

Dear Connecticut Families,

As I notice the summer days getting shorter, I am trying to soak up as much sunshine and warm weather as I can with my three children. I hope you all have found time to do the same and also have been able to do what keeps you and your family healthy and happy.

At the CT Office of Early Childhood (OEC), we believe that every child deserves a strong start, and we are excited to share that we are making new and additional investments through the **Early Childhood Education Endowment** to help do just that. The Endowment is a permanent savings account for early childhood used to create more opportunities for families, strengthen early childhood education programs, and make it easier to find and access child care.

We know finding child care can be difficult. These investments into the Endowment are part of Connecticut's long-term commitment to making it easier for families to find child care that meets your needs, is affordable, and supports your child's early learning and development.

What does this mean for my family?

More opportunities for children

During State Fiscal Year 2027 (July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027), Connecticut is using Endowment funds for:

- **Approximately 1,000 new Early Start CT spaces**, creating more opportunities for families to access affordable early childhood education. Early Start CT is Connecticut's state-funded child care program that operates using a sliding fee scale to help families pay for care.
- **Approximately 10 new Smart Start classrooms**, expanding preschool opportunities in communities across Connecticut.
- Continued support for different types of early childhood programs, including child care centers, family child care homes, Head Start programs, and public school preschool programs.

These investments will give more families access to high-quality early childhood education and more choices to meet their family's needs.

What about free child care?

You may have heard about plans to make child care free for some Connecticut families. In **State Fiscal Year 2028**, Connecticut plans to cover the fees for eligible families (those making under \$100,000) when their children are enrolled in **Early Start CT spaces**.

It is important to know that this only applies to children enrolled in an **Early Start CT space** and does not mean that all child care in Connecticut will be free.

If your child currently attends an early childhood program and you are not sure whether they are enrolled in an Early Start CT space, **check with your provider or search eligible programs at www.ctoec.org/early-start-ct/**.

An easier way to find care

Families shouldn't have to search multiple websites and navigate different systems just to understand their child care options.

OEC is developing a new **One Point of Entry family portal** to make that process easier. Over time, the portal will help families:

- Find child care and preschool options.
- Learn about early childhood programs and services.
- Better understand eligibility and financial assistance.
- Connect with participating providers.

The goal is simple: **make it easier for families to find, understand, and access the programs and services available to them.**

Stronger programs and educators

We are committed to supporting the people who show up every day for Connecticut's children. Early childhood programs and families depend on educators and staff to support their children to thrive. OEC is supporting the workforce through the expansion of:

- Scholarships;
- Apprenticeship programs;
- Professional learning, coaching, and professional development;
- Health insurance subsidy; and
- Other supports that help early childhood programs recruit and retain educators, and provide high-quality care.

This also includes **ELEVATE**, OEC's quality improvement system that provides early childhood programs with tools, resources, coaching, and other supports to strengthen the quality of care and learning they provide.

What should I do now?

YOU DON'T NEED TO TAKE ANY ACTION TODAY.

These opportunities will roll out over the coming months. **OEC will continue to share information as new Early Start CT opportunities become available, new classrooms open, and the One Point of Entry portal and other family resources are launched.**

Connect with support in your community

LOCAL GOVERNANCE PARTNERS (LGPS) work in communities across Connecticut to help connect families with early childhood information, resources, and supports. Your local partner can help you learn more about early care and education opportunities and resources available in your community, and connect you to a Parent Ambassador to get involved in this important work!

FIND YOUR LOCAL GOVERNANCE PARTNER: [Find your local contact by selecting your town](#)

PARENT LEADERS: Have ideas or questions for OEC related its policies, programs, and initiatives for families? You can reach out to OEC.ParentCabinet@ct.gov or reach out directly to an OEC Parent Cabinet leader in your region from the map on website [CT OEC Parent Cabinet – Connecticut Office of Early Childhood](#). CT OEC Parent Cabinet is a Statewide Parent Advisory to uplift parent voice to inform directly into OEC services and policies.

Thank you for trusting Connecticut's early childhood providers with your children, and for continuing to share your experiences and needs with us. Your voices help shape where Connecticut's early childhood system goes next.

Sincerely,

Elena Trueworthy

Commissioner

Connecticut Office of Early Childhood