
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6558

AN ACT CONCERNING ISSUES RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT.

SUMMARY

This bill allows the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) commissioner to issue up to six family child care home licenses to a person or group of people who provide child care services in a commissioner-approved space provided through a partnership with an association, organization, corporation, institution, or public or private agency. Under current law, family child care home licenses are for child care services provided in the licensee's private home.

These licenses must be issued in accordance with existing law (unless otherwise specified under the bill) and may be issued in FYs 22-26 for up to one space in each of the following cities: Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, Stamford, or Waterbury. They expire on June 30, 2026, subject to the commissioner's authority to suspend or revoke them under the law (see BACKGROUND). The bill also prescribes an application process for this type of licensure.

Additionally, the bill creates a 13-member early childhood workforce development needs task force.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2021

LICENSE APPLICATION PROCESS

The bill requires prospective licensees for the six family child care home licenses to submit the following items as part of their licensure application: (1) a copy of the current fire marshal certificate of compliance with the Fire Safety Code and (2) written verification of compliance with the State Building Code, local zoning and building requirements, and local health ordinances. Additionally, the bill allows

the OEC commissioner to (1) require applicants to comply with additional conditions related to the health and safety of children to be served in these facilities and (2) waive any requirement that does not apply to these facilities.

EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

Scope

The bill requires the task force to examine the following:

1. ways to encourage equity-based practices in early childhood education preparation and professional development;
2. ways to address inequity in access to employment opportunities and compensation in the early childhood workforce;
3. the feasibility of creating a new, co-authored license that would offer multiple levels of flexibility to address the range of ages, settings, and roles in the early childhood field, including a professional continuum for assistants; lead teachers; generalists; and specialists such as early interventionist, mental health, integrated special education, and rehabilitation therapies; and
4. workforce demands in the state related to the need for early childhood educators providing child care services for infants and toddlers to age six or eight.

Additionally, the bill requires the task force to make recommendations about the following topics:

1. legislation for early childhood educator preparation requirements;
2. creating a new early childhood teacher license or credential jointly issued by OEC and the State Department of Education (SDE);
3. developing a unifying framework for early childhood educator preparation, in accordance with the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Council for Exceptional

Children – Division of Early Childhood, to offer definition of levels for competencies and compensation such as (a) professional development and alternative routes for aides or classroom assistants; (b) associate degree preparation and alternative routes for assistant teachers; (c) bachelor’s degree preparation or post-baccalaureate work for head teachers; (d) bachelor’s degree preparation, post-baccalaureate work, or graduate degree attainment for specialists; and (e) alignment with competencies to address adult learners, experience in the field, as well as capacity in languages, community content, and cultural norms;

4. methods for increasing compensation related to competency and degree attainment that will work across all sectors of the early care and education sector, including subsidized and parent fee supported programs; and
5. early childhood workforce development and job opportunity creation.

Membership

Table 1 describes the required expertise for the 13 task force members and their respective appointing authorities. The bill allows any members appointed by legislative leaders to be General Assembly members.

Table 1: Task Force Membership

<i>Appointing Authority</i>	<i>Member(s) and Required Expertise</i>
House speaker	Early childhood education professor at a Connecticut public higher education institution Representative of a school readiness program or state-funded child care center
Senate president pro tempore	Community college faculty member Representative of a private child care provider that is not receiving state

	financial assistance
House majority leader	Representative of the Capitol Region Education Council regional education service center
Senate majority leader	Family child care home operator or representative of an organization that represents or supports family child care homes
House minority leader	Representative of the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance
Senate minority leader	Representative of a state or national early childhood accrediting organization
N/A	OEC commissioner, or the commissioner's designee
N/A	SDE commissioner, or the commissioner's designee
N/A	Co-chairs of the Connecticut Consortium for the Advancement of Early Childhood Educators
N/A	State Education Resource Center executive director, or the director's designee

The bill requires the above appointments to be made by July 31, 2021, and appointing authorities to fill any vacancies that may arise.

Leadership, Staff, and Meetings

Under the bill, the House speaker's and Senate president pro tempore's appointees must serve as the task force chairpersons, and the Education Committee administrative staff must serve as task force staff. The chairpersons must schedule the first meeting by August 30, 2021.

The task force must report its findings to the Education Committee by January 1, 2023. It must terminate on the date it submits the report or on January 1, 2023, whichever is later.

BACKGROUND

License Suspension and Revocation

The OEC commissioner may suspend or revoke a family child care home license if the family child care home's owner or operator, an assistant or substitute staff member or employee, or any household member age 16 or older has a criminal history containing felony convictions for, among other things, (1) use of physical force, (2) risk of injury to or impairing morals of children, (3) abandonment of young children, (4) illegal drug sale or possession, (5) sexual assault, or (6) any felony where the victim is a minor (CGS § 19a-87e).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference - APP
Yea 38 Nay 0 (03/15/2021)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 50 Nay 0 (04/21/2021)