

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

June 2, 2020

Dear Superintendents,

COVID-19 has brought challenges, changes, and collaboration in Connecticut and in her cities and towns. Children and families face challenges as well. We are writing to you about an initiative in CT that is designed to support young children and their families. Through 4-CT, and the support of CT's early childhood funders, the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) will be expanding its support to family child care providers in your region by expanding the number of regional support networks, in partnership with the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE).

Staffed Family Child Care Networks are designed to support small child care programs run in providers' homes. Before the pandemic, about 10% of child care occurred in Family Child Care homes. Right now, 30% of CT's child care supply is coming from Family Child Care homes. Regional Networks will help support these programs with supply subsidies, coaching on early childhood practices, and on business practices. These networks will also connect programs with 10 hour a day phone support for health, mental health, as well as consultation for children's behavioral challenges. For more info about Staffed Family Child Care Networks go to:

https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/fcc_networks_brief_0.pdf

We anticipate that, over the next year, more families will be seeking out Family Child Care settings, as they are small programs (up to 9 children), with more flexible hours. They are more likely to be open than centers at this time. The networks will support high quality care for the children, and support for the families, that will help more children's development so they are ready for school.

OEC currently supports one large and four smaller networks. Our goal is to reach a total of 12 networks within a few weeks. **In order to achieve this, we have been collaborating with the statewide Family Resource Center (FRC) Network**, as they are located throughout the state, and have experience supporting family child care providers. FRC's provide OEC with a trusted partner in this expansion. SDE oversees FRCs, and OEC is excited to partner with SDE and FRCs in this effort.

Since some FRCs are located in non-profits, and others are embedded in school budgets, **we wanted to update superintendents who may be approached about one of their FRCs participating in this project.** It is funded with \$800,000 from philanthropists, and OEC has dedicated funds in the SFY 2020-2021 budget to continue these efforts.

Thank you for all you are doing for children and families at this time. We look forward to continued partnership in the coming year.

Sincerely,



Beth Bye, Commissioner
Office of Early Childhood



Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Commissioner
CT State Department of Education