



Connecticut's Response to COVID-19: Child Care Actions

Fact Sheet | January 2021

On March 27, 2020, the CARES Act was signed into law, including \$3.5 billion in supplemental appropriations for the Child Care and Development Block Grant to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus. This funding represents a 60% increase in total discretionary appropriations for fiscal year 2020, which amounts to \$9.326 billion. States were given broad flexibility for how to use this funding and have therefore taken a variety of approaches to help address needs of working families and providers through COVID-19. However, as the funds ran out during the ongoing crisis, many states began pulling from other sources to continue supporting parents and providers alike. This fact sheet explains the actions Connecticut took to support the child care industry and working parents through 2020.

Connecticut received \$23.5 million in supplemental CCDBG funds through the CARES Act.

In April 2020, the state used \$5.8 million of these funds to provide resources for licensed child care providers, with additional reimbursements to providers that stayed open to serve the children of essential workers, through July. The state intended to use these payments to help offset the costs many child care providers incurred while they adhered to new public health standards—such as lower ratios—and operated with decreased enrollment. Programs were also asked to document how they used this funding to increase wages for staff during the crisis.

In May 2020, Connecticut's Office of Early Childhood (OEC) surveyed licensed family child care homes, centers, group homes, and license exempt state funded programs to understand the impact of COVID-19 on child care providers and to inform a new plan for recovery efforts. With the survey results, the OEC designed the next phase of funding.

Through the resulting Expense Kickstart Subsidy, the state offered a total of \$8 million in one-time grants to help cover expenses such as rent, payroll, and utilities. Additionally, a Supply Subsidy helped to cover the cost of cleaning and safety supplies, offering a total allocation of \$2.5 million to providers. The state also offered additional funding to help businesses pay for background checks and First-Aid trainings. Programs

had to be operating in January 2020 to qualify for these programs, and applications closed on September 19.

Connecticut also offered funds to help connect family child care providers with a larger Family Child Care Network that offered opportunities in professional development, coaching and consultation, and businesses and administrative support, to help them sustain their business and improve in the midst of COVID-19.

Separately, the state established "CTCARES for Hospital Workers," an emergency program serving healthcare workers as they continued to work on the frontlines of the crisis. The state, working in partnership with major hospitals, determined the child care needs of healthcare workers and subsequently opened 25 child care locations at hospitals around the state. The program ran through the end of June and was supported by a \$3 million donation from Dalio Philanthropies. CTCARES for Hospital Workers ended on June 26.

Connecticut's child care subsidy program, Care4Kids, paid providers based on enrollment through the beginning of the pandemic and in July reverted to paying providers based on attendance. This included covering care for school-age children as families navigated a hybrid school model throughout the fall.

At time of publication, the state had not yet announced additional plans to support child care providers or the needs of school-aged care during 2021.