

State Economic Assistance for Connecticut Child Care Providers During the COVID-19 Emergency

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Issue

This report describes the state assistance available exclusively to Connecticut child care providers during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Summary

The state's Office of Early Childhood (OEC) is administering several economic assistance initiatives to assist child care centers, group child care homes, and family child care homes during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Some of these initiatives aim to financially stabilize child care programs by continuing payments to providers that were participating in state assistance programs prior to the emergency beginning. Other new initiatives are temporary programs designed to boost funding of existing state-licensed programs while simultaneously meeting the emergency child care needs of essential and frontline workers.

State Program Stabilization Funding

OEC is continuing to pay publicly funded child care providers that participate in certain state-funded programs through June 30, 2020, (end of FY 20) at the same level the providers received in March 2020. Child enrollment or attendance during this time does not impact payment amounts. OEC refers to this payment continuation as "state program stabilization funding" that aims to support providers to "assure a supply of care after the Public Health Emergency" ([OEC Coronavirus Memo 13](#), March 26, 2020).

Providers that participate in the following programs are eligible to receive these continued payments through the end of the fiscal year:

1. Care 4 Kids, a child care subsidy program for children from low-income families;
2. Child Day Care, which provides funding to municipalities and private, nonprofit corporations for planning, constructing, or renovating child care centers as part of a capital development project for neighborhood facilities;
3. School Readiness, which provides a developmentally appropriate learning experience for three- to five-year-old children who are too young to enroll in kindergarten; and
4. Smart Start, which provides grants to local and regional boards of education for capital and operating expenses related to establishing or expanding a preschool program for the town or towns under their jurisdiction.

New Emergency Care Programs

OEC created [four new, short-term programs](#) to provide economic assistance to child care providers that remain open to serve essential workers and first responders.

CTCARES for Frontline Workers

This temporary child care subsidy program will help maintain enrollment in child care programs while assisting [frontline workers](#) (e.g., health care, grocery, state facility, group home care workers). OEC is dedicating a \$10 million fund to help these workers pay for licensed care at a child care center, family child care home, or group child care home. (Alternatively, frontline workers can use the subsidy to pay an adult age 20 or older who is not the child’s parent to care for the child.) To be eligible for the subsidy, frontline workers must not (1) exceed the family income limit of 85% of the state median income or (2) currently be enrolled in the Care 4 Kids program.

Table 1 describes the subsidy rates for eligible workers based on weekly hours worked and number of children receiving care.

Table 1: CTCARES for Frontline Workers Subsidy Rates

<i>Hours Worked Per Week</i>	<i>Number of Children</i>	<i>Subsidy Rate Per Week</i>
8 to 20	1	\$100
	2	\$200
	3 or more	\$250
21 or more	1	\$200
	2	\$400
	3 or more	\$500

Source: [Office of Early Childhood](#)

The program is accepting applications through 2-1-1 Child Care beginning April 27, 2020, through June 15, 2020. For accepted families, OEC directly pays the subsidy to the child care provider, while the family pays the difference for any costs not covered by the subsidy. The office will pay subsidies weekly until June 30, 2020.

CTCARES for Child Care

Under this program, OEC offers supplemental funds to any state-licensed child care provider that cares for children of [essential workers](#) (e.g., health care, infrastructure, manufacturing, retail workers) during the public health emergency. Providers whose program is subject to pending enforcement or has been subject to discipline in the past three years must also sign an attestation, agreeing to spend at least half of the funds on increasing employee compensation.

Table 2 describes the supplemental funding rates for eligible providers based on the type of child care program and number of children of essential workers receiving care.

Table 2: CTCARES for Child Care Supplemental Funding Rates

<i>Child Care Program</i>	<i>Children of Essential Workers</i>	<i>Weekly Supplemental Funding</i>
Family or group child care home	1 – 2 (full-time equivalency)	\$200
	Each additional child (half-time equivalency)	\$50 per child
Child care center	1-5 (full-time equivalency)	\$275
	6-13 (full-time equivalency)	\$550
	14 or more (full-time equivalency)	\$825

Source: [Office of Early Childhood](#)

OEC guarantees the program’s funding from April 4, 2020, through May 31, 2020. A funding extension may become available. Providers must submit enrollment weekly in order to receive the funding, but funding is not based upon attendance. The office is counting children as full-time, half-time, or quarter-time equivalency, even if they use less than their allotted time during the week. However, if a child does not attend at all during the week, then they are not counted.

CTCARES for Family Child Care

As part of this program, OEC is in the process of establishing additional Family Child Care Networks to support state-licensed family child care providers. These networks are community initiatives that offer affiliated family child care providers support services and resources, such as professional development, coaching and consultation, and business and administrative supports. Examples of existing networks include [All Our Kin](#), [Cercle](#), [EdAdvance](#), [TEAM, Inc.](#), and [United Way of Western Connecticut](#).

Family child care providers who join a network will be eligible for grants to support operational expenses during the public health emergency. This funding will help them (1) maintain smaller group sizes, (2) purchase supplies, and (3) cover expenses to allow them to remain open. The office will share more information about the application process for grants once it has established the additional networks.

CTCARES for Hospital Workers (“Project 26”)

This [program](#) provides grants to 26 or more state-licensed child care programs located within a three-mile radius of hospitals so that they can provide child care to hospital staff. OEC is choosing recipient programs that do not have any enforcement actions against their license and are able to serve the following age groups: infants and toddlers, preschool children, and school-aged children.

The program funds up to three classrooms in a program. The classrooms must be open to only children of hospital staff and follow these enrollment guidelines:

- one classroom serving up to six infants and toddlers,
- one classroom serving up to 10 preschool children, and
- one classroom serving up to 10 school-aged children.

OEC will fund Project 26 sites for up to eight weeks; it did not publicly specify per-program funding amounts. The office will phase-out the project between May 29, 2020, and June 26, 2020, depending on when the sites started operating. The office is using a \$3 million philanthropic donation to support this program.

There is no application process for the program, as OEC is directly contacting eligible child care providers.

Hyperlinks

State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. “Coronavirus Memo 13.”

<https://www.ctoec.org/storage/2020/03/COVID-19-Memo-13-Continuation-of-State-Funding-final-3-27-20.pdf>. May 21, 2020.

State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. “CTCARES Programs.” <https://www.ctoec.org/covid-19/ctcares-programs/>. May 21, 2020.

State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. “CTCARES for Frontline Workers Child Care Subsidy Program.” https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CTCARES-Frontline-Worker-Definition_2020-04-27.pdf. May 21, 2020.

State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. “CTCARES for Frontline Workers Child Care Subsidy Program.” <https://www.ctoec.org/ctcares-for-frontline-workers/>. May 21, 2020.

State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development. “Essential Businesses – Executive Order 7H.” <https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Coronavirus-Business-Recovery/Business-Exemptions-for-Coronavirus>. May 21, 2020.

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State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood. “CTCARES Hospital Workers: Project 26 Fact Sheet.” https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/OEC_Project-26-Fact-Sheet-English.pdf. May 21, 2020.

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