

Connecticut's Early Childhood Policy Challenges

Care Shortages and Funding Approaches

Office of Legislative Research



Today's Presentation

Overview: Child Care and Early Education

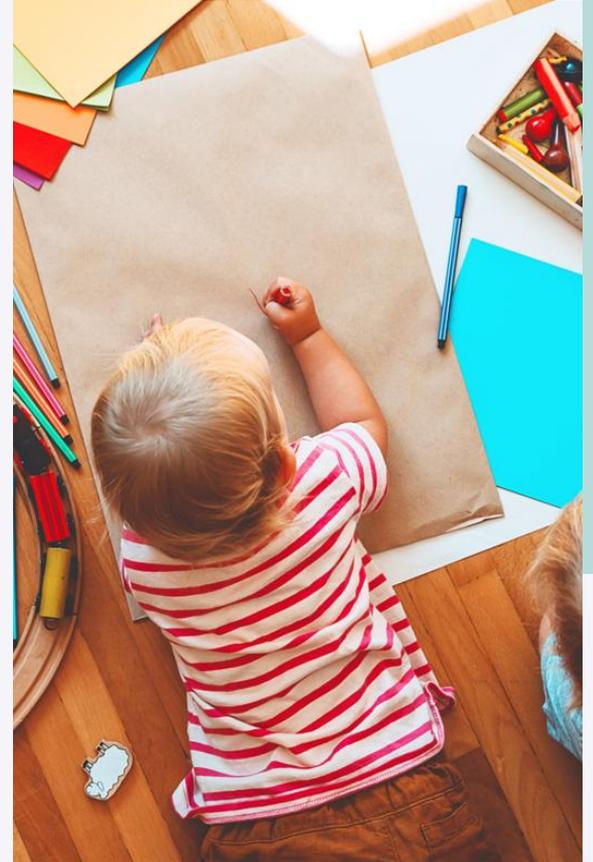
- Challenges
- Blue Ribbon Panel Report
- Cost and Wage Data

Legislation from Last Session

- Early Start CT
- Tri-Share Child Care Pilot
- Early Childhood Care and Education Fund
- Other Highlights

Questions

Overview: Child Care and Early Education



CT's Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care Report

The challenges:

- Parents can't pay more, teachers can't earn less, and programs are lucky to keep their doors open



\$1.5 Billion

Has been lost per year in Connecticut economy due to the lack of infant and toddler care

1 in 5

Parents had to quit a job or have been fired due to child care problems

Blue Ribbon Report Contd.

Report includes a 5-year plan with multiple goals and action steps

- Initial cost estimate of more than \$2 billion

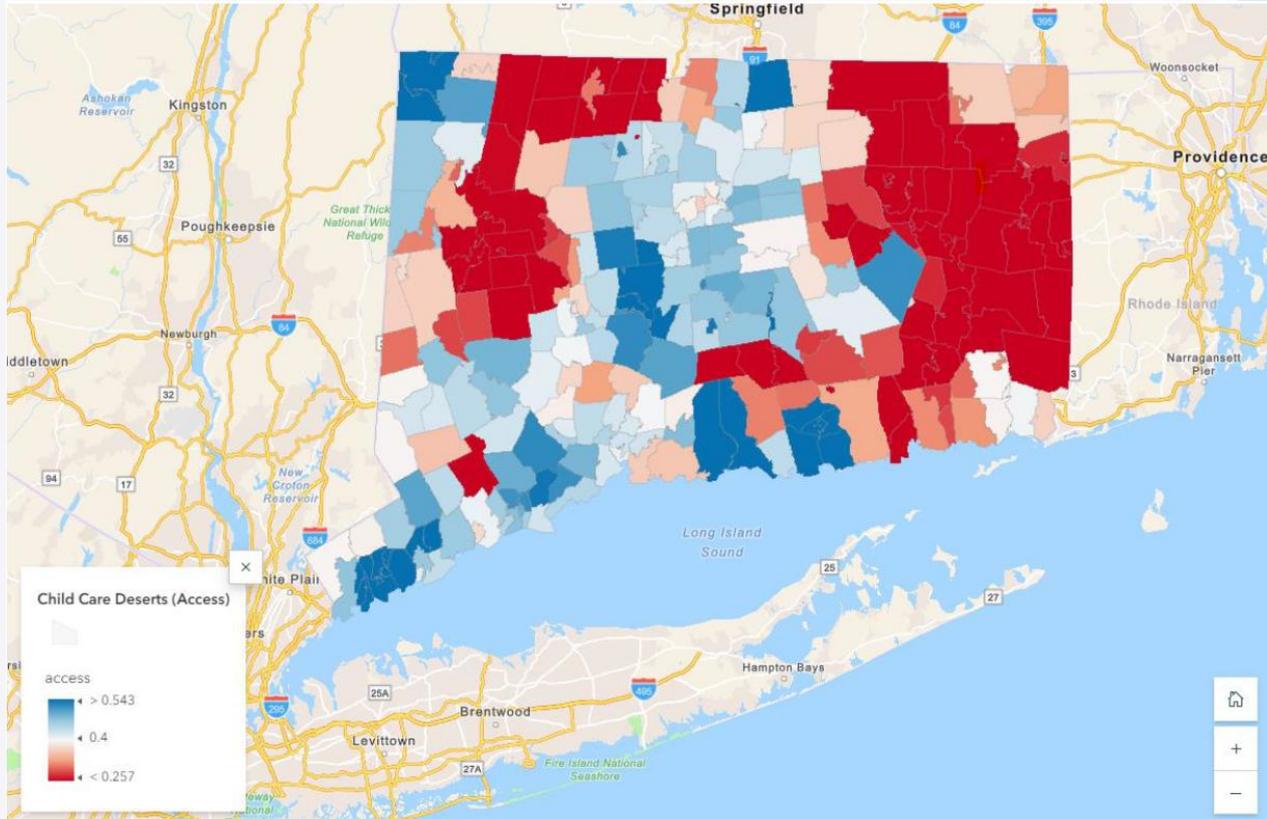


Some issues named in the report addressed in 2024 session:

- Simplifying funding system:
 - Early Start CT
- Identifying new funding sources:
 - Tri-Share Program
- Funding to help increase staff compensation:
 - one-time wage supplement of \$1800 each

Child Care Desert Map

- Measures the number of available child care slots compared to the nearby child population
- Read as a ratio of slots to child population
- If there were a 1:1 ratio, there would be a slot for each child



Source: Office of Early Childhood

Child Care Costs: What Families Pay

Statewide Fee Analysis of Child Care Facilities in Connecticut

Service Type – Full-Time	Weekly Cost			Yearly Cost
	Lowest	Highest	Average	Average
Infant/Toddler Center	\$200	\$708	\$355	\$17,040
Infant/Toddler Home	\$100	\$550	\$276	\$13,248
Preschool Center	\$100	\$595	\$295	\$14,160
Preschool Home	\$100	\$500	\$254	\$12,192

Source: Connecticut 211 Child Care, updated November 1, 2024

Information does not include state or federally subsidized programs or those with sliding scale rates. Yearly cost assumes a 48-week year.

Child Care Costs: What Workers Get Paid

Year	Minimum Wage	Childcare Workers Hourly	All Occupations Hourly	Difference Between All Occup. and Childcare Workers
2023	\$15.00	\$15.34	\$25.76	-\$10.42
2022	14.00	14.68	24.90	-10.22
2021	13.00	13.53	23.56	-10.03
2020	12.00	12.82	22.76	-9.93
2019	11.00	12.36	22.11	-9.75

Source: CT Department of Labor, Labor Market Information

New Laws from 2024 Session



Early Start CT, PA 24-78

Creates Early Start CT Program

Goals:

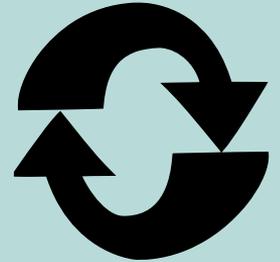
- **Provide** access for infants and toddlers and pre-school children to quality early care and education programs and prepare them for school, and
- **Prevent** or minimize developmental delay in children before age five



Early Start CT, PA 24-78, contd.

Eliminates three existing grant programs:

1. **School Readiness Preschool** → *(CGS § § 10-16o to -16u)*
2. **Child Day Care for Disadvantaged Children** → for development and operation of day care facilities → *(CGS § 8-210)*
3. **Head Start State Supplement** → helps Head Start Programs provide extended hours or additional service days, such as in summer → *(CGS § 10-16n)*



***These programs repealed effective July 1, 2025, and replaced with Early Start CT**

Early Start CT: Eligibility

- ❖ At least 60% of eligible children in a program receiving assistance must be in a family below 75% of state median income

- ❖ Majority of selected programs must serve children living in, or attend programs in, priority school districts (PSDs), former PSD, or towns where at least 40% of school lunches served to students qualifying for school FRPL
- ❖ Application must be informed by a data-based needs assessment and community plan by the governance partner (governance partners replaces school readiness councils)



Early Start: Allows Grants on a Per-Child or Per-Classroom Rate

Per child rate at least:

- \$10,500 for each child ages 3, 4, or 5 (and not eligible for Kindergarten); or
- \$13,500 for each child under age 3 in toddler or infant care (and not in preschool)

Per classroom:

- Equivalent to per child rate multiplied by classroom capacity, determined by commissioner on a case-by-case basis



Tri-Share Child Care Program, PA 24-91

- Employers must have a facility in **New London County**
- Employees **must live** in Connecticut and **not be receiving other assistance** for child care costs
- **LEARN**, southeastern Connecticut's regional educational service center, has been selected to administer Tri-Share
- **Electric Boat** committed as a program business partner
- **\$1.8 million** in one-time funding allocated for this (PA 24-81)

**Tri-Share means:
child care costs are
shared equally
between employers,
employees, and the
state**

Early Childhood Care and Education Fund, PA 24-91

- Revisions to the Early Childhood Care and Education Fund (formerly the Early Childhood Education Fund)
 - **Deposits, donations, and investments** to be used solely to support the state's early childhood education and child care needs
 - Any deposited funds **are not state property** and cannot be combined with state funds
 - Under the **state treasurer's office** and advised by **new 23-member commission** created to prepare a five-year plan



Other Legislative Highlights

Early Childhood Teachers and Assistants Pay Supplement (PA 24-91)

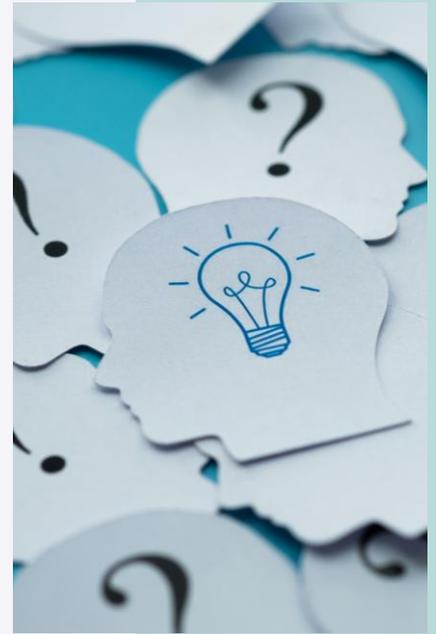
- One-time FY 25 payment of at least \$1,800 per person
- First-come, first serve basis
- OEC must use \$9 million of its appropriation (equals 5,000 payments of \$1,800)

Care 4 Kids

- Additional \$53.3 million in FY 25 to increase the rates the state pays to providers
- Additional \$18.8 million in one-time funds for FY 25 to cap parent fees at 7% and expand infant and toddler capacity (PA 24-81)



Questions?



Thank you

John Moran
Principal Analyst
Office of Legislative Research





2024 ISSUES CONFERENCE

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10:00 AM - 12:30 PM



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