OVERVIEW
During the 2021-2022 school year, Connecticut preschool enrolled 11,043 children, an increase of 1,377 from the prior year, as the programs began to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. State spending totaled $130,701,882, down $5,199,344 (4%), adjusted for inflation since last year. State spending per child equaled $11,836 in 2021-2022, down $2,224 from 2020-2021, adjusted for inflation. Connecticut met an average of 5.1 of 10 quality standards benchmarks.

WHAT’S NEW
During the 2021-2022 school year, the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) implemented 25% funding enhancements for the Child Day Care Contracts (CDCC) and School Readiness (SR) programs. All programs, including Smart Start, received funding for a full allocation for FY 2022 despite some fluctuations in enrollment.

Staffing shortages and fiscal challenges continued to be an issue. Alternative models of support were implemented to continue providing fiscal stability for programs, including wage supplements, enrollment grants, and additional cost of living increases. The state provided some flexibility to address staffing challenges and to meet program requirements.

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 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 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 and/or children with household incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level for SSBG funds. 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 pre-K for 3- and 4-year-olds 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 ................................................... 11,043
Special education enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ............................ 5,826
Federally funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ........... 3,951
State-funded Head Start enrollment, ages 3 and 4 ..................... 264

RESOURCES
Total state pre-K spending .......................................... $130,701,882
State Head Start spending .............................................. $5,083,238
State spending per child enrolled ........................................ $11,836
All reported spending per child enrolled* ........................... $11,836

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

ACCESS RANKINGS

4-YEAR-OLDS
3-YEAR-OLDS

32
12

RESOURCES RANKINGS

STATE SPENDING
ALL REPORTED SPENDING

7
9

TOTAL BENCHMARKS MET

5.1

Data are for the 2021-2022 school year, unless otherwise noted.
CONNECTICUT CHILD DAY CARE CONTRACTS (CDCC)

ACCESS
Total state pre-K enrollment ..................................................... 1,625
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

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 | ✓
Curriculum supports | Approval process & supports | Approval process & supports | ✓
Teacher degree | CDA + 12 EC credits | BA | ✓
Teacher specialized training | CDA + 12 EC credits | Specializing in pre-K | ✓
Assistant teacher degree | HSD | CDA or equivalent | ✓
Staff professional development | PD: 1% of total work hours; PD plans (some teachers & assistants) | For teachers & assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching | ✓
Maximum class size | 20 (3- & 4-year-olds) | 20 or lower | ✓
Staff-child ratio | 1:10 (3- & 4-year-olds) | 1:10 or better | ✓
Screening & referral | Vision, hearing, health & more; Referrals not required | Vision, hearing & health screenings; & referral | ✓
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 | ✓

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

* Indicates that while policy meets the benchmark, it is not being implemented fully.

RESOURCES
Total state pre-K spending .................................................. $33,663,174
Local match required? .......................................................... No
State spending per child enrolled ....................... $20,716
All reported spending per child enrolled* ................ $20,716

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUP</th>
<th>CT SR</th>
<th>CT CDCC</th>
<th>CT Smart Start</th>
<th>Head Start†</th>
<th>Special Ed‡</th>
<th>Other/None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-YEAR-OLDS</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-YEAR-OLDS</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† 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.

SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPENDING PER CHILD</th>
<th>CDCC*</th>
<th>HDST†</th>
<th>K-12‡</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$THOUSANDS</td>
<td>$20,716</td>
<td>$12,331</td>
<td>$24,135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 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.

Data are for the 2021-2022 school year, unless otherwise noted.
CONNECTICUT SCHOOL READINESS (SR)

ACCESS
Total state pre-K enrollment..................................................... 8,712
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

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

| POLICY                                    | CT SR REQUIREMENT                          | BENCHMARK                                                                 | REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early learning &amp; development standards</td>
<td>Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive</td>
<td>Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum supports</td>
<td>Approval process &amp; supports</td>
<td>Approval process &amp; supports</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher degree</td>
<td>CDA + 12 EC credits</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher specialized training</td>
<td>CDA + 12 EC credits</td>
<td>Specializing in pre-K</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant teacher degree</td>
<td>HSD</td>
<td>CDA or equivalent</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff professional development</td>
<td>PD: 1% of total work hours; PD plans (some teachers &amp; assistants)</td>
<td>For teachers &amp; assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum class size</td>
<td>20 (3- &amp; 4-year-olds)</td>
<td>20 or lower</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff-child ratio</td>
<td>1:10 (3- &amp; 4-year-olds)</td>
<td>1:10 or better</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Screening &amp; referral</td>
<td>Vision, hearing, health &amp; more; Referrals not required</td>
<td>Vision, hearing &amp; health screenings; &amp; referral</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous quality improvement system</td>
<td>Structured classroom observations (per Head Start and NAEYC accreditation requirements); Data used for program improvement</td>
<td>Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information about the benchmarks, see the Executive Summary and Roadmap to State Profile Pages.
* Indicates that while policy meets the benchmark, it is not being implemented fully.

RESOURCES
Total state pre-K spending................................................. $93,788,708
Local match required?....................................................... No
State spending per child enrolled........................................ $10,765
All reported spending per child enrolled* ................................ $10,765

For more information about the benchmarks, see the Executive Summary and Roadmap to State Profile Pages.
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PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3-YEAR-OLDS</th>
<th>4-YEAR-OLDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78%</td>
<td>70%</td>
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SPENDING PER CHILD ENROLLED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Spending per Child Enrolled</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CT SR*</td>
<td>$10,765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDST†</td>
<td>$12,331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-12‡</td>
<td>$24,135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 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.
CONNECTICUT SMART START

ACCESS
Total state pre-K enrollment ................................................................. 706
School districts that offer state program... 14% (towns/communities)
Income requirement ................................................................. No income requirement
Minimum hours of operation.......................... 6 hours/day; 5 days/week
Operating schedule................................. School or academic year

QUALITY STANDARDS CHECKLIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POLICY</th>
<th>CT SMART START REQUIREMENT</th>
<th>BENCHMARK</th>
<th>REQUIREMENT MEETS BENCHMARK?</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Early learning &amp; development standards</td>
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<td>Approval process &amp; supports</td>
<td>Approval process &amp; supports</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher degree</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher specialized training</td>
<td>ECE, ECE SpEd</td>
<td>Specializing in pre-K</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant teacher degree</td>
<td>HSD</td>
<td>CDA or equivalent</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff professional development</td>
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<td>For teachers &amp; assistants: At least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum class size</td>
<td>18 (3- &amp; 4-year-olds)</td>
<td>20 or lower</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff-child ratio</td>
<td>1.9 (3- &amp; 4-year-olds)</td>
<td>1:10 or better</td>
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RESOURCES
Total state pre-K spending ................................................................ $3,250,000
Local match required? ................................................................. No
State spending per child enrolled ................................................... $4,603
All reported spending per child enrolled* ........................................ $4,603

* 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

PERCENT OF POPULATION ENROLLED IN PUBLIC ECE

RESOURCES

Total state pre-K spending ................................................................ $3,250,000
Local match required? ................................................................. No
State spending per child enrolled ................................................... $4,603
All reported spending per child enrolled* ........................................ $4,603

* 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.

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