



House Bill No. 6724

Public Act No. 15-51

**AN ACT CONCERNING TECHNICAL AND MINOR REVISIONS TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES STATUTES.**

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

Section 1. Subdivision (13) of section 17a-93 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2015*):

(13) "Foster family" means a person or persons, licensed [or certified] by the Department of Children and Families or approved by a licensed child-placing agency, for the care of a child or children in a private home;

Sec. 2. Subsection (c) of section 17a-111b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2015*):

(c) If the court determines that such efforts are not required, the court shall, at such hearing or at a hearing held not later than thirty days after such determination, approve a permanency plan for such child. The plan may include (1) adoption and a requirement that the commissioner file a petition to terminate parental rights, (2) long-term foster care with a relative licensed as a foster parent, [or certified as a relative caregiver,] (3) transfer of guardianship, or (4) such other

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planned permanent living arrangement as may be ordered by the court, provided the commissioner has documented a compelling reason why it would not be in the best interests of the child for the permanency plan to include one of the options set forth in subdivisions (1) to (3), inclusive, of this subsection. The child's health and safety shall be of paramount concern in formulating such plan.

Sec. 3. Section 17a-114a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2015*):

A person licensed [or certified] pursuant to section 17a-114 shall be liable for any act or omission resulting in personal injury to a child placed in his care by the Commissioner of Children and Families to the same extent as a biological parent is liable for any act or omission resulting in personal injury to a biological child in his care.

Sec. 4. Section 17a-106e of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) (1) On and after October 1, 2013, the Department of Children and Families shall, within available appropriations, ensure that each child thirty-six months of age or younger who has been substantiated as a victim of abuse or neglect is screened for both developmental and social-emotional delays using validated assessment tools such as the Ages and Stages and the Ages and Stages-Social/Emotional Questionnaires, or their equivalents. The department shall ensure that such screenings are administered to any such child twice annually, unless such child has been found to be eligible for the birth-to-three program, established under section 17a-248b.

(2) On and after July 1, 2015, the department shall ensure that each child thirty-six months of age or younger who is being served through the department's [differential] family assessment response program, established under section 17a-101g, is screened for both developmental

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and social-emotional delays using validated assessment tools such as the Ages and Stages and the Ages and Stages-Social/Emotional Questionnaires, or their equivalents, unless such child has been found to be eligible for the birth-to-three program.

(b) The department shall refer any child exhibiting developmental or social-emotional delays pursuant to such screenings to the birth-to-three program. The department shall refer any child who is not found eligible for services under the birth-to-three program to the Help Me Grow prevention program of the Children's Trust Fund or a similar program [which] that the department deems appropriate.

(c) Not later than July 1, 2014, and annually thereafter, the department shall submit, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, a report to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children for inclusion in the annual report card prepared pursuant to section 2-53m on the status of the screening and referral program authorized pursuant to subsection (a) of this section. Such report shall include: (1) The number of children thirty-six months of age or younger within the state who have been substantiated as victims of abuse or neglect within the preceding twelve months; (2) the number of children thirty-six months of age or younger within the state who have been served through the department's [differential] family assessment response program within the preceding twelve months; (3) the number of children who were screened for developmental and social-emotional delays pursuant to subsection (a) of this section by the department or by a provider contracted by the department within the preceding twelve months; (4) the number of children in subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection referred for evaluation under the birth-to-three program within the preceding twelve months, the number of such children actually evaluated under such program, the number of such children found eligible for services under such program and the services for which

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such children were found eligible under such program; and (5) the number of children described in subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection receiving evidence-based developmental support services through the birth-to-three program or through a provider contracted by the department within the preceding twelve months.

Sec. 5. Section 17a-44 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2015*):

(a) The photo-listing service shall quarterly check the status of photo-listed children for whom inquiries have been received. Periodic checks shall be made by such service to determine the progress toward adoption of such children and the status of those children registered but never photo-listed because of placement in a preadoptive or adoptive home prior to or at the time of registration.

(b) The commissioner shall refer appropriate children to national adoption or permanency resource exchanges when an adoptive family has not been identified within one hundred eighty days of the termination of the parental rights. The commissioner shall establish criteria by which a determination may be made that a referral to national exchanges is not necessary, and the commissioner shall monitor the status of those children not referred.

Sec. 6. Section 17a-110b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2015*):

The Commissioner of Children and Families shall, within available appropriations, establish [an adoption] a permanency resource exchange in this state within the Department of Children and Families. The primary purpose of the exchange shall be to link children who are awaiting placement with permanent families by providing information and referral services and by the recruitment of potential adoptive families or families interested in pursuing guardianship of such

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children. The department and each child-placing agency shall register any child who is free for adoption with such [adoption] permanency resource exchange.

Approved June 19, 2015