

**Testimony of Beth Bye, Commissioner, Office of Early Childhood
Before the Finance and Revenue General Obligation Bonding Sub-Committee
Tuesday, March 25, 2025**

Good afternoon, Senator Miller, Representative Napoli, Senator Hwang, Representative Piscopo and distinguished members of the Finance and Revenue General Obligation Bonding Sub-Committee. I am Beth Bye, Commissioner of the Office of Early Childhood (OEC). I am testifying concerning unallocated bond funds for child care facilities construction and renovation. Below are responses to the Bonding Subcommittee questions.

1. Do you need the unallocated balances? **Yes.**
 - a. If so, for what purpose?
The unallocated balance is for Early Start CT Facilities Expansion and Renovation of state-funded child care facilities.
 - b. Within what time frame?
Between FY25 and FY32.
2. Are the unallocated funds obligated, designated, or otherwise attached to projects, or are funds available for future needs as they arise?
 - a. **They are available for projects as they arise to meet the facility needs for Early Start CT Facilities Expansion and Renovation and to support a current allotment of facility expansion of \$10,000,000 for center and family child care programs.**
 - b. If attached to projects, please provide information on the projects.
Early Start CT will require child care facility expansion and renovation.
 - c. **For the committee's awareness, C.G.S § 10-508 (P.A. 21-111) expanded the use of child care facility construction and renovation beyond Smart Start to include School Readiness, Child Day Care, and Even Start. This language needs to be amended starting July 1, 2025, to reflect that School Readiness and Child Day Care will become Early Start CT pursuant to Section 10-550.**
3. Allocation of funds
 - a. When was the last time funds for the program were allocated, if ever?
The last time OEC received an allocation from this authorization was in 2017.
 - b. Have the funds been requested for allocation by the bond commission? If so, how much and when?
No, they have not been allocated.
4. What impediments, if any, have there been in accessing and using the bond funds?
If bond funds are allocated, we do not think there are impediments to accessing and using the bond funds.
5. For programs with recent allocations, what portion of the allocation has been spent?
There is \$359,230 unexpended from the total allocation of \$3,519,149 which was last allocated in 2017.
 - a. What is the typical time between allocation and final expenditure of the funds?
This varies depending on RFP process, allocation timeline.

6. If increased bond authorizations have been proposed for FY 25, what expansion or increase of projects is expected and how quickly are the new funds anticipated to be needed? **None have been proposed.**

a. Do you anticipate a further need for new authorizations past the biennium?
Yes. This will depend on the early care and education final package approved by the legislature.

7. For ongoing programs, have the expected annual amounts changed? **N/A.**

Thank you for your time and attention to this issue, which will help our state residents to more efficiently access the important services that they are eligible for. The OEC is committed to working together—with legislators, the executive branch, providers, advocates, and parents—to better serve our families with young children.

The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood advances a two-generation family-centered approach in our pursuit of optimal health, safety, and learning outcomes for young children. Through our core programs, we support infant and toddler care, preschool, after-school care, child care and youth camp licensing, home visiting, and early intervention to address developmental delays. OEC is working toward better-coordinated, cost-effective services that support Connecticut's youngest children and families.