



**House Bill No. 6352**

**Public Act No. 11-120**

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND MODIFICATIONS TO STATUTES CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Subsection (a) of section 17a-4 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2011*):

(a) There shall be a State Advisory Council on Children and Families which shall consist of [~~seventeen~~] nineteen members appointed by the Governor, including at least five persons who are child care professionals, two persons eighteen to twenty-five years of age, inclusive, served by the Department of Children and Families, one child psychiatrist licensed to practice medicine in this state and at least one attorney who has expertise in legal issues related to children and youth. The balance of the advisory council shall be representative of young persons, parents and others interested in the delivery of services to children and youths, including child protection, behavioral health, juvenile justice and prevention services. No less than fifty per cent of the council's members shall be parents, foster parents or family members of children who have received, or are receiving, behavioral

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health services, child welfare services or juvenile services and no more than half the members of the council shall be persons who receive income from a private practice or any public or private agency that delivers mental health, substance abuse, child abuse prevention and treatment, child welfare services or juvenile services. Members of the council shall serve without compensation, except for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. The Department of Children and Families shall provide the council with funding to facilitate the participation of those members representing families and youth, as well as for other administrative support services. Members shall serve on the council for terms of two years each and no member shall serve for more than two consecutive terms. The commissioner shall be an ex-officio member of the council without vote and shall attend its meetings. Any member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings or fifty per cent of all meetings during any calendar year shall be deemed to have resigned. The council shall elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson to act in the chairperson's absence.

Sec. 2. Section 17a-3 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2011*):

(a) The department shall plan, create, develop, operate or arrange for, administer and evaluate a comprehensive and integrated state-wide program of services, including preventive services, for children and youths whose behavior does not conform to the law or to acceptable community standards, or who are mentally ill, including deaf and hearing impaired children and youths who are mentally ill, emotionally disturbed, substance abusers, delinquent, abused, neglected or uncared for, including all children and youths who are or may be committed to it by any court, and all children and youths voluntarily admitted to, or remaining voluntarily under the supervision of, the commissioner for services of any kind. Services shall not be denied to any such child or youth solely because of other

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complicating or multiple disabilities. The department shall work in cooperation with other child-serving agencies and organizations to provide or arrange for preventive programs, including, but not limited to, teenage pregnancy and youth suicide prevention, for children and youths and their families. The program shall provide services and placements that are clinically indicated and appropriate to the needs of the child or youth. In furtherance of this purpose, the department shall: (1) Maintain the Connecticut Juvenile Training School and other appropriate facilities exclusively for delinquents; (2) develop a comprehensive program for prevention of problems of children and youths and provide a flexible, innovative and effective program for the placement, care and treatment of children and youths committed by any court to the department, transferred to the department by other departments, or voluntarily admitted to the department; (3) provide appropriate services to families of children and youths as needed to achieve the purposes of sections 17a-1 to 17a-26, inclusive, 17a-28 to 17a-49, inclusive, and 17a-51; (4) establish incentive paid work programs for children and youths under the care of the department and the rates to be paid such children and youths for work done in such programs and may provide allowances to children and youths in the custody of the department; (5) be responsible to collect, interpret and publish statistics relating to children and youths within the department; (6) conduct studies of any program, service or facility developed, operated, contracted for or supported by the department in order to evaluate its effectiveness; (7) establish staff development and other training and educational programs designed to improve the quality of departmental services and programs, provided no social worker trainee shall be assigned a case load prior to completing training, and may establish educational or training programs for children, youths, parents or other interested persons on any matter related to the promotion of the well-being of children, or the prevention of mental illness, emotional disturbance, delinquency and other disabilities in children and youths; (8) develop and implement

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aftercare and follow-up services appropriate to the needs of any child or youth under the care of the department; (9) establish a case audit unit to monitor each area office's compliance with regulations and procedures; (10) develop and maintain a database listing available community service programs funded by the department; (11) provide outreach and assistance to persons caring for children whose parents are unable to do so by informing such persons of programs and benefits for which they may be eligible; and (12) collect data sufficient to identify the housing needs of children served by the department and share such data with the Department of Economic and Community Development.

(b) (1) The department, with the assistance of the State Advisory Council on Children and Families, and in consultation with representatives of the children and families served by the department, providers of services to children and families, advocates, and others interested in the well-being of children and families in this state, shall develop and regularly update a single, comprehensive strategic plan for meeting the needs of children and families served by the department. In developing and updating the strategic plan, the department shall identify and define agency goals and indicators of progress, including benchmarks, in achieving such goals. The strategic plan shall include, but not be limited to: (A) The department's mission statement; (B) the expected results for the department and each of its mandated areas of responsibility; (C) a schedule of action steps and a time frame for achieving such results and fulfilling the department's mission that includes strategies for working with other state agencies to leverage resources and coordinate service delivery; (D) priorities for services and estimates of the funding and other resources necessary to carry them out; (E) standards for programs and services that are based on research-based best practices, when available; and (F) relevant measures of performance.

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(2) The department shall begin the strategic planning process on July 1, 2009. The department shall hold regional meetings on the plan to ensure public input and shall post the plan and the plan's updates and progress reports on the department's web site. The department shall submit the strategic plan to the State Advisory Council on Children and Families for review and comment prior to its final submission to the General Assembly and the Governor. On or before July 1, 2010, the department shall submit the strategic plan, in accordance with section 11-4a, to the General Assembly and the Governor.

(3) The commissioner shall track and report on progress in achieving the strategic plan's goals not later than October 1, 2010, and quarterly thereafter, to said State Advisory Council. The commissioner shall submit a status report on progress in achieving the results in the strategic plan, in accordance with section 11-4a, not later than July 1, 2011, and annually thereafter to the General Assembly and the Governor.

[(c) The department shall prepare a plan to keep children who are convicted as delinquent and will be committed to the Department of Children and Families and placed in the Connecticut Juvenile Training School in such facility for at least one year after their referral to the department, which plan shall include provisions for development of a comprehensive approach to juvenile rehabilitation.]

Sec. 3. Section 17a-102a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2011*):

(a) Each birthing hospital shall provide education and training for nurses and other staff who care for high-risk newborns on the roles and responsibilities of such nurses and other staff as mandated reporters of potential child abuse and neglect under section 17a-101.

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(b) [Not later than October 1, 2002, the] The Department of Children and Families shall [adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, on] coordinate with the birthing hospitals in the state to disseminate information regarding the procedures for the principal providers of daily direct care of high-risk newborns in birthing hospitals to participate in the discharge planning process and ongoing department functions concerning such newborns.

(c) For purposes of this section, "birthing hospital" means a health care facility, as defined in section 19a-630, operated and maintained in whole or in part for the purpose of caring for women during delivery of a child and for women and their newborns following birth, and "high-risk newborn" means any newborn identified as such under any regulation or policy of the Department of Children and Families.

Approved July 8, 2011