



State of Connecticut  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Commission on Children

## 2007 Children's Legislation

### Summary of Legislation Concerning Connecticut Children, Youth, and Families

July 13, 2007

#### I. Prevention and Early Intervention

- **Passed: Public Act 07-47 Signed by Governor Rell (RB 5108), An Act Concerning Reporting Requirements Related to the Child Poverty and Prevention Council** - last year the Child Poverty and Prevention Council was merged to strengthen the nexus between poverty and prevention investments. The bill requires the Child Poverty and Prevention Council to submit annual reports to the Governor and legislature and requires the Governor to continue to submit a Prevention Budget. **This year investments in prevention programs increased 3% toward the state goal of at least 10% investment in programs that promote the health, safety and learning of children and support families.**

#### II. Healthy Expectations for Children, Youth and Families

- **Passed: Public Act 07-185 (SB 1484), An Act Concerning the HealthFirst Connecticut and Healthy Kids Initiative**- as amended by **HB 8002, AA Implementing the Provisions of the Budget Concerning Human Services and Public Health**, a comprehensive health bill expanding coverage for the state Medicaid Program.

**Key policy provisions in the bill:**

- 1) Raises the income eligibility to 185% of the Federal Poverty Level for parents and relative caregivers; 2) Expands HUSKY outreach;
- 3) Increased reimbursement rates for providers; 4) Automatic enrollment in HUSKY for uninsured newborns; 5) Establishes two Primary Care Case Management Pilots; 6) Creates two planning commissions for universal health care and a more primary preventive health care system;
- 7) Provides for medical interpreters in hospitals ; 8) ) Eliminates HUSKY cost sharing requirement; 9) requires DSS to institute a premium assistance program for HUSKY A; 10) Extends coverage to

needy pregnant women whose families income have not exceeding two hundred fifty percent of the FPL; 11) Establishes a Child Quality Improvement Program to implement best practices in primary care providers office; 13) Provides funding for the Health Information Network with the University of Connecticut Health Center, Department of Public Health to securely integrate state health and social services data.; 14) Funding for expansion of “Electronic health information system to share information among systems to inform decision making and enhance health outcomes for individuals. 15) As of January 1, 2009, insurers must continue coverage up until age 26 years of age or when the person gets married. Coverage depends on the child being a resident of the state except for full time students attending out of state accredited institutions of higher education or resides out of state with a custodial parent.

**Budget Allocations:**

- Allocates \$17,025 in '08 and \$22,700 in '09 for expansion for parents 185% ( est. 9,700 people will be covered);
  - \$3.5 million in '08 and \$3.5 million in '09 for pregnant women from 185% to 250%, will require federal approval;
  - \$2.5 million in each year for the Primary Case Management Pilots in Windham and Waterbury for 1000 HUSKY clients;
  - \$3.9m in '08 and \$8.2m in '09 to extend coverage to newborns for 4 months;
  - provides for \$500,000 to implement provision requiring each school district to report on whether the pupil has health insurance, expected to increase enrollment by 3,300, \$5.4 million in '08 and \$8.4
  - Oral Health, \$20m in each fiscal year
  - HMO rate increase- \$10m in each fiscal year – total \$43,550,037 in '08 and \$52,306,416 in '09.
  - Increases reimbursement rates for fee for service health expenditures, \$94.35 in '08 and \$120.7 million in '09.
  - \$1 million for community and school based HUSKY outreach in each year of the budget.
  - Effective April 2009, requires DSS to pay for foreign language interpreter services for Medicaid patients.
- **Passed: Public Act 07-101 (HB 6646), An Act Concerning Medicaid Billing Practices for Federally Qualified Health Centers,** Permits Federally Qualified Health Centers under the Medicaid Program to receive reimbursement for multiple services provided to an individual on the same calendar day.
  - **Passed: Public Act 07-83 (HB 7065,) An Act Concerning Legislative Review and Approval of Waiver Applications Submitted by the Commissioner of DSS to the Federal Government.** Requires DSS to receive approval from the

Human Services and Appropriations Committees for any waiver submitted to the federal government regarding section 17b-8 regarding the Medicaid health system.

- **Passed: Public Act 07-107 ( SB 260 ) AAC Health Assessments for Adolescent Student.** Moves up the mandating health physicals for children from grades 10 or 11 to grades 9 or 10 in order to identify health needs of youth earlier.
- **Expansion of the Birth to Three Program:** \$913,507 in '08 and \$2,181,319 in '09, total \$26,945,837 in '08 and \$ 28,213,749 in '09
- **School Based Health Clinics:** increase \$2.5 million in each year, total \$10.209,364 in each fiscal year.
- **Healthy Lifestyles Initiative and Childhood Obesity Prevention:** \$1 million in each fiscal year.
- **Children's Behavioral Health:** \$1,337,500 in each fiscal year

### III. Children's Health and Safety

- **Passed: HB 6723, An Act Concerning Prevention of Lead Poisoning** - requires universal screening and lowers the threshold for intervention by the local Health Director from 20 micrograms per deciliter to 15 micrograms per deciliter (ug//dl). **Included in the budget Implementer bill, HB 8002, An Act Implementing the Provisions of The Budget Concerning Human services and Public Health.**

**Budget:** local health district, \$2.5m in each year; \$713,000 in each year to DPH for the universal lead screening provision; and \$600,000 for laboratory equipment from the state surplus

- **Failed: SB 1324, An Act Concerning Health Care Access, Quality and Family Support for Children with Special Health Care Needs** - establish an oversight council to better coordinate and plan for children with special health care needs.

**Budget: \$550, 000 is allocated in the budget for 20 additional Children to be served in the Katie Beckett Waiver for children with special Health care needs. This brings the number served to 200.**

- **Passed: Public Act 07-8 (SB 1152), An Act Concerning Placement of Siblings of Children by the Department of Children and Families** - changes the age for placement into special study foster homes from fourteen to ten, and also allows placement of children with non-relatives, if such children are siblings of other children placed in relative care.

- **Passed: Public Act 07-143, An Act Concerning Jessica’s Law and Consensual Sexual Activity Between Adolescents Close in Age to Each Other,** to provide enhanced penalties for the sexual assault of children under thirteen years of age, require mandatory minimum terms of imprisonment for the crimes of enticing a minor, employing a minor in an obscene performance and importing or possessing child pornography and enact a tender years exception to the hearsay rule.
- **Passed: Public Act 07-168, An Act Banning Pesticide Use on School Grounds-** bans use of pesticides on school play grounds and athletic fields for grades k-8<sup>th</sup> grades.

## **I. Early Childhood: Building a Comprehensive, Quality, System**

1. **School Readiness Grant Program:** \$10.2 in '08 and \$24.9 in '09, estimate of 600 new slots in '08 and 3000 in '09; total \$61,388,972 in '08 and \$76,338,972 in '09.
2. **State Funded Child Development Centers:** \$ 2.5 in '08 and \$4.943 in '09 For increased reimbursement rates tied to meeting the School Readiness program standards. Total including municipal payments \$12,834,278 in '08 and \$15,127,583 in '09.
3. **Care4Kids child care subsidy program:** \$89,985,229 in '08 and \$93,118,727
4. **Head Start:** \$2.2 in '08 and \$2.2 in '09, total including services and enhancements \$4,621,150
5. **School Readiness Facilities Expansion:** allocates \$6.5 in '08 and \$8.5 in '09 for debt service on bonding for renovation and new facilities for pre-K programs. (Treasurers budget)
6. **Early Childhood Workforce:** DSS School Readiness Enhancement funds: \$4,355,361 in '08 and \$4,955,500 in '09 for workforce registry; scholarship program, accreditation project and quality enhancement for school readiness programs: Office of Workforce Competitiveness, \$500,000 for Career Ladder Project; Higher Education, \$500,000 for Higher Education Collaborative to support articulation between two and four year colleges and development of a birth to three credential.
7. **Quality Assurance and Accountability System:** \$900,000 in '08 and \$900,000 in '09 is allocated to the Cabinet to accomplish the following:
  - Developing an accountability system including adopting outcomes and measures for publicly funding pre-K programs, may use Head Start assessment.

- Charged with developing a Quality Rating System for Pre-K programs; \$3 million in '08 and \$2.5 million in '09
- Conduct a longitudinal study of school readiness programs that examines the educational progress of children from pre-kindergarten to third grade;
- Unexpended School Readiness funds may be used by the Department of Education for various purposes to support school readiness including professional development; transition to kindergarten; development of a statewide pre-school curriculum; developing student assessments for students in grades k to two; developing and implementing best practices in involving parents; transition to k; professional development including assistance in career advancement for school readiness staff: by October 1, 2007, implement a K assessment tool for all children in kindergarten ( may not be used as an accountability tool for program accountability);
- By December 1, 2008, Cabinet required to adopt and implement the accountability plan for early child education services; plan shall include: population indicators and program and system measures of the readiness of children to enter kindergarten, and development of data sharing agreements between state agencies and whether the data can be combined to assess the progress of children toward school readiness.
- By December 31, 2008, and annually thereafter, the cabinet shall report on the measures implemented to the Office of Policy and Management, and to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of budgets related to education, human services, and higher education and employment advancement.
- Providers of early childhood education receiving state funding must employ the program measures developed in the plan to evaluate the effectiveness of their service and by June 30, 2009 shall report the results if said evaluation to the Early Childhood Cabinet.
- By December 31, 2008 report to the Cabinet and the Legislature on progress in developing a quality workforce that meets the school readiness qualifications.
- Provide funding to local school readiness councils to plan and implement broader plans for a birth to eight early childhood system to achieve optimal health and school success.

## II. Early Reading Success

- **Failed: RB 1218, An Act Concerning the Assessment of the Teaching of Reading-** to require the development of an assessment in the area of reading as a requirement for certain teacher certification candidates.
- **Passed; RB 7136, An Act Concerning a Grant Program to Match Federal and Private Dollars to Promote Early Childhood Literacy in Pediatric Care Settings-** funding for Reach Out and Read Program in Pediatric Practices.

**Budget allocates \$150,000 in '08 and '09 for the program to the State Department of Education in HB 8003.**

- **Budget allocates \$150,000 in '08 and '09 for the program to the State Department of Education included in HB 8003.**
- **Passed:** Early Reading Success Grant: included in the Education Implementer bill is language requiring SDE to require priority school districts receiving grant funds to adopt best practices in reading instruction. If a school district fails to do so, SDE can impose a reading program that must be implemented. School districts are required to report on progress of students due to the program in improving reading skills.

#### **IV. Positive Youth Development**

- **Passed: RB 1196, An Act Concerning the Age of a Child for Purposes of Jurisdiction in Delinquency Matters and Proceedings** - youth ages 16 and 17 years old would be treated as juveniles in criminal matters instead of in the adult system beginning in 2010.  
**Included in HB 1500, An Act Implementing the Provisions of the Budget Concerning General Government**
- **Passed: RB 7246, An Act Implementing the Plan of the Juvenile Jurisdiction Planning and Implementation Committee** - provides a timetable and funding to the Judicial Department to establish regional youth courts and staff to accommodate the 16 and 17 year olds in the Juvenile Court. **Included in HB 1500**
- **Passed: HB 5576, Family Support Centers for Children of Families with Service Needs** - establishes Family Support Centers for FWSN in local communities. (note: as of October 2007, judges cannot order a FWSN youth incarcerated).
- **Passed: RB 7348, An Act Concerning After School and Out of Time School Grants** - provides flexibility to the Department of Education to administer the grant including allocating up to 5% for technical assistance for quality and sustainability and allowing non-profits to apply for funding:  
**Budget**  
Budget allocates \$5.3 in '08 and '09. Also, \$150,000 is allocated for after school accreditation initiatives and Charter Oak College received \$54,000 in each year for early childhood staff to facilitate the school age credential program. **In HB 8003, An Act Implementing Provisions of the Budget Concerning Education**

- **Passed: Public Act 07-66 (RB 7350), An Act Concerning In-School Suspensions** - requires school districts to provide for in school suspensions unless there is a serious situation.
- **Passed; RB 709, An Act Establishing a Community Violence Outreach Program** - to provide grants to municipalities to reduce youth violence.  
**Budget:** \$ 1 million in each fiscal year
- **Failed; Public Act 07-135 (HB 5656 ), An Act Concerning Access to Post Secondary Education** - the bill extends in-state tuition status to undocumented immigrants residing in CT who show “residence” in CT and he or she must file an affidavit with the college stating that he or she has applied to legalize immigration status.
- **Family With Service Needs:** #3.5 in each fiscal year for four new Family Support Centers to serve high risk youth and their families.

## V. Family Strength

- **Parent Trust Act:** Budget: allocates \$250, 000 in each fiscal year
- **Passed: Public Act 07-160 (HB 7240), An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Legislative Program Review and Investigation Committee Concerning the State’s Welfare Reform Initiative** - Makes changes to the state’s Welfare to Work Program: 1) allows DSS to run part of the cash assistance program with state funds only to help avoid federal work participating rate-related penalties; 2) expands the Safety Net Program to include families who have complied with the Jobs First Program rules; 3) makes certain DOL records available for review by the state’s regional workforce investment boards baring confidentiality protections; 4) requires DOL to collect data on job training and placement services it funds rather than DSS.
- **HB 6649, An Act Concerning a State Earned Income Tax Credit** – to provide persons who qualify for and claim the federal earned income tax credit, a credit against their state liability equal to twenty per cent of their federal credit for the same income year. (EITC) **Failed**
- **RB 1335, An Act Concerning School Readiness for Homeless Children** - establishes a grant program to provide comprehensive services to children living in shelters. **Budget;** \$300,000 in each year for shelters to establish child coordinators.
- **Passed: Public Act 07-63 (SB 1156), An Act Aligning the Food Stamp Program Motor Vehicle Rule with the Care4Kids Motor Vehicle Rule**-permits DSS to exclude motor vehicles when determining eligibility for the federal Food

Stamp Program. Allows eligible families to access food stamps without having to sell their cars.

- **HB 7037, An Act Expanding the Subsidized Guardianship program to Siblings of Children Living with Relative Caregivers, and the Right of Foster Parents, Prospective Adoptive Parents and Relative Caregivers to be Heard in Certain Legal Proceedings.** The bill makes more guardians eligible for cash and medical assistance through DCF's Subsidized Guardianship Program. Currently the program is restricted to relatives taking care of foster children whose parents are either dead or unlikely to be able to care for them within the foreseeable future. Under the bill, caregivers qualify for additional subsidies when they assume guardianship of the child's half or step siblings to whom they are not related. It also allows foster parents and prospective adoptive parents, and relative caregivers the right to be heard at all proceedings concerning an abused or neglected child they are caring for or who was under their care in the last year.  
**Failed**

## **VI. Innovation in Education**

- **Failed : SB 1094, An Act Concerning School Bullying-** bill requires school districts to not only develop a bullying policy but to implement it. It also proposes a fine up to \$10,000 for non-compliance with the bullying law. **No action after both Houses passed with conflicting amendments.**
- **Passed: Public Act 07-122 (HB 7273), An Act Concerning Suspensions and Expulsions by Local and Regional Boards of Education** - the bill gives authority to a school administrator rather than the board to shorten or waive suspension periods for students who have not previously had either a suspension or expulsion imposed on them if the student completes an administration specified program. It extends the same authority to the Boards of Education to take similar action for an expulsion of such students if they complete a Board specified program. The law already allows administrations to determine suspension periods and boards to determine expulsion periods, but only specifically allows for modifications, on a case by case basis by the board, where the law requires a student to be expelled for a year because he possessed a weapon or sold drugs. Students and families cannot be charged for participation in any programs mandated by administrators or boards of education.
- **Passed: Public Act No. 07-66 (HB 7350), An Act Concerning In-School Suspension,** Prohibits out of school suspension except for serious threats to safety, and extends from five to 10 days the maximum length of in-school suspensions. The law defines suspension as exclusion from school privileges or from transportation but not from education programs.

- **Passed; Public Act 07-147 ( SB 977), An Act Concerning Restraints and Seclusion in Public Schools**, Places school districts under the same regulations for use of restraints and seclusion for special education students to conform with what other state agencies are required to do. It requires schools to notify parents about the laws and regulations governing the use of physical restraints and seclusion and also when physical restraints have been used on their children.

## VII. Education Innovation and Accountability

The Legislature passed the largest increase in education funding in recent history, growing from \$1.6 billion in FY 07 to \$ 1.88 billion in FY 09. Commensurately, new laws provide sweeping authority to the State Board of Education to ensure accountability and progress in reducing the achievement gap among Connecticut’s urban, suburban and rural students.

### Highlights

- Establish up to 12 new CommPACT schools based on the Boston “Pilot School” model. Under the jurisdiction of local school boards, these school will have autonomy over budget, staffing, governance, curriculum and school calendar- a public charter school concept to spark innovation within school districts. **Budget, \$500, 000 in FY 09**
- Expand magnet school per pupil subsidy and expand the number of students in magnet schools. **Budget, \$17.4 million in FY 08 and \$2.5 million in FY 09.**
- Funding to establish a longitudinal data system to track individual student academic progress as well as put in place a school rating system to measure school district student achievement. **Budget, \$3.65 in FY 08 and \$2.75 in FY 09.**
- Funding for ten new positions in the State Department of Education to implement a new system of oversight and accountability. **Budget, \$1.9 in FY 08 and \$1.9 in FY 09.**

### State Board of Education: Increased Authority

The State Board of Education has new powers to take significant action to raise student performance in school districts persistently failing to make progress:

- Direct the transfer and assignment of teachers and principals
- Require the district to implement curriculum approved by the State Department of Education.
- Assign a technical assistance team to the school district to guide school or district initiatives.
- Reconstitute schools as charter schools.
- Provide funding so that students in a failing school or district may attend public school in a neighboring district.

- School districts failing to make Adequate Yearly Progress for two consecutive years additional corrective actions can be taken including: reduce funding; replace personnel; remove school from local control; appoint a receiver or trustee to administer the district; abolish or restructure the district.