



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



Connecticut Office of  
Early Childhood

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Office of Early Childhood Announces Continuation of Families Receiving Care4Kids Child Care Subsidy**

*Policy Adjustment Will Allow Parents Enrolled in Care4Kids to Continue Program*

(HARTFORD, CT) – The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) announced today that — after re-examining all options — it has found a way to ensure families currently enrolled in the Care4Kids program continue to receive the child care subsidy as long as they meet the current income eligibility requirement. The decision comes after gathering input from parents and providers who were concerned about the impact on families.

To address a projected \$33 million shortfall as a result of new federal requirements that the Office of Early Childhood must implement to the Care4Kids program, the program will be closed to new applications for low-income working parents, effective August 1, 2016. New applicants who qualify as Temporary Assistant for Needy Families (TANF) recipients, or who are former TANF recipients within the last five years, or who are teen parents 18 and 19 years of age, will remain eligible for the child care subsidy.

“We believe that maintaining continuity of care for children currently enrolled in the Care4Kids program is of the utmost importance,” said OEC Commissioner Myra Jones-Taylor. “We are pleased we were able to find a solution that ensures families currently receiving the Care4Kids subsidy will be able to remain in the program.”

“We applaud the agency’s decision to continue care for the families currently using the Care4Kids program,” said Merrill Gay, Executive Director of the CT Early Childhood Alliance. “Obviously the problem is the funding shortfall, which will prevent new families from accessing the program. This program is critical for lower income working families and the Alliance will continue to advocate for Care4Kids.”

The current eligibility threshold requires that parents are working and their income is below 50 percent of the State Median Income (SMI).

This change in policy from a previous announcement on May 25 reflects the agency’s collaboration with early childhood stakeholders and response to their concerns. The previous

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policy announcement changed eligibility for existing and new applications to under 30 percent of SMI.

The need to change eligibility requirements is a result of sweeping policy changes required of states under the reauthorization of the federal Child Care Development Block Grant Act. The challenge for Connecticut and many other states is that these changes significantly increase the annual cost of care per child.

The OEC and Commissioner Myra Jones-Taylor have taken proactive steps, including testifying on June 15 before the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee to urge Congress to appropriate more funding to the Child Care Development Block Grant Act to ensure all eligible children across the nation receive the child care they need and make it possible for low-income parents to keep their jobs.

The OEC will maintain a wait list for parents who apply for Care4Kids, but who no longer have access due to the changes in eligibility requirements beginning August 1, 2016.

Other child care programs may be available to children no longer eligible for Care4Kids. We encourage families to call 2-1-1 Child Care. This service is available at no charge to help parents find child care and answer all child care related questions. 2-1-1 Child Care maintains a list of state-licensed child care facilities in Connecticut. 2-1-1 Child Care can be reached by dialing 2-1-1 or [1-800-505-1000](tel:1-800-505-1000) from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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