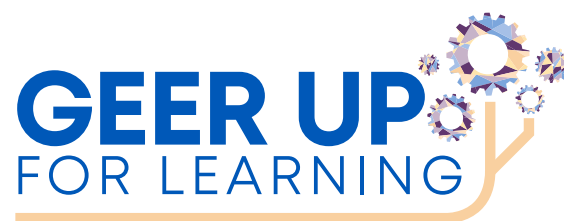


Providers



WELCOME PACKET

Early Care and
Education



Funded by the OEC through the Governor's Education Emergency Relief Fund in partnership with NEAT and the RESC Alliance.



Connecticut Office
of Early Childhood



Governor's Education
Emergency Relief



INTRODUCTION



Welcome Early Care and Education Providers!

During this challenging time in the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been difficult for many families to maintain connections with their child's early learning program. This challenge has been especially true for families who need to keep their child home for health and safety concerns, and who may have limited access to technology. The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) is able to provide technology support to families with young children who are in need and deserving of support.

These funds come from \$3 billion dollars Congress set aside for the Education Stabilization Fund through the CARES Act. Connecticut received \$27.8 million dollars, of which the Office of the Governor

awarded OEC

**\$4 million
dollars.**

The OEC is fortunate to have support from the community with this effort. OEC is partnering with the Regional Educational Service Centers Alliance (RESC) and New England Assistive Technology (NEAT) to help distribute iPads, and provide technical support and learning for children and families.



GUIDELINES



We look forward to assisting you during this difficult time, and hope the services and technology provided to you will help the children you work with grow and flourish.

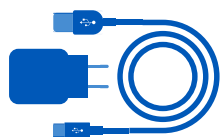
In order to assure the best possible outcomes, there are several guidelines we ask you follow listed below. If you have any questions, please contact your service coordinator.

1. **Getting Started with the iPad**
2. **iPad Care**
3. **Internet Safety**
4. **Returning iPad**
5. **Professional Development**
6. **Resources**

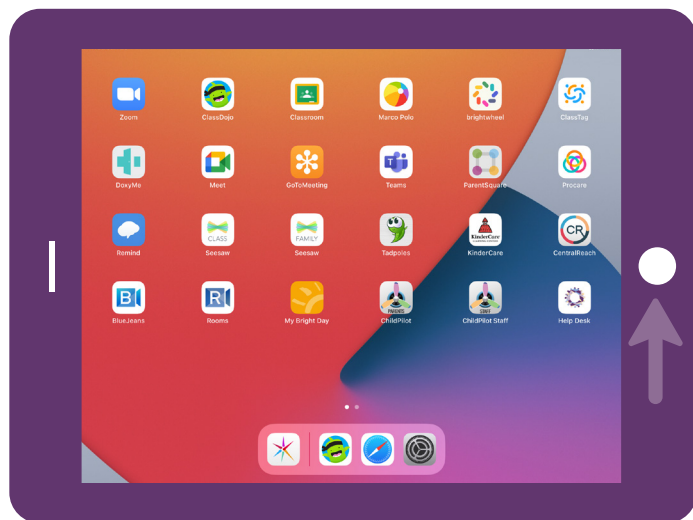
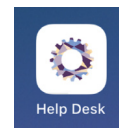
- ⚙️ **OEC Website**
- ⚙️ **Sparkler App**
- ⚙️ **Erikson Remote Learning Webinar**



GETTING STARTED



- ⚙️ Your families will receive an iPad with a case and screen protector on it, charger and adapter.
- ⚙️ The iPad may or may not come charged, so please advise families to hook the iPad up to a charger when they receive it.
- ⚙️ Suggest to families that they keep the charger with the iPad or in a specific location to avoid misplacing it.
- ⚙️ This iPad is supervised and managed by EASTCONN (part of the RESC Alliance).
- ⚙️ Some functions of the iPad will not be able to be used.
- ⚙️ If needing Technical Support, click on the Help Desk App icon that looks like this on the iPads; or call **860-407-6789** between 9am - 4pm for assistance.



When families first receive the iPad, the home screen will look similar to this after pressing the home button.

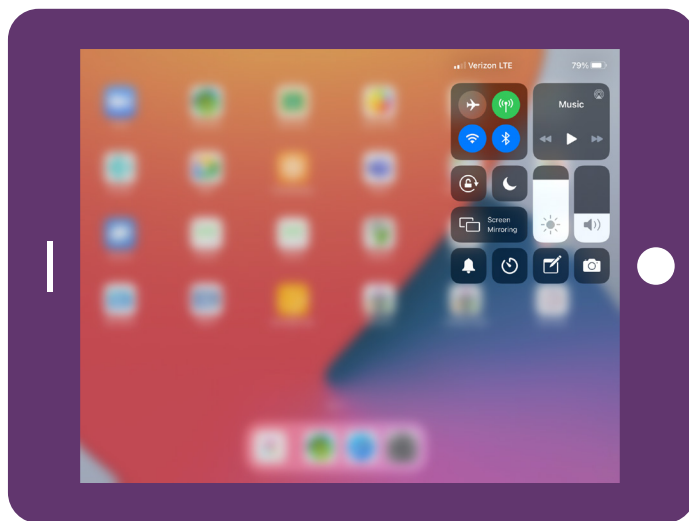
Please let them know which apps they will be using on the devices as there may be some not for your program.



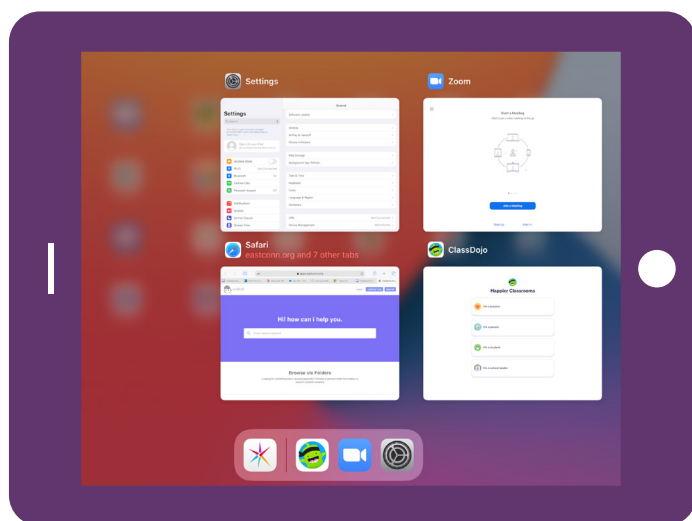
GETTING STARTED



When they want to quickly access the settings for sound, camera, brightness, WIFI, Bluetooth, etc., slide down the top right corner of the iPad to see this:



To access the full settings, click on the Settings application located on the home screen in the bottom bar.



To close out open apps and windows, double click on the home button on the bottom of the iPad, then swipe up each open app or window to close it out.



IPAD CARE



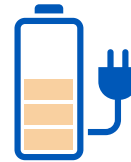
Care of Your iPad

Store the iPad in the case provided, and in a safe and secure location.

- ⚙️ Protect the iPad as you would your purse or wallet.
- ⚙️ Don't leave your iPad in a car.
- ⚙️ Don't leave the iPad unattended in a public space.



Protect your iPad from liquids and extreme temperatures.



When charging, make sure the charging cord isn't a tripping hazard.



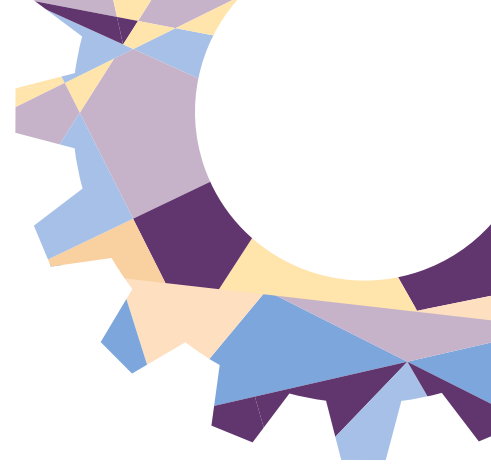
Only use your fingers or a special stylus (pointer) on the screen.



Report a lost or stolen iPad immediately.



INTERNET SAFETY



Internet Safety

- ⚙ Always supervise children while they browse the internet.
- ⚙ Always keep your passwords secure.
- ⚙ Only allow family members to use the iPad.
- ⚙ Only connect the iPad to familiar wireless networks.
 - ⚙ Avoid using your iPad in a public space, such as a fast food restaurant.
 - ⚙ Using your public library should be safe.
- ⚙ Only communicate online with people you can identify.
 - ⚙ Never open attachments without trusting the sender.
- ⚙ Internet content provided by the cellular service is filtered for the protection of your children.
- ⚙ Internet content provided by home or commercial Wi-Fi networks may not be filtered.
- ⚙ Always remain careful about sharing your personal information. Learn how to recognize and protect yourself from phishing (the tricks that are used to steal information and more) here, <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/how-recognize-and-avoid-phishing-scams>



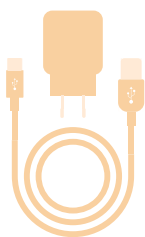
RETURNING IPAD

Exiting Geer Up For Learning

⚙ When asking families to return the iPad, make sure they include:

- ⚙ The iPad
- ⚙ The case
- ⚙ The charging cord
- ⚙ The charging adapter

⚙ Provide receipt to families.

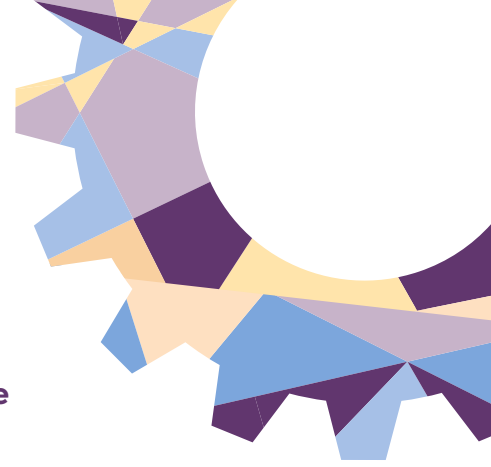


Important iPad Guidelines

- ⚙ Use of the iPad should be limited to specified program activities.
- ⚙ Families are not responsible for a broken, lost, or stolen iPad. However, they are responsible to report broken, lost, or stolen iPads as soon as they can to their Early Care and Education program.
- ⚙ Devices may not be available to replace a broken, lost, or stolen iPad.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



The following professional development opportunities focus on the use of technology to support children's learning and development, and connect with families. Sessions are open to all providers; however, some content may be specific to early care and education teachers.



- ⚙️ The Technology in Early Childhood Center at the Erikson Institute offered a series of webinars November through January. There will be an opportunity to access the content of the webinars by watching a video and completing a workbook mid-January through February.
- ⚙️ OEC Remote Learning Guidance: This document provides general guidance and resources related to supporting young children's learning through the use of technology.
- ⚙️ The OEC is also partnering with the RESC Alliance to provide support related to remote learning. The RESCs will be offering two types of support. This support is described below, with additional details and registration information provided on the flyers and on the OEC website.
 - ⚙️ Office Hours to Support Remote Learning Practices: An open drop-in opportunity to participate in facilitated discussions and ask questions related to remote learning and developmentally appropriate practices.
 - ⚙️ An opportunity to engage with a facilitator and a team of educators, sharing ideas to enhance remote learning practices.
 - ⚙️ Space in the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) is limited. Programs receiving devices through GEER have been prioritized for participation, along with state funded programs that are offering remote learning. Please identify one to two staff members per site who are able to participate in all scheduled sessions and who will share information with others facilitating remote learning opportunities. We will work to accommodate as many individuals as possible, but may need to prioritize enrollment to ensure that all programs are able to participate.



RESOURCES

Funded by the OEC through the Governor's Education Emergency Relief Fund in partnership with NEAT and the RESC Alliance.



Connecticut Office
of Early Childhood



Governor's Education
Emergency Relief

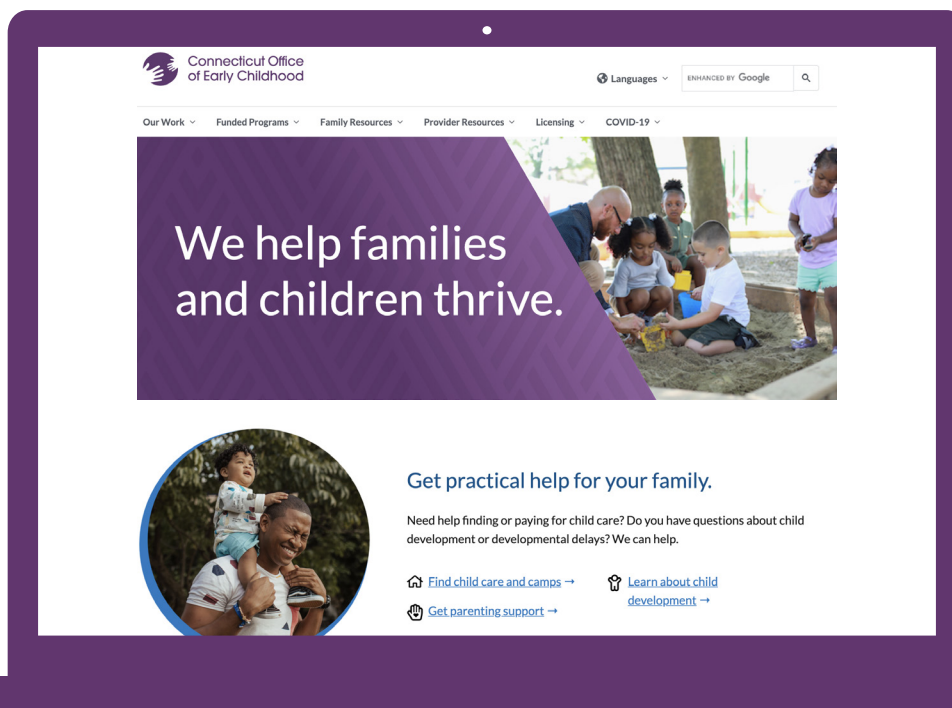


OEC WEBSITE

OEC Resources for Providers

We know this is a challenging time for providers. Here are some resources that might help:

- ⚙️ **Program Operations during COVID-19** – Find resources and guides for running your program
- ⚙️ **Supporting Children and Families During COVID-19** – Includes tips for supporting children and families, and learning from home
- ⚙️ **CTCARES Programs** – a series of short-term programs to help families and child care providers during COVID-19





Welcome to sparkler

A tool to engage Connecticut families to
promote healthy early development



Contents

1. What is Sparkler and Why is it Important?

2. How can Families Use Sparkler?

- Mobile developmental screening (ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2)
- Parent-child co-play and parenting tips
- Connection

3. How can Educators, Home Visitors, and Providers use Sparkler?

- Using the dashboard
- Getting started with a unique code and admin login credentials

4. Conclusion

- Contact Sparkler with questions: support@playsparkler.org

What is Sparkler?

Sparkler is an evidence-based, mobile tool that promotes engagement, screening, and early learning.

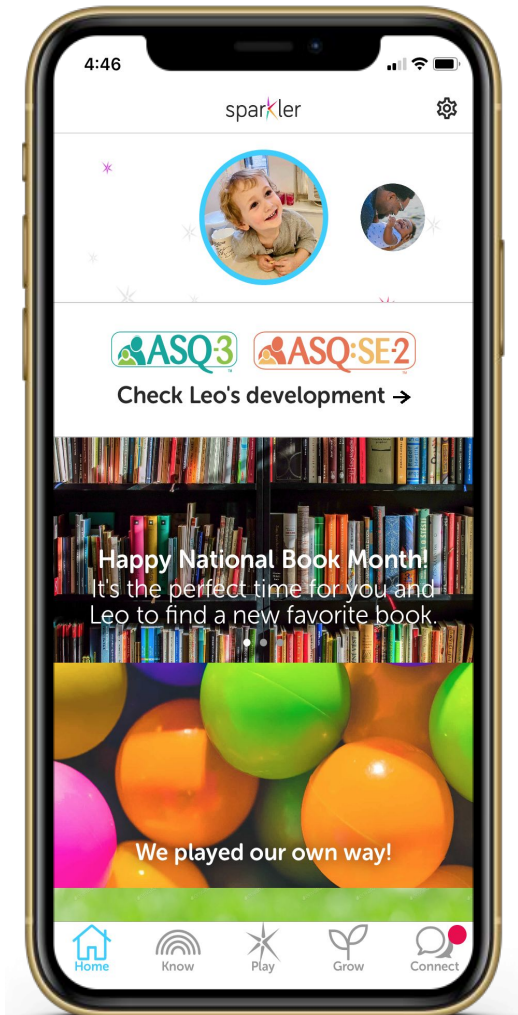
Starting this year, Sparkler is available to ALL Connecticut families of 0-5 year olds in English & Spanish, on Android/iOS. It will appear on iPads families receive through GEER.

For families, Sparkler offers:

1. **Screening:** Mobile developmental screening (ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2)
2. **Play & Parenting Tips:** Standards- aligned activities for parents and children.
3. **Connection:** Connection with professionals — 211 Child Development and/or providers (schools/teachers, home visitors, etc.).

For providers, Sparkler enables:

1. **Engagement:** Use the app to see what families see.
2. **Monitoring and Connecting:** Use Sparkler's web-based dashboard to monitor and interact with the families you serve.



Why Sparkler?



♥ Heart

💡 Mind

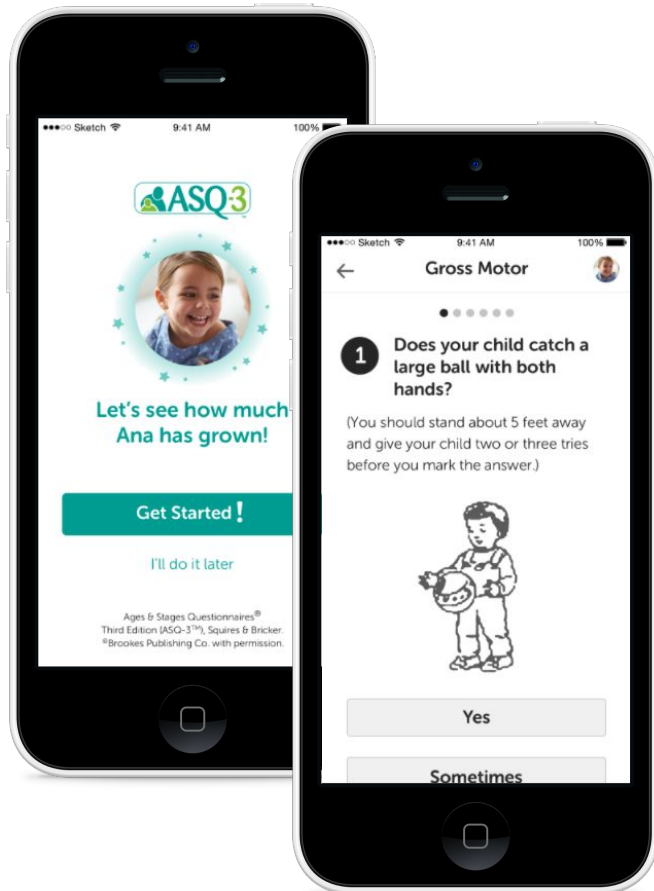
🧑 Body

💬 Words

The early years have a lifelong impact: The years before kindergarten (birth - age 5) are vitally important. Children's early experiences and their back-and-forth interactions with parents and caregivers shape their early development — and prepare them for success in school and life. Early screening, monitoring, and intervention can make a lifetime of difference for parents/caregivers and their children.

Sparkler is a tool that empowers and engages parents/caregivers by making developmental screening and early learning resources available and accessible — helping parents, educators, and other early childhood providers collaborate to help children develop strong hearts, minds, bodies, and words — and get ready for a lifetime of success.

Screen to Know how a Child is Doing



Families can visit **KNOW** in Sparkler to find the mobile Ages and Stages Questionnaires® currently assigned to their child.

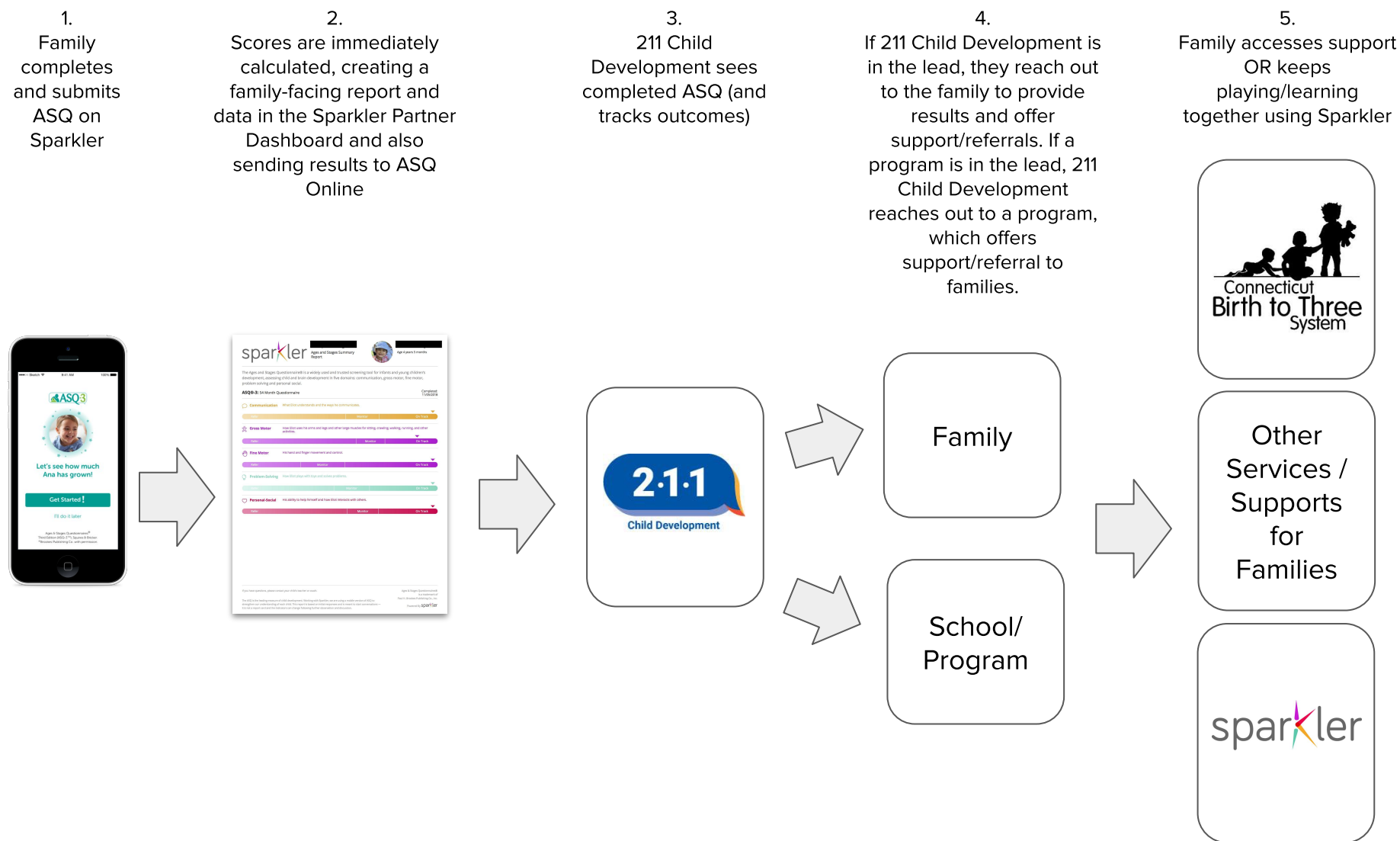
ASQ-3: A screening tool that pinpoints developmental progress in children between the ages of one month to 5 ½ years. It looks at children's progress in communication, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, problem solving, and personal-social skills.

ASQ:SE-2: A screening tool to assess the social-emotional behaviors of young children.

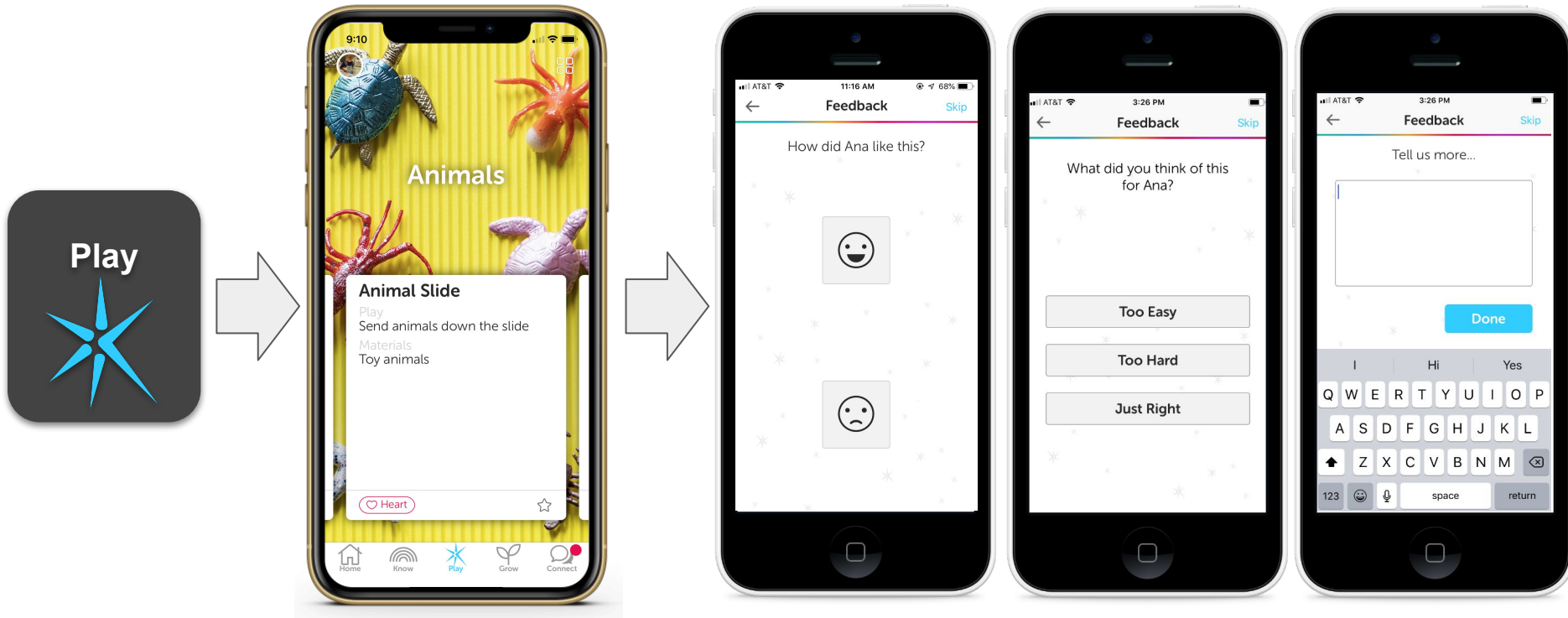
The Ages and Stages Questionnaires® are designed to be completed by parents; they have been in use for decades and have been proven to be reliable and valid measures. They help educators, doctors, and families understand children's strengths, celebrate milestones, set goals, and access support.

Ages & Stages Questionnaires® and ASQ® are registered trademarks of Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

What Happens When a CT Family Takes the ASQ?

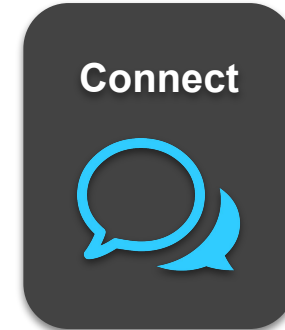


Play: Spark Healthy Early Development Together!



Families can visit **PLAY** in Sparkler to swipe through a library of standards-aligned, age-appropriate, play-based learning activities designed to spark playful co-play and learning. Each play card contains a simple “recipe for play.” They can read it and then put down their phone to play with their children. Once they play, they can add a photo, and press “we did it.” If they choose, they can provide feedback about the activity, which is added to their Sparkler scrapbook so they can keep track of what they accomplish together. Providers can use Sparkler to “recommend” different activities that are aligned with their priorities/curriculum. Sparkler currently has a library of 1500+ activities and is adding more all the time, including activities aligned with CT ELDS!

Get Handy Messages & Connect With Other Caregivers

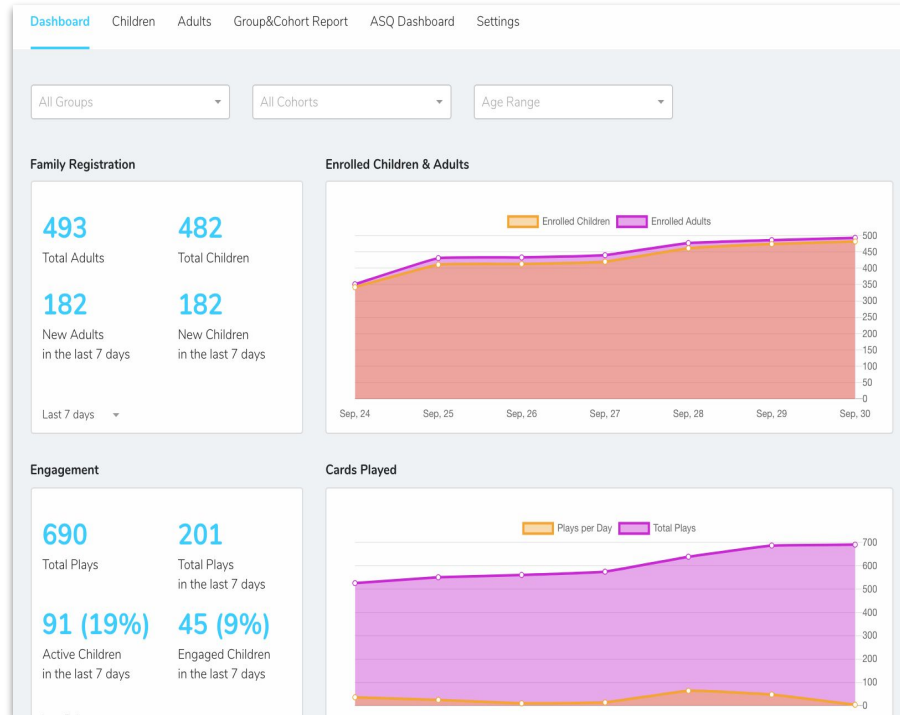


Sparkler has robust two-way messaging to engage and connect with families. Providers can send messages from the Sparkler Dashboard, which families receive in the **CONNECT** section of their Sparkler app.

Messaging includes:

- **2-3 messages** per week for families with tips and reminders.
- **Custom coaching** to families from teachers/home visitors/other providers.
- **The ability for parents to connect with other relatives/caregivers**, to correspond and work together to support a child's learning.

How Can Educators/Home Visitors/Providers Use Sparkler?



Educators, home visitors, and other providers in the state of Connecticut can sign into Sparkler's the web-based partner dashboard to track trends and engage with families.

Accessing the Dashboard is just for educators, home visitors, and other providers, *not* for parents, and is a separate log in. It allows you to:

- **Track trends** across groups of parents
- **See individual parent/child learning and progress**, including ASQ results and play
- **Download** aggregate and individual data
- **Download** parent-friendly screening reports, with ASQ visualizations, which can be shared with families
- **Engage and communicate** with families — groups or individuals — with messages or sending suggested activities

A window into progress @home: see progress and learning!



Sparkler enables providers to engage families and also gives them a “window” into what families are accomplishing together outside of school. When providers look at families’ feedback and photos, they get information they can use to provide tailored feedback and encourage deeper engagement.

Help Your Families Get Started



Learn through play with sparkler

Sparkler sparks healthy early development for children (0-5) and families in Connecticut. Check in on your child's development and get a library of 1000+ play activities just right for your child's age. Get regular coaching and advice — right on your new iPad. Sparkler is in English and Spanish, for iOS or Android.



How to Register:

1. Tap "Create a New Account" In Sparkler
2. Enter Sparkler Access Code:
3. Enter your name and email to create your account
4. Create your password
5. Enter your phone number, address, ZIP (optional)
6. Choose Your Group in the drop-down menu:
7. Review "Sponsoring Partners" and Privacy
8. Create a profile for your child: name, preferred pronoun, birth date, and photo (optional)
9. Enter your Provider Key to link with your home visitor:

GEER-eligible families will find Sparkler on their iPads.

Other families interested in participating can download Sparkler from the App Store or Google Play Store.

Families should use the correct **codes** to link with their program and individual provider (if their provider is using Sparkler):

- Home Visiting: 1788
- ECE families: 1600
- Birth to Three: 8023

Please see the attached **handouts** for your program, which you can share with your families. If you could use fliers, posters, or other materials to help share or explain Sparkler with your families, please reach out (support@playsparkler.org).

Please encourage families to get started and use Sparkler to spark healthy early development!

sparkler

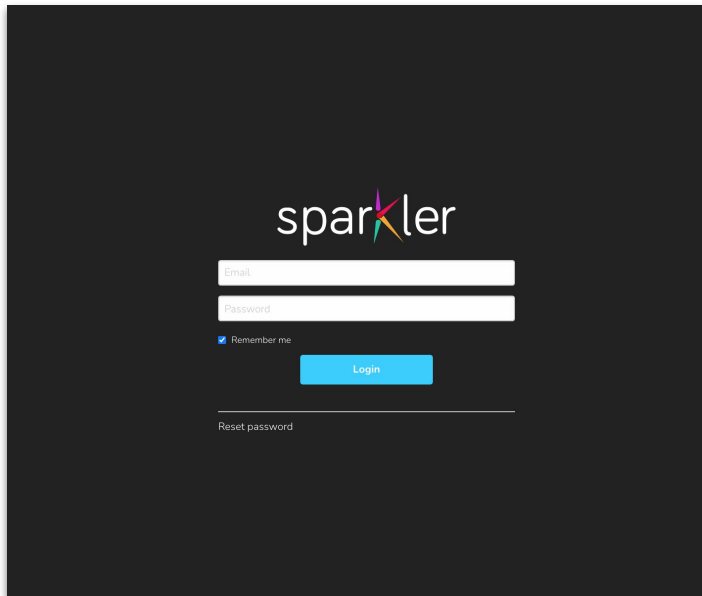
Connecticut Office of
Early Childhood

Connecticut
2-1-1
Child Development
Infoline

ASQ
Ages & Stages
Questionnaires

sparkler

How Can YOU Get Started With the Sparkler Dashboard?



<https://app.playsparkler.com/dashboard/login>

Use an Existing Account: Do you and your organization already have access to Sparkler's dashboard? If you need help accessing an existing account, please reach out to your supervisor.

Create New Access: If you do *not* have access to the dashboard and want to start using it to engage with families, please reach out to your program's leadership AND email support@playsparkler.org.

Once you do, two things will happen:

1. **Sparkler will create a code for your organization/classroom.** When a family signs up with YOUR code, they link to your organization, cohort, or classroom. This allows you to see them and vice versa.
2. **Sparkler will create partner admin dashboard access** for the person/people who are authorized to use Sparkler.



Thank you for helping all Connecticut children get off to a strong start! Visit playsparkler.org/connecticut or email support@playsparkler.org with questions.

Participate in your own time in TEC Center's PD workshop series!

AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING THROUGH FEBRUARY 26th!

The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) and Erikson Institute's Technology in Early Childhood (TEC) Center are excited to provide an asynchronous opportunity to participate in a technology-focused professional development workshop series exclusively for Connecticut early childhood teachers and administrators.

These professional learning opportunities were funded by OEC with funding from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund.



Connecticut Office of
Early Childhood



Sessions and Steps

RETHINKING TECHNOLOGY USE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD Participants will explore how young children learn from screen-based devices, barriers that make learning from screen-based devices difficult, as well as strategies to effectively mitigate those barriers. **Steps to participate:**

First, for your workbook, click [this link](#) to make a copy in Google Drive or [this link](#) to download it as a PDF

Next, [click this link](#) to open the Vimeo videos to watch for each topic (**Password: ctec**). Utilize your workbook for the reflection prompts in each video.

Finally, [click this link](#) to complete this post-workshop survey.

TECHNOLOGY & SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING Participants will prioritize the whole child's health, safety, and engagement by supporting their social emotional learning using technology tools. Participants will discover ways to use technology as a tool to support relationships between teachers and students. **Steps to participate:**

First, for your workbook, click [this link](#) to make a copy in Google Drive or [this link](#) to download it as a PDF

Next, [click this link](#) to open the Vimeo videos to watch for each topic (**Password: ctec**). Utilize your workbook for the reflection prompts in each video.

Finally, [click this link](#) to complete this post-workshop survey.

SUPPORTING CAREGIVER ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION Participants will explore ways to increase caregiver engagement and involvement in remote learning while considering caregiver and family needs. This session highlights the positive outcomes and potential of remote learning as an access point to families and bridging the school to home partnership. **Steps to participate:**

First, for your workbook, click [this link](#) to make a copy in Google Drive or [this link](#) to download it as a PDF

Next, [click this link](#) to open the Vimeo videos to watch for each topic (**Password: ctec**). Utilize your workbook for the reflection prompts in each video.

Finally, [click this link](#) to complete this post-workshop survey.

SUPPORTING ALL LEARNERS WITH TECHNOLOGY *Available Jan 22th All children do not approach technology in the same ways. Participants will learn some of the evidence behind effectively using technology with young children with a range of abilities. **Steps to participate:**

First, for your workbook, click [this link](#) to make a copy in Google Drive or [this link](#) to download it as a PDF

Next, [click this link](#) to open the Vimeo videos to watch for each topic (**Password: ctec**). Utilize your workbook for the reflection prompts in each video.

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