

Connecticut State Board of Education  
Hartford

**Position Statement On  
Preschool Programs and Services**

Adopted September 11, 2002

Families are increasingly looking to local public schools to assist them in meeting the needs of preschool-age children. The Connecticut State Board of Education is committed to ensuring that all of the state's preschool-age children, including children with disabilities, are afforded an opportunity to participate in a high-quality preschool education. Such an experience fosters a child's overall development, including literacy and readiness for the public school kindergarten curriculum. The Board believes that a high-quality preschool education is essential to children's future success both in school and as adults. The Board's focus on preschool education is a cornerstone of the state's school reform efforts, with attention to high expectations and the assurance that preschool-age children will demonstrate performance and proficiency at each age and stage of development and will enter school ready to learn.

The Board views Connecticut's local and regional school boards as leaders in a community's collaborative response to meeting the needs of preschool-age children and their families. As leaders, local boards do not necessarily need to operate programs. Rather, local boards should coordinate and facilitate the array of services and supports available, including high-quality preschool education, for the child and family within the community.

The ability to ensure that preschool children are successful learners in school will depend on a number of factors. These include a child's good health and nutrition; quality interactions with parents, caregivers and peers; and experiences provided by preschool educators who are guided by values, ideas, actions directed at the interests of individual children and their families, and scientifically based research. Research consistently relates parental educational status and parental reading competence as inherent benefits to young children acquiring literacy and meeting other age-appropriate developmental expectations. In developing strategies to close achievement gaps among students, local boards of education must actively encourage parents without a high school diploma or in need of literacy and English-language supports to enroll in local adult education programs. Local and regional school boards are encouraged to design effective family literacy strategies for parents of preschool-age children.

To foster the maximum development of children during the preschool years, the Board endeavors to sponsor preschool programs and services that expand and enhance the availability and quality of comprehensive and integrated public school and community-based preschool programs and services for all children by:

- encouraging local school board leadership in each community to ensure that the educational needs of preschoolers are being met;
- providing assistance to local and regional school boards when needed to implement new community- or school-based preschool programs and/or improve existing ones;

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- supporting the participation of families in the preschool education of their children;
- ensuring that parents with adult educational needs, including English as a second language, receive priority for such services;
- supporting the community in its efforts to ensure access to a high-quality preschool education for its children;
- supporting the quality of children’s learning at the preschool level by providing and promoting high-quality educational opportunities and establishing standards for high expectations linked to Connecticut’s curricular goals and standards for children in kindergarten through Grade 12; and
- supporting the professional development of personnel to ensure that they possess the skills, knowledge and competencies to offer children a quality preschool education.

Through the coordination of policy concerning preschool education and child care across state agencies, local school districts' leadership in setting high standards and fostering collaboration among local partners, and each child being supported by caring and knowledgeable families, an educational continuum, starting at preschool, can be effected. As a result, no child will be left behind and each child will enter school prepared and eager to continue learning.