**Policy Manual**

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**Chapter 1: Administration**

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**Overview**

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**Geographic Equity**

The Connecticut Birth to Three System ensures that resources are made available under Part C for all geographic areas within the state through contracts with individual Birth to Three programs, each serving one or more assigned towns. Each program is required to serve any eligible child within their service area.

Programs are selected via a competitive Request for Proposal process and an analysis of needed capacity for each town. As the need for additional capacity arises, a new RFP is issued for specific towns.

1**-3**

**Equitable Access and Participation (General Education Provisions Act)**

Connecticut has taken the following steps to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the Connecticut Part C statewide system as required by section 427(b) of GEPA:

1. In 1993, the Connecticut General Assembly enacted state statute, 17a-248 of the Connecticut General Statutes that requires the lead agency to “establish and maintain a statewide Birth to Three system of early intervention services pursuant to Part C of the IDEA for eligible children and families of such children.”
2. Connecticut has implemented a statewide toll free number to a system point of entry (SPOE) for all referrals to the Connecticut Birth to Three System. Connecticut serves a diverse population of infants and toddlers and works with the State Interagency Coordinating Council to identify and address barriers. There are Spanish-speaking care coordinators answering the phones and all care coordinators use Language Line service to provide translation in other languages when needed.
3. SPOE care coordinators gather demographic information electronically and then transmit each referral through the Birth to Three data system to an appropriate local Birth to Three program in which service coordinators are available to respond to referrals in a timely manner and to ensure timely initial evaluation and assessment to determine eligibility and begin IFSP planning for eligible children.
4. Once a child is determined to be eligible, the same program has the capacity and responsibility to develop the IFSP and provide timely services. Service providers and service coordinators may be employees of each Birth to Three program or may be subcontractors of each program.
5. Connecticut Birth to Three programs use a blended model of service coordination in which the individual designated as the service coordinator for the child and family is also a provider of other IFSP services to that child and family.
6. One or more agencies in each of Connecticut’s 169 towns have a contract to provide comprehensive early intervention services to eligible infants and toddlers and their families.
7. Programs are selected via a competitive Request for Proposal process and an analysis of needed capacity for each town. As the need for additional capacity arises, a new RFP is issued for specific towns.

**1-4**

**Public Participation Policies and Procedures**

1. As required in §303.208,at least 60 days prior to being submitted to the Office of Special Education Programs in the U.S. Department of Education, Connecticut’s application for funds under Part C of IDEA, including any policies, procedures, descriptions, methods, certifications, assurances and other information required in the application, is published in a manner that ensures circulation throughout the state for at least a 60-day period, with an opportunity for public comment on the application for at least 30 days during that period.
2. The application includes the policies used by Connecticut to ensure that, before adopting any new policy or revising an existing policy needed to comply with Part C of IDEA and these regulations, the lead agency, Office of Early Childhood:
	1. Holds public hearings on the new policy including any revision to an existing policy;
	2. Provides notice of the hearings held in accordance with (a) above at least 30 days before the hearings were conducted to enable public participation; and
	3. Provides an opportunity for the general public, including individuals with disabilities, parents of infants and toddlers with disabilities, early intervention providers, and the members of the State Interagency Coordinating Council, to comment for at least 30 days on the new policy, including any revision to an existing policy needed to comply with Part C of IDEA and these regulations.

**1-5**

**Collaboration with Head Start and Early Head Start, Early Education, and Child Care Programs**

The lead agency promotes collaboration among Head Start and Early Head Start programs under the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9801, et seq, as amended), early education and child care programs, and services under Part C of IDEA through a number of activities including:

1. A statewide Memorandum of Agreement establishes the relationship between the Connecticut Birth to Three System and all Connecticut Early Head Start programs in the areas of child find, serving dually-enrolled children, and transition.
2. The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (which includes the Head Start Collaboration State Director, state-pre-K programs, state and federal home visiting programs, the CCDF Administrator, and the Child Care Licensing Division) with the Departments of Education (SDE), Children and Families (DCF), and the Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet (Connecticut’s version of a State Advisory Council) have partnered to focus on creating a system in which each of the partners agree to collaborate in the development and, as appropriate, the use of agreed upon comprehensive, evidence based program and learning standards, strong family engagement and health programs, workforce registry, system of certification and credentials specific to birth to age five, and successful program improvement efforts to improve outcomes for children.
3. The lead agency co-chairs the Early Childhood Cabinet and leads its two work groups.
4. The lead agency co-chairs, consistent with section 642B(b)(1)(C)(viii) of the Head Start Act, the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care established under the Head Start Act.