

Connecticut State Board of Education  
Hartford

## Position Statement on Early Childhood Education

Adopted February 3, 2010

The State Board of Education is committed to high-quality early childhood education that provides children with the foundation for future success. This vision for early learning is aligned with the stated goals for Connecticut's young children and described within: *Ready by Five, Fine by Nine: Connecticut's Early Childhood Systems Framework*. Acknowledging that early learning takes place in a variety of settings the Board envisions comprehensive, integrated programs and services for all children, regardless of where they are enrolled. This will ensure that young children will be physically and emotionally healthy and well prepared for life in a global society. In order to realize this vision, the Board will advance policies and provide guidance to strengthen connections between preschool, kindergarten and the primary grades based on the following key principles:

- School districts should take a leadership role in sharing curricular resources and expertise with the greater early childhood community.
- Young children learn best in high-quality environments that recognize children's individual rates of growth and development and utilize a wide variety of developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant teaching strategies. These strategies must address all areas of development, including the personal and social, creative expression, physical and cognitive domains.
- Early learning across developmental domains and content areas is interrelated; young children's development in each domain does not occur in isolation.
- Families are essential partners in the education of young children and should be involved in early childhood programs in meaningful and culturally relevant ways.
- Curricula are based upon clear, consistent early learning standards and the use of assessment to guide instruction.
- Early childhood programs should celebrate diversity and promote a sense of belonging, positive relationships and high expectations for all children, including those with disabilities and those who are English language learners.
- Strong partnerships between preschool and elementary education promote aligned and coordinated educational practices and support transitions between grade levels and programs.
- Young children learn best from highly qualified teachers with specific training to effectively address the unique learning needs of young children.
- Communities should strive to make affordable, high-quality preschool accessible for all young children.

The State Board of Education believes that in order to close Connecticut's achievement gap, state- and publicly-supported early childhood programs must join forces to meet the needs of our youngest learners. All early childhood stakeholders must address the achievement gap early in order to maximize success for all students. Children's earliest years build the crucial foundation for later school achievement and success in adulthood.