

An Early Childhood System for Connecticut's Children

The Implementation of
Public Act 11-181

Presentation to the Early Childhood Education Cabinet
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It's all about children & families

Vision

The Office of Early Childhood will create a coordinated system of programs and policies aimed at promoting optimal growth and development of all children in Connecticut from birth to age 5.

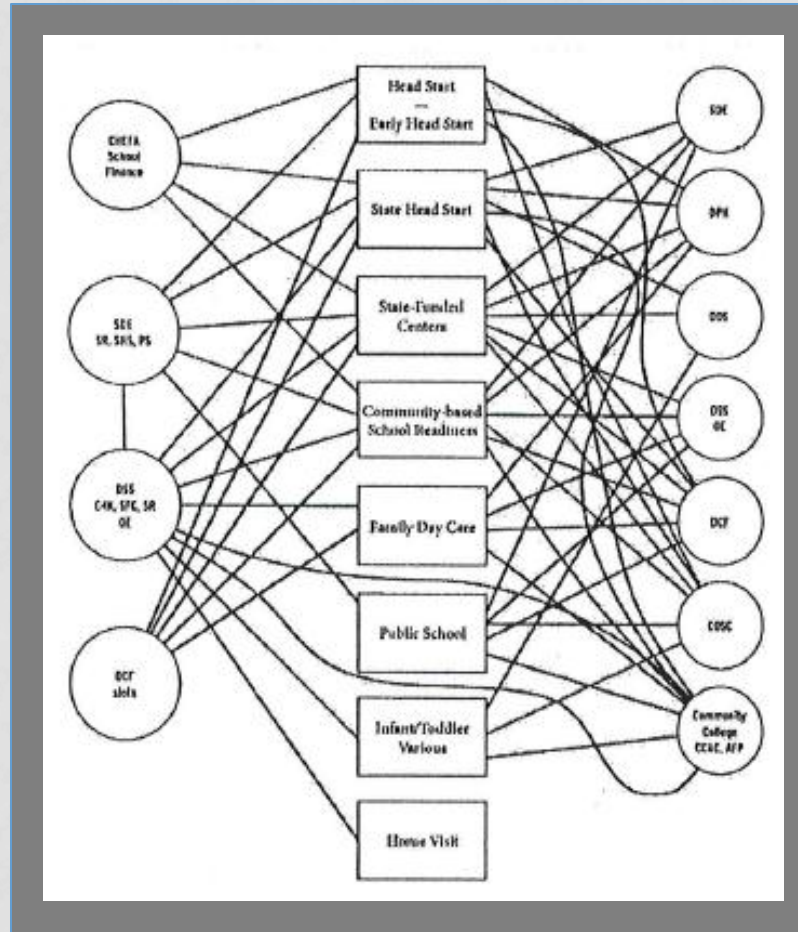
Guiding Values and Principles

Adapted from the national EC Systems Working Group

Optimally, a comprehensive early childhood system will:

1. Reach all children and families, and as early as possible, with needed services and supports
2. Ease access for families and transitions for children
3. Value parents as decision makers and leaders
4. Ensure stability and continuity of services along a continuum from prenatal into school entry and beyond
5. Genuinely include and effectively accommodate children with special needs
6. Reflect and respect the strengths, needs, values, languages, cultures and communities of children and families
7. Catalyze and maximize investment and foster innovation

Where We Started



Current Challenges

Inefficient

- Programs in separate agencies create redundancy and multiple administrative structures

Lack of a singular policy agenda

- Programs lack a coordinated vision and direction

Insufficient data and accountability

- Individual data systems in separate agencies do not allow for the information-sharing needed for accountability and policy decision-making

Uneven quality

- Different standards and requirements create uneven quality of services for children and families

Difficult for families

- It is challenging for families to make informed choices and access programs they need

What authority should governance have?

From National Consultants: BUILD

Influencing Factors

① Coordination

(across programs and services)

② Alignment

(to promote a developmental continuum)

③ Efficiency

(no duplication, more value for money)

④ Accountability

(for quality, equity, and results)

Gubernatorial Leadership

Strong Leadership (of the Structure)

Clear Statutes

Control of \$

Consolidation or Co-Location

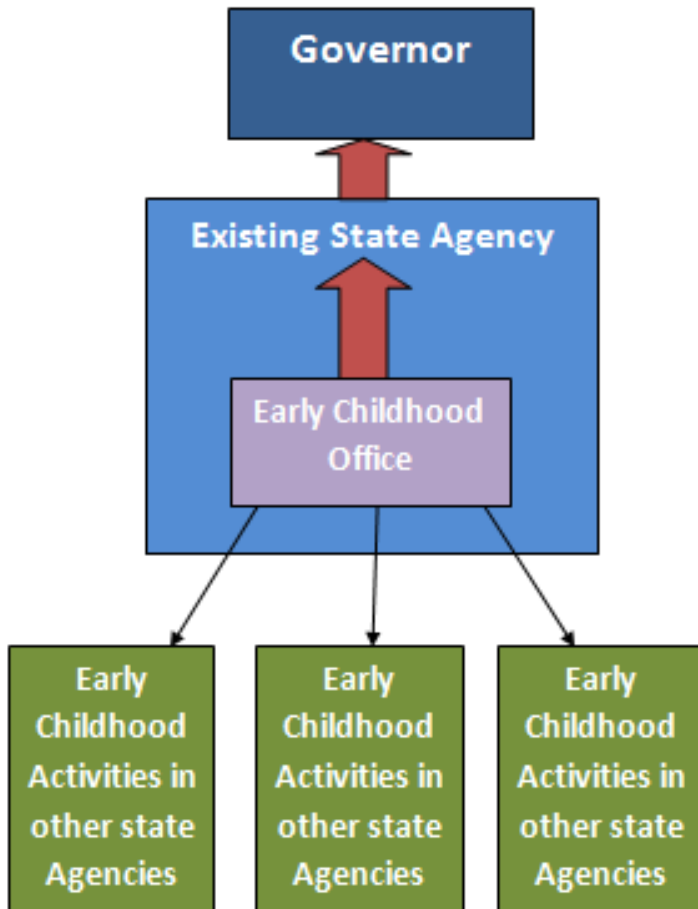
Components of Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems

Federal initiatives, research and national consultants are all in agreement that a comprehensive early childhood system includes:

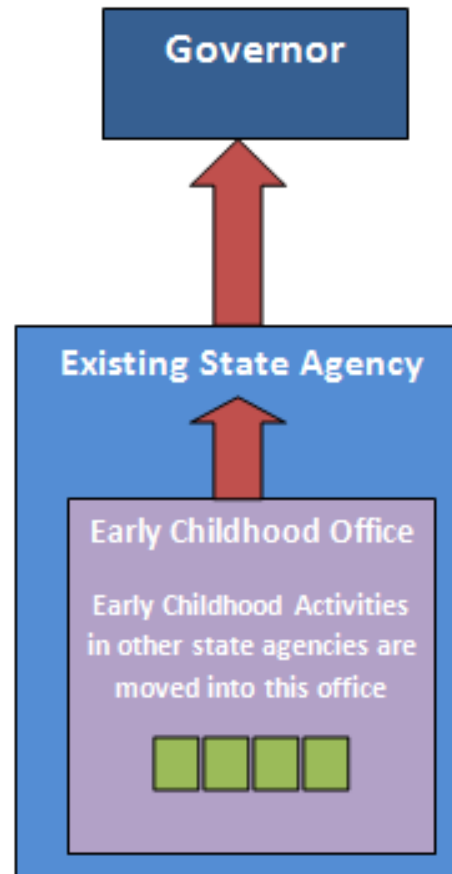
- Early Care and Education Services
 - School and center-based programs & family childcare
 - Licensing, quality enhancement & workforce development
- Early Intervention and Home Visiting
- Parent Information and Family Support Services

Three Governance Structures for Early Childhood

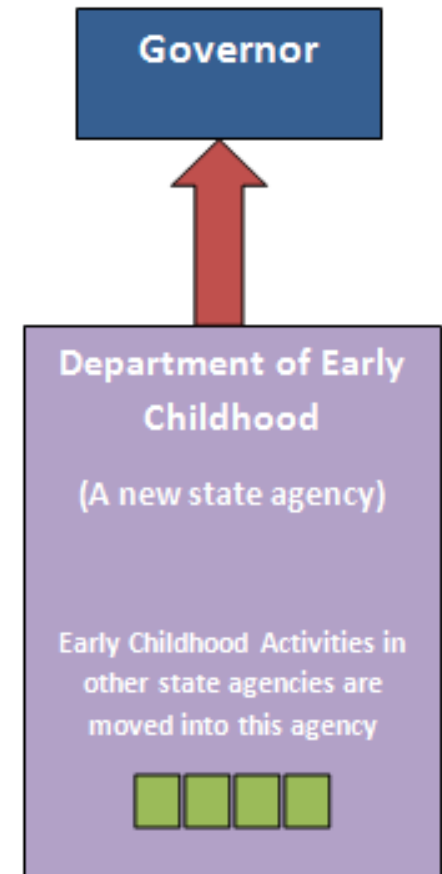
Coordination



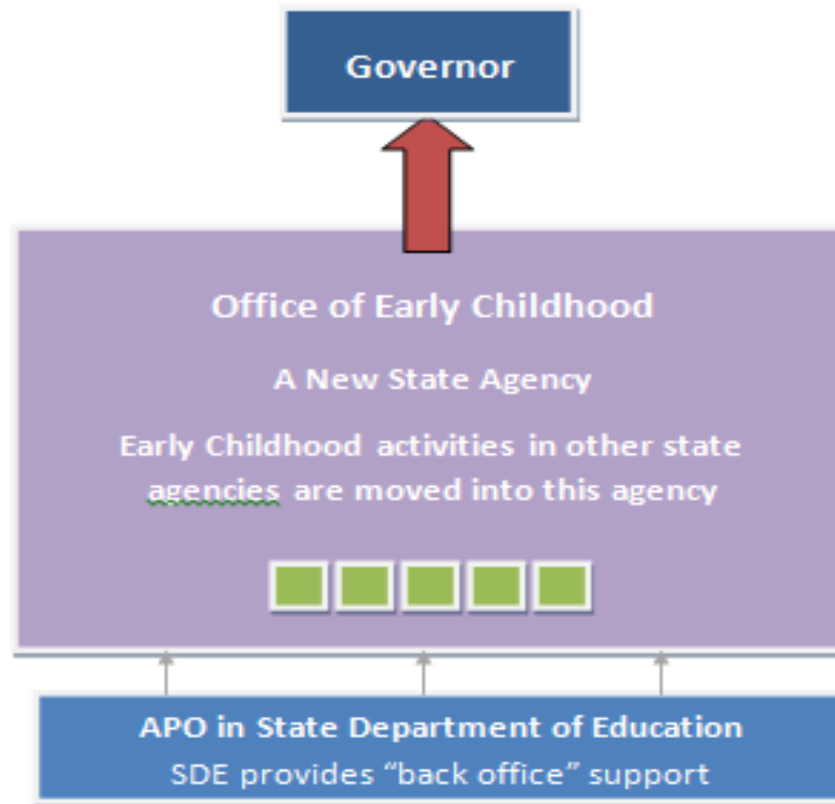
Consolidation



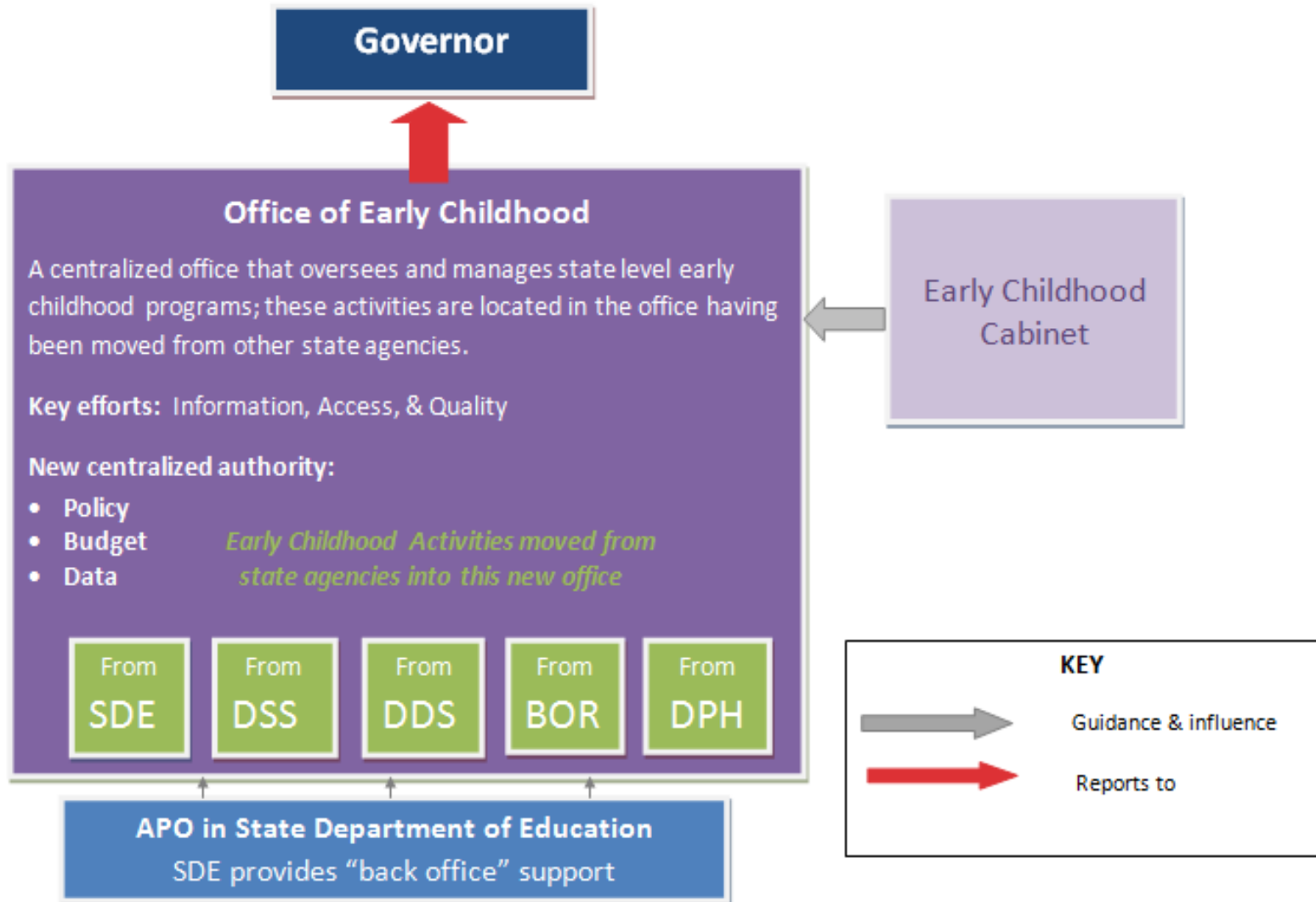
Creation



New Proposed Governance Structure Connecticut's Hybrid Model



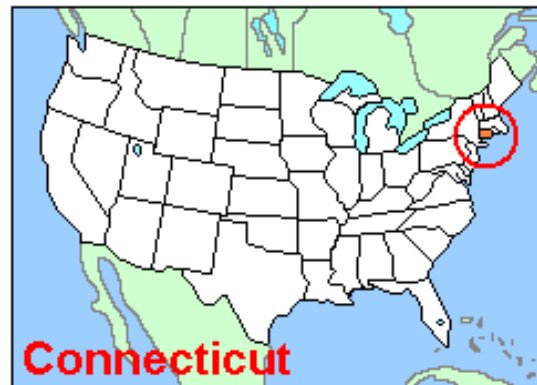
Proposed Centralization Governance Structure for Connecticut's Early Childhood System



This is BOLD!

Only **3** other states have centralized their early childhood services in one state agency devoted to early childhood.

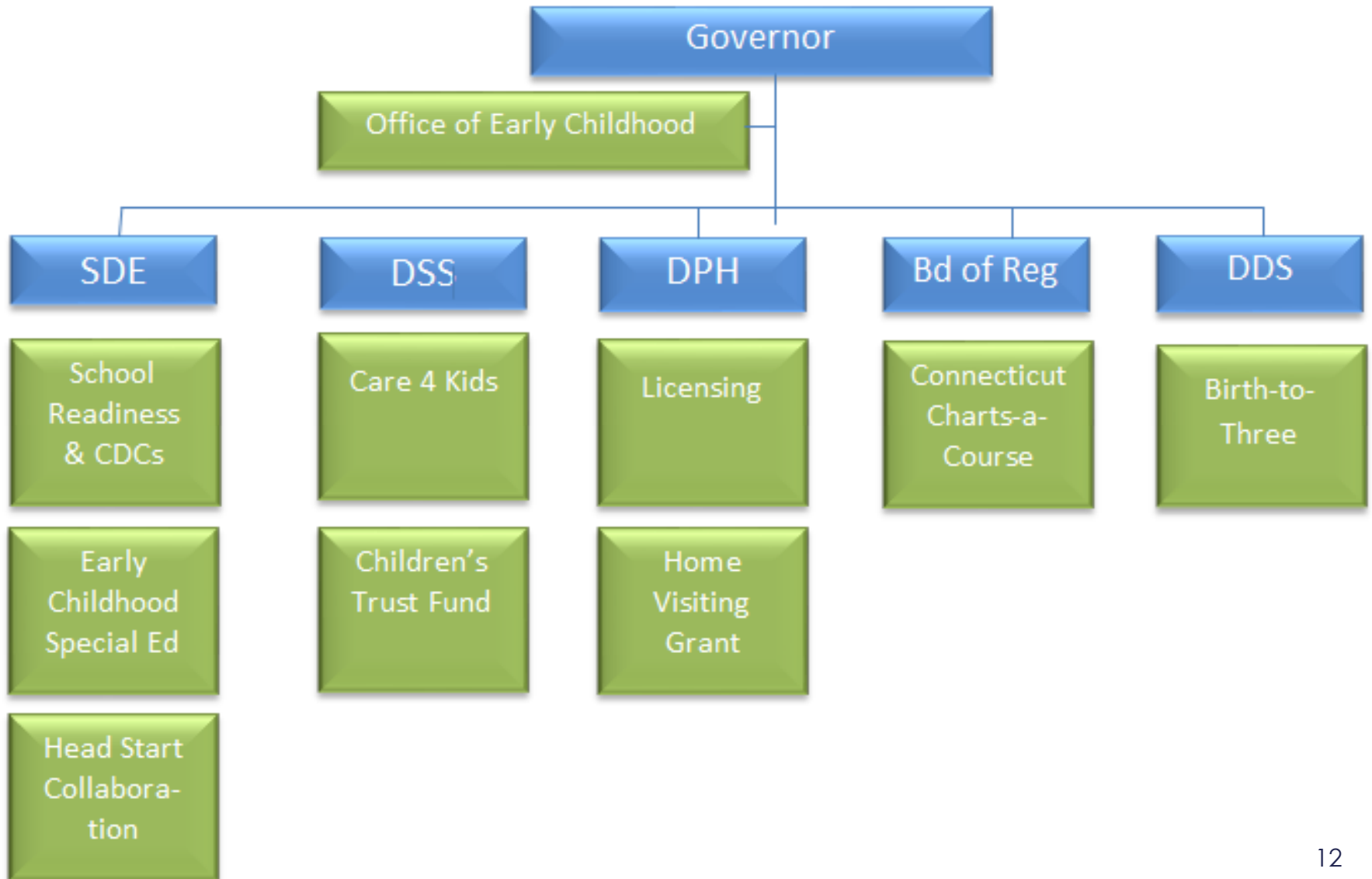
- Massachusetts
- Washington
- Georgia



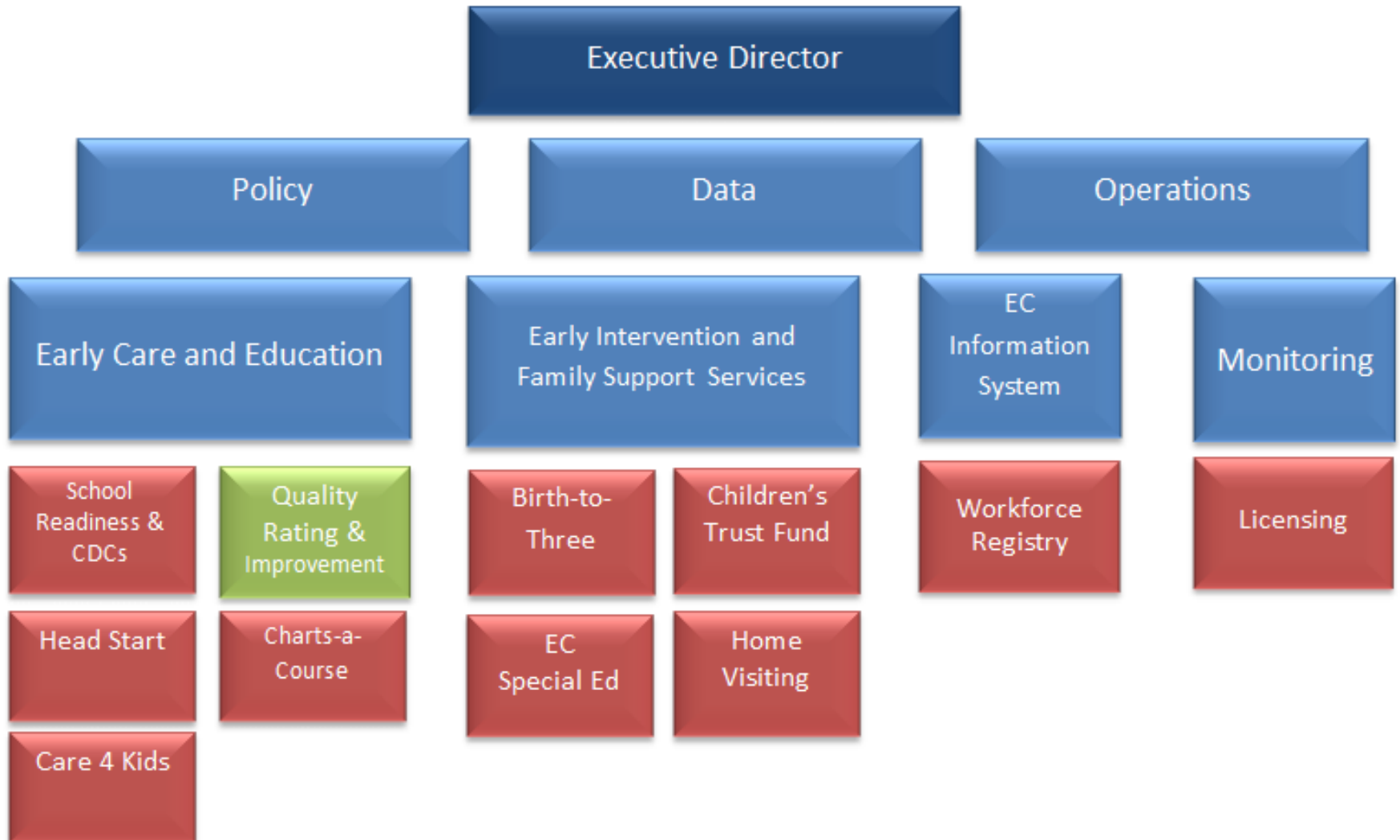
Connecticut's Proposal:

- A new agency that reallocates and realigns existing programs and resources to better meet the needs of young children and families.
- This proposal is more comprehensive than any state – including the full range of services that children and families require starting at birth.

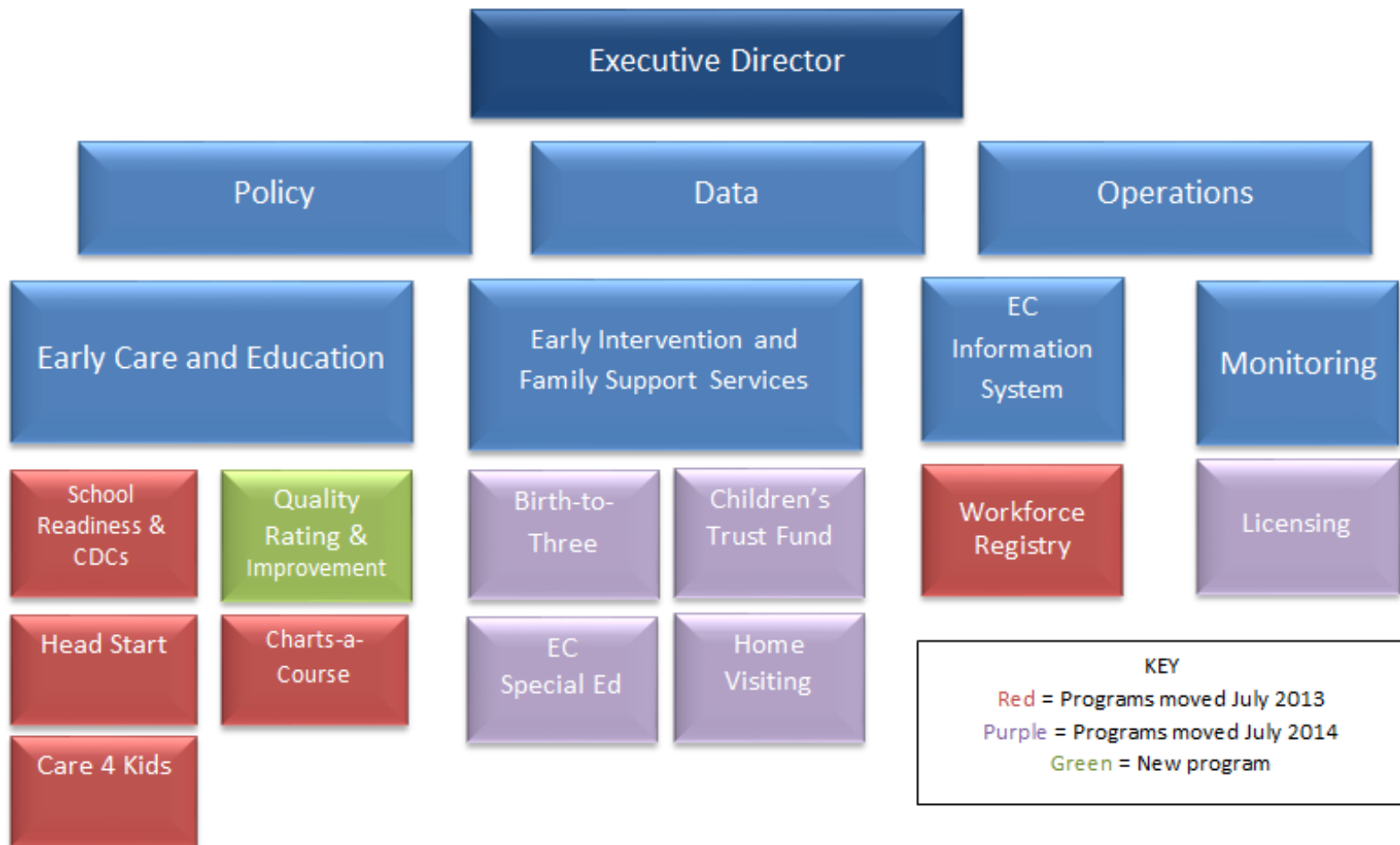
Programs to be Moved



Potential Organizational Structure for the Office of Early Childhood



Phases for Moving Programs



New Early Childhood Cabinet

Co-Chairs

- Executive Director of the Office of Early Childhood
- Rotating from among membership

Staffed by the Office of Early Childhood

Quarterly meetings (at a minimum)

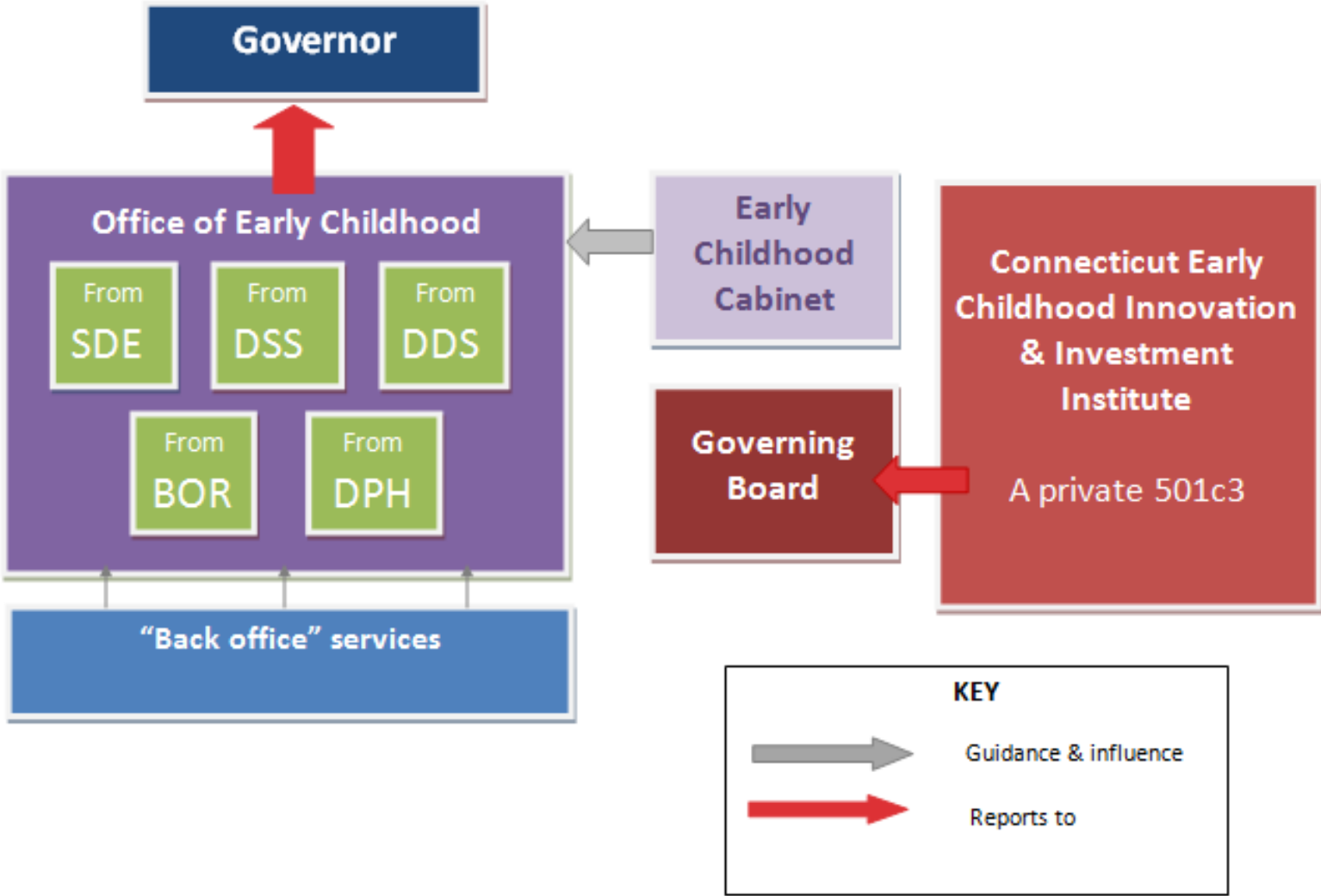
Functions:

- Policy recommendations for an effective and cohesive system
- Annual action plans and strategic reports (as called for in 2007 Head Start Act) to Governor and committees of cognizance

New Early Childhood Cabinet Members

- Executive Director of the Office of Early Childhood
- Commissioner of Education (current member)
- Commissioner of Social Services (current member)
- President of Board of Regents (current member)
- Commissioner of Public Health (current member)
- Commissioner of Developmental Services (current member)
- Commissioner of Children and Families (current member)
- Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management (current member)
- Project director of Head Start Collaboration (current member)
- Parent of School Readiness child (current member)
- Local early childhood education provider (current member)
- Representative of a LEA in an Alliance district (current member made more specific)
- Parent of child attending elementary school in an Alliance district (current member made more specific)
- Member of the House of Representatives (current member)
- Member of the Senate (current member)
- Representative of Head Start Association (current member)
- Representative of the business or philanthropic community (current member)

Connecticut's Early Childhood System with Proposed Public/Private Component



Connecticut Early Childhood Innovation and Investment Institute

Key efforts:

- Oversight, technical assistance & support to Local Early Childhood Councils
- Launching innovations
- Policy research and development
- Advocacy
- Public information and outreach
- Fund raising and grant procurement

Local Early Childhood Councils

Key efforts:

- Local planning and coordination
- Inventory of local programs and services
- Information to families (coordination with Child Care Info Line, Help Me Grow, etc.)

Benefits of a Coordinated System

For the State

- Efficiency and responsiveness
- A singular policy agenda
- Unified data system and accountability

For Providers, Children, and Families

- Consistent quality standards and requirements
- Coordinated mechanism for accessing information

CT's New Office of Early Childhood Thank you!

