

2018 LEGISLATIVE SESSION UPDATE

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State Budget Update

The 2018 Legislative Session ended Wednesday, May 9, at midnight. In the final hour of the session, both the House and Senate approved a FY19 state budget bill that makes modifications to the budget passed in the fall of 2017. Unlike last year when the legislative did not pass a budget until November, the state now has a final budget in place for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2018.

The Office of Early Childhood fared well with the state budget that passed in [Senate Bill 453](#). Below is a chart listing the OEC line items. The holdbacks to Personal Services, Other Expenses, Even Start, 2Gen-TANF and Head Start Services were annualized.

T434	OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD	ORIGINAL FY 19 APPROPRIATION	NEW FY19 APPROPRIATION
T435	Personal Services	[7,791,962]	<u>7,574,843</u>
T436	Other Expenses	[411,727]	<u>391,141</u>
T437	Birth to Three	21,446,804	
T438	Evenstart	[437,713]	<u>295,456</u>
T439	2Gen - TANF	[750,000]	<u>412,500</u>
T440	Nurturing Families Network	10,230,303	
T441	Head Start Services	[5,186,978]	<u>5,083,238</u>
T442	Care4Kids TANF/CCDF	130,032,034	
T443	Child Care Quality Enhancements	6,855,033	
T444	Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership	1,130,750	
T445	Early Care and Education	101,507,832	
T446	Smart Start	3,325,000	
T447	AGENCY TOTAL	[289,106,136]	<u>288,284,934</u>

There was a major victory for low-income parents on HUSKY A with incomes between 155 and 138 percent of the federal poverty level who were slated to lose coverage. Legislators allocated \$12 million in the budget to reverse the income restrictions, which will enable 13,500 low-income adults to keep their HUSKY A health coverage.

The budget also provides a 1 percent cost of living increase for state-funded social service community providers. We are seeking confirmation which social service providers are eligible to receive this rate increase.

The CT Mirror ran a story on the state budget vote: [Legislative overwhelmingly enacts bi-partisan CT budget](#)

Bill Update

The Office of Early Childhood did well with passing important bills this session, including the two agency bills. Below is a rundown of early childhood bills that passed. A more comprehensive list of bills is in the attached bill chart; the column all the way to the right indicates whether each bill died or passed.

HB 5169 – An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Office of Early Childhood passed 148-0 in the House and 36-0 in the Senate. This is the first of 2 of our agency bills. The OEC worked with legislators to craft an amendment to fine-tune sections of the bill.

A key win is passage of Section 1 and 2 of the bill, which creates a 90-day grace period for homeless children to provide health and immunization records, enabling immediate access to child care either in a home or a center. With passage of this language, the OEC will be in compliance with the federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) law. Another key win is language concerning background checks for relatives receiving Care 4 Kids. The language removes the requirement that relatives submit to fingerprint checks; rather the OEC will conduct three internal checks.

A description of each section of the bill is attached. Also the Office of Legislative Research (OLR) posted its [analysis](#).

HB 5449 – An Act Concerning the Administration of Certain Early Childhood Program and the Provision of Early Childhood Services by the Office of Early Childhood passed 149-0 in the House and 36-0 in the Senate. This is the second agency bill. The OEC worked with legislators to craft an amendment to fine-tune sections of the bill. A big win is language that allows the OEC Commissioner the discretion to prioritize infants and toddlers on the Care 4 Kids wait list (currently, there is no wait list but we anticipate a wait list will eventually be necessary in order to stay within available funding). This means that newborns who would normally be placed at the end of the wait list now can be prioritized and placed at the front of the wait list for child care.

Another key section of this bill allows for up to 2% of Care4Kids, Early Care and Education, Child Care Quality Enhancement, and Nurturing Families Network funding to be used for piloting innovative and results-driven service delivery, program evaluation and enhancement, funding and procurement models that are performance-driven and results-accountable, interagency coordination, and evaluative tools and infrastructure. The funds cannot be used for agency administrative and overhead costs.

The bill also removes the specific School Readiness per child rate for full-day care from the statute. It allows the Commissioner to establish School Readiness rates deemed necessary to improve quality and increase access.

A description of each section of the bill is attached. Also the Office of Legislative Research (OLR) posted its [analysis](#).

HB 5450 – An Concerning the Staff Qualifications for Early Childhood Educators passed 146-0 in the House and 36-0 in the Senate. The OEC worked closely with Rep. Bobby Sanchez and the Early Childhood Alliance on this bill.

The bill delays the requirement to meet staff qualification by two years - 2020 to meet the requirement that 50% of programs have lead teachers with a bachelor's degree and 2023 to meet the requirement that 100% of programs have lead teachers with a bachelor's degree. It also requires the OEC to complete an analysis of the state-funded early childhood education staff qualifications requirement, within available appropriations, and submit the analysis and the agency's recommendations to the Education Committee by January 1, 2020.

The Office of Legislative Research (OLR) posted its [analysis](#).

SB 437 – An Act Concerning a Two-Generational Initiative passed 35-0 in the Senate and in concurrence in the House. The bill requires the Two-Generational Advisory Council to consult with the Attorney General's office, Office of Policy and Management, and the Connecticut Preschool through Twenty and Workforce Information Network (P20 WIN) to develop a uniform approach to facilitate data sharing across state agencies. The bill designates the OEC as the coordinating agency for the Executive Branch for the two-generation initiative and specifies that OEC is responsible for coordinating the initiative's agency efforts and data sharing.

The Office of Legislative Research (OLR) posted its [analysis](#).

SB 13 – An Act Concerning the Fair Treatment of Incarcerated Persons passed 36-0 in the Senate and 148-0 in the House. This bill includes key provisions related to the care of pregnant women who are incarcerated, including the following:

- requires the Department of Correction to ensure that at least one health care provider at York Correctional Institution has specialized training and knowledge related to pregnancy and childbirth and assess each inmate for pregnancy upon admission to the correctional institution
- gives pregnant inmates the right to receive specified counseling, medical care, specialized diet, appropriate clothing and sanitary materials, and access to treatment for postpartum depression
- requires inmates with high risk pregnancies to be moved to the medical infirmary or a hospital;
- limits the use of restraints on pregnant inmates
- requires the correctional institution to provide pregnant inmates with counseling and discharge planning prior to their release

HB 5210 – An Act Mandating Insurance Coverage of Essential Health Benefits and Expanding Mandated Health Benefits for Women, Children and Adolescents passed 89-61 in the House and 36-0 in the Senate. The bill requires certain health insurance policies to cover 10 “essential health benefits” including maternity and newborn care and pediatric services, including oral and vision care.

In the final days of the legislative session, the House and Senate passed a number of important bills while other bills died due to inaction in either one chamber or in both chambers. The CT News Junkie ran a comprehensive story on the winners and losers: [Legislative Triage: The Winners and Losers of the 2018 Legislative Session](#)