

Framework Core Values, Goals and Ten Immediate Priorities from Connecticut's Early Childhood Investment Framework "Ready by 5 and Fine by 9"

Four Core Values

Connecticut's Early Childhood Investment Framework is grounded in four fundamental beliefs about children, families, communities, schools and the role of state government in achieving the goal of "all children ready for early educational success."

1. Families and communities raise children, with schools and the state as essential partners in early childhood investment.
2. All families need information in the years of early child development and some families need both information and support to assure that their children reach annual age-appropriate and grade-appropriate developmental milestones.
3. Learning begins at birth and requires intentional support during the years before schooling begins. All children should have the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviors that enable them to be successful in the early years of schooling.
4. The quality, effectiveness and cultural competence of early childhood experiences are key to assuring children's preparation for success in the first years of schooling.

Three Goals

To help ensure that all of the state's young children, regardless of where they live, are "ready by five and fine by nine," the Cabinet proposes three goals for the children of the State of Connecticut:

- To reach appropriate developmental milestones from birth to age five.
- To begin kindergarten with the knowledge, skills and behaviors needed for success in school.
- To have K-3 education experiences that extend children's birth-to-five learning and ensure consistent progress in achieving reading mastery.

Ten Immediate Priorities

- Assure fiscal support for high-quality preschool for all 3- and 4-year-olds in families at or below 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, and increase this income eligibility standard as state resources permit.
- Address state reimbursement inequities for center-based preschool programs.
- Develop a multi-year early childhood work force professional development plan to assure compliance with state law and selected national certification programs.
- Provide health, mental health and education consultation to preschool programs to enhance the skills of directors and teachers for meeting the comprehensive needs of children.
- Support the design and implementation of the kindergarten assessment (statewide implementation due in fall 2009).
- Develop a comprehensive strategic plan for serving infants and toddlers.
- Ensure that HUSKY children receive regular well child visits and an annual developmental assessment.
- Provide all families and caregivers (including non-custodial parents) with information about child development, prenatal through age 8
- Expand eligibility categories in the Birth-to-Three program to include mild developmental delays and environmental risks.
- Support local communities in developing birth-to-5 councils (e.g., using School Readiness Councils) for planning and monitoring early childhood services.