



### *Connecticut Department of Social Services*

The state is preparing a comprehensive child care plan to access federal funds, including the new child care stimulus funds for programs and services over the next two years.

The Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) Family Services & Child Care Team, in collaboration with the State Child Day Care Council is convening three public hearings to provide Connecticut residents an opportunity to comment on child care services in Connecticut. DSS must prepare the state's Child Care Plan to access federal funds. A draft of the plan follows this page. The plan must be submitted to Washington, D.C. by July 1, 2009. Your participation in this process is welcomed.

The schedule of **Public Hearings** follows:

- **New Haven - Wednesday, May 13, 2009** - 4:00 to 7:00 PM at LULAC Head Start, 250 Cedar Street, New Haven, Connecticut (203) 777-4006
- **Norwich - Monday, May 18, 2009** - 4:00 to 7:00 PM at the Southeastern Mental Health Authority (SMHA), Uncas on Thames Campus, 401 West Thames Street, Building # 301, Norwich, Connecticut (860) 859-4500
- **New Britain - Wednesday, May 20, 2009** 1:00 – 3:00 PM during the “New Initiatives That Help Connecticut Babies and Toddlers Grow and Develop” Forum, at the Research and Education Center for the Hospital for Special Care, 370 Osgood Avenue, New Britain (860) 223-2761

To submit written comments: send an email to [julie.bisi@ct.gov](mailto:julie.bisi@ct.gov) or USPS mail to  
ATTN: Child Care Division – CCDF Plan, Connecticut Department of Social Services, 25  
Sigourney Street, Hartford, CT 06106, no later than June 8, 2009.

Further information is available by calling the Department of Social Services' Child Care Team at 1-800-811-6141 (press option 6) or (860) 424-5598.

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**CONNECTICUT'S DRAFT PLAN**

**FOR THE**

**FEDERAL CHILD CARE AND  
DEVELOPMENT FUND**  
Federal Fiscal Years 2010 & 2011

**AND**

**AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT**  
**CHILD CARE STIMULUS FUNDS**  
Federal Fiscal Years 2009 - 2010

**MICHAEL P. STARKOWSKI**  
Commissioner  
Department of Social Services

**M. JODI RELL**  
Governor  
State of Connecticut

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The federal Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 as amended (hereafter referred to as the Child Care and Development Fund or CCDF), has raised significant national attention to the issue of child care in the United States. CCDF is only one source of federal funds that supports early care and education services in Connecticut.

In February of 2009, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) appropriated additional CCDF Discretionary child care funds to Connecticut to expand services to additional children and families facing difficult economic circumstances and provide investments to improve the quality of child care to support the health and well-being of children.

This draft plan only addresses the CCDF and ARRA funds available to Connecticut (Section V). However, the guiding principles, objectives and strategies of the plan (Section IV-A, B, C) comprise a more comprehensive view of the Connecticut child care system, which is supported by other private, federal and state funds. Combined and coordinated with the other funding sources, the CCDF and the ARRA funds significantly contribute to the Connecticut child care delivery system.

While there have been significant enhancements and improvements in the Connecticut child care system since the inception of CCDF in 1990, this plan recognizes that there must be continued efforts to address areas that need further attention. In particular, we reference recent work completed by the Early Childhood and Education Cabinet and its Early Childhood Investment Plan.

As the lead agency for child care, welfare reform, children's health, and a host of other critical health and human services networks in the state, the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) is committed to supporting children, their families, and caregivers to access services that assist families in attaining self-sufficiency. Significant work in areas of availability, affordability and quality improvements has been ongoing within DSS, other state agencies and in Connecticut communities and will progress with continued financial support from the federal government.

The federal **Child Care and Development Fund Plan** presents the strategies and direction for Connecticut to strive toward high quality early care and education programs and services for all children, from birth through their school-age years. The goal is for Connecticut families to be able to select from a wide range of programs designed to meet their unique needs while children receive the critical foundation they need for healthy development and lifelong learning.

## **II. LEGISLATION OVERVIEW**

This section provides an overview of the essential provisions as contained in the final CCDF rule and regulation issued on July 24, 1998 (Federal Register - Vol. 63, No. 142) and the more recent ARRA legislation adopted on February 17, 2009.

### **A. CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND (CCDF)**

The **goals** of the CCDF are to:

- allow each state maximum flexibility in determining child care policies that best suit the needs of children and parents within the state.
- promote parental choice in making decisions on child care that best suits their family's needs.
- encourage states to provide consumer information to help parents make informed child care choices.
- assist states in providing child care to parents trying to become independent of public assistance.
- assist states in implementing the health, safety, licensing and registration standards established in state regulations.

The **purpose** of the CCDF is to increase the availability, affordability and quality of child care services in order to:

- provide low-income families with the financial resources to find and afford quality child care for their children.
- enhance the quality and increase the supply of child care for all families, including those who receive no direct assistance under CCDF.
- provide parents with a broad range of options to address their child care needs.
- strengthen the role of the family.
- improve the quality of and coordination among child care programs and early childhood development programs.
- increase the availability of early childhood development and school-age services.

Further, the CCDF directs Connecticut to:

- maximize parental choice through the use of certificates and/or contracts.
- use a broad range of child care providers that include center-based, family child care, informal home care, relative care and sectarian child care providers.
- coordinate planning and delivery of child care services.
- design flexible programs that provide for the changing needs of recipient families.
- administer CCDF funds responsibly.
- design programs that provide uninterrupted service to families and providers.

The federal CCDF legislation sets forth guidelines to allow states to construct a unified, seamless child care system that will assist families that are transitioning off public assistance and other low income working families. In addition, it provides funding to support consumer education, capacity building and provider training opportunities.

CCDF comprises the following funding streams (see Section V):

- **Mandatory Funds** - states receive a comparable federal share determined by the actual funds expended in 1995 for federal welfare (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families -TANF) child care.
- **Matching Funds** - states receive a share of available national funds after allocation to Tribes and Territories. The state allocation is based on a formula defined for the former At-Risk TANF child care program which is based on the number of children under age thirteen (13) in Connecticut as a percentage of the national total of children under age thirteen (13). Connecticut's share is .015%. States must provide matching funds at the federal fiscal year 1995 Medicaid rate (50% for Connecticut) to receive this share of funds and must maintain child care spending at the 1995 level.
- **Discretionary Funds** - states receive a share of available national funds after allocation to Tribes and Territories. The formula is based on the states' percentage of children under age five (5), percentage of children receiving free or reduced school lunches, and per-capita income.
- **Targeted Expansions** - states receive specific allocations that target essential child care service areas such as school-age, resource and referral, and infant/toddler assistance. These expansions are uncertain from year to year since they require federal congressional approval on an annual basis.



The CCDF provides the following budget guidance for service provision:

<b>Child Care Services</b>	<b>at least</b>	<b>70 %</b>
<b>Administration</b>	<b>capped at</b>	<b>5 %</b>
<b>Quality Services</b>	<b>at least</b>	<b>4 %</b>
<b>Other – state option</b>	<b>up to</b>	<b>21 %</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>100 %</b>

- **Child Care Services** – ensures that at least 70% of total funds are used for families receiving state cash assistance, families transitioning off cash assistance and low-income working families at-risk for needing such assistance.
- **Administration** - establishes a 5% cap on services that are not an integral part of child care service provision. Administration **does not** include services such as eligibility determination, market rate methodology, management information systems, recruitment, etc. that are directly related to the provision of child care services.
- **Quality Services** - requires that at least 4% of funds received be used for activities designed to provide a variety of state selected quality activities such as: consumer and provider education, provider training and skill development, capacity expansion, scholarship assistance. See Attachment 6.
- **Other – state option** - the balance of funds or 21% can be used for child care services or quality services.

The CCDF also allows states to:

- adopt an eligibility family income guideline at 85% of the state median income level (SMI); Connecticut has adopted 50% SMI for initial eligibility and allows families to earn up to 75% SMI;
- establish health and safety standards for the prevention of infectious diseases, building and physical premises, safety and training for child care providers. See Attachment 4;
- determine payment rates that are sufficient to insure equal access. See DSS web site - [http://www.ct.gov/dss/lib/dss/pdfs/care4kid\\_rates.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dss/lib/dss/pdfs/care4kid_rates.pdf);
- set different rates for unlicensed caregivers than those set for licensed child care providers.

The CCDF also requires states to adhere to specific federal assurances and certifications. See Attachment 5.

## **B. AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009 (ARRA)**

The purpose of the ARRA that address the child care stimulus funds are:

- to assist those most impacted by the recession through the provision of funds to expand services to additional children and families facing difficult economic circumstances;
- to provide supplemental targeted funding for investments to improve the quality of child care to support the health and well-being of children.

The United States Congress appropriated \$2 billion nationally in supplemental funding for the CCDF Discretionary fund – see previous section that describes CCDF Discretionary Funds. The ARRA funds supplement the FY 2009 CCDF Discretionary fund appropriation to states provided through the regular appropriation process. The ARRA child care funds are **one-time funds** included in the FY 2009 CCDF grant award and are considered FY 2009 CCDF funds subject to all existing requirements for CCDF Discretionary funds. Thus, the ARRA funds can be obligated in federal fiscal year 2009 and/or 2010.

The ARRA requires that CCDF Discretionary funds made available under the law must be used to supplement, not supplant state general revenue funds for child care assistance to low-income families. A state will be considered to have satisfied the “supplement not supplant” requirement if the state has not made administrative or legislative changes to reduce the amount of general revenue funds for child care assistance to low-income families below the amount the state would have spent under state law and policies in place on the date of enactment of the ARRA (February 17, 2009).

The ARRA specifies that states must use funds for quality activities authorized under section 98.51 of the Child Care and Development Fund Final rule (Attachment 6) including funds for activities to improve the quality of infant and toddler care. These targeted quality funds under ARRA are in addition to the four percent minimum quality requirement in the previous CCDF section. See Section V of this draft Plan for specific ARRA and CCDF funds targeted to Connecticut.

The ARRA also provides funds to support Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Connecticut. This draft plan does not address these funds. Please visit the federal Head Start web site at:

<http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2009pres/04/20090402a.html>

### III. SUMMARY OF CONNECTICUT'S PRIOR USE OF CCDF

The Department of Social Services issues an annual report on child care services in Connecticut. The DSS annual report provides a summary of state and federal funds and the child care initiatives administered by the Department of Social Services. We recommend that you review the recently completed report, *The Status of Child Care in Connecticut*, for state fiscal year 2007-2008. This report is available by accessing it in the Child Care pages of the DSS web site at [www.ct.gov/dss](http://www.ct.gov/dss) or directly at [http://www.ct.gov/dss/lib/dss/annual\\_report\\_to\\_the\\_state\\_general\\_assembly.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dss/lib/dss/annual_report_to_the_state_general_assembly.pdf). Prior annual reports are also available on the DSS web site.

CCDF funds are allocated by the Connecticut General Assembly through the state General Fund budget process and continue to contribute to a variety of child care and early education programs and services in Connecticut. The CCDF funds, when combined with other federal and state funding sources, enhance the overall support of Connecticut's child care system. Following are a summary of those activities:

- **Child Care Subsidies (certificates or vouchers)** - supports eligible families in the Connecticut *Care 4 Kids* program by providing payment to child care providers chosen by parents.
- **Early Childhood Programs and Enhancements** - supports the DSS Child Day Center contracted program to serve infant/toddlers and the School Readiness Quality Enhancement program for selected communities to provide a variety of services that support child care providers, families and children.
- **Resource and Referral Services** - assists families with consumer education materials and information on available child care providers and provides data management and reporting services. This effort is undertaken primarily by the United Way of Connecticut's 211-Child Care program.
- **Licensing Personnel** – supports the hiring of state personnel at the Connecticut Department of Public Health to license and monitor child care facilities.
- **Provider Training and Professional Development** - supports the community college's Connecticut Charts-a-Course career development system, which include scholarships, a provider registry, a Training Approval Board, career counselors, the statewide Accreditation Facilitation Project and the Training Program in Child Development. In addition, the University of Connecticut distributes a newsletter for all Connecticut child care providers.
- **Administrative Services** - supports DSS administrative functions to manage the CCDF funds.

#### **IV. DRAFT CCDF PLAN PROVISIONS**

This section describes essential components, as proposed by DSS, for inclusion in Connecticut's draft plan that will eventually be submitted [*due by July 1, 2009*] to the Boston and Washington D.C. offices of the United State Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance Child Care Bureau. DSS has prepared this draft plan based on prior collaborative work and discussions with a variety of state, local, and private organizations and Connecticut citizens. The actual federal plan document that DSS is required to submit will contain information that may be in this draft plan and/or collected as a result of the formal public hearing process. We advise you that the federal Child Care Bureau requires states to present information in a prescribed format, which will be different from the format of this draft plan. The current approved Connecticut federal CCDF plan, which expires on September 30, 2009, is accessible in PUBLICATIONS as available on the DSS web site at [www.ct.gov/dss](http://www.ct.gov/dss). This will provide you the opportunity to review the federal prescribed format and expected content.

We have prepared this section as follows: Guiding Principles, Objectives, and Strategies.

##### **A. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The guiding principles were adopted in 1990 when DSS completed the first CCDF federal plan. Numerous child care providers, advocates and other constituents participated in that process. While not a requirement for federal plan approval, we have always included this information in each submission. We added a principle that addressed workforce issues in our plan submitted in 2001, added a principle to support President Bush's **Good Start, Grow Smart** initiative in 2003, added a principle that addresses fraud and improper payments in 2005, added a principle that addresses emergency child preparedness in 2007, included reference to the goals and principles identified by the Early Childhood Education Cabinet and Governor Rell's Early Childhood Investment Plan in 2007.

The Connecticut Child Care and Early Education system will:

- offer families a broad range of accessible, affordable, comprehensive and quality child care services.
- allow families to choose the most appropriate child care service and be informed about how to locate and evaluate child care opportunities.
- allow for a smooth transition when families change child care services.
- provide appropriate services and training opportunities for caregivers, including caregivers exempt from licensing.
- ensure that caregivers maintain basic health and safety standards.

- ensure that all available federal funds are maximized and combined into one universal child care program to support targeted families and children.
- establish eligibility guidelines which address income and child care need.
- establish a payment system, which addresses family co-payments, provider payments differentiated by licensed and unlicensed caregivers, and age of child.
- ensure the coordination and on-going planning for all local, state and federal early childhood services and programs.
- establish various incentives and cost models to address teacher turnover and compensation levels that will expand and retain the number of early education professionals.
- establish guidelines and content standards to promote early learning skills that will help children be ready for school.
- establish guidelines to assure that all state and federal funds are properly paid to those clients and child care providers, which meet the eligibility and payment requirements, and to establish preventive mechanisms to avoid improper payments from being made at all.
- establish coordinated emergency planning and crisis response training opportunities for center based and family/home child care providers, to address safety issues that impact children in child care, after-school, recreational and summer-camp settings.

## **B. OBJECTIVES**

Connecticut proposes the following objectives that support the federal CCDF goals, the Guiding Principles and Governor Rell's Early Childhood Investment Plan. The objectives remain essentially the same as included in the prior two-year federal plan.

- **increase child care capacity** - the establishment, expansion or recruitment of new child care facilities/providers and support for existing child care providers in order to expand the number of child care "arrangements" available to families seeking child care assistance.
- **increase financial assistance** to families in order to make child care affordable - the efficient provision of affordable child care subsidies (certificates or vouchers) and/or contracts to early childhood programs in order to assist low income working families and families transitioning off public cash assistance.
- **enhance quality and school readiness services** - the establishment of critical support services to enhance developmentally appropriate educational opportunities for children and professional opportunities for caregivers.

- **provide opportunities for children** in the state to: 1) reach appropriate developmental milestones from birth to age 5; 2) begin kindergarten with the knowledge, skills and behaviors needed for success in school; and 3) have K-3 education experiences that extend children's birth-to-5 learning and ensure consistent progress in achieving reading mastery.
- **enhance health and safety provisions** - the establishment of policies and support services to assure children have access to healthy and safe child care settings
- **identify and address the safety, crisis response and emergency preparedness** issues affecting children in schools, child care providers, after school programs, youth camps and other settings and to inventory emergency preparedness activities, address the communication, training and practice/exercise needs of the providers
- **expand linkages and leveraging of available funds** - the coordination of child care and early childhood education services among state agencies, state and local community organizations, businesses and child care providers.
- **increase number of early care and education professionals and promote retention** - the establishment of incentive and cost models to increase and retain early education teachers in order to address the high turnover rate.
- **reach, inform, and support primary caregivers of infants and toddlers** – further dissemination and training of the Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers.
- **establish guidelines and standards that support early learning for children ages 0-5** - the development, implementation and evaluation of standards on early literacy, language, pre-reading and numeracy skills that help children to succeed in preschool, kindergarten and beyond.
- **establish preventive mechanisms to avoid improper payments** and establish guidelines to assure that all state and federal funds are properly paid to those clients and child care providers, which meet the eligibility and payment requirements.
- **ensure the coordination and on-going planning for all local, state and federal early childhood services and programs** – work with early childhood partners to maximize collaboration opportunities.

## C. STRATEGIES

Connecticut proposes the following strategies:

### 1. INCREASE CHILD CARE CAPACITY

The state and federal welfare reform initiative will continue to require families with children to find employment or participate in employment activities. The supply of child care providers and/or child care spaces must continue to expand in order to meet this demand.

Proposed strategies include:

- continue to educate the business community about **tax credits** that can be accessed for establishing new child care facilities and subsidizing employee child care needs.
- continue to administer the **Child Care Facilities Loan Fund** program to assist with the new construction, acquisition or expansion of child care facilities.
- continue to convene caregiver recruitment sessions throughout the state to **increase the number of family day care home providers.**
- coordinate with **local community, public housing and economic development projects** to include child care as a community development project and explore micro-enterprise and small business funding opportunities.
- educate public cash assistance recipients about child care as a career opportunity and **expand child care occupational training programs.**
- expand **linkages with Head Start and other early care and education programs** to coordinate various funding streams that can finance full-day, full-year programs.
- expand programs and spaces for children under age 13 through the state's **State Child Day Care Center Program** and **School Readiness programs.**
- support **kith and kin providers** with necessary educational and training opportunities and link them with the formal child care community.
- expand linkages with **Schools of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century** programs that provide services for school-age children.

## 2. INCREASE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES

The ability for families to afford the fees charged by caregivers is a major factor that continues to determine the families' participation and selection of certain caregivers.

Proposed strategies include:

- expand **child care financial assistance opportunities for low-income working families** with earnings up to 75% of the state median income level and with children under the age of 13 (under 19 if they have special needs).
- increase the number of **families transitioning from public cash assistance to work** who use public funded child care including the Care 4 Kids Program, state-supported centers and school readiness programs.
- continue to administer a **school-age child care contract program** targeting available state and federal funds to eligible organizations that provide before and after school child care at school and community settings for working families earning less than 75% of the state median income level.
- continue to administer a **child care center contract program** directing available state and federal funds to eligible child care centers that provide **infant / toddler, preschool and school-age services**. Activities funded by this initiative are designed to provide high quality, safe, age-appropriate environments and a full range of social, educational, recreational and nutritional services to children and support services to their families. Enrollment will be targeted to families earning less than 75% of the state median income level.
- encourage families to pursue **child support**.
- continue to partner with the Connecticut Department of Education in the administration of the state's **School Readiness program** to selected communities.



### 3. Enhance Quality and School Readiness Services

CCDF funds have supported quality initiatives since its inception in 1990 and currently supports several thousand Connecticut children (ages 13 and under) in comprehensive, quality early learning and school readiness programs.

Proposed strategies include:

- continue to provide **consumer education and information materials** that educate current and potential child care consumers
- continue to support the state's **child care resource and referral** program to provide the following services:
  - ◆ counseling and consumer information
  - ◆ data on the types of child care opportunities, fees, special service considerations, etc
  - ◆ technical assistance and information for child care providers
  - ◆ community education and collaboration activities
- continue to provide **technical support and training opportunities** for new and existing child care providers with an emphasis on infant/toddler and school-age child care providers
- continue to establish strategies **effectively to use the media** to provide information and education to parents and child care professionals.
- continue to support a **voluntary professional development system** for early caregivers.
- continue to support to the **statewide program to assist caregivers to achieve accreditation** status by appropriate national organizations.
- continue to support **quality enhancements for the priority school communities** as defined in the state's school readiness legislation in collaboration with the State Department of Education.
- continue to support a **newsletter** that is distributed to all child care providers, libraries, legislators, schools, etc.
- continue to implement **background checks for informal child care providers** seeking approval to participate in the Care 4 Kids program in collaboration with the Departments of Public Safety and Children and Families.

- continue to implement training and educational opportunities for **relative and other license-exempt providers**.
- **promote the development of all of the state's young children** by providing opportunities for children in the state to: 1) reach appropriate developmental milestones from birth to age five; 2) begin kindergarten with the knowledge, skills and behaviors needed for success in school; and 3) have K-3 education experiences that extend children's birth-to-5 learning and ensure consistent progress in achieving reading mastery.

#### **4. ENHANCE HEALTH AND SAFETY PROVISIONS**

Connecticut must assure that procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers that provide services for which assistance is provided under the CCDF comply with all applicable state or local health and safety requirements.

Proposed strategies include:

- continue to fund **child care licensing personnel** at the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) to monitor child care facilities. Please access the web sites (Attachment 3) for DPH and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care to review the Connecticut licensing and regulatory requirements.
- strengthen Connecticut's regulations with regard to children's health and safety in child care.
- continue to work with the Departments of Public Safety (**criminal background checks**) and Children and Families (**child abuse and neglect checks**) for child care providers exempt from licensing requirements.
- continue to implement health and safety provisions for child care providers exempt from licensing requirements who apply for assistance from the Care 4 Kids Program. (Attachment 4).
- continue to develop the plans to coordinate emergency planning and crisis response training opportunities for center based and family/home child care providers, to address safety issues that impact children in child care, after-school, recreational and summer-camp settings.

## 5. **EXPAND LINKAGES AND LEVERAGING OF AVAILABLE FUNDS**

Connecticut should continue the many coordination and planning activities.

Proposed strategies include:

- continue to coordinate efforts with sister state agencies, the Early Childhood and Education Cabinet, Connecticut Head Start State Collaboration office, Head Start Directors Association, State Directors Forum, School Readiness Liaisons Network, Connecticut After School Network, Connecticut Child Day Care Council, Birth to Three Interagency Coordinating Council, Medicaid Managed Care Council, child care provider memberships groups, Early Childhood Alliance, Connecticut Voices for Children, Connecticut Association for Human Services, etc.
- continue strategic discussions on infant-toddler issues as developed in the ***First Words, First Steps – The Importance of the Early Years***. See DSS web site as follows: [http://www.ct.gov/dss/lib/dss/infanttoddler\\_report\\_lb\\_pe10\\_16\\_08.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dss/lib/dss/infanttoddler_report_lb_pe10_16_08.pdf)
- continue the variety of strategic discussions originated by the Early Childhood and Education Cabinet including the ***Ready by Five, Fine by Nine – Connecticut’s Early Investment Plan***. See the following web site: [www.ctearlychildhood.org](http://www.ctearlychildhood.org)
- continue to review the economic impact of the child care industry.
- continue to coordinate recruitment efforts with the United Way of Connecticut 211 Child Care and the Department of Public Health child care licensing staff and with several state and local organizations to increase the supply of child care providers.
- continue to work with the Department of Labor and the Job First Employment Services program to enhance opportunities for parents through job opportunities training, transportation, and child care.
- continue to establish linkages with employment and training organizations and businesses to provide necessary supports for their employees seeking child care assistance.
- continue to coordinate efforts with the DSS Fraud Recovery Division to mitigate client fraud and improper payments through Quality Control - review of payment and eligibility accuracy.
- continue to develop strategies to link state and local agencies with early childhood programs for children with special needs, in collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services, Connecticut Department of

Public Health and the Connecticut Department of Education's Early Childhood and Special Education bureaus.

- continue to coordinate with the Department of Children and Families and other appropriate state and local agencies to create strategies around family support initiatives.
- continue to coordinate efforts with the various DSS units: Family Support (services to TANF eligible families), Child Support (encourage single mothers to seek financial assistance from the absent parent), Housing (services for homeless families with children), Community Services (build links between child care services and Domestic Violence programs), Elderly Services (coordinate intergenerational programs and educate and train grandparents who are child care providers), Client Fraud (improper payments), Quality Control (payment and eligibility accuracy) and Medical Care Administration (coordinate activities that assure all children in child care have access to health care).

## **6. INCREASE THE NUMBER OF EARLY CARE WORKFORCE**

Connecticut, like the nation as a whole, is experiencing significant turnover in child care staffing. The causes may include depressed levels of compensation and benefits, working conditions, advancement opportunities and inadequate recruitment, along with many competing opportunities available in the larger economy, but the magnitude of those factors is unknown. We do know that the child care market cannot remedy the low wage scale for staff merely through family fees, but rather requires targeted, multiple funding mechanisms. The impact of the recent economic downturn makes these needs much greater.

Proposed strategies include:

- continue to study the extent and nature of the turnover of child care staff in the state
- continue to research the credentials and pattern of compensation of caregivers.
- continue to examine mechanisms to supplement compensation and benefits for caregivers in connection with levels of professional development
- continue to examine apprenticeship opportunities as they apply to the child care workforce.
- continue to develop the Early Childhood Workforce Plan and create opportunities for highly-skilled early childhood education.

## **7. ESTABLISH EARLY LEARNING GUIDELINES**

The *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative, as in 2003, has encouraged state-federal partnerships among CCDF, other federal early care and education programs and

state early care initiatives in order to promote early learning principles and school readiness. There is sufficient research underway throughout the United States to support this objective and Connecticut has already addressed much of this as a result of past state legislation.

Proposed strategies include:

- continue to disseminate the *Preschool Curriculum Framework for Children in Preschool Programs* document and present workshops, as necessary, to discuss the content.
- continue to require the use of the *Preschool Curriculum Framework for Children in Preschool Programs* document in Connecticut funded school readiness programs and encourage other early care programs to adopt it.
- continue to disseminate the *Connecticut Preschool Assessment Framework* document for assessing preschool children and present workshops to early care programs in order to discuss the content, objectives and benefit to supporting early learning.
- further develop the committee work to establish a conceptual framework for Early Readiness for Children from Birth to Age Nine.
- continue to disseminate the Connecticut Guidelines for the Development of Infant & Toddler Early Learning and seek to reach, inform, and support infants and toddlers' primary caregivers —whether parents or child care providers.

**V. ESTIMATED FUNDS**

**A. CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND (CCDF)**

DSS has not the received the CCDF funding estimates for federal fiscal year 2010 that begins October 1, 2009 and ends September 30, 2010. However, for the purpose of this draft plan, we are using the federal fiscal year 2009 funds as our planning estimate. That number is **\$51,394,837**. These are solely CCDF federal funds. In order to receive these federal funds, Connecticut must spend state funds to support the required federal maintenance of effort (MOE) funding level at \$18,738,357 and the state matching funding level at \$18,178,031.

The available federal funding categories are defined in Section II. Following are the identified funding levels:

CCDF MOE Funds .....	\$18,738,357
CCDF Matching Funds.....	\$18,178,031
Discretionary Funds.....	\$14,478,449
<b>Total Federal Only .....</b>	<b>\$51,394,837</b>
State Share - MOE .....	\$18,738,358
State Share - Matching Funds.....	\$18,178,031
<b>Total Required State Share.....</b>	<b>\$36,916,389</b>

The federal CCDF Discretionary Funds level (\$14,478,449) is further delineated with “targeted” service expectations as follows:

Discretionary .....	\$12,455,299
Targeted - Quality Expansion Funds.....	\$ 1,203,263
Targeted - Infant-Toddler Funds .....	\$ 696,850
Targeted - School-Age or R&R Funds .....	\$ 123,037
<b>Total Discretionary Funds .....</b>	<b>\$14,478,449</b>

For the purposes of this draft CCDF Plan, DSS has prepared the following preliminary allocation plan for federal fiscal year October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010:

Care 4 Kids Program .....	\$45,611,922
DSS Internal Administrative Services.....	\$ 3,000,000
Quality Services.....	\$ 2,782,915
<b>Total CCDF Funding .....</b>	<b>\$51,394,837</b>

We propose to use the CCDF funds for “quality services” to supplement state funds that support initiatives identified in Section IV-C Strategies, such as professional development scholarship assistance, accreditation support services as offered through the Connecticut Charters-a-Course project. The targeted quality funds for infant/toddler services will continue to support quality child care services at DSS state supported centers that serve infant-toddlers. The targeted funds to support either school-age or resource and referral services will continue to support resource and referral services at the United Way 211-Child Care project.

**B. AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (ARRA)**

DSS has received notification to the ARRA funds targeted to child care. These funds can be used for federal fiscal year 2009 and 2010. The total available funds are **\$13,685,624**. These are solely CCDF Discretionary federal funds and do not require Connecticut to match the federal funds with state funds.

The available federal funding categories and levels are as follows:

Quality Expansion.....	\$ 1,131,375
Quality Infant/Toddler .....	\$ 655,215
Child Care Services .....	<u>\$11,899,034</u>
<b>Total ARRA .....</b>	<b>\$13,685,624</b>

For the purposes of this draft CCDF Plan, DSS has prepared the following preliminary allocation plan:

Federal Fiscal Year 2009	
Care 4 Kids Program .....	\$10,800,000
Federal Fiscal Year 2010	
Care 4 Kids Program .....	\$1,099,034
Quality Infant-Toddler .....	\$ 655,215
Quality Expansion.....	<u>\$1,131,375</u>
<b>Total ARRA .....</b>	<b>\$13,685,624</b>

We do not propose any changes to the Care 4 Kids eligibility and payment program provisions. The available funds will be used to support access for new families to receive child care assistance.

We are seeking ideas to support **one-time only** expenditures and projects for the quality infant-toddler and quality expansion funds. We have identified a few considerations as follows;

- expand dissemination of the Infant/Toddler Early Learning Guidelines
- develop direct deposit and electronic invoicing capabilities for the Care 4 Kids program.
- explore cooperative ventures with Early Head Start providers in order to leverage other ARRA funds.
- develop a statewide Emergency Preparedness Plan for early care providers.
- supplement training, scholarship assistance and accreditation support services to assist caregivers obtain credentials and degrees.
- consider special grants to licensed providers who may incur short-term declines in revenue.
- provide grants to “severe need” communities participating in the State Department of Education school readiness program in order to purchase materials such as books, toys, and other learning materials.

## **C. OTHER FEDERAL FUNDS USED FOR CHILD CARE SERVICES**

Under the federal welfare law, "The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996", Connecticut receives a **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant**. DSS administers the TANF block grant and the General Assembly appropriates sufficient state general funds in order to claim the available federal TANF funds. The TANF block grant provides states with the option to transfer, "up to 30% of the TANF block grant" for child care assistance and other human service related needs the state deems a priority. Connecticut does not transfer TANF direct funds for child care but does transfer TANF funds to the Social Services Block Grant to support the DSS child day center program.

Connecticut also receives federal **Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)** funds, which can be used for child care services and a host of other critical human service needs. DSS administers the SSBG block grant and the General Assembly provides approval for funds disbursed. The SSBG block grant plan is being developed as this draft plan is distributed. We will identify such funds once the plan is approved.

Certain Connecticut early care providers directly receive federal **Head Start** funds from the federal office in Boston, MA. Connecticut provides state Head Start funds that supplement the federal Head Start funds. The Connecticut Department of Education administers these funds along with the state school readiness funds. Such funds are identified in the DSS annual report on child care.

The CCDF plan does not address the available Head Start funds in Connecticut. As previously reported in this plan, there are new ARRA funds to support Head Start and Early Start programs in Connecticut.



## ATTACHMENT 1

### GLOSSARY

<b>ACF</b>	Administration for Children and Families - This is the federal office with oversight to the Child Care and Development Fund.
<b>ARRA</b>	American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.
<b>CCAP</b>	Child Care Assistance Program - The state's regulatory name for the existing child care subsidy programs known as the Care 4 Kids program.
<b>CCDBG</b>	Child Care and Development Block Grant - This is the official federal statutory name for CCDF.
<b>CCDF</b>	Child Care and Development Fund - This is the name adopted by ACF to describe the child care federal legislation and funding program.
<b>CSCRC</b>	Connecticut 's Child Safety & Crisis Response Committee - established to improve communication and training for emergency planning response issues for schools and child care providers.
<b>C4K</b>	Care 4 Kids. This name became effective January 1, 2002, for Connecticut's child care subsidy program.
<b>DSS</b>	Connecticut Department of Social Services - The state designated agency to prepare and submit the federal CCDF plan.
<b>ECE</b>	Early Childhood Education Cabinet – established by the Connecticut Legislature in 2006.
<b>ELG</b>	Connecticut's Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers
<b>HEAD START</b>	A federal program created in 1965 that provides economically disadvantaged children with comprehensive child development services.
<b>PRWORA</b>	Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. This is also known as the federal welfare reform legislation.
<b>SSBG</b>	Social Services Block Grant - This is a source of federal funds that states can target for child care services.
<b>TANF</b>	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families - This is the federal name for available funds to support a variety of services to individuals eligible to receive cash assistance. TANF replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program.

**ATTACHMENT 2**

**CHILD CARE SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT – PUBLIC HEARINGS**

The state is preparing a comprehensive child care plan to access federal funds, including the new child care stimulus funds for programs and services over the next two years. The Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) Family Services & Child Care Team, in collaboration with the State Child Day Care Council is convening three public hearings to provide Connecticut residents an opportunity to comment on child care services in Connecticut. DSS must prepare the state’s Child Care Plan to access federal funds. The plan must be submitted to Washington, D.C. by July 1, 2009. Your participation in this process is welcomed.

Please share this schedule with others and encourage their involvement.

The draft plan will be available after May 11, 2009 on the DSS web site [www.ct.gov/dss](http://www.ct.gov/dss)  
Go to Publications and click on *CT Draft Federal Plan 2009-2011*.

To submit written comments: send email to [julie.bisi@ct.gov](mailto:julie.bisi@ct.gov) or mail to ATTN: Child Care Division – CCDF Plan, Connecticut Department of Social Services, 25 Sigourney Street, Hartford, CT 06106, no later than June 8, 2009.

LOCATION	DATE	TIME	MEETING SPONSOR / LOCATION	ADDRESS
<b>NEW HAVEN</b>	<b>Wednesday, May 13, 2009</b>	<b>4:00 – 7:00 PM</b>	LULAC Head Start	250 Cedar Street, New Haven (203) 777-4006
<b>NORWICH</b>	<b>Monday, May 18, 2009</b>	<b>4:00 – 7:00 PM</b>	Southeastern Mental Health Authority (SMHA)	Uncas on Thames Campus 401 West Thames St., Bldg 301 Norwich (860) 859-4500
<b>NEW BRITAIN</b>	<b>Wednesday, May 20, 2009</b>	<b>1:00 – 3:00 PM</b>	“New Initiatives That Help Connecticut Babies and Toddlers Grow and Develop” Research and Education Center for the Hospital for Special Care	370 Osgood Avenue (corner of Corbin), In the Auditorium, New Britain (860) 223-2761

\* The DSS Family Services & Child Care Team is prepared to answer questions concerning this information. Reach them by calling in-state toll-free 1-800-811-6141 and press 6 at any time during the message to be connected or (860) 424-5598 from within the local calling area or from out of state.

**ATTACHMENT 3**

**DIRECTORY OF CHILD CARE RELATED SERVICES  
DIRECTORIO DE SERVICIOS RELACIONADOS CON CUIDADO INFANTIL**

<i>Early Childhood Education Cabinet and Governor's Early Childhood Research &amp; Policy Council</i> Gabinete de Educación Temprana y Consejo de la Gobernadora de Investigación y Política de la Niñez	<i>Office of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet</i>	860-713-6582 <a href="http://www.ctearlychildhood.org">http://www.ctearlychildhood.org</a> <a href="http://www.ecpolicycouncil.org">http://www.ecpolicycouncil.org</a>
<i>Family Services</i> <i>Servicios para Familias</i>	<i>Department of Social Services (DSS)</i>	1-800-811-6141 <a href="http://www.dss.state.ct.us/ccare/index.htm">http://www.dss.state.ct.us/ccare/index.htm</a>
<i>Child Care Licensing</i> <i>Licencias para Cuidado de Niños</i>	<i>Department of Public Health (DPH)</i>	1-800-282-6063 <a href="http://www.dph.state.ct.us/Licensure/licensure">http://www.dph.state.ct.us/Licensure/licensure</a>
<i>Bureau of Early Childhood, Education</i> <i>Oficina de Educación Infantil Temprana</i>	<i>State Department of Education (SDE)</i>	860-713-6573 <a href="http://www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/readiness/index">http://www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/readiness/index</a>
<i>211 Child Care</i> <i>Servicios de Referencia para Personas que buscan Cuidado Infantil</i>	<i>United Way of Connecticut</i>	1-800-505-1000 <a href="http://www.childcareinfoline.org">www.childcareinfoline.org</a>
<i>Care 4 Kids</i> <i>Programa de Asistencia de Cuidado Infantil</i>	<i>United Way of Connecticut</i>	1-888-214-5437 <a href="http://www.ctcare4kids.com/">http://www.ctcare4kids.com/</a>
<i>Accreditation Facilitation Project (AFP)</i> <i>Proyecto de Facilitación de Acreditación</i>	<i>Connecticut Charts-A-Course (CCAC)</i>	1-800-832-7784 860-257-1104 <a href="http://www.ctcharts-a-course.org">http://www.ctcharts-a-course.org</a>
<i>Scholarship Assistance Program &amp; Career Advisement</i> <i>Programa de Becas y Consejería Académica</i>	<i>Connecticut Charts-A-Course (CCAC)</i>	1-800-832-7784 203-287-3906 <a href="http://www.ctcharts-a-course.org">http://www.ctcharts-a-course.org</a>
<i>Training Program in Child Development</i> <i>Programa de Entrenamiento en Desarrollo Infantil</i>	<i>Connecticut Charts-A-Course (CCAC)</i>	1-800-832-7784 203-287-3904 <a href="http://www.ctcharts-a-course.org">http://www.ctcharts-a-course.org</a>
<i>Child Care Facilities Loan fund (CCFLF)</i> <i>Fondo de Préstamos para Instalaciones de Cuidado Infantil</i>	<i>Connecticut Health and Education Facilities Authority-CHEFA</i>	1-800-750-1862 860-520-4700 <a href="http://www.chefa.com">http://www.chefa.com</a>
<i>Child Care Tax Credits</i> <i>Créditos de Impuesto para Empleadores por Contribuciones a Cuidado</i>	<i>Department of Revenue Services (DRS)</i> <i>(Forms) (Information)</i>	860-297-5698 860-297-4932 <a href="http://ct.gov/drs">http://ct.gov/drs</a>
<i>Child Care Registry</i> <i>Registro para Provedores y Maestros de Cuidado Infantil</i>	<i>Connecticut Charts-A-Course (CCAC)</i>	1-800-832-7784 203-287-3906 <a href="http://www.ctcharts-a-course.org">http://www.ctcharts-a-course.org</a>
<i>HUSKY Plan (Health Care for Uninsured Kids and Youth)/</i> <i>Cuidado de Salud para Niños y Jóvenes sin Seguro Médico</i>	<i>Department of Social Services (DSS)</i>	1-877-CT-HUSKY 1-877-284-8759 <a href="http://www.huskyhealth.com">http://www.huskyhealth.com</a>
<i>Child Support Information Hotline</i> <i>Línea de Información sobre Mantenimiento de Niños</i>	<i>Department of Social Services (DSS)</i>	1-800-228-5437 <a href="http://www.dss.state.ct.us/csdc/csdc.htm">http://www.dss.state.ct.us/csdc/csdc.htm</a>
<i>Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline</i> <i>Línea para Reportar Casos de Abuso y Descuido de Niños</i>	<i>Department of Child and Families (DCF)</i>	1-800-842-2288 <a href="http://www.state.ct.us/DCF">http://www.state.ct.us/DCF</a>

## ATTACHMENT 4

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR PROVIDERS EXEMPT FROM LICENSING REQUIREMENTS**

The proposed DSS plan must address the following CCDF health and safety provisions:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

In the Care 4 Kids program, the eligible parent must provide the provider exempt from licensing requirements with information on the Provider/Parent Agreement form. Such provider must complete and sign the Provider/Parent Agreement attesting to the following:

- the provider is 18 years of age or older;
- the total number of children in care;
- local town code enforcement and minimum health and safety standards are met, including the availability of a working telephone, fire extinguisher and smoke alarm at the childcare location;
- the absence of an arrest or conviction for a felony, violent crime, injury to a minor or other crimes against persons;
- the absence of a DCF protective services for child abuse or neglect and that all instances of suspected child abuse or neglect will be reported to the state child welfare agency;
- all children in care are age-appropriately immunized;
- the parent has provided the name and address of the child's primary care physician and health insurance carrier;
- the provider is not working another job during the hours the child is in care; and
- changes in the site or location of care will be reported promptly to DSS.

In addition, DSS has an agreement with the Connecticut Department of Children and Families to conduct child abuse and neglect background checks for all unlicensed providers at the time of initial application and at least one time per year thereafter. State and federal criminal background checks are mandated for all non-relative providers that provide care in the child's home and for any provider suspected of having committed a sex crime or crime against persons in Connecticut or any other state. Information concerning the results of criminal and child abuse/neglect background checks is released to the parent to the extent necessary to provide the parent with the ability to make an informed choice about continuing care with the provider.

Parents and providers must also certify that the provider is capable of providing safe and competent care as a condition of eligibility, including the ability to feed, bathe and toilet the child as appropriate and the ability to respond to emergencies and provide adequate care and supervision.

## ATTACHMENT 5

### ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

The following statements are specific federal assurances and certifications that DSS is required to follow as the administrator of the federal CCDF funds.

DSS, as designated CCDF lead agency, assures that:

- Connecticut will have a program that complies with the provisions of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, as amended;
- the parent(s) of each eligible child within Connecticut is provided the option either:
  - (a) to enroll such child with a child care provider that has a grant or contract for the provision of service; or
  - (b) to receive a child care certificate;
- in cases in which the parent(s) elect(s) to enroll the child with a provider that has a grant or contract with the Lead Agency, the child will be enrolled with the eligible provider selected by the parent to the maximum extent practical.
- the child care certificate offered to parent(s) shall be of a value commensurate with the subsidy value of child care services provided under a grant or contract.
- state or local rules, procedures, or other requirements promulgated by CCDF will not significantly restrict parental choice from among categories of care or types of providers with respect to regulatory requirements, health and safety requirements, payment rates and registration requirements.
- that children are age-appropriately immunized.
- that CCDF Discretionary funds are used to supplement, not supplant state general revenue funds.

DSS, as designated CCDF Lead Agency, certifies that:

- DSS has procedures in place to ensure that providers of child care services afford parents unlimited access to their children.
- DSS maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints and makes information regarding such complaints available to the public on request.
- DSS will collect and disseminate to parents of eligible children and the general public, consumer education information that will promote informed child care choices.

## ATTACHMENT 5

- Connecticut has licensing requirements applicable to child care services provided within the state.
- Connecticut has requirements designed to protect the health and safety of children and that these requirements are applicable to child care providers that provide services made available under the CCDF.
- procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers that provide services for which assistance is provided under the CCDF comply with all applicable State or local health and safety requirements.
- payment rates will be sufficient to ensure equal access for eligible children to comparable child care services in the state that are provided to children whose parents are not eligible to receive assistance under this program or under any other Federal or State child care assistance programs.

## ATTACHMENT 6

### CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND

Sec. 98.51 Activities to improve the quality of child care.

(a) No less than four percent of the aggregate funds expended by the Lead Agency for a fiscal year, and including the amounts expended in the State pursuant to Sec. 98.53(b), shall be expended for quality activities.

(1) These activities may include but are not limited to:

- (i) Activities designed to provide comprehensive consumer education to parents and the public;
- (ii) Activities that increase parental choice; and
- (iii) Activities designed to improve the quality and availability of child care, including, but not limited to those described in paragraph (2) of this section.

(2) Activities to improve the quality of child care services may include, but are not limited to:

- (i) Operating directly or providing financial assistance to organizations (including private non-profit organizations, public organizations, and units of general purpose local government) for the development, establishment, expansion, operation, and coordination of resource and referral programs specifically related to child care;
- (ii) Making grants or providing loans to child care providers to assist such providers in meeting applicable State, local, and tribal child care standards, including applicable health and safety requirements, pursuant to Sec. Sec. 98.40 and 98.41;
- (iii) Improving the monitoring of compliance with, and enforcement of, applicable State, local, and tribal requirements pursuant to Sec. Sec. 98.40 and 98.41;
- (iv) Providing training and technical assistance in areas appropriate to the provision of child care services, such as training in health and safety, nutrition, first aid, the recognition of communicable diseases, child abuse detection and prevention, and care of children with special needs;
- (v) Improving salaries and other compensation (such as fringe benefits) for full-and part-time staff who provide child care services for which assistance is provided under this part; and
- (vi) Any other activities that are consistent with the intent of this section.