Procedure: 1. OEC-funded early care and education programs are required to achieve NAEYC Accreditation or Head Start Approval in accordance with legislative and contractual requirements. a. School Readiness sites must achieve NAEYC Accreditation within three years of the date when children funded through School Readiness begin attending the program.

Listed below is the link for more information:

https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GP_B-05_Meeting-Quality-Assurance-Requirements-2020-05.pdf

NAEYC Accreditation or Head Start Approval, as follows:

NAEYC Accreditation documentation:

- i. Submission of email confirmation of NAEYC annual reports within 30 days of receipt;
- ii. NAEYC Accreditation/renewal/loss of accreditation decision reports within 72 hours of receipt; and
- iii. Notice and results of (announced or unannounced) verification visit within 72 hours of receipt.

A. Submission of a OHS-ACF Monitoring Review Report or a successor instrument pursuant to federal regulations within 30 days of receipt. c. Evidence of results of annual environment rating scale assessment if the program is within its three (3) years of initial funding and has not yet achieved NAEYC Accreditation or Head Start Approval requirements. 7. OEC-funded early care and education programs agree to provide the above reports/documentation and additional reports/documentation as requested by the OEC, within timelines prescribed. The OEC-funded early care and education programs shall maintain all reporting documents and make them available to the OEC upon request. 8. OEC-funded early care and education programs shall maintain an annual written program improvement plan based on data collected from Accreditation tools and reports, OHS 7 National Association for the Education of Young Children. 2018. Retrieved, July 18, 2018. 8 <https://www.naeyc.org/accreditation/early-learning/update> 9 https://www.ct.gov/oec/lib/oec/earlycare/ece_reporting_requirements.pdf Office of Early Childhood-OEC General Policy GP B-05 May 2019 Page 4 of 6 Monitoring Review reports, and other data including but not limited to licensing inspections, Environment Rating Scales, and/or Program Administration Scale. The written plan shall identify timelines, responsible parties, progress and goals, and shall refer to and build upon previous annual plans. The administrator(s) for OEC-funded early care and education program(s) shall provide evidence of program improvement planning for review by the OEC Program Manager upon request. 9. OEC-funded early care and education programs agree that the OEC shall have access to their child care facilities and business offices, if different, during business hours, and further agree to provide copies of any record requested by the OEC. 10. Kindergarten classrooms are not required to meet OEC Quality Assurance-related requirements. The local or regional board of education's preK-3rd grade plan may require Accreditation as part of an on-going commitment to high-quality early learning.

B. Extension Requests

1. Under specific circumstances, a newly funded program may submit a one-time extension request to the three-year timeline for achieving Accreditation or Head Start Approval or refunding (CGS 10-16p). The OEC Program Manager shall implement the extension request procedure as follows:

- a. The program's administrator must notify the OEC in writing of the need for an extension.
- b. The extension request submitted by the program's administrator must include:
 - detailed information regarding the rationale for the request
 - specific time-lines addressing the process for current Accreditation or Head Start Approval or refunding
 - the proposed extension term.

2. Upon review the OEC may grant an extension which will stipulate:
 - The approved specific time period during which the program must develop and implement a program improvement action plan and timeline for completion of the Accreditation process or obtain HHS written notification regarding QIP approval; and
 - The Alternative Interim Quality Assurance Process in which the program must participate.
3. Should OEC quality improvement monitoring toward achieving Accreditation or Head Start Approval finds the site negligent in addressing areas of concern, the OEC may reallocate funding to another program or site.
4. OEC-funded early care and education programs seeking Accreditation renewal or appealing HHS letter(s) of termination or denial of refunding are not eligible for an extension.

III. ALTERNATIVE INTERIM QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS

A. OEC-funded early care and education programs that are not NAEYC Accredited or Head Start Approved shall participate in the Alternative Interim Quality Assurance Process, which includes:

1. On-site quality improvement monitoring conducted by OEC staff;
2. An environmental assessment using an early childhood environment rating scale conducted by an OEC approved rater, at the program's expense; Office of Early Childhood-OEC General Policy GP B-05 May 2019 Page 5 of 6
3. Within a month following the issuance of the results of the environment rating scale assessment, or upon request, submit to the OEC Program Manager a written detailed program improvement **action plan** to address:
 - a. identified issues,
 - b. responsible staff,
 - c. specific dates and timelines, and
 - d. an up-to-date plan and timeline of steps met and to be taken to achieve Accreditation or Head Start Approval.

B. If, in the sole judgment of the OEC, a facility does not make sufficient progress toward achieving Accreditation or Head Start Approval within a specified timeframe, or if the facility is negligent in addressing areas of concern, the OEC may, depending on the funding stream:

- reimburse the CDC contractor at the unaccredited rate for the balance of the contract period or reduce the funding in the contract; or
- reallocate School Readiness or Smart Start funding to another program or site.

IV. LOSS OF ACCREDITATION OR HEAD START APPROVAL

A. OEC-funded early care and education programs that lose Accreditation or Head Start Approval through deferral, denial, revocation or inability to complete the renewal NAEYC timeline process must:

1. Within 72 hours of receipt from NAEYC or the Office of Head Start, submit to the OEC Program Manager, and School Readiness Liaison if applicable, the Accreditation Decision Report or OHS letter of termination or denial of refunding.

2. Within a week, meet with the OEC Program Manager to: a. address the specific reason(s) for the loss of Accreditation or Head Start Approval and discuss options for continued state funding eligibility or removal of state funds. b. submit a written detailed program improvement action plan, including a copy of the QIP in the case of a Head Start grantee, to address:

- i. identified issues,
- ii. responsible staff,
- iii. specific dates and timelines, and
- iv. steps to be taken to achieve Accreditation.

B. The OEC will review the detailed program improvement action plan and QIP if applicable and notify the OEC-funded early care and education program(s) regarding next steps.

C. Application as a satellite location will NOT satisfy the NAEYC Accreditation requirement.

V. REMOVAL OF STATE FUNDS

A. OEC-funded early care and education programs that fail to achieve or maintain Accreditation or Head Start Approval in accordance with legislative and contractual requirements must notify the OEC Program Manager. OEC-funded early care and education programs receiving School Readiness and/or Smart Start funds shall submit written notification signed by the Mayor/Chief Elected Official and Superintendent. Office of Early Childhood-OEC General Policy GP B-05 May 2019
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B. The OEC Program Manager will inform the OEC-funded early care and education program the date when enrollment of new children must be stopped and will identify the date when access to state funds will cease.

C. OEC-funded School Readiness program(s)' administrator(s) and the School Readiness Liaison(s) —working collaboratively with the School Readiness Council(s)— must:

- Communicate in writing to families that the program has lost OEC-funding because it did not meet the OEC requirement to achieve or maintain Accreditation or Head Start Approval and that families have the following options: a. Continue on the same type of OEC-funded space at another program approved by the OEC and, if applicable, by the School Readiness

Council and Liaison; b. Remain at the program with the family paying the program fee; or c. Connect with 211 Child Care to explore other child care availability.

- Explore available program options in the community in order to transfer the spaces in a timely fashion.
- Work to transfer the spaces to another program (if School Readiness, another School Readiness funded program) no later than the end of the grant/contract period.
- Put forward proposed sites for space reallocation to the OEC for approval.
- OEC will review and contact options available locally. Upon OEC approval, the transfer of spaces to a selected program(s) will be authorized.

D. Programs that experience a removal of OEC funding and subsequently achieve NAEYC Accreditation or Head Start Approval may apply to be considered for this funding in a future grant cycle.

C-01

School Readiness Council Membership, Responsibilities, and the Role of the Liaison

Policy: The city of New London will convene a local School Readiness Council to be known as The New London School Readiness Council

Procedure:

1. The New London School Readiness Council meets on the second Monday of every month, August through June. Meetings are held at 12:00pm in the Central office conference room of the New London Board of Education. Meetings may be held electronically e.g. zoom, google meets.
2. Council meetings are open to the public and documentation of discussions and actions is recorded and disseminated to the public.
3. Membership is open to all interested in the well-being of New London's young children and families. It is recognized that at any given NLSRC meeting guests are welcome to attend. Membership will include, but may not be limited to, the following groups and individuals:
 - a. Chief Elected Official/Designee
 - b. Superintendent/Designee
 - c. Parents of young children under 8 years living or working in New London, or enrolled in a NL School Readiness program
 - d. Representatives from local Head Start, Family Resource Centers, Child Care Centers and Group Homes, Nursery Schools and Family Child Care Homes
 - e. Representatives from the community who provide services to children, including health care professionals
 - f. All School Readiness program -representatives

- g. McKinney-Vento liaison
- h. New London business owners
- i. Workforce or job training representatives
- j. Any interested community member

The NLSRC seeks to

- include a minimum of 25% parents and guardians eligible for school readiness.
 - Ensure that the racial, ethnic and socioeconomic composition of the NLSRC reflects the New London Community.
 - Ensure times and locations of meetings are convenient for council members including parents.
4. In order to be considered a member of the NLSR council you must attend three consecutive meetings after your third meeting you may request to be a member. Any requests for membership will be expressed at the council meeting and then voted on by the council and recorded in the meeting notes.
 5. Regular attendance at the Council meetings is expected. Any member failing to attend three consecutive meetings without providing a sufficient excuse acceptable to the School Readiness Administrator or Co-chairs, will be excused from the School Readiness Council and a replacement will be appointed to complete the remainder of the grant year.
 6. Membership is expected for the School Readiness Grant Year from July 1st to June 30th.
 7. Any vacancies will be filled on the recommendation of a School Readiness Council Member to the School Readiness Council or by recommendation of a School Readiness Chairperson.
 8. Any standing New London School Readiness Council member may resign from the NLSR Council by delivering a written resignation to the Mayor of the New London with a copy to the Superintendent of New London Public Schools and to the New London School Readiness Liaison, and Chairs.
 9. Chairs live or are actively involved in the New London Community and are elected by the New London School Readiness Council. If there are more than 2 people nominated to the chair position the role can be shared by three people. Chairs would represent both NLPS and the New London Community.

10. Chairs are expected to attend all meetings and adhere to the guidelines for active members. At least one chair must be present or the meeting will be canceled.
11. The Chairpersons shall preside at Council meetings, shall work with staff to appoint committees as needed, shall ensure that there is a coordinated effort to establish a collaboration between the community and public schools, shall perform all duties as required to keep the School Readiness Council viable and functioning, and shall be expected to attend at least seventy-five percent (75%) of all regularly scheduled New London School Readiness Meetings each grant year. Chairpersons are required to serve a two-year renewable term.

Subject: Voting

Voting membership shall consist of all those formally recorded as members, or their designee. You must have attended at least two meetings per quarter to vote.

Guests may never vote.

Programs, their designee or any council member directly connected to the program cannot participate on any vote that is directly related to the program they are representing. Only one vote per program can be cast

1. New London School Readiness Council Members shall, by majority vote, resolve all motions.
2. Voting shall be conducted at meetings by NLSRC voting members or their designee.
3. Quorum: The New London School Readiness Council (NLSRC) quorum, defined as the minimum number of New London School Readiness Council Members that must be present in order to make the proceedings of the Council meeting valid as long as one or all of the NLSRC chairs or their designees is present at any given NLSRC meeting;
4. LEARN, SECT's regional educational service center, provides fiscal agent and grant coordination services. Fiscal decisions are made by consensus among active members present and eligible at a meeting. In the event that consensus cannot be reached in a reasonable amount of time, a formal vote will be taken of those active members eligible to vote at the meeting. In the case of a formal vote, only one member of the program may vote.
5. The decision will be made by a majority vote (51%) of those active members present. Chairs will determine "reasonable amount of time." School Readiness Programs receiving funding may not vote on slot allocation.

6. If a decision needs to be made e.g., required to meet an OEC deadline when a NLSRC meeting is not scheduled, voting may occur via email. The same process outlined in 1. would be followed. The results of the voting would be shared with the NLSRC.
7. It is recognized that New London School Readiness Council Members are broad representatives of the community. One sector (i.e. public school vs. community) is not favored over another. Any member who feels that an issue is a conflict of interest must abstain from discussion and/or voting on that issue.
8. Recommendations for funding and all NLSRC Council work shall not be overruled by the Chief Elected Official or Superintendent or any other governing body at the local level.

Subject: Meeting Attendance

Policy:

New London School Readiness programs must attend and participate in meetings pertaining to the School Readiness Grant program and its local School Readiness Council.

Procedure:

1. Each School Readiness program must identify a staff person to be designated as the School Readiness Contact. This School Readiness Contact will be identified to New London School Readiness Council, the School Readiness Liaison and the fiscal agent at the beginning of each fiscal year as well as when there are changes in this position.
2. This School Readiness Contact will be responsible to attend the following meetings:
 - a. Monthly New London School Readiness Council meetings
Scheduled quarterly sub-grantee meetings and other meetings as scheduled by liaison
3. In the event that the School Readiness Contact is unable to attend a meeting, he/she will designate another individual from their School Readiness program to attend in their place. This individual must be able to make decisions with regards to the individual School Readiness program.

To read the entire description of GP C-01, please use link below.

https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GP_C-01_School-Readiness-Council-Membership-Responsibilities-and-Role-of-the-Liaison-final-2.6.22.pdf

Sub Committees

The New London School Readiness Council shall consist of three standing committees: The Leadership Committee, The Kindergarten Transition Committee, and Curriculum and Assessment Committee.

Each committee must consist of the New London School Readiness Administrator (Liaison), at minimum two representatives from the New London School Readiness Council, and other community or public-school representatives recommended by the Council.

The Leadership Committee

The Leadership Committee shall review Grants submitted to the New London School Readiness Administrator (Liaison) for School Readiness grant funds each grant year. The committee members will review the submitted grants and make recommendations to the New London School Readiness Council as to funding allocations. The Leadership Committee shall consist of the Major's designee, the SR Chairs, and the liaison. The Leadership Committee shall meet biweekly to review and prepare the NLSRC Council meeting agenda and grant applications.

The Kindergarten Transition Committee

The Kindergarten Transition Committee shall collaborate with the community and public schools to provide program policies, procedures and a plan that ensures New London children and their families experience a smooth and successful transition from the child's preschool program to kindergarten.

Curriculum and Assessment Committee

The Curriculum and Assessment Committee shall collaborate to review best practices supporting high quality preschool curriculum and assessment across New London preschool programs. They will make recommendations to the NLSRC to support high quality preschool curriculum and assessment implementation that led to improved outcomes for New London preschool children.

Other Committees

The New London School Readiness Council (NLSRC) may establish Ad Hoc committees or task forces as needed. The process to formalize a committee shall consist of a proposal presented to the NLSRC that states the need, the goal and pertinent activities to achieve the goal. Proposals will be voted on by the NLSRC.

C-02 Budget Guidance

Policy: New London School Readiness programs will be subject to conditions of New London School Readiness Council approved contracts.

Procedure:

1. The School Readiness Liaison will create contracts for the subgrantees.
2. Failure to meet the conditions of the contract will result in a review by the School Readiness Liaison and the Council, which may result in termination of the contract and the withdrawal of School Readiness funds.
3. Failure to meet conditions of a contract may be determined through one or more of the following methods:
 - a. Information shared during School Readiness meetings.
 - b. Site visits and/or program monitoring conducted by the School Readiness Liaison, the Office of Early Childhood
 - c. Monthly reporting completed by School Readiness programs.
 - d. End of the year reporting completed by School Readiness programs.
 - e. Programmatic results of the School Readiness Monitoring.
4. If either Council members, the Office of Early Childhood, or the School Readiness Liaison, based on any of the above interactions, suspects failure to meet conditions of contract, the following steps will occur:
 - a. Concern will be brought to the attention of the School Readiness Liaison or the School Readiness Co-chairs.
 - b. The School Readiness Liaison will notify the program of the concern. First time notification will be verbal, second time notification for the same issue will be written.
 - c. Upon first time notification of concern, a verbal conversation will take place between program representative and Liaison, results of which will be shared with Co-chairs and the conversation will be documented.
 - d. Upon second notification of concern, a verbal conversation will take place between the program representative, Liaison and at least one Co-chair. This conversation will be followed up with a written summary of discussion.
 - e. If concern continues to persist, co-chairs will be made aware of concern and the action that has occurred up to that point in time. A discussion will take place as to next steps/recommendations.
 - f. Written documentation of conversation and next steps/recommendations will be provided to the program representative.

- g. Program representative will have 10 business days to respond. Responses must be in written form.

Procedure:

School Readiness programs must adhere to the following budget guidance when writing their ED 114 budget and budget justification:

The link for more information for GP C-02.

https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GP_C-02_School-Readiness-Grantee-Budget-Guidance-2020-05.pdf

C-03

School Readiness Start Up Costs

The OEC states that the School Readiness Grant may be used to fund start-up activities in new programs or in programs establishing new classrooms or expanding existing classroom space to accommodate six (6) or more additional children. Start-up costs are established at a maximum rate of \$1,250 per-child in new classrooms. Start-up costs are regarded as one-time expenses at the provider/program level and must be associated with establishing a new School Readiness program or classroom. Costs may include limited renovations, staff or family recruitment and orientation and purchase of supplies and/or equipment for the program.

School Readiness Councils (SRCs) are not obligated to provide start-up costs to sub-grantees. The awarding of start-up costs is contingent upon the grantee having unobligated dollars after they have determined their space allocation to current and anticipated sub-grantees. Further, SRCs may consider prioritizing “start-up” requests. Programs in newly developed sites, with little possibility of sharing resources with other sites, may be considered priority programs that are in existing sites.

For purposes of this grant, a “Start-Up Provision” has been added to the OEC Form ED 114. Grantees must identify start-up costs on the ED 114 up to the allowed maximum dollar amount. Sub-grantees must submit a budget and budget justification for the start-up costs.

Grantees must submit the identified new program, the Grantee budget modifications on Form ED 114 reflecting the use of “Start-Up Costs” and the sub-grantee budget and budget justification to OEC.

It is the responsibility of the SRCs and the 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.

For complete information regarding GP C-03.

https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GP_C-03_School-Readiness-Start-up-Costs-2020-05.pdf

C -05 Non-Sectarian Policy

Subject: Non-sectarian

Policy: New London School Readiness programs must be “non-sectarian programs”.

Purpose: To promote compliance with Public Act 97-259 (Section 5, Subsection A) requiring that programs funded with School Readiness moneys be non-sectarian. The State of Connecticut requires that programs accepting public money cannot promote religion or advance one religion over another religion.

Procedure:

- The program must be open to all children, and cannot exclude a child based on the families religious creed or lack thereof;
- The program cannot attempt to persuade or convert children or their families to religion or a particular religious persuasion.
- The program will not implement religious observances, such as prayer, grace, confession, church attendance, religious instruction, etc.;
- The program must accommodate the practice of a child or staff member’s personal religious beliefs where the practice is required during program hours; (e.g., Islamic designated time for prayer);
- The program may not require children or their families enrolled in the School Readiness program to participate in faith-based or church sponsored activities or services;
- Programs may not discriminate in hiring based on religious affiliation or lack of religious affiliation; and
- Unless it is not practicable, classes should be conducted in rooms that are free of religious symbols and items.

*If state funds are being used to purchase spaces for eligible children in a School Readiness program operated by faith-based organizations, these programs must be nonsectarian (non-religious) in order not to run afoul of requirements of the Establishment Clause. It is not enough to allow students and/or their families to “opt out” of portions of the program which are religious in nature. To be eligible for funding, programs must comply with these requirements. Program space is defined as wherever the children are located for School Readiness services. Sectarian items may include, but are not limited to pictures, statues, books or songs. Sectarian activities may include, but are not limited to prayer, celebration, storytelling, and/or other religious rituals.

To see complete explanation of GP C-05, please use link listed below.
https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GP_C-05_Nonsectarian-Policy-for-School-Readiness-Programs-2020-05.pdf

C-06 School Readiness Non-Residency Option

Policy: The School Readiness Programs in New London need to maintain full utilization of School Readiness Slots. School Readiness programs must prioritize New London resident children to fill School Readiness slots. Non-resident children may be considered for enrollment in a New London School Readiness slot according to the following criteria:

- Nonresident children may be enrolled in a New London School Readiness slot-after attempts have been made to fill the slot with a New London Resident. Slots cannot be held open for a nonresident child.
- Any child enrolled in a New London School Readiness slot as a New London resident may continue in the New London School Readiness slot until beginning kindergarten regardless of a change in residency status.
- All non-resident children enrolled in a NL slot need to be reported to the school readiness liaison.

No more than 25% of New London slots can be filled by nonresident children. However, to avoid slots being unutilized a non-resident may be assigned to a slot after priority has been given to a resident.

The complete OEC policy can be found at:

https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GP_C-06_SR-Non-Residency-Option-2020-05.pdf

C-07 School Readiness Reimbursement Rates

OEC states that for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015, and each fiscal year thereafter, the per-child cost of the Office of Early Childhood School Readiness program offered by a School Readiness provider shall not exceed eight thousand, nine hundred twenty-seven dollars. Therefore, effective July 1, 2015, the Full-Day space reimbursement rate for children enrolled in School Readiness programs will be \$8,924 or \$743.66 per month for 12 months.

It is the responsibility of the School Readiness Council and the Liaisons to share this information with their sub-grantees and ensure that each program is in compliance with the nonsectarian guidelines, GP C05, in order for sub-grantees to receive funding as a School Readiness Program.

For further information please refer to the OEC website, GP C-07.

https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GP_C-07_Space-Reimbursement-Fees-for-Full-Day-2020-05.pdf

Appendix 1: Sample School Readiness Monitoring Staff Files Form

Name _____

Trainings must be 2 hours in length

Date of Review: _____

1. Staff Name 2. Date of hire 3. Educ/Degrees 4. Current in Registry?	Diversity training date *required once upon hire	Literacy training date *required once upon hire	Special Needs Training date *required annually	2 Child Dev/ECE training dates *required annually	CPR/FA* Meds Admin** * renewed every 2 years **renewed 1 (epi) or 3 years	Individual PD Plan *includes goals (short term, long term, identified by self, identified by supervisor)	Total # PD hours obtained to date *12 hours required annually
1.				1.			
2.							
3.				2.			
4.							

of hours worked per week (_____) x # of weeks to be worked this year (_____) x 1% = _____ required hours of continuing education