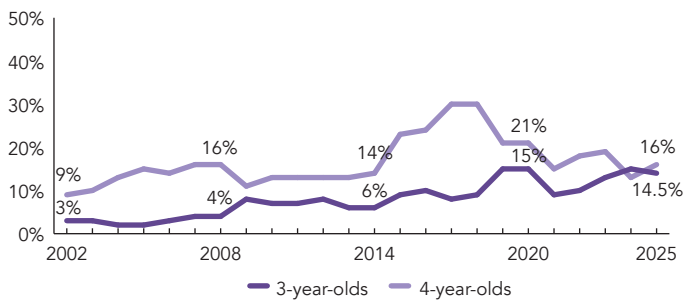
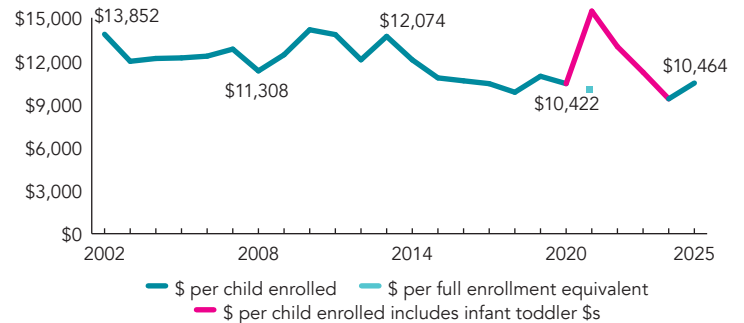


Connecticut

PERCENT OF STATE POPULATION ENROLLED



STATE SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED (2025 DOLLARS)



OVERVIEW

During the 2024-2025 school year, Connecticut preschool enrolled 12,724 children, an increase of 391 from the prior year. State spending totaled \$133,143,028, up \$17,646,563 (15%), adjusted for inflation, since last year. State spending per child equaled \$10,464 in 2024-2025, up \$1,099 from 2023-2024, adjusted for inflation. Connecticut met an average of 5.1 of 10 quality standards benchmarks. The pink colored line on the spending per child enrolled figure reflects the years in which spending reported for the CDCC program included infant and toddler slots.

WHAT'S NEW

Early Start CT launched in July 2025 combining previous separate programs, School Readiness, Child Day Care Contracts, and State Head Start Supplement, into one funding system. In June 2025, the CT legislature also passed a historic investment in Early Childhood funding with the passage of the Early Childhood Education Endowment. The Governor set up an endowment to fund early childhood education that will grow over time. There are milestones, rules, and an advisory board to guide how the funds will be used. Starting in July 2025, the endowment will provide the first year of funding, up to \$36 million, to support the early care system for CT. Funding from the endowment in year 1 will increase access to families with an additional 1,000 spaces funded through the Endowment to expand Early Start CT. This funding will provide a rate payment increase to providers and create additional spaces. Each year, the Endowment funds will add spaces. In July of 2027, the Endowment will provide free family fees for families participating in Early Start CT and making less than \$100,000 a year, and low-cost family fees for families making up to \$150,000.

BACKGROUND

Connecticut serves prekindergarten children in three state-funded programs: School Readiness Program (SR), Child Day Care Contracts (CDCC), and Smart Start, all supervised by the Office of Early Childhood (OEC). Non-Head Start SR, CDCC, and Smart Start programs have three years to become NAEYC accredited. Programs not NAEYC accredited or Head Start approved are required to have annual Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) ratings by state-approved raters to help prepare them for accreditation.

Connecticut has provided funding for CDCC for over 40 years through a purchase-of-service contracting system. The services provided through the CDCC are supported through state funds and must operate for at least 10 hours per day. Eligibility requirements target children with household incomes below 75% SMI for state funding CDCC programs, which must be licensed as a child care facility by the state, may operate under the contract held by an elementary or secondary school, nursery school, preschool, day care center, group child care home, family child care home, family resource center, Head Start program, or local or regional board of education.

School Readiness was founded in 1997 to expand access to early childhood programs for 3- and 4-year-olds. Financial support is available to 21 Priority School Readiness districts, as defined by legislation, and 46 Competitive School Readiness municipalities that have at least one school in which 40% or more of children are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch or fall within the 50 lowest wealth-ranked towns in the state. Any family can apply for School Readiness spaces in designated Priority or Competitive municipalities; however, 60% of children enrolled in each municipality must meet the income guideline of at-or-below 75% of the SMI.

Smart Start was created during the 2014 legislative session to expand publicly funded preschool in public school settings. Funding is distributed to local or regional boards of education through a competitive grant process.

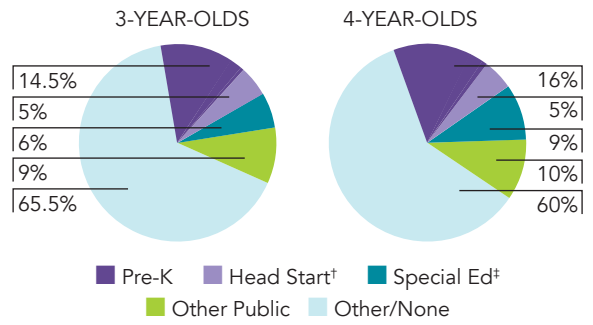
Connecticut's overall support for state-funded preschool, including enrollment and funding for CDCC, SR, and Smart Start, is depicted in the first two pages of the state profile. The third page focuses solely on CDCC, the fourth on SR, and the fifth on Smart Start.

CONNECTICUT STATE OVERVIEW

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment	12,724
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4	7,423
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4	3,443
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4.....	545

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE

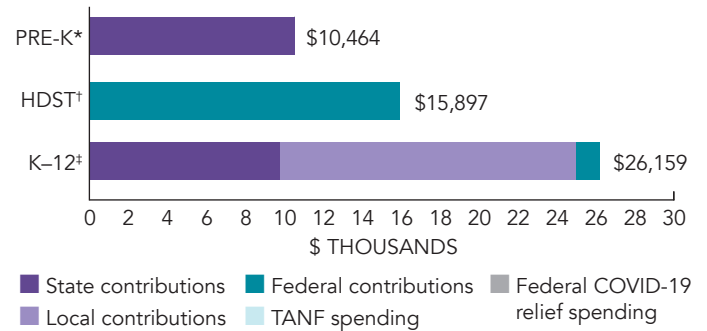


† Estimates children in Head Start not also enrolled in state pre-K.
‡ Estimates children in special education not also enrolled in state pre-K or Head Start.

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$133,143,028
State Head Start spending	\$5,083,238
State spending per child enrolled	\$10,464
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$10,464

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED



* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.
† Head Start per-child spending includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds.
‡ K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

ACCESS RANKINGS	
4-YEAR-OLDS	3-YEAR-OLDS
37	12

RESOURCE RANKINGS	
STATE SPENDING	ALL REPORTED SPENDING
9	20

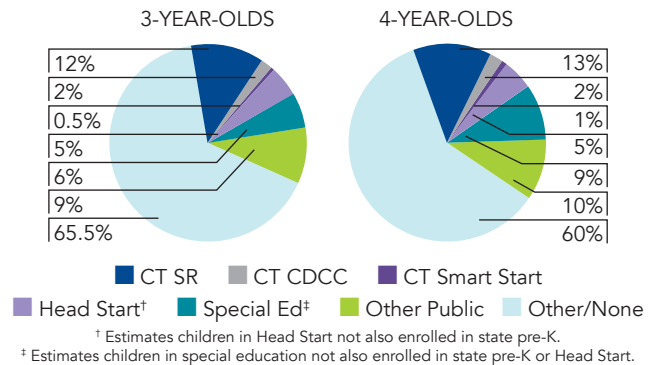
TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET
5.1

CONNECTICUT CHILD DAY CARE CONTRACTS (CDCC)

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment 1,644
 School districts that offer state program ... 28% (towns/communities)
 Income requirement 75% SMI (60% families)
 Minimum hours of operation 10 hours/day; 5 days/week
 Operating schedule Full calendar year

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE



QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	CT CDCC REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
Early learning & development standards	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum supports	Approval process & supports	Approval process & supports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	AA in ECE (at least 50% of teachers); CDA + 12 ECE credits (other teachers)	BA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	AA in ECE (at least 50% of teachers); CDA + 12 ECE credits (other teachers)	Specializing in pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	No minimum education degree	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	PD: 1% of total work hours; PD plans (some teachers)	For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; Coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	20 (3- & 4-year-olds)	20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	1:10 (3- & 4-year-olds)	1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Screening & referral	Vision, hearing, health & more; Referrals not required	Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continuous quality improvement system	Structured classroom observations (per Head Start and NAEYC accreditation requirements); Data used for program improvement	Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>

For more information about the benchmarks, see the Executive Summary and Roadmap to State Profile Pages.

5

RESOURCES

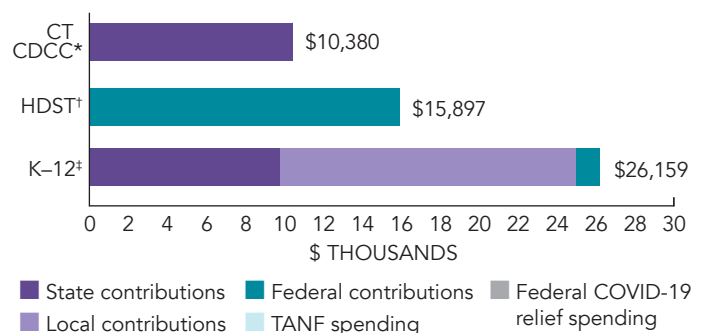
Total state pre-K spending \$17,064,040
 Local match required? No
 State spending per child enrolled \$10,380
 All reported spending per child enrolled* \$10,380

* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.

† Head Start per-child spending includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds.

‡ K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

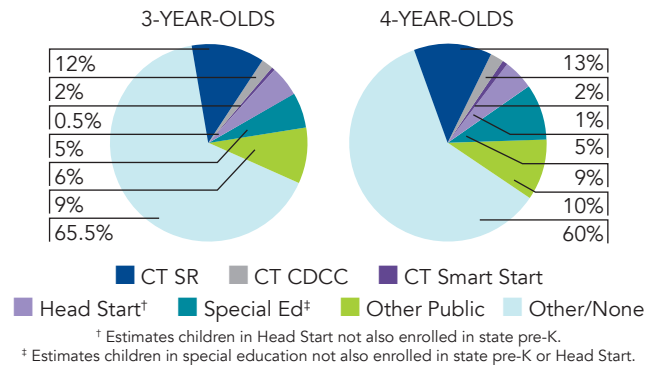


CONNECTICUT SCHOOL READINESS (SR)

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment.....	10,440
School districts that offer state program...	40% (towns/communities)
Income requirement.....	75% SMI (60% families)
Minimum hours of operation.....	2.5 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule.....	Determined locally

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE



QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	CT SR REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
Early learning & development standards	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum supports	Approval process & supports	Approval process & supports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	AA in ECE (at least 50% of teachers); CDA + 12 ECE credits (other teachers)	BA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	AA in ECE (at least 50% of teachers); CDA + 12 ECE credits (other teachers)	Specializing in pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	No minimum education degree	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	PD: 1% of total work hours; PD plans (some teachers)	For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; Coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	20 (3- & 4-year-olds)	20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	1:10 (3- & 4-year-olds)	1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Screening & referral	Vision, hearing, health & more; Referrals not required	Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continuous quality improvement system	Structured classroom observations (per Head Start and NAEYC accreditation requirements); Data used for program improvement	Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>

For more information about the benchmarks, see the Executive Summary and Roadmap to State Profile Pages.

5

RESOURCES

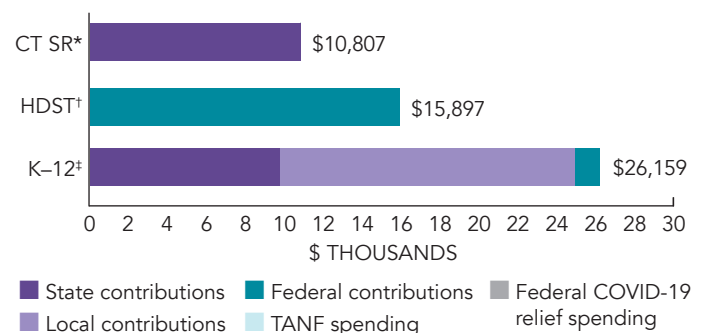
Total state pre-K spending	\$112,829,449
Local match required?.....	No
State spending per child enrolled	\$10,807
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$10,807

* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.

† Head Start per-child spending includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds.

‡ K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

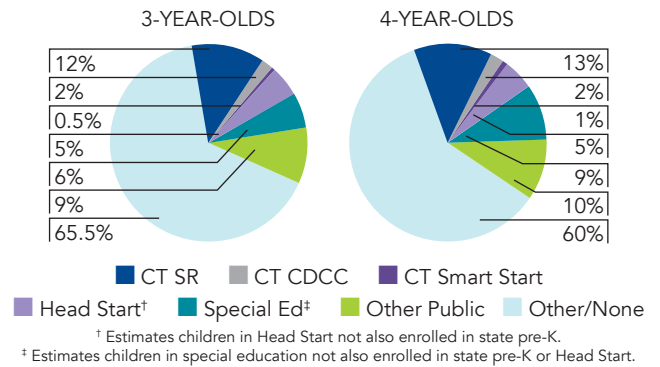


CONNECTICUT SMART START

ACCESS

Total state pre-K enrollment.....	640
School districts that offer state program...	14% (towns/communities)
Income requirement.....	75% SMI (60% of families)
Minimum hours of operation.....	6 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule.....	School or academic year

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE



QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

POLICY	CT SMART START REQUIREMENT	BENCHMARK	REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
Early learning & development standards	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum supports	Approval process & supports	Approval process & supports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher degree	BA	BA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Teacher specialized training	ECE, ECE SpEd	Specializing in pre-K	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assistant teacher degree	HSD	CDA or equivalent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff professional development	PD plans (teachers only)	For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; Coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maximum class size	18 (3- & 4-year-olds)	20 or lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Staff-child ratio	1:9 (3- & 4-year-olds)	1:10 or better	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Screening & referral	Vision, hearing, health & more; Referrals not required	Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continuous quality improvement system	Structured classroom observations (per Head Start and NAEYC accreditation requirements); Data used for program improvement	Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>

For more information about the benchmarks, see the Executive Summary and Roadmap to State Profile Pages.

6

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending	\$3,249,539
Local match required?.....	No
State spending per child enrolled	\$5,077
All reported spending per child enrolled*	\$5,077

* Pre-K programs may receive additional funds from federal or local sources that are not included in this figure.

† Head Start per-child spending includes funding only for 3- and 4-year-olds.

‡ K-12 expenditures include capital spending as well as current operating expenditures.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

