



Governor Ned Lamont State of Connecticut



FACT SHEET
2024 Legislative Session

HOUSE BILL 5051 *AN ACT ESTABLISHING EARLY START CT*

The Problem

As every parent in the Connecticut knows, a lack of affordable child care is a major barrier to opportunity in Connecticut. And businesses see it too—lack of child care options inhibits Connecticut businesses' ability to recruit, retain, and maintain a productive workforce, costing the state economy \$1.5 billion every year.

Governor Lamont's Solution

In December, Governor Lamont's Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care culminated after a year of work with the release of a final report, which included legislative recommendations. This bill proposes consolidating Connecticut's three existing early childhood programs into a single program, Early Start CT. A single state-funded early care and education program will reduce unnecessary red tape and bureaucracy and will make child care more accessible for parents. The Early Start CT program will preserve the sliding fee scale based on family income.

The bill significantly expands Connecticut's Care 4 Kids child care subsidy program by increasing eligibility from 50% to 65% of the state median income, increasing access to child care and preventing families from falling off the child care benefit cliff.

The Office of Early Childhood will now pay state-funded programs by classroom rather than by child where possible, which will provide programmatic and fiscal stability. This stability will allow programs to offer more scheduling flexibility for families, including part-week and part-day options.

Connecticut will expand its first-in-the-nation child care incubator program to child care deserts in rural New London County. The innovative child care incubator model provides aspiring child care educators with business and early childhood training to create family home day care programs.

This proposal establishes the Tri-Share Child Care Matching Program, a pilot program where child care costs are shared equally between the parent, their employer, and the state.

Contacts:

Governor's Office: Matthew Brokman, 860-951-9619 or matthew.brokman@ct.gov
Office of Policy and Management: Susan Sherman, 860-416-2008 or susan.b.sherman@ct.gov
State Capitol, Room 406

It also simplifies pathways to become a state-funded early childhood educator by recognizing both Bachelors and Associates degrees for teachers, moving from a fifteen-step to a three-step career ladder, and rewarding early childhood educators with bonuses for degree completion.

Finally, the proposal establishes and funds local and regional governance partners to provide data-based assessments to inform OEC about community child care needs, as well as parental and community outreach.