

CONNECTICUT ARRA HEAD START
GRANT APPLICATION

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Objectives and Need for Assistance

The Problems

Connecticut has long sought to ensure that all the state's youngest children grow up healthy, safe and ready for school success. Connecticut has historically established broad constituencies to address these issues by forming partnerships between state and local government, business, philanthropic and education, economic and workforce sectors and family and service providers. We, as a state, have succeeded in getting stakeholders to the table but have yet to establish a *governance structure* that provides coherence to the mélange of funding streams, programs and agencies that compose early care and education in Connecticut.

The 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results in reading and mathematics show that, overall, Connecticut's students are some of the highest performing in the country. However, the achievement gaps in reading and mathematics between students from our wealthiest districts and those who are disadvantaged are among the largest in the nation. The differences in achievement are striking in the fourth-grade reading and mathematics test scores, and continue on into the eighth-grade reading and math tests as well. In a competitive global economy, the gaps translate into an unaffordable loss for students. We know that early childhood education plays a significant role in children's learning outcomes. Building a comprehensive, integrated early care and education system in Connecticut will give the most vulnerable children the opportunity to build a strong foundation for future success.

Connecticut's Early Care and Education Landscape

In 2005, the Connecticut legislature established an Early Childhood Education Cabinet consisting of state agency heads, community representatives and legislative leaders. The Cabinet identified three foci for Connecticut's children:

- to reach appropriate developmental milestones from birth to age 5;
- to begin kindergarten with the knowledge, skills and behaviors needed for success in school; and
- to have kindergarten-Grade 3 educational experiences that extend their birth-to-5 learning and ensure consistent progress in achieving reading mastery.

In July 2006, the cabinet identified 10 action items as needing immediate attention with the top priority being the provision of high-quality preschool for 3- and 4-year-old Connecticut children living with families at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level. To assist the cabinet with its systems building work, Governor M. Jodi Rell established the Early Childhood Research and Policy Council by executive order in February 2006 with membership from business, philanthropy, higher education, K-12 education, the workforce and economic development sectors, and mayors. She also invited the participation of key leadership from the Connecticut General Assembly.

The council was charged with developing specific policy recommendations for each of these action items and projecting the fiscal investment necessary to achieve them. The resulting Early Childhood Investment Plan was published in November 2006 and guided the development of the state's early childhood budget for the 2008-09 biennium. Due to an unprecedented fiscal crisis, Governor Rell dissolved the Research and Policy Council effective March 1, 2009. In January

2010, a newly reconstituted cabinet was legislatively designated by the Governor as the State Advisory Council pursuant to the federal Head Start Act of 2007.

Current Status of the Quality and Availability of Early Childhood Education and Development Programs and Services for Children from Birth to School Entry

Connecticut estimates the population of children from birth to 3 years old at approximately 120,000 and the population of students eligible for preschool at approximately 80,000; this is based on approximately 40,000 students that register for public school kindergarten each year. This number underestimates the population given that some students attend private school. Federal and state programs, including Birth to Three (IDEA Part C), Care4Kids (child care subsidies), Child Care Infoline (statewide information and referral), Department of Social Services (DSS) Child Care Centers, Early Head Start, Family Resource Centers, Head Start, Nurturing Families Network, Parents as Teachers, and State Department of Education (SDE) and DSS School Readiness have provided services to over 10,000 infants, toddlers and preschool-age children annually (See Appendix I *Connecticut Strategic Report* pp. 4-8 for descriptions of these programs). Connecticut serves over 24,000 3- and 4-year-old children in publicly funded preschool programs. This represents more than 30 percent of all 3- and 4-year-old children in the state. In addition, over 9,500 children per year, birth to age 3, are served by the IDEA Part C program, which is approximately 10 percent of each age cohort under the age of 3.¹

¹ March 2010. Presentation by the Department of Social Services to Early Childhood Education Cabinet.

Governance

As previously stated, Connecticut is faced with a fragmented system of early care and education funding and service delivery. Children birth to age 5, including children with disabilities enrolled in IDEA Part B and C, are served in a variety of education and care settings that are funded by several sources, many of which overlap. Early childhood programs may receive state and federal funds such as School Readiness which is jointly administered by the Department of Social Services and the Department of Education under state statute and within available state appropriations. Additionally, there is funding for childcare through the Department of Social Services and federal and state Head Start. Children with disabilities in those settings may also be receiving services through Part C or Part B funding. Much of the administration and funding for early care and education in Connecticut is siloed. Our challenge is to create a viable governance structure that can coordinate diverse programmatic needs and funding requirements to enable a coherent and sustainable system to care for and educate our youngest learners. Our goal is to bring together agencies and other service providers to improve quality outcomes for all children and families.

The former Research and Policy Council began the work to address these governance challenges. In 2006, the council commissioned a report on governance options based on a review of models in other states. In 2009, Dr. Charles Bruner of the Child and Family Policy Center conducted focus groups and interviews with Connecticut stakeholders and prepared an assessment of our work toward building an early childhood system with recommendations for next steps. Unfortunately, the state was not able to act on Dr. Bruner's recommendations due to the dissolution of the Research and Policy Council. The re-formation of the Early Childhood

Cabinet now provides Connecticut with the opportunity to take the exemplary work of the past and look at it from a fresh perspective.

Using the tenet that “form should follow function,” the Cabinet seeks to determine which governance options will be the most effective in creating a cohesive, unified and sustainable system of early care and education. Management, planning and system building, resource allocation, fundraising, accountability and communication are key areas that require additional consideration to inform the choice of an optimal governance structure for Connecticut. This structure will foster state-level, cross-agency collaboration and support local system-building capacity. The Cabinet acknowledges that there is no best governance option, that changes are evolutionary, and that leadership is vital to change. Connecticut seeks to build on its strengths, stimulate cross-agency collaboration, and remain flexible in our approach, allowing for mid-course corrections that will lead to stability and sustainability in a governance structure.

The overall objective is to provide an aligned system of early childhood education delivery in Connecticut. To achieve this objective, with the support of this grant, the cabinet has articulated four priority areas: data systems, early learning standards, professional development, and family involvement/home visitation. Addressing these four priorities will assist Connecticut in meeting the responsibilities of the State Advisory Council as stated in the Head Start Act of 2007.

Data Systems

The capacity to effectively collect, monitor and report on the progress of student programs and services from early childhood through postsecondary education and into the workforce is essential for making policy and fiscal decisions based on desired outcomes for the children being served in Connecticut. Connecticut is noted for its capacity and ability to collect and analyze early childhood data. The State Department of

Education has two state longitudinal data systems (SLDS) grants from the federal government, in addition to state funds that support the ongoing development of a system to track the educational progress of students from school entry, including preschool, throughout their school career. This system will eventually link students to their teachers and courses.

In 2002, under Connecticut General Statute (CGS) 10-10a, the SDE developed and implemented the Public School Information System (PSIS) to collect enrollment data, demographic information and program information for students enrolled in prekindergarten through Grade 12 in the state's public schools. All public school students are given a state-assigned unique identifier (SASID). In addition, students participating in the IDEA Part C system are assigned a SASID that follows them into the public school system. This has worked extremely well to allow tracking of children from Part C into Part B and then into kindergarten. In 2007, the statute was expanded to include all preschool students who are in nonpublic school programs receiving state and/or federal funds. The SDE implemented the Pre-Kindergarten Information System (PKIS), which collects information similar to that found in PSIS. Within the State Department of Education's Division of Assessment, Research and Technology are designated staff members for the management of the PSIS, PKIS and other data collection systems for special education and kindergarten assessment. Staff members are able to provide information at both student and program levels.

Connecticut has recently developed the Connecticut Professional Workforce Registry administered by Connecticut Charts-a-Course to collect data on early childhood teachers serving children outside the public school system. Teacher preparation programs in

Connecticut's higher education system are using these data to track the educational attainment of the early childhood workforce. However, this database is still separate from our public school licensed teacher database that resides in the SDE. While the SDE does assign a unique educator identification to every teacher in Connecticut's public school system, the SDE does not yet have the ability to link teachers to students. However, as required by the Federal State Fiscal Stabilization Fund application, Connecticut has a plan to do so by August 2011. Furthermore, the state currently does not have a uniform way of identifying early childhood programs across state agencies. These are data elements that will need to be developed to have a fully functioning early childhood data system.

Connecticut has made significant progress in early childhood data collection, and the state's P-20 Council is actively building support for this effort. A governance structure, which sets requisite interoperability policies and procedures for all program and service providers, is the foundational element needed for advancement toward a unified early childhood data system.

Early Learning Standards

Connecticut's Preschool Curriculum Framework was last reissued in 2006. The preschool curriculum framework is organized into four domains of development:

- personal and social
- physical
- cognitive creative
- expression/aesthetic

The following principles guide the curriculum framework:

- Early learning and development are multidimensional.
- Developmental domains are highly interrelated.
- Young children are capable and competent.
- There are individual differences in rates of development among children.
- Children will exhibit a range of skills and competencies in any domain of development.
- Knowledge of child growth and development and consistent expectations are essential to maximizing educational experiences for children and to developing and implementing programs.
- Families are the primary caregivers and educators of their young children.
- Young children learn through active exploration of their environment through child-initiated and teacher-selected activities.

The Connecticut Preschool Assessment Framework is a curriculum-embedded tool developed to be a companion to *The Preschool Curriculum Framework*. These curriculum and assessment frameworks provide a system for using standards in both planning curriculum and assessing children's progress.

In 2009, Connecticut published *Guidelines for the Development of Infant and Toddler Early Learning*. This publication is intended as a handbook for infant and toddler caregivers. This work was sponsored by the Department of Social Services with the help of a broad range of constituents representing Head Start, family childcare, special education, public schools and health care. These guidelines, based on principles consistent with *The Preschool Curriculum Framework*, are designed to inform and

support infant and toddler primary caregivers, including parents and childcare providers. The cabinet intends to use the infant and toddler guidelines and the Connecticut Preschool Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks as a foundation for developing and adopting early learning standards for children ages birth to 5.

In addition, the Connecticut State Board of Education has recently adopted the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and mathematics developed by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Chief Council of State School Officers (CCSSO). Connecticut's new early learning standards will be aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

Professional Development

Significant efforts have been made to strengthen Connecticut's early childhood workforce. *Connecticut General Statutes*, Section 10-16p (b), requires all teachers in preschool programs receiving public funds to have a bachelor's degree by 2015. In the fall of 2007, the Early Childhood Research and Policy Council convened a workforce subcommittee whose charge was to develop a plan to raise the educational qualifications of early childhood teachers. The workforce subcommittee was co-chaired by the Commissioner of the Department of Higher Education (DHE) and the Director of the Office of Workforce Competitiveness. The Office of Workforce Competitiveness is focused on preparing Connecticut's workforce for the rapidly changing and competitive economy of the 21st century. The subcommittee membership included 43 representatives from state agencies, higher education, business, workforce and economic development and philanthropic and advocacy organizations.

In 2009, the DHE surveyed early childhood education graduates statewide and found

that approximately 70 percent of these students were already working in early childhood community-based programs before graduation. The survey also found that students who obtained bachelor's degrees and state teacher certification often leave community-based programs for public school teaching positions. The results indicated that out of 500 early childhood graduates annually, only 143 new staff are added to the early childhood workforce. Of these graduates, 89 became employed in community programs and 54 became teachers in public schools. The implications of these findings are that for many students enrolled in early childhood programs, further education is a pathway from current teaching positions in community programs to positions in public schools.²

The workforce subcommittee also analyzed data from Connecticut's Professional Registry administered by Connecticut Charts-a-Course (CCAC). This registry offers program administrators a way of tracking the qualifications of their staff and can be used to create staff development plans to assist in meeting staff credentialing requirements. Analysis of the resulting information indicated that the projected workforce picture was not as hopeful as had been anticipated. The registry indicated that fewer teachers had college degrees than had been projected from earlier analyses. As of fall 2008, only 378 (31 percent) of the teachers in publicly funded programs have at a minimum a bachelor's degree and 12 credits in early childhood education. This data demonstrated that the first, and by far the greatest challenge, to meeting the requirement of the bachelor's degree by 2015 is the status of the current workforce. The majority (69 percent) of the current

² Schechter, Carlota (2009). *The higher education pathways for the early childhood workforce: A leaky pipeline.*

teachers (857 individuals) are well below this degree requirement.³ Based on these data the subcommittee developed a multiyear plan to increase both the size and the qualifications of the workforce in publicly funded and center-based early childhood education programs. This plan targets public preschools, Head Start, School Readiness Programs and DSS childcare centers. In addition, recommendations were made to increase the minimum requirements for the staff in publicly funded early childhood education programs. This plan is designed to be aligned with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) State Policy Blueprint, NAEYC public report.⁴ A recommendation was made by a workforce subcommittee to develop the Connecticut Early Childhood Teacher Credential (ECTC). This is a competency-based credential that would be awarded to students who graduate from approved associate and baccalaureate degree early childhood programs of study. The ECTC will allow for a more flexible and efficient approach to education for this financially challenged workforce, while also ensuring that those individuals who work with young children have both the knowledge and competencies to be effective. The ECTC is an alternative legislative proposal to the legislation that called for 50 percent of the teachers to have a bachelor's degree and the remaining to have an associate's degree by 2015. This proposal has twice been considered by the legislature as a revision to the state statute but has not yet been passed. It is slated to be reconsidered in a future legislative session.

³ Gilliam, Water & Schechter, Carlota (2008). *Early Childhood Workforce*. Presentation to the Research and Policy Council.

⁴ LeMoine, Sarah (2008). *Workforce Designs: A policy blueprint for state early childhood professional development systems*.

Family Involvement/Home Visitation

Children's earliest years provide a core foundation for school achievement and eventual success in life. In these first few years, children's development and learning are influenced by a wide array of factors in their homes and communities that can put them at risk. These factors include poverty, inadequate health care, limited exposure to language and literacy, developmental disabilities and delays, and child abuse or neglect. Children that experience these and other problematic early life circumstances often lag in their development as preschoolers and consequently enter formal schooling behind their peers. With adequate supports from family and community members, many of these risk factors can be lessened.

Connecticut leads many states in its strong commitment to parents as partners in learning. Proven models include the People Empowering People, the Parent Leadership Training Institute and Parents Supporting Educational Excellence. These model leadership initiatives teach parents how to lead for the next generation in program and policy. A Parent Trust was established through legislation that allows for competitive community grants in family civics.

Approach

For each of the four identified priority areas described above, the cabinet has developed a plan of action with goals, strategies, activities, deliverables and expected outcomes.

Work groups for each priority were formed by publicly posting a request to all interested stakeholders. Four work groups met for two half-day sessions to develop strategies, activities/actions, timelines and deliverables to carry out the work to meet these goals over the next three years.

Priority Area: Data

Goal: Increase integration, quality and accessibility of Connecticut early childhood data for the benefit of all stakeholders.

Strategies	Activities/Actions	Deliverables/Accomplishments
Assign unique identifiers to all: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. young children b. early childhood programs c. early childhood staff 	<p>Ask the P-20 Council to convene meetings of people responsible for child IDs in each agency to reach a solution on unique identifiers for children.</p> <p>Ask the P-20 Council to convene meetings between the SDE and Department of Public Health and 211 Child Care on program IDs.</p> <p>Investigate expansion of SDE State Assigned Student Identifiers (SASIDs) to other types of private and public programs for young children.</p> <p>Improve SASID portability for children who already have them to reduce duplication. Give all children’s SASIDs to their parents or guardians.</p>	<p>Agreement across all relevant state agencies on the use and implementation of unique identifiers for all young children.</p> <p>Agreement across all relevant state agencies on the use of unique identifiers for all early childhood programs.</p> <p>Increased numbers of children under 5 will have a unique identifier.</p> <p>Quality of SASID assignments will improve, reducing duplication.</p>
Develop (or use an existing) data architecture project that will enable data across agencies while still observing privacy requirements.	Investigate existing projects such as CHIN and CONNCADE (both at UConn)	Selection (or development) of a data architecture program.
The Early Childhood Education Cabinet will facilitate a multiagency Memorandum of Understanding concerning the deliverables and standards of data accessibility.	Cabinet to work with Data Quality and Access Consortium (started by previous Early Childhood Cabinet, continued by the Connecticut Economic Resource Center) to determine draft language for MOU.	<p>MOU in place.</p> <p>Signatory agencies making data more usable and accessible to the public.</p>

Strategies	Activities/Actions	Deliverables/Accomplishments
	Cabinet (or Data Quality and Access Consortium) to convene meetings of participating agencies to finalize language for MOU and obtain signatures of Commissioners	

Priority Area: Early Learning Standards

Goal: By September 2013, Connecticut will adopt comprehensive and multi-domain early learning standards that reflect a progression of skills birth through age 5, aligned with kindergarten-Grade 12 standards.

Strategies	Activities/Actions	Deliverables	Accomplishments
Conduct review of existing standards and research on early learning.	Develop rubrics for review of existing standards and research. Review of selected current national and international standards and research. Review of all current Connecticut learning standards and documents.	Set of research and standards to guide draft document. Crosswalk of existing standards documents	Providing a solid foundation for building early learning standards, including current research, national and international practices, and building upon current Connecticut standards.
Involve and engage cross-sector stakeholders throughout the process.	Develop a process for inviting/identifying “stakeholders.”	Plan articulating cross-sector involvement in development and	Cross-sector support for the implementation of early learning

Strategies	Activities/Actions	Deliverables	Accomplishments
	<p>Announce the initiative. Use media to reach a diverse array of stakeholders across all demographics.</p> <p>Collect responses and evaluate for gaps in representation.</p> <p>Invite reps to fill gaps.</p> <p>Identify and reduce barriers to full stakeholder participation.</p> <p>Develop and monitor a process for ongoing communication with stakeholders.</p>	<p>review of standards.</p> <p>Forum for ongoing communication with stakeholders.</p>	<p>standards, birth to age 5.</p>
<p>Engage leadership to ensure the promotion of the understanding and buy-in of the early learning standards and their relationship to kindergarten-Grade 12 education.</p>	<p>Orient leadership (State Board of Education, superintendent) to the learning standards.</p> <p>SDE to develop a policy for implementation that involves LEA leadership.</p>	<p>SDE policy for implementation linked to kindergarten-Grade 12 systems.</p>	<p>Respect and mutual understanding between 0-5 systems and kindergarten-Grade 12 systems.</p>
<p>Develop a document outlining early learning standards for children ages birth to age 5 in all areas of development, designed for appropriate use with all children, including those with disabilities and dual language learners.</p>	<p>Develop draft document outlining standards.</p> <p>Vet document to various stakeholders.</p> <p>Revise document based on feedback.</p> <p>Link to current framework for assessment</p>	<p>Final document articulating learning standards birth through age 5.</p>	<p>Set of comprehensive and multi-domain early learning standards with wide stakeholder buy-in.</p>

Strategies	Activities/Actions	Deliverables	Accomplishments
	or develop a plan for a tool linked to standards.		
Plan for implementation and professional development.	<p>Cross-agency policy changes necessary for implementation (note: leadership from involved agencies included as “stakeholders” throughout the process).</p> <p>Create timetable for implementation of standards with consideration of possible pilot implementation.</p> <p>Plan for financing and rollout of professional development on the implementation.</p>		

Priority Area: Professional Development

Goal: To have a highly qualified and effective workforce for *all* children birth to 5 in *all* settings.

Strategies	Activities/Actions	Deliverables	Accomplishments
Scholarship money will be available for staff in <i>all</i> settings, which comes from a commitment by state agencies that fund programs serving young children 0-5.	<p>Create a scholarship pool as part of the Early Childhood System that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • universal for all settings; • for all staff working with children 0- 	Create a Scholarship Advisory Committee that provides oversight and recommendations.	Establish a Scholarship Advisory Committee (SAC) to identify sources and eligibility and to make policy recommendations.

Strategies	Activities/Actions	Deliverables	Accomplishments
	5; and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> available to staff working on a credential/degree to meet state and federal requirements. 	Create a scholarship program with multiple funding streams from state agencies and other sources. Implementation timeline. Interagency MOAs for funding. Yearly data reports regarding scholarship outcomes.	Begin to implement recommendations of SAC. Begin to offer scholarships statewide to staff in <i>all</i> types of programs to meet state and federal requirements.
Propose changes to child care licensing requirements regarding the qualifications of newly hired teachers who work in licensed programs.	Propose amending licensing to require that each classroom is staffed by at least one “teacher”* as defined by NAEYC Accreditation Standards. *(person who has primary responsibility for a group of children)	Create a Child Care Licensing Study Group with broad-based representation to discuss proposed change in licensing staff qualification regulation and to make recommendations. Hold statewide hearings with recommendations for changes and/or revisions on qualifications in licensing regulations to gather input for revisions.	Collect data on qualifications of nonpublic staff for study group to use as part of recommendations. Publish the recommendations of the study group and hold the hearings. Begin a public awareness and engagement process around proposed changes in regulation. Propose change to licensing regs through legislative process.
Make higher education more accessible to a greater number of early childhood staff and address the capacity of higher education to deliver bachelor of arts, bachelor of science, associate of arts, and associate of science degrees. This includes supports for individuals and programs to ensure access and persistence of the incumbent as well as	Create a higher education consortium among the Connecticut State University system, UConn and private college system to increase capacity of non-certification bachelor’s degrees in early childhood education and child development programs that lead to an Early Childhood Teacher Credential (ECTC).	Using Early Childhood Teacher Educators (ECTE)/ECTC Committee as a resource, create a consortium that uses some of the current resources of higher education to begin to deliver course work. Establish a source of funding for the	Evaluate capacity of higher education system and articulation agreements between two- and four-year institutions of higher education. To increase teacher quality, pilot Early Childhood Teacher Credential at two- and four-year colleges where programs already exist that can be

Strategies	Activities/Actions	Deliverables	Accomplishments
the future workforce.	<p>Ensure seamless articulation between associate and bachelor’s degree programs using work already done by Early Childhood Teacher Credential Standards Committee.</p> <p>Define necessary supports for access and establish programs that are flexible and accessible enough for incumbent workforce to persist.</p>	consortium and the development of programs leading to ECTC, as well as supports for individuals and programs.	<p>approved by the State Department of Education and Department of Higher Education to deliver ECTC.</p> <p>Begin to award ECTC. Start process to develop new courses and programs of study leading to ECTC in the BA/BS programs. Evaluate pilot. Make revisions based on outcomes. Expand course offerings. Propose the inclusion of the ECTC for legislative language in relevant state statutes.</p>

Priority Area: Families and Home Visitation

Goal: Fostering and partnership among families and communities in the early years.

Strategies	Activities/Actions	Deliverables/Accomplishments
<p>Educate professionals in the importance of parents as partners.</p> <p>“Professionals” are identified as being among the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> early childhood field and kindergarten–first-grade teachers; 	<p>Research and gather information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct review of the current research on benefits of “Parents as Assets/Partners.” Conduct scan of existing “parents as partners” training models and resources in Connecticut and nationally. 	<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trainings provided for combinations of professionals: e.g., to early childhood/health care professionals and school leadership. Trainings provided to each category of professionals. <p>Change the institutionalized culture to positive view</p>

Strategies	Activities/Actions	Deliverables/Accomplishments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school leadership/board of education; • health care professionals (mental and physical), pediatricians, nurses, mental health; and • community leaders. 		of parents as partners and assets.
	Garner input from identified “professional” groups on the challenges they face in partnering with parents.	Fact sheets developed for professionals.
	Convene representatives from all groups to discuss common goals for parents as partners	Common Messaging using the resources we have (“walk the talk”).
	Develop and design training for each group/and for combination of groups.	
Provide a comprehensive system of parenting education.	<p>Appoint a Steering Committee.</p> <p>Develop a matrix to identify approaches and models of education and training, including the following categories: who delivers the training, the manner of delivery, and the funding sources.</p>	<p>Matrix of models, programs and services.</p> <p>Identification of the gaps.</p>
	Develop a communication campaign on the value of parenting education.	Increased awareness, access and parent participation in education.
	Social media – develop a universal message that will be widely spread.	Increased awareness, access and parent participation in education.

Strategies	Activities/Actions	Deliverables/Accomplishments
Promote parent leadership	Research and gather information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scan proven parent leadership initiatives in Connecticut. • Identify and convene groups delivering parent leadership training such as PLTI, PEP, Aspira, Fatherhood Initiative, Lee Y Seras, Family Support Council, etc. 	Create a coherent integrated system of parent leadership. Parents in Connecticut have the civic skills to improve outcomes for children. Parents see themselves as valuable assets.
	Garner input from groups and discuss common goals for parent leadership training.	Fact sheets developed for effective parent leadership.
	Leverage funding dollars for existing parent leadership training to bring to scale.	Develop a standard for parent engagement and leadership in early care and education.
	Establish system of early contact with expectant and new parents with ongoing follow-up outreach efforts to connect with parents when they are available and interested.	Deliver a continuum of parent leadership training that is flexible based on parent availability and interest.
Create a system/continuum of home visitation services.	Appoint a Steering Committee for this work. Develop a matrix of existing services, including the categories of age range, targeted groups, geographic distribution, demographics, models, goals, training required, and funding sources.	Matrix that exhibits a continuum of Home Visitation programs and services for children ages prenatal to 5. Identified gaps in service.

Strategies	Activities/Actions	Deliverables/Accomplishments
	<p>Literature review of best practices and research.</p> <p>Hire a consultant.</p>	<p>Best practices document.</p>
	<p>Define competencies and credentials for home visitors.</p> <p>Define quality standards for all home visitation programs/services.</p> <p>Ongoing training for home visitors.</p>	<p>Skilled workforce.</p> <p>Quality standards.</p> <p>Improved outcomes for children and families.</p>
	<p>Convene a Home Visitation Congress with national speakers, community input and parent voice.</p>	<p>Greater understanding.</p> <p>Increased access year.</p> <p>Increased number of families involved in child's education and understanding of developmentally appropriate practice.</p>

Needs Assessment

A project director will be contracted to oversee the day-to-day work required to accomplish the council's four priority areas. The project director will research best practices regarding a comprehensive needs assessment to include a review of existing needs assessments and determine how the data can be effectively integrated. The needs assessment will include information on the quality and availability of programs and services for children from birth to school entry, and also gather information about the availability of high-quality prekindergarten services for low income children in the state. As a result, he or she will recommend to the State Advisory Council suggested approaches to complete the needs assessment.

The SAC will implement a schedule of periodic needs assessments based on best practices. In planning the needs assessment, the SAC will remain cognizant of current fiscal constraints and the lack of an integrated early childhood data system.

Opportunities and Barriers to Coordination and Collaboration

Connecticut has aimed to address many of the child and family challenges with policy innovations, program initiatives and structural reform. These advances have served our early childhood efforts to date and have yielded strong partnerships with state and local policy leaders that provide many opportunities for collaboration throughout the state.

This most recent fiscal year, the Connecticut legislature established a Children and Recession Task Force which identified family trends and issues resulting from the recession related to housing, employment, homelessness, child care and unemployment. Based on this impact of the recession, recommendations were made to state leadership on budgetary and policy actions to mitigate the effects of these downward trends. The task force recommended legislation that was

adopted as the first state legislation on children in this downturned economy. This statute establishes what must take place for children in our state with an unemployment rate of 8 percent or higher to include: a) streamlined customer-friendly services, b) establishment of a state leadership team from every key state agency so no child receives fragmented services; c) year-round food programs; d) child care services for families so they can look for work and job train and if homeless, receive childcare; e) that the trend towards low birth weight babies be rapidly reversed with research-based interventions; f) family access to services and information on eligibility be integrated and provided through a single point of entry.

Connecticut's Poverty and Prevention Council chaired by the Governor's Office of Policy and Management, works to reduce child poverty by 50 percent within a decade. The council looks at the costs of poverty, the proven interventions, and what should be done and bundled together for greatest impact. This goal is coupled with a goal of prevention, rather than crisis, for children.

The Governor reports every two years on the state's budget regarding prevention efforts for children. Each agency reports best outcome and strategies in prevention. Similarly, coordinated efforts across agency and branch of government are reported and silhouetted for replication. State contracts are linked to both prevention for children and child poverty reduction.

Connecticut has established a committee to apply for the Affordable Care Act Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program, which will disburse \$1.5 billion in grants to states over the next five years. This committee is a partner with us on our fourth goal and strategy focused on home visitation and family engagement.

The Home Visitation Program will help Connecticut coordinate and deliver services in the five areas of health, development, early learning, child abuse and neglect prevention and family

support services. The state is currently assessing our models with evidence of success. One such model is our Child First. That project has recently received a significant grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for families most at-risk in four of our cities. Another model program is the Nurturing Families Network, available through all birthing hospitals in the state. There is an Advisory Committee that coordinates with our state early care and education efforts and which sits on our home visitation and parent engagement committee.

The Advisory Committee is documenting which home-visiting programs are already under way in various places across our state, and what level of quality they provide, as well as whether our state has the capacity to provide counseling and substance abuse treatment. The effort will be coordinated with other programs that require needs assessments, such as Head Start.

In the area of parent leadership, Connecticut offers communities a competitive grant opportunity to promote family civics. Communities can apply for grants to teach parent leadership if they select proven models, reflect diversity and show outcomes. This has led to over 2000 graduates of parent leadership training programs who have gone on to join advisory committees, state and local councils, as well as the development of new coalitions of parents concerned with children. Connecticut has accrued over 1.5 million volunteer hours from this effort.

Concerned with outcomes rather than numbers served, the legislature has shifted its state appropriations process towards results-based accountability. All three branches of government and agencies funded by government are trained in results-based accountability. No one presents before the Appropriations Committee without population trends, indicators and impact. This facilitates a common way of looking at what works, a shared vocabulary and a commitment to dollars following data, interventions and outcomes.

Connecticut is the only state in the nation to report to the public on its social state and quality of life. Annually, the public is objectively apprised through data analysis on how we are faring in key subject areas that cross age and region. From wages to health care to housing, we can observe the social state of Connecticut. Eleven indicators are offered separately, as well as integrated into a single digit number, so we can trace our overall direction and success as a state. We look only at indicators that have a trend line of three decades.

Many opportunities for collaboration were noted in the 2008 Connecticut Head Start Needs Assessment Survey:

Overall, programs across Connecticut reported positive relationships with the wide range of partners who support their work with young children and families and generally few barriers to engaging partners in these efforts. The vast majority of responses to items in nearly all of the priority areas reflect ongoing collaboration and coordination with state and local providers and organizations, and know difficulties achieving productive partnerships and working together, This is notable considering Head Start Performance Standards require Head Start grantees to provide a comprehensive array of services for the highest need families which necessitates making meaningful connections daily with a wide range of systems and service providers. Especially in the areas of connecting and

*aligning their work with other early childhood providers, collaboration is most evident.*⁵

Besides the opportunities noted in the 2008 Connecticut Head Start Needs Assessment, Connecticut faces challenges and barriers to coordination and collaboration largely due to the recession and the fiscal crisis. Reduced state resources and a reduction in the workforce at state agencies have diminished the amount of collaboration between state agencies. A lack of coherence in the state's ability to develop a governance structure that affords us the opportunity to work effectively and efficiently across the many agencies and organizations that impact children and families continues to be barrier to collaboration and coordination. Much work in the area of early care and education in Connecticut is siloed and we do not have the governance in place to take the work that has and will be done to the level of institutionalization and sustainability in a manner that is functional and transparent for all stakeholders. Public hearings on the work of the SAC will be held annually.

Factors that May Accelerate or Decelerate the Work

First and foremost, the vision of the next Governor and his administration toward early childhood education in general will either accelerate (by providing additional funding or at least maintaining current funding) or decelerate this work (by imposing large budget cuts across early childhood state-funded programs of all types). If the latter happens, then most efforts will have to go toward recouping or mitigating the effect of drastic budget cuts to preserve as many of the

⁵ Connecticut Head Start State Collaboration Office (2009). *2008 Head Start State Needs Assessment Survey: Final report.*

current services as possible. Keeping this in mind as this grant application was written, the SAC has, in all cases, sought low-cost or no-cost strategies to the areas of data, personnel development, family engagement and early learning standards. Expansion of home visiting services, however, will rely on additional federal or state funding. Additional unknowns that could either help or hinder the work of the SAC are possible early state employee retirements in July 2011 and the state budget for fiscal years 2012 and 2013.

Our state has a large and strong constituent base of community leaders and parents concerned about the early years. Numerous foundations contribute to local planning and service integration. Concurrently, a Parent Trust bolsters local family civics. So we know that a focus on strategies that bring in quality, access and families will be supported on the community level. Additionally, we know that community leaders will be messengers and contributors to this process.

The reason the SAC has taken the approach of using a subgrantee is to ensure that despite potential instability within state government, the work of the SAC will have a measure of stability, neutrality and flexibility that may not be possible within any one state agency. A request for proposal (RFP) will be disseminated throughout the state to ensure a fair and open process for procurement with regard to the subgrantee.

Cooperating Entities

See Appendix 1 Strategic Report pp. 11-12

Membership of the Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet

NOTE: The Governor appoints the chairperson, Commissioners appoint their designees from the state agencies, and various majority and minority leadership of the Connecticut General Assembly appoint others. This is standard legislative procedure in Connecticut for entities including Task Forces and Commissions, Advisories.

<u>Head Start Act , 2007</u> State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care for children from birth to school entry	<u>Connecticut Statute</u> Early Childhood Education Cabinet	<u>Member</u>
Representative from a state agency responsible for childcare	Commissioner of Social Services /Designee	Claudette Beaulieu Deputy Commissioner, Department of Social Services
Representative of the State education agency	Commissioner of Ed/Designee	Harriet Feldlaufer Bureau Chief, State Department of Education, Bureau of Teaching and Learning
Representative of the local education agency	Representative from a public elementary school with a prekindergarten program	David Title Superintendent, Fairfield Public Schools
Representative of institutions of higher education in the State	Representative from an institution of higher education	Joan Paris Director, Early Childhood Education, Norwalk Community College
Representative of local providers of early childhood education and development services	A representative of a local provider of early childhood education	Eileen Ward Director, Children's Community Development Center
Representative from Head Start agencies located in the State, including migrant and seasonal Head Start programs and Indian Head Start programs	Representative from a Head Start Program	Dona Ditrio Early Childhood Education Director, New Opportunities for Waterbury, Inc.
State Director of Head Start Collaboration	Project Director of the Connecticut Head Start Collaboration Office	Grace Whitney Head Start Collaboration Office
Representative of the State agency responsible	Representative from SDE who is responsible for	Anne Louise Thompson

<u>Head Start Act , 2007</u> State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care for children from birth to school entry	<u>Connecticut Statute</u> Early Childhood Education Cabinet	<u>Member</u>
for programs under 619 or part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Commissioner of Developmental Services/Designee the IDEA Part C lead agency	Bureau Chief, State Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education Linda Goodman Director, Birth to Three System, Department of Developmental Services
Representative of the State agency responsible for health or mental health care	Commissioner of Public Health/Designee and Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction/Designee	Norma Gyle Deputy Commissioner, Department of Public Health Patricia Rehmer Mental Health Consultant, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
Representatives of other entities determined relevant by the Governor		
	Executive Director of the Commission on Children/Designee	Elaine Zimmerman Executive Director, Connecticut Commission on Children
	Member of the House of Representatives	Representative Beth Bye
	Parent of a child attending school in a priority school district	Marisol Estrada-Soto Parent
	Member of the Senate	Senator Thomas Gaffey
	Representative from the business or philanthropic community	John Rathgeber President, Connecticut Business and Industry Association
	Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management /Designee	Kathy Guay Director, Fiscal & Policy Section Office of Policy and Management

Plans to Sustain Activities Beyond the Grant Period

Connecticut, like most states, will be facing significant challenges as it puts together its biennial budget for fiscal years 2012 and 2013, beginning July 1, 2011. In planning its work, the SAC has identified cost-effective approaches for making measurable progress on four priorities that are essential to building a quality early care and education system in our state.

This work must be completed over the next three years if Connecticut going to move forward with the goals it established in its “Ready by 5 & Fine by 9” report. The SAC will work with the new administration and state legislature and build collaborative relationships with supportive groups to ensure that Connecticut maintains its commitment to our youngest citizens. As the state’s economy and fiscal position improves, we must be ready to strengthen our early care and education system.

Staff and Position Data

Description: SAC Coordinator

The Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet is placed within the Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) for administrative purposes only. The Governor has designated Andrea Brinnel, education consultant with the SDE, as the staff member to coordinate the activities of the SAC. Andrea Brinnel brings over 20 years of experience in public and private education to this work. She has taught in both public and private schools at the preschool and secondary level. In addition, she also served as a central office administrator for a Connecticut public school district and as a member of the board of directors for a private special education school. Mrs. Brinnel was a validator under the previous accreditation system for the National Association for the Education of Young Children and has been trained as a local assessor under the new accreditation system.

She is the program manager for the state Head Start supplementary grant program and coordinator of accreditation for programs funded through the state's School Readiness grant program.

Mrs. Brinnel received her master's degree in education and certificate of advanced graduate studies from Westfield State College and is currently enrolled in a doctor of education program in educational leadership and supervision at American International College.

The following are the current responsibilities of the staff position to the SAC:

- Schedule meetings
- Prepare meeting agendas
- Disseminate SAC materials
- Oversee SAC Web site content
- Coordinate SAC Leadership Team
- Monitor federal and state legislative requirements
- Coordinate preparation and dissemination of state reports
- Maintain cabinet records

Description/Qualifications: SAC Project Director (to be contracted with)

Under the direction of the SAC Leadership Committee, a project director will be selected to oversee the day-to-day work required to accomplish the council's four priority areas. For each of the three years of funding, the project director will be responsible for the implementation of specific activities listed in the strategic report, including tracking expenditures and preparing progress reports. The project director will ensure that the goals and objectives as articulated in the SAC plan are coordinated and communicated to key

policy stakeholders at the state and local level.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Develop any consultant agreements necessary to further the work of the SAC
- Ensure that tasks are being completed as planned and in a timely manner
- Communicate regularly with SAC leadership team and members and SDE Coordinator
- Meet regularly with any groups or committees formed to carry out the four work plans
- Track funds and expenditures
- Develop progress reports
- Work with SDE Coordinator and the Head Start Collaboration Director to support the work of the SAC
- Coordinate data collection for statewide needs assessment
- Work with the legislature to represent the SAC priorities and initiatives
- Work with the P-20 Council on early childhood data system
- Work with Department of Higher Education (DHE), the State Education Resource Center (SERC) and Connecticut Charts-a-Course (CCAC) on pre-service and in-service professional development initiatives and activities
- Coordinate with SDE and DSS work on early learning standards development
- Serve as the SAC liaison to the Department of Public Health's work on (federal) home visiting grants
- Serve as the SAC liaison to the SERC Parent Trust Fund

Education

Graduation from an accredited college or university with a master's degree in education, early childhood education, or a related field or, in lieu thereof, a combination of degrees and years of experience.

Experience and Training

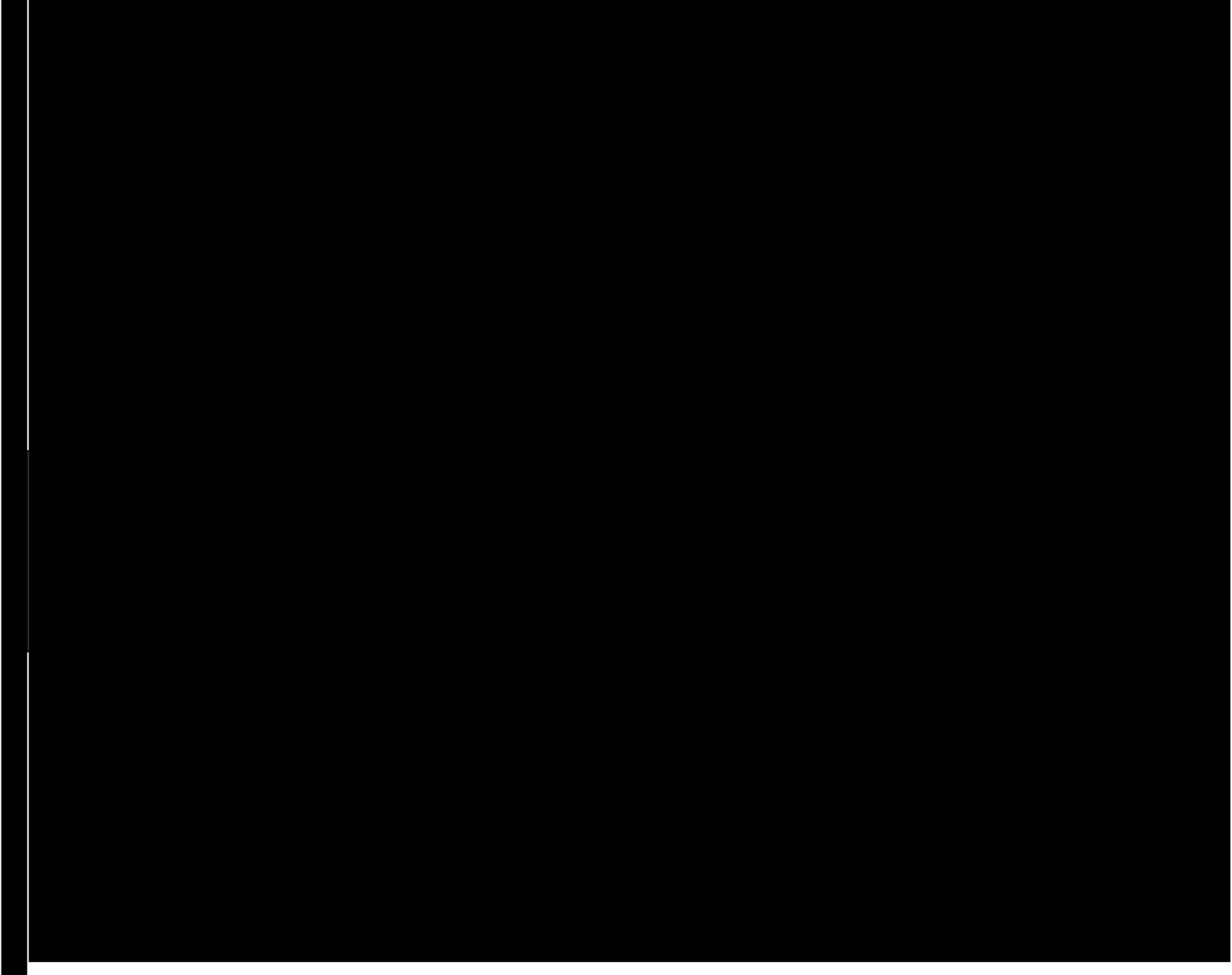
Experience in the role of supervisor or director in agencies that address the needs of infants, toddlers or preschool-age children and/or experience in early care and education programs in communities or schools. Experience in Early Head Start or Head Start preferred. Strong organizational skills, excellent verbal and written communication. Must be adept at working with budgets and experience with managing grants. Prospective candidates should be able to complete tasks independently as well as be able to work collaboratively and with transparency.

Organizational Profile

In February 2010, Connecticut Governor M. Jodi Rell designated the Early Childhood Education Cabinet as the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care. In addition, Governor Rell designated Andrea Brinnel, education consultant for the Connecticut State Department of Education, to coordinate the activities of the council. The designation letter from the Governor can be found in Appendix II.

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 50 of Public Act 09-6, the Early Childhood Education Cabinet shall be within the SDE for administrative purposes only. Therefore, the SDE is responsible for the management of the State Advisory Council.

The graphic below depicts the organizational structure and relationship of the Cabinet, its work groups, and the SDE as the administrative agency.



Financial Statements/Audit Report Summary

The following link is to the State of Connecticut Single Audit Report for the year ended June 30, 2009: http://www.cga.ct.gov/apa/pdf2010/SWSA_2009.pdf

The fiscal sub-grantee for this work will be determined through the Connecticut State Department of Education's procurement process for personal service agreements. This open and competitive process will ensure all entities having an interest in this work will have an opportunity to make application. Proposals will be assessed in a fair and objective manner, and a sub-grantee will be chosen from the pool of qualified applicants.

The grant award will be used toward meeting the strategic work at hand to meet the four goals and action steps within the designated timelines. Additionally, funds will be used for SAC meeting expenses and for subcontracts in the areas of research, product design, Web site maintenance, the creation of necessary data instruments, and administrative expenses.

The majority of the funds will be used for a project director under the direction of the SAC's leadership team. The project director will develop and oversee the day-to-day work required to accomplish the council's priorities. For each of the three years, the project director will be responsible for implementation of the specific activities listed in the strategic report and will be responsible for tracking and submitting expenditure and progress reports.

A leadership team will be organized to oversee the project director and strategic direction of this work within the identified priority areas. A member of the leadership team will represent the subgrantee. Other members will include the chair of the cabinet, the chairs of each of the four groups (data, early learning standards, professional development, and families and home visitation), the Head Start State Collaboration Office, and the SAC Coordinator. Additional stakeholders will be included, as appropriate.

Third Party Agreements

No third party agreements are necessary as a subgrantee will be selected through the State Department of Education's official procurement process. See State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management Procurement Standards:

http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/finance/psa/psa_pos_procurementstandards_021709_update_082709.pdf

Budget and Budget Justification

Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet Budget

Category	Year 1 Federal	Year 1 Non-Federal	Year 2 Federal	Year 2 Non-Federal	Year 3 Federal	Year 3 Non-Federal	Total
a. Personnel	0		0		0		
b. Fringe Benefits	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
c. Travel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
d. Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
e. Supplies	0		0		0		
f. Contractual	\$165,000		\$208,987		\$208,987		
g. Construction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
h. Other	0		0		0		
i. Total Direct Charges	\$165,000		\$208,987		\$208,987		
j. Indirect Charges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
k. TOTALS	\$165,000		\$208,987		\$208,987		

Additional Justification

Contractual dollars will be used to contract for a project director to perform the duties as detailed in the project director position (p. 45-46). The position will not be filled until funding is received and, therefore, the funds set aside for year one expenses reflect a shorter time period that the funding for years two and three.

It is expected that approximately \$80,000 a year (prorated the first year) will be for the project director contract, \$1,500 a year for Web site expenses, up to \$5,800 a year for administrative expenses, \$2,300 a year for the project director's and Cabinet expenses (e.g., meetings, travel, etc.) and approximately \$100,000 a year for other contracts to carry out the work as delineated by work plans.

Nonfederal Resources Description:

Connecticut will bring a total of [REDACTED] (see SAC Matching Funds table below) each of the next three years, for a total of [REDACTED] in nonfederal dollars and resources, as a match to its total three year request for \$582,974 in federal funds. This match is more than two times the 70 percent nonfederal share requirement. This match represents a firm commitment from several state agencies and organizations to support the work of the grant application. These funds are in sole support of early childhood education and care and are aligned to the four priorities of this grant: data systems, early learning standards, professional development, and families and home visitation/parent engagement.

Historically, Connecticut has shown a strong financial commitment to early childhood education and care and has developed partnerships with philanthropic and advocacy organizations to advance its agenda. For the past 20 years, Connecticut has funded state preschool programs and has one of the highest funding-per-child of all 38 states with state-funded preschool programs in the country (NIEER, 2009). State-funding for the IDEA Part C sponsored by the Department of Developmental Services has quadrupled over the past four years. Philanthropic foundations such as the Hartford Foundation for Giving and the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund have longstanding commitments to early funding for local communities. This includes grants for community planning, early literacy, low birth weight, home visitation and parent engagement.

For this grant application, the State Departments of Education, Developmental Disabilities, Public Health, and Higher Education and the Commission on Children, are providing matching funds and in-kind services to support activities consistent with the state's strategic plan and this application. In addition, funds and in-kind support are being brought to the table from

philanthropic organizations to facilitate the enhancement of high-quality early care and education systems in our state. See table below describing funding source, amount, description and grant priority.

Early childhood stakeholders in Connecticut have demonstrated their strong commitment to the provision of high-quality services and programs for young children through their in-kind and fiscal support of the SAC. This application demonstrates that Connecticut has provided significantly more matching funds than required for this grant proposal. If additional federal funds become available to support the priorities of this application, Connecticut is poised to strengthen the areas addressed through the cooperative efforts of our partnerships.

SAC Matching Funds

Requires a non-Federal share of 70 percent of the total approved cost: [REDACTED] (total);
 [REDACTED] (annually).

Can be met by cash or in-kind contributions

Agency/Organization	Contact Name	Annual Amount	Total	Description	Grant Priority
Department of Developmental Services	Linda Goodman	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Birth to Three in-kind administrative salaries and fringes	Administrative support
Department of Education	Harriet Feldlaufer	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	10% of state funds awarded to communities for the administration of School Readiness programs as outlined in CGS 10-16 p(B) (g)	Early Learning Standards & Workforce Development
Department of Education	Harriet Feldlaufer	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	office supplies, postage, computers, telephones	Administrative support
Department of Education	Harriet Feldlaufer	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	State grant for improving early literacy	Early Learning Standards
Department of Public Health	Kevin Sullivan	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	State funds for Children's Health Initiative Asthma Program	Family Engagement/Home Visitation
Connecticut Business and Industry Association	John Rathgeber	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Office Space Telephone Computer network General office expenses	Administrative support
Commission on Children	Elaine Zimmerman	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Foundation funding for low birth weight/home visitation/father engagement	Family Engagement

Agency/Organization	Contact Name	Annual Amount	Total	Description	Grant Priority
Commission on Children	Elaine Zimmerman	██████	██████	Administrative salary and fringes – Executive Director Staff salary and fringes	Administrative support
Commission on Children	Elaine Zimmerman	██████	██████	Telephone Postage General office expenses	Administrative support
Norwalk Community College	Joan Parris	██████	██████	Administrative salary and fringes – Program Director of Early Childhood Programs	Staff /Workforce Development
Total Non-Federal Share		██████	██████		