



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 244

January Session, 2021

Substitute House Bill No. 6559

House of Representatives, April 1, 2021

The Committee on Education reported through REP. SANCHEZ, R. of the 25th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.

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

1 Section 1. Section 10-16o of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

3 The state shall encourage the development of a network of school
4 readiness programs pursuant to sections 10-16p to 10-16r, inclusive, as
5 amended by this act, 10-16u and 17b-749a in order to:

6 (1) Provide open access for children to quality programs that promote
7 the health and safety of children and prepare them for formal schooling;

8 (2) Provide opportunities for parents to choose among affordable and
9 accredited programs;

10 (3) Encourage coordination and cooperation among programs and
11 prevent the duplication of services;

12 (4) Recognize the specific service needs and unique resources
13 available to particular municipalities and provide flexibility in the
14 implementation of programs;

15 (5) Prevent or minimize the potential for developmental delay in
16 children prior to their reaching the age of five;

17 (6) Enhance federally funded school readiness programs;

18 (7) Strengthen the family through: (A) Encouragement of [parental
19 involvement] family engagement and partnership in a child's
20 development and education; and (B) enhancement of a family's capacity
21 to meet the special needs of the children, including children with
22 disabilities;

23 (8) Reduce educational costs by decreasing the need for special
24 education services for school age children and to avoid grade repetition;

25 (9) Assure that children with disabilities are integrated into programs
26 available to children who do not have disabilities; [and]

27 (10) Improve the availability and quality of school readiness
28 programs and their coordination with the services of child care
29 providers; [.] and

30 (11) Facilitate the racial, ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of the
31 children, families and staff in school readiness programs.

32 Sec. 2. Section 10-16p of the general statutes is repealed and the
33 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

34 (a) As used in sections 10-16o to 10-16r, inclusive, as amended by this
35 act, 10-16u, 17b-749a and 17b-749c:

36 (1) "School readiness program" means a nonsectarian program that
37 (A) meets the standards set by the Office of Early Childhood pursuant
38 to subsection (b) of this section and the requirements of section 10-16q,
39 and (B) provides a developmentally appropriate learning experience of
40 not less than four hundred fifty hours and one hundred eighty days for

41 eligible children, except as provided in subsection (d) of section 10-16q;

42 (2) "Eligible children" means children three and four years of age and
43 children five years of age who are not eligible to enroll in school
44 pursuant to section 10-15c, or who are eligible to enroll in school and
45 will attend a school readiness program pursuant to section 10-16t;

46 (3) "Priority school" means a school in which forty per cent or more
47 of the lunches served are served to students who are eligible for free or
48 reduced price lunches pursuant to federal law and regulations,
49 excluding such a school located in a priority school district pursuant to
50 section 10-266p or in a former priority school district receiving a grant
51 pursuant to subsection (c) of this section and, on and after July 1, 2001,
52 excluding such a school in a transitional school district receiving a grant
53 pursuant to section 10-16u;

54 (4) "Severe need school" means a school in a priority school district
55 pursuant to section 10-266p or in a former priority school district in
56 which forty per cent or more of the lunches served are served to students
57 who are eligible for free or reduced price lunches;

58 (5) "Accredited" means accredited by the National Association for the
59 Education of Young Children, National Association for Family Child
60 Care, a Head Start on-site program review instrument or a successor
61 instrument pursuant to federal regulations, or otherwise meeting such
62 criteria as may be established by the commissioner, unless the context
63 otherwise requires;

64 (6) "Year-round" means fifty weeks per year, except as provided in
65 subsection (d) of section 10-16q;

66 (7) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Early Childhood;

67 (8) "Office" means the Office of Early Childhood;

68 (9) "Seeking accreditation" means a school readiness program seeking
69 accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young
70 Children, National Association for Family Child Care or a Head Start

71 on-site program review instrument or successor instrument pursuant to
72 federal regulations, or attempting to meet criteria as may be established
73 by the commissioner; and

74 (10) "Concentration in early childhood education" means a program
75 of study in early childhood education, including, but not limited to,
76 early childhood education, child study, child development or human
77 growth and development.

78 (b) (1) The office shall be the lead agency for school readiness. For
79 purposes of this section and section 10-16u, school readiness program
80 providers eligible for funding from the office shall include local and
81 regional boards of education, regional educational service centers,
82 family resource centers and providers of child care centers, group child
83 care homes and family child care homes, as described in section 19a-77,
84 Head Start programs, preschool programs and other programs that
85 meet any standards established by the commissioner. The office shall
86 establish standards for school readiness programs. The standards may
87 include, but need not be limited to, guidelines for staff-child
88 interactions, curriculum content, including preliteracy development,
89 lesson plans, parental involvement, staff qualifications and training,
90 transition to school and administration. The office shall develop age-
91 appropriate developmental skills and goals for children attending such
92 programs. The commissioner, in consultation with the president of the
93 Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, the Commissioners of
94 Education and Social Services and other appropriate entities, shall
95 develop a professional development program for the staff of school
96 readiness programs.

97 (2) For purposes of this section:

98 (A) Prior to July 1, 2022, "staff qualifications" means that for each
99 early childhood education program accepting state funds for infant,
100 toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's child care
101 program or school readiness program, there is in each classroom an
102 individual who has at least the following: (i) A childhood development
103 associate credential or an equivalent credential issued by an

104 organization approved by the commissioner and twelve credits or more
105 in early childhood education or child development, as determined by
106 the commissioner or the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and
107 Universities, after consultation with the commissioner, from an
108 institution of higher education (I) accredited by the Board of Regents for
109 Higher Education or Office of Higher Education, and (II) regionally
110 accredited; (ii) an associate degree with twelve credits or more in early
111 childhood education or child development, as determined by the
112 commissioner or the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and
113 Universities, after consultation with the commissioner, from such an
114 institution; (iii) a four-year degree with twelve credits or more in early
115 childhood education or child development, as determined by the
116 commissioner or the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and
117 Universities, after consultation with the commissioner, from such an
118 institution; (iv) certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an
119 endorsement in early childhood education or special education; (v) an
120 associate degree with a concentration in early childhood education from
121 an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited; or (vi) a
122 bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education
123 from an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited;

124 (B) From July 1, 2022, until June 30, 2025, "staff qualifications" means
125 that for each early childhood education program accepting state funds
126 for infant, toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's
127 child care program or school readiness program, (i) at least fifty per cent
128 of those individuals with the primary responsibility for a classroom of
129 children (I) hold certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an
130 endorsement in early childhood education or early childhood special
131 education, (II) have been issued an early childhood teacher credential,
132 pursuant to section 10-520b, (III) hold at least an associate degree with a
133 concentration in early childhood education from an institution of higher
134 education that is regionally accredited, or (IV) satisfy the requirements
135 of subdivision (3), (4) or (5) of this subsection, and (ii) such remaining
136 individuals with the primary responsibility for a classroom of children
137 hold a childhood development associate credential or an equivalent
138 credential issued by an organization approved by the commissioner and

139 twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child
140 development, as determined by the commissioner or the president of
141 the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, after consultation with
142 the commissioner, from an institution of higher education (I) accredited
143 by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher
144 Education, and (II) regionally accredited;

145 (C) From July 1, 2025, until June 30, 2029, "staff qualifications" means
146 that for each early childhood education program accepting state funds
147 for infant, toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's
148 child care program or school readiness program, (i) at least fifty per cent
149 of those individuals with the primary responsibility for a classroom of
150 children (I) hold certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an
151 endorsement in early childhood education or early childhood special
152 education, (II) have been issued an early childhood teacher credential,
153 pursuant to subdivision (2) of section 10-520b, (III) hold at least a
154 bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education
155 from an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited, or
156 (IV) satisfy the requirements of subdivision (3), (4) or (5) of this
157 subsection, and (ii) such remaining individuals with the primary
158 responsibility for a classroom of children (I) hold an associate degree
159 with a concentration in early childhood education from an institution of
160 higher education that is regionally accredited, or (II) have been issued
161 an early childhood teacher credential, pursuant to subdivision (1) of
162 section 10-520b; and

163 (D) On and after July 1, 2029, "staff qualifications" means that for each
164 early childhood education program accepting state funds for infant,
165 toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's child care
166 program or school readiness program, one hundred per cent of those
167 individuals with the primary responsibility for a classroom of children
168 (i) hold certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in
169 early childhood education or early childhood special education, (ii) have
170 been issued an early childhood teacher credential, pursuant to
171 subdivision (2) of section 10-520b, (iii) hold at least a bachelor's degree
172 with a concentration in early childhood education from an institution of

173 higher education that is regionally accredited, or (iv) satisfy the
174 requirements of subdivision (3), (4) or (5) of this subsection.

175 (3) Any individual with a bachelor's degree in early childhood
176 education or child development or a bachelor's degree and twelve
177 credits or more in early childhood education or child development,
178 who, on or before June 30, 2015, is employed by an early childhood
179 education program that accepts state funds for infant, toddler and
180 preschool spaces associated with such program's child care program or
181 school readiness program shall be considered to meet the staff
182 qualifications required under subparagraphs (B) to (D), inclusive, of
183 subdivision (2) of this subsection. No such early childhood education
184 program shall terminate any such individual from employment for
185 purposes of meeting the staff qualification requirements set forth in
186 subparagraph (B), (C) or (D) of subdivision (2) of this subsection.

187 (4) Any individual with an associate degree or a bachelor's degree in
188 early childhood education or child development or an associate degree
189 or a bachelor's degree and twelve credits or more in early childhood
190 education or child development from an institution of higher education
191 that is regionally accredited, other than an associate degree or a
192 bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education,
193 may submit documentation concerning such degree for review and
194 assessment by the office as to whether such degree has a sufficient
195 concentration in early childhood education so as to satisfy the
196 requirements set forth in subparagraphs (B) to (D), inclusive, of
197 subdivision (2) of this subsection.

198 (5) Any individual with an associate degree with twelve credits or
199 more in early childhood education or child development, as determined
200 by the commissioner or the president of the Connecticut State Colleges
201 and Universities, after consultation with the commissioner, from an
202 institution of higher education (A) accredited by the Board of Regents
203 for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education, and (B) regionally
204 accredited, who has been employed in the same early childhood
205 education program that accepts state funds for infant, toddler and

206 preschool spaces associated with such program's child care program or
207 school readiness program since 1995 shall be considered to meet the staff
208 qualifications required under subparagraphs (B) to (D), inclusive, of
209 subdivision (2) of this subsection until June 30, 2025. On and after July
210 1, 2025, such individual shall hold a childhood development associate
211 credential or an equivalent credential, described in subparagraph (A) of
212 subdivision (2) of this subsection, or otherwise meet the staff
213 qualifications required under subparagraphs (C) and (D) of subdivision
214 (2) of this subsection. Any such individual who terminates his or her
215 employment with such early childhood education program on or before
216 June 30, 2025, and accepts a position at another early childhood
217 education program accepting state funds for spaces associated with
218 such program's child care program or school readiness program shall
219 submit documentation of such individual's progress toward meeting
220 the staff qualification requirements set forth in subparagraph (B) to (D),
221 inclusive, of subdivision (2) of this subsection in a manner determined
222 by the office.

223 (c) The commissioner shall establish a grant program to provide
224 spaces in accredited school readiness programs located in priority
225 school districts, as described in section 10-266p, or in former priority
226 school districts for eligible children. [Under the program, the grant shall
227 be provided, in accordance with this section, to the town in which such
228 priority school district or former priority school district is located.] The
229 state, acting by and in the discretion of the Commissioner of Early
230 Childhood, in consultation with a town or regional school readiness
231 council, may enter into a contract with a municipality, local or regional
232 board of education, regional educational service center, family resource
233 center, provider of a child care center, group child care home or family
234 child care home, as described in section 19a-77, Head Start program,
235 preschool program or other program that meets such standards
236 established by the commissioner, to provide, within available
237 appropriations, state financial assistance. Eligibility shall be determined
238 for a five-year period based on an applicant's designation as a priority
239 school district for the initial year of application, except that if a school
240 district that receives a grant pursuant to this subsection is no longer

241 designated as a priority school district at the end of such five-year
242 period, such former priority school district shall continue to be eligible
243 to receive a grant pursuant to this subsection. Grant awards shall be
244 made annually contingent upon available funding and a satisfactory
245 annual evaluation. The chief elected official of such town and the
246 superintendent of schools for such priority school district or former
247 priority school district shall submit a plan for the expenditure of grant
248 funds and responses to the local request for proposal process to the
249 commissioner. The commissioner shall review and approve such plans.
250 The plan shall: (1) Be developed in consultation with the local or
251 regional school readiness council established pursuant to section 10-16r₂
252 as amended by this act; (2) be based on a needs and resource assessment;
253 (3) provide for the issuance of requests for proposals for providers of
254 accredited school readiness programs, provided, after the initial
255 requests for proposals, facilities that have been approved to operate a
256 child care program financed through the Connecticut Health and
257 Education Facilities Authority and have received a commitment for debt
258 service from the Department of Social Services, pursuant to section 17b-
259 749i, on or before June 30, 2014, and on or after July 1, 2014, from the
260 office, are exempt from the requirement for issuance of annual requests
261 for proposals; and (4) identify the need for funding pursuant to section
262 17b-749a in order to extend the hours and days of operation of school
263 readiness programs in order to provide child care services for children
264 attending such programs.

265 (d) (1) The commissioner shall establish a competitive grant program
266 to provide spaces in accredited school readiness programs or school
267 readiness programs seeking accreditation located in (A) an area served
268 by a priority school or a former priority school, (B) a town ranked one
269 to fifty when all towns are ranked in ascending order according to town
270 wealth, as defined in subdivision (26) of section 10-262f, whose school
271 district is not a priority school district pursuant to section 10-266p, (C) a
272 town formerly a town described in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision,
273 as provided for in subdivision (2) of this subsection, or (D) a town
274 designated as an alliance district, as defined in section 10-262u, whose
275 school district is not a priority school district pursuant to section 10-

276 266p. A town in which a priority school is located, a regional school
277 readiness council, pursuant to subsection (c) of section 10-16r, as
278 amended by this act, for a region in which such a school is located or a
279 town described in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision may apply for
280 such a grant in an amount equal to the number of spaces in an accredited
281 school readiness program or a school readiness program seeking
282 accreditation multiplied by the per child cost set forth in subdivision (1)
283 of subsection (b) of section 10-16q. Eligibility shall be determined for a
284 three-year period based on an applicant's designation as having a
285 priority school or being a town described in subparagraph (B) of this
286 subdivision for the initial year of application. [Grant awards shall be
287 made annually contingent upon available funding and a satisfactory
288 annual evaluation.] The state, acting by and in the discretion of the
289 Commissioner of Early Childhood, in consultation with a town or
290 regional school readiness council, may enter into a contract with a
291 municipality, local or regional board of education, regional educational
292 service center, family resource center, provider of a child care center,
293 group child care home or family child care home, as described in section
294 19a-77, Head Start program, preschool program or other program that
295 meets such standards established by the commissioner, to provide,
296 within available appropriations, state financial assistance. The chief
297 elected official of such town and the superintendent of schools of the
298 school district or the regional school readiness council shall submit a
299 plan, as described in subsection (c) of this section, for the expenditure of
300 such grant funds to the commissioner. In awarding grants pursuant to
301 this subsection, the commissioner shall give preference to applications
302 submitted by regional school readiness councils and may, within
303 available appropriations, provide a grant to such town or regional
304 school readiness council that increases the number of spaces for eligible
305 children who reside in an area or town described in subparagraphs (A)
306 to (D), inclusive, of this subdivision, in an accredited school readiness
307 program or a school readiness program seeking accreditation. [A town
308 or regional school readiness council awarded a grant pursuant to this
309 subsection shall use the funds to purchase spaces for such children from
310 providers of accredited school readiness programs or school readiness

311 programs seeking accreditation.]

312 (2) (A) Except as provided in subparagraph (C) of this subdivision,
313 commencing with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2005, if a town received
314 a grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection and is no longer
315 eligible to receive such a grant, the town may receive a phase-out grant
316 for each of the three fiscal years following the fiscal year such town
317 received its final grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

318 (B) The amount of such phase-out grants shall be determined as
319 follows: (i) For the first fiscal year following the fiscal year such town
320 received its final grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, in
321 an amount that does not exceed seventy-five per cent of the grant
322 amount such town received for the town or school's final year of
323 eligibility pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection; (ii) for the
324 second fiscal year following the fiscal year such town received its final
325 grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, in an amount that
326 does not exceed fifty per cent of the grant amount such town received
327 for the town's or school's final year of eligibility pursuant to subdivision
328 (1) of this subsection; and (iii) for the third fiscal year following the fiscal
329 year such town received its final grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of
330 this subsection, in an amount that does not exceed twenty-five per cent
331 of the grant amount such town received for the town's or school's final
332 year of eligibility pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

333 (C) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2011, and each fiscal year
334 thereafter, any town that received a grant pursuant to subparagraph (B)
335 of subdivision (1) of this subsection for the fiscal year ending June 30,
336 2010, shall continue to receive a grant under this subsection even if the
337 town no longer meets the criteria for such grant pursuant to
338 subparagraph (B) of subdivision (1) of this subsection.

339 [(e) (1) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, and each fiscal year
340 thereafter, priority school districts and former priority school districts
341 shall receive grants based on the sum of the products obtained by (A)
342 multiplying the district's number of contracted slots on March thirtieth
343 of the fiscal year prior to the fiscal year in which the grant is to be paid,

344 by the per child cost pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of
345 section 10-16q, except that such per child cost shall be reduced for slots
346 that are less than year-round, and (B) multiplying the number of
347 additional or decreased slots the districts have requested for the fiscal
348 year in which the grant is to be paid by the per child cost pursuant to
349 subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of section 10-16q, except such per child
350 cost shall be reduced for slots that are less than year-round. If said sum
351 exceeds the available appropriation, such number of requested
352 additional slots shall be reduced, as determined by the commissioner,
353 to stay within the available appropriation.]

354 [(2) (A)] (e) (1) If funds appropriated for the purposes of subsection
355 (c) of this section are not expended, the commissioner may deposit such
356 unexpended funds in the account established under section 10-16aa and
357 use such unexpended funds in accordance with the provisions of section
358 10-16aa.

359 [(B)] (2) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015, and each fiscal year
360 thereafter, if funds appropriated for the purposes of subsection (c) of
361 this section are not expended, an amount up to one million dollars of
362 such unexpended funds may be available for the provision of
363 professional development for early childhood care and education
364 program providers, and staff employed in such programs, provided
365 such programs accept state funds for infant, toddler and preschool slots.
366 Such unexpended funds may be available for use in accordance with the
367 provisions of this subparagraph for the subsequent fiscal year. The
368 commissioner may use such unexpended funds on and after July 1, 2015,
369 to support early childhood education programs accepting state funds in
370 satisfying the staff qualifications requirements of subparagraphs (B) and
371 (C) of subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this section. The commissioner
372 shall use any such funds to provide assistance to individual staff
373 members, giving priority to those staff members [(i)] (A) attending an
374 institution of higher education accredited by the Board of Regents for
375 Higher Education or the Office of Higher Education, and approved by
376 the Office of Early Childhood, and regionally accredited, at a maximum
377 of ten thousand dollars per staff member per year for the cost of higher

378 education courses leading to a bachelor's degree or, not later than
379 December 31, 2015, an associate degree, as such degrees are described
380 in said subparagraphs (B) and (C), or [(ii)] (B) receiving noncredit
381 competency-based training approved by the office, at a maximum of one
382 thousand dollars per staff member per year, provided such staff
383 members have applied for all available federal and state scholarships
384 and grants, and such assistance does not exceed such staff members'
385 financial need. Individual staff members shall apply for such
386 unexpended funds in a manner determined by the commissioner. The
387 commissioner shall determine how such unexpended funds shall be
388 distributed.

389 [(C)] (3) If funds appropriated for the purposes of subsection (c) of
390 this section are not expended pursuant to subsection (c) of this section,
391 deposited pursuant to [subparagraph (A) of this] subdivision (1) of this
392 subsection, or used pursuant to [subparagraph (B) of this] subdivision
393 (2) of this subsection, the commissioner may use such unexpended
394 funds to support local school readiness programs. The commissioner
395 may use such funds for purposes including, but not limited to, [(i)] (A)
396 assisting local school readiness programs in meeting and maintaining
397 accreditation requirements, [(ii)] (B) providing training in implementing
398 the preschool assessment and curriculum frameworks, including
399 training to enhance literacy teaching skills, [(iii)] (C) developing a state-
400 wide preschool curriculum, [(iv)] (D) developing student assessments
401 for students in grades kindergarten to two, inclusive, [(v)] (E)
402 developing and implementing best practices for parents in supporting
403 preschool and kindergarten student learning, [(vi)] (F) developing and
404 implementing strategies for children to successfully transition to
405 preschool and from preschool to kindergarten, including through
406 parental engagement and whole-family supports that may be utilized
407 through the two-generational initiative, established pursuant to section
408 17b-112l, or through other available resources, [(vii)] (G) providing for
409 professional development, including assisting in career ladder
410 advancement, for school readiness staff, [(viii)] (H) providing
411 supplemental grants to other towns that are eligible for grants pursuant
412 to subsection (c) of this section, and [(ix)] (I) developing a plan to

413 provide spaces in an accredited school readiness program or a school
414 readiness program seeking accreditation to all eligible children who
415 reside in an area or town described in subparagraphs (A) to (D),
416 inclusive, of subdivision (1) of subsection (d) of this section.

417 [(3) Notwithstanding subdivision (2) of this subsection, for the fiscal
418 years ending June 30, 2015, to June 30, 2016, inclusive, the office may
419 retain up to one hundred ninety-eight thousand two hundred dollars of
420 the amount appropriated for purposes of this section for coordination,
421 program evaluation and administration.]

422 (f) Any school readiness program that receives funds pursuant to this
423 section or section 10-16u shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color,
424 national origin, gender, religion or disability. For purposes of this
425 section, a nonsectarian program means any public or private school
426 readiness program that is not violative of the Establishment Clause of
427 the Constitution of the State of Connecticut or the Establishment Clause
428 of the Constitution of the United States of America.

429 (g) Subject to the provisions of this subsection, no funds received by
430 a town pursuant to subsection (c) or (d) of this section or section 10-16u
431 shall be used to supplant federal, state or local funding received by such
432 town for early childhood education, provided a town may use an
433 amount determined in accordance with this subsection for coordination,
434 program evaluation and administration. Such amount shall be at least
435 five per cent of the total grant allocation, but not more than seventy-five
436 thousand dollars and shall be determined by the commissioner based
437 on the school readiness grant award allocated to the town pursuant to
438 subsection (c) or (d) of this section or section 10-16u and the number of
439 operating sites for coordination, program evaluation and
440 administration. Such amount shall be increased by an amount equal to
441 local funding provided for early childhood education coordination,
442 program evaluation and administration, not to exceed twenty-five
443 thousand dollars. Each town that receives a grant pursuant to
444 subsection (c) or (d) of this section or section 10-16u shall designate a
445 person to be responsible for such coordination, program evaluation and

446 administration and to act as a liaison between the town and the
447 commissioner. Each school readiness program that receives funds
448 pursuant to this section or section 10-16u shall provide information to
449 the commissioner or the school readiness council, as requested, that is
450 necessary for purposes of any school readiness program evaluation.

451 (h) Any town receiving a grant pursuant to this section may use such
452 grant, with the approval of the commissioner, to prepare a facility or
453 staff for operating a school readiness program and shall be adjusted
454 based on the number of days of operation of a school readiness program
455 if a shorter term of operation is approved by the commissioner.

456 (i) A town may use grant funds to purchase spaces for eligible
457 children who reside in such town at an accredited school readiness
458 program located in another town. A regional school readiness council
459 may use grant funds to purchase spaces for eligible children who reside
460 in the region covered by the council at an accredited school readiness
461 program located outside such region.

462 (j) Children enrolled in school readiness programs funded pursuant
463 to this section shall not be counted (1) as resident students for purposes
464 of subdivision (22) of section 10-262f, or (2) in the determination of
465 average daily membership pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (a)
466 of section 10-261.

467 (k) (1) Up to two per cent of the amount of the appropriation for this
468 section may be allocated to the competitive grant program pursuant to
469 subsection (d) of this section. The determination of the amount of such
470 allocation shall be made on or before August first.

471 (2) Up to two per cent of the amount of the appropriation for this
472 section may be used by the commissioner in a manner consistent with
473 the provisions of section 10-509, as amended by this act.

474 (l) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, and each fiscal year
475 thereafter, any school readiness program that (1) is licensed by the
476 Office of Early Childhood pursuant to chapter 368a, (2) provides full-

477 day and year-round child care and education programs for children,
478 and (3) receives funds pursuant to this section or section 10-16u, shall
479 use any amount of the per child cost as described in subdivision (1) of
480 subsection (b) of section 10-16q that is over the amount of eight
481 thousand nine hundred twenty-seven dollars, exclusively to increase
482 the salaries of those individuals with direct responsibility for teaching
483 or caring for children in a classroom at such school readiness program.

484 Sec. 3. Section 10-16r of the general statutes is repealed and the
485 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

486 (a) A town seeking to apply for a grant pursuant to subsection (c) of
487 section 10-16p, as amended by this act, or section 10-16u shall convene
488 a local school readiness council or shall establish a regional school
489 readiness council pursuant to subsection (c) of this section. Any other
490 town may convene such a council. The chief elected official of the town
491 or, in the case of a regional school district, the chief elected officials of
492 the towns in the school district and the superintendent of schools for the
493 school district shall jointly appoint and convene such council. Each
494 school readiness council shall be composed of: (1) The chief elected
495 official, or the official's designee; (2) the superintendent of schools, or a
496 management level staff person as the superintendent's designee; (3)
497 parents; (4) representatives from local programs such as Head Start,
498 child care providers receiving state financial assistance pursuant to
499 section 8-210, as amended by this act, family resource centers, nonprofit
500 and for-profit child care centers, group child care homes,
501 prekindergarten and nursery schools, and family child care home
502 providers; (5) a representative from a health care provider in the
503 community; (6) the local homeless education liaison designated by the
504 local or regional board of education for the school district, pursuant to
505 Subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act,
506 42 USC 11431 et seq., as amended from time to time; ~~(7)~~ a representative
507 from a workforce or job training entity in the community; (8) a
508 representative from a local business in the community; and ~~[(7)]~~ (9)
509 other representatives from the community who provide services to
510 children. [The chief elected official shall designate] On and after July 1,

511 2021, the members of the school readiness council shall elect the
512 chairperson of the school readiness council. Each school readiness
513 council is required to document efforts to ensure that the racial, ethnic
514 and socioeconomic composition of the council reflects that of its town or
515 region, as applicable. At least twenty-five per cent of the membership of
516 the school readiness council shall be parents or guardians of children
517 eligible to attend a school readiness program. Such parents or guardians
518 may, within available appropriations, be compensated for any time and
519 travel related to council meetings, and any activities related to training,
520 leadership and community engagement. School readiness council
521 meetings shall be held at times and locations that are convenient for the
522 council members, including the parent and guardian members.

523 (b) The local school readiness council shall: (1) Make
524 recommendations to the chief elected official and the superintendent of
525 schools on issues relating to school readiness, including any
526 applications for grants pursuant to sections 10-16p, as amended by this
527 act, 10-16u, 17b-749a and 17b-749c; (2) foster partnerships among
528 providers of school readiness programs; (3) cooperate with the Office of
529 Early Childhood in any evaluation of a school readiness program; (4)
530 identify existing and prospective resources and services available to
531 children and families; (5) facilitate the coordination of the delivery of
532 services to children and families, including (A) referral procedures, and
533 (B) before and after-school child care for children attending
534 kindergarten programs; (6) exchange information with other councils,
535 the community and organizations serving the needs of children and
536 families; (7) make recommendations to school officials concerning
537 transition from school readiness programs to kindergarten; [and] (8)
538 encourage public participation; and (9) collaborate with the Office of
539 Early Childhood related to planning improvements to the state early
540 care and education governance structure.

541 (c) Two or more towns or school districts and appropriate
542 representatives of groups or entities interested in early childhood
543 education in a region may establish a regional school readiness council.
544 If a priority school is located in at least one of such school districts, the

545 regional school readiness council may apply for a grant pursuant to
546 subsection (d) of section 10-16p, as amended by this act. The regional
547 school readiness council may perform the duties outlined in
548 subdivisions (2) to (8), inclusive, of subsection (b) of this section.

549 Sec. 4. Section 10-509 of the general statutes is repealed and the
550 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

551 (a) As used in this subsection, "early care and education and
552 childhood development programs" includes the child care subsidy
553 program, established pursuant to section 17b-749, the school readiness
554 program, as defined in section 10-16p, as amended by this act, the
555 supplemental quality enhancement grant program, established
556 pursuant to section 17b-749c, the [Nurturing Families Network]
557 Connecticut Home Visiting System, established pursuant to section 17b-
558 751b, as amended by this act, family child care homes and group child
559 care homes, as described in section 19a-77, and the program for state
560 financial assistance for neighborhood facilities, including child care
561 centers, pursuant to section 8-210, as amended by this act.

562 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019, and each fiscal year
563 thereafter, the Commissioner of Early Childhood may expend in any
564 year an amount not to exceed two per cent of the total amount
565 appropriated to the office for early care and education and child
566 development programs for the purpose of carrying out its
567 responsibilities pursuant to section 10-500, as amended by this act,
568 including, but not limited to, piloting innovative and results-driven
569 service delivery, program evaluation and improvement, funding and
570 procurement models that are performance-driven and results-
571 accountable, interagency coordination and collaboration and evaluative
572 tools and infrastructure, provided if the total amount of such two per
573 cent exceeds one million dollars, all funds in excess of one million
574 dollars shall be used for service delivery. The commissioner may not
575 expend any funds under this section for administrative or other
576 overhead costs of the Office of Early Childhood. The commissioner may
577 develop policies and procedures to implement the provisions of this

578 section.

579 (c) Not later than January first of each year, the office shall submit a
580 report relating to how the commissioner has expended funds pursuant
581 to subsection (b) of this section to the joint standing committee of the
582 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education,
583 in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a. Such report shall
584 include, but need not be limited to, (1) the results of any program
585 evaluations conducted by the office, (2) an assessment of the
586 relationship between the cost and the value of the service delivery
587 outcomes achieved, and (3) any policies and procedures developed by
588 the commissioner to implement the provisions of this section.

589 Sec. 5. Section 8-210 of the general statutes is repealed and the
590 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

591 (a) The state, acting by and in the discretion of the Commissioner of
592 Social Services or the Commissioner of Early Childhood, as appropriate,
593 may enter into a contract with a municipality or a qualified private,
594 nonprofit corporation for state financial assistance for the planning,
595 construction, renovation, site preparation and purchase of improved or
596 unimproved property as part of a capital development project for
597 neighborhood facilities. Such facilities may include, but need not be
598 limited to, child care centers, elderly centers, multipurpose human
599 resource centers, emergency shelters for the homeless and shelters for
600 victims of domestic violence. The financial assistance shall be in the
601 form of state grants-in-aid equal to (1) all or any portion of the cost of
602 such capital development project if the grantee is a qualified private
603 nonprofit corporation, or (2) up to two-thirds of the cost of such capital
604 development project if the grantee is a municipality, as determined by
605 the Commissioner of Social Services or the Commissioner of Early
606 Childhood, as appropriate.

607 (b) The state, acting by and in the discretion of the Commissioner of
608 Early Childhood, may enter into a contract with a municipality, a group
609 child care home or family child care home, as described in section 19a-
610 77, a human resource development agency or a nonprofit corporation

611 for state financial assistance in developing and operating child care
612 centers, group child care homes and family child care homes for
613 children disadvantaged by reasons of economic, social or environmental
614 conditions, provided no such financial assistance shall be available for
615 the operating costs of any such child care center, group child care home
616 or family child care home unless it has been licensed by the
617 Commissioner of Early Childhood pursuant to section 19a-80, as
618 amended by this act. Such financial assistance shall be available for a
619 program of a municipality, of a group child care home or family child
620 care home, of a human resource development agency or of a nonprofit
621 corporation which may provide for personnel, equipment, supplies,
622 activities, program materials and renovation and remodeling of the
623 physical facilities of such child care centers, group child care homes or
624 family child care homes. Such contract shall provide for state financial
625 assistance, within available appropriations, in the form of a state grant-
626 in-aid (1) for a portion of the cost of such program, as determined by the
627 Commissioner of Early Childhood, if not federally assisted, (2) equal to
628 one-half of the amount by which the net cost of such program, as
629 approved by the Commissioner of Early Childhood, exceeds the federal
630 grant-in-aid thereof, or (3) in an amount not less than the per child cost
631 as described in subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of section 10-16q, for
632 each child in such program that is three or four years of age and each
633 child that is five years of age who is not eligible to enroll in school,
634 pursuant to section 10-15c, while maintaining services to children under
635 three years of age under this section. For the fiscal year ending June 30,
636 2020, and each fiscal year thereafter, the amount per child pursuant to
637 subdivision (3) of this subsection that is over the amount of the per child
638 cost that was prescribed pursuant to the contract for the fiscal year
639 ending June 30, 2019, shall be used exclusively to increase the salaries of
640 early childhood educators employed at the child care center. The
641 Commissioner of Early Childhood may authorize child care centers,
642 group child care homes and family child care homes receiving financial
643 assistance under this subsection to apply a program surplus to the next
644 program year. The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall consult with
645 directors of child care centers in establishing fees for the operation of

646 such centers.

647 (c) The Office of Early Childhood, in consultation with
648 representatives from child care centers, group child care homes and
649 family child care homes, within available appropriations, shall develop
650 guidelines for programs provided at state-contracted child care centers,
651 group child care home and family child care homes. The guidelines shall
652 include standards for program quality and design and identify short
653 and long-term outcomes for families participating in such programs.
654 The Office of Early Childhood, within available appropriations, shall
655 provide a copy of such guidelines to each state-contracted child care
656 center, group child care home and family child care home. Each state-
657 contracted child care center, group child care home and family child
658 care home shall use the guidelines to develop a program improvement
659 plan for the next twelve-month period and shall submit the plan to the
660 Office of Early Childhood. The plan shall include goals to be used for
661 measuring such improvement. The Office of Early Childhood shall use
662 the plan to monitor the progress of such child care center, group child
663 care home or family child care home.

664 (d) The state, acting by and in the discretion of the Commissioner of
665 Early Childhood, may enter into a contract with a municipality, a group
666 child care home or family child care home, a human resource
667 development agency or a nonprofit corporation for state financial
668 assistance for a project of renovation of any child care center, group
669 child care home or family child care home receiving assistance under
670 this section, to make such center accessible to persons with physical
671 disabilities, in the form of a state grant-in-aid equal to (1) the total net
672 cost of the project, as approved by the Commissioner of Early
673 Childhood, or (2) the total amount by which the net cost of the project,
674 as approved by the Commissioner of Early Childhood, exceeds the
675 federal grant-in-aid thereof.

676 (e) Any municipality, group child care home or family child care
677 home, human resource development agency or nonprofit corporation
678 that enters into a contract pursuant to this section for state financial

679 assistance for a child care center, group child care home or family child
680 care home shall have sole responsibility for the development of the
681 budget of the program provided at such child care center, group child
682 care home or family child care home, including, but not limited to,
683 personnel costs, purchases of equipment, supplies, activities and
684 program materials, within the resources provided by the state under
685 such contract. Upon local determination of a change in the type of child
686 care services required in the area, a municipality, group child care home
687 or family child care home, human resource development agency or
688 nonprofit corporation may, within the limits of its annual budget and
689 subject to the provisions of this subsection and sections 19a-77 to 19a-80,
690 inclusive, as amended by this act, and 19a-82 to 19a-87a, inclusive,
691 change its child care service. An application to change the type of child
692 care service provided shall be submitted to the Commissioner of Early
693 Childhood. Not later than forty-five days after the Commissioner of
694 Early Childhood receives the application, the Commissioner of Early
695 Childhood shall advise the municipality, human resource development
696 agency or nonprofit corporation of the Commissioner of Early
697 Childhood's approval, denial or approval with modifications of the
698 application. If the Commissioner of Early Childhood fails to act on the
699 application not later than forty-five days after the application's
700 submittal, the application shall be deemed approved.

701 (f) The Commissioner of Early Childhood may (1) with the approval
702 of the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, authorize the
703 expenditure of such funds for the purposes of this section as shall enable
704 the Commissioner of Early Childhood to apply for, qualify for and
705 provide the state's share of federally assisted child care services, and (2)
706 expend an amount not to exceed two per cent of the amount
707 appropriated for purposes of this section in a manner consistent with
708 the provisions of section 10-509, as amended by this act.

709 Sec. 6. Subsection (b) of section 10-500 of the general statutes is
710 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
711 *2021*):

712 (b) The office shall be responsible for:

713 (1) Delivering services to young children and their families to ensure
714 optimal health, safety and learning for each young child, including, but
715 not limited to, coordinating agency efforts and data sharing in the two-
716 generational initiative established pursuant to section 17b-112l;

717 (2) Developing and implementing the early childhood information
718 system, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-501;

719 (3) Developing and reporting on the early childhood accountability
720 plan, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-503;

721 (4) Implementing a communications strategy for outreach to families,
722 service providers and policymakers;

723 (5) Beginning a state-wide longitudinal evaluation of the school
724 readiness program examining the educational progress of children from
725 prekindergarten programs to grade four, inclusive;

726 (6) Developing, coordinating and supporting public and private
727 partnerships to aid early childhood initiatives;

728 (7) Developing a state-wide developmentally appropriate
729 kindergarten entrance inventory that measures a child's level of
730 preparedness for kindergarten, but shall not be used as a measurement
731 tool for program accountability;

732 (8) Creating a unified set of reporting requirements for the purpose
733 of collecting the data elements necessary to perform quality assessments
734 and longitudinal analysis;

735 (9) Comparing and analyzing data collected pursuant to reporting
736 requirements created under subdivision (8) of this subsection with the
737 data collected in the state-wide public school information system,
738 pursuant to section 10-10a, for population-level analysis of children and
739 families;

740 (10) Continually monitoring and evaluating all early care and

741 education and child development programs and services, focusing on
742 program outcomes in satisfying the health, safety, developmental and
743 educational needs of all children; [, while retaining distinct separation
744 between quality improvement services and licensing services for child
745 care centers, group child care homes and family child care homes;]

746 (11) Coordinating home visitation services across programs for
747 young children;

748 (12) Providing information and technical assistance to persons
749 seeking early care and education and child development programs and
750 services;

751 (13) Assisting state agencies and municipalities in obtaining available
752 federal funding for early care and education and child development
753 programs and services;

754 (14) Providing technical assistance to providers of early care and
755 education programs and services to obtain licensing and improve
756 program quality;

757 (15) Establishing a quality rating and improvement system
758 developed by the office that covers home-based, center-based and
759 school-based early child care and learning;

760 (16) Maintaining an accreditation facilitation initiative to assist early
761 childhood care and education program and service providers in
762 achieving national standards and program improvement;

763 (17) Consulting with the Early Childhood Cabinet, established
764 pursuant to section 10-16z, and the Head Start advisory committee,
765 established pursuant to section 10-16n;

766 (18) Ensuring a coordinated and comprehensive state-wide system of
767 professional development for providers and staff of early care and
768 education and child development programs and services;

769 (19) Providing families with opportunities for choice in services

770 including quality child care and community-based family-centered
771 services;

772 (20) Integrating early childhood care and education and special
773 education services;

774 (21) Promoting universal access to early childhood care and
775 education;

776 (22) Ensuring nonduplication of monitoring and evaluation;

777 (23) Performing any other activities that will assist in the provision of
778 early care and education and child development programs and services;

779 (24) Developing early learning and development standards to be
780 used by early care and education providers;

781 (25) Developing and implementing a performance-based evaluation
782 system to evaluate licensed child care centers, in accordance with the
783 provisions of section 17b-749f; and

784 (26) Promoting the delivery of services to infants and toddlers to
785 ensure optimal health, safety and learning of children from birth to three
786 years of age.

787 Sec. 7. Subsection (c) of section 19a-80 of the general statutes is
788 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
789 *1, 2021*):

790 (c) The commissioner [, within available appropriations,] shall
791 require each prospective employee of a child care center or group child
792 care home [in] for a position [requiring] that requires the provision of
793 care to a child or involves unsupervised access to any child in such child
794 care center or group child care home, to submit to comprehensive
795 background checks, including state and national criminal history
796 records checks. The criminal history records checks required pursuant
797 to this subsection shall be conducted in accordance with section 29-17a.
798 The commissioner shall also request a check of the state child abuse

799 registry established pursuant to section 17a-101k. [The Department of
800 Social Services may agree to transfer funds appropriated for criminal
801 history records checks to the Office of Early Childhood.] The
802 Commissioner of Early Childhood shall notify each licensee of the
803 provisions of this subsection. No such prospective employee shall [have
804 unsupervised access to children in the child care center or group child
805 care home until such comprehensive background check is completed
806 and the Commissioner of Early Childhood permits such prospective
807 employee to work in such child care center or group child care home]
808 begin working in such child care center or group child care home until
809 the provisions of 45 CFR 98.43(d)(4), as amended from time to time, have
810 been satisfied.

811 Sec. 8. Subsection (c) of section 19a-87b of the general statutes is
812 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October*
813 *1, 2021*):

814 (c) The commissioner [, within available appropriations,] shall
815 require each initial applicant or prospective employee of a family child
816 care home in a position requiring the provision of care to a child,
817 including an assistant or substitute staff member and each household
818 member who is [sixteen] eighteen years of age or older, to submit to
819 comprehensive background checks, including state and national
820 criminal history records checks. The criminal history records checks
821 required pursuant to this subsection shall be conducted in accordance
822 with section 29-17a. The commissioner shall also request a check of the
823 state child abuse registry established pursuant to section 17a-101k. The
824 commissioner shall notify each licensee of the provisions of this
825 subsection. For purposes of this subsection, "household member" means
826 any person, other than the person who is licensed to conduct, operate or
827 maintain a family child care home, who resides in the family child care
828 home, such as the licensee's spouse or children, tenants and any other
829 occupant.

830 Sec. 9. Section 19a-421 of the general statutes is repealed and the
831 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2021*):

832 (a) No person shall establish, conduct or maintain a youth camp
833 without a license issued by the office. Applications for such license shall
834 be made in writing at least thirty days prior to the opening of the youth
835 camp on forms provided and in accordance with procedures established
836 by the commissioner and shall be accompanied by a fee of eight
837 hundred fifteen dollars or, if the applicant is a nonprofit, nonstock
838 corporation or association, a fee of three hundred fifteen dollars or, if
839 the applicant is a day camp affiliated with a nonprofit organization, for
840 no more than five days duration and for which labor and materials are
841 donated, no fee. All such licenses shall be valid for a period of one year
842 from the date of issuance unless surrendered for cancellation or
843 suspended or revoked by the commissioner for violation of this chapter
844 or any regulations adopted under section 19a-428 and shall be
845 renewable upon payment of an eight-hundred-fifteen-dollar license fee
846 or, if the licensee is a nonprofit, nonstock corporation or association, a
847 three-hundred-fifteen-dollar license fee or, if the applicant is a day camp
848 affiliated with a nonprofit organization, for no more than five days
849 duration and for which labor and materials are donated, no fee.

850 (b) The licensee for each youth camp licensed under this section shall
851 require any person who is eighteen years of age or older and a
852 prospective employee of the youth camp for a position that requires the
853 provision of care to a child, or involving unsupervised access to children
854 at such youth camp, shall submit to a background check. Such
855 background check shall include (1) a national criminal history records
856 check, (2) a check of the registry established and maintained pursuant
857 to section 54-257, (3) a check of the National Sex Offender Registry
858 Public Website maintained by the United States Department of Justice,
859 and (4) a check of the Department of Children and Families child abuse
860 and neglect registry, established pursuant to section 17a-101k. For
861 purposes of completing the check of the child abuse and neglect registry
862 under this section, the licensee shall submit an authorization for release
863 of information form for each prospective employee to the office and the
864 office shall then request the Commissioner of Children and Families to
865 conduct a check of the child abuse and neglect registry for each such
866 prospective youth camp employee. A licensee shall maintain, on site at

867 the youth camp, all records and documentation associated with each
868 such background check and provide access to such records and
869 documentation to the staff of the office. A background check required
870 under this subsection shall be conducted at least once every five years
871 for any youth camp staff member whose employment in any licensed
872 youth camp occurs over more than five years. Any prospective
873 employee of a youth camp who has satisfied the requirements of a
874 comprehensive background check pursuant to subsection (c) of section
875 19a-80, as amended by this act, subsection (c) of section 19a-87b, as
876 amended by this act, or subsection (a) of section 17b-749k, within the
877 previous five years shall not be required to submit to an additional
878 background check for the purposes of employment in a youth camp and
879 such comprehensive background check shall satisfy the requirements of
880 this subsection. Any prospective employee of a youth camp who holds
881 a J-1 visa, H-1B visa or a R-1 visa issued by the United States Department
882 of State shall not be required to submit to a background check under this
883 section.

884 Sec. 10. Section 10-530 of the general statutes is repealed and the
885 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2021*):

886 (a) As used in this section:

887 (1) "Child care facility" means a "child care center", "group child care
888 home" or "family child care home" that provides "child care services",
889 each as described in section 19a-77, or any provider of child care services
890 under the child care subsidy program established pursuant to section
891 17b-749;

892 (2) "Child care services provider or staff member" means any person
893 who is (A) a licensee, employee, volunteer or alternate staff, assistant,
894 substitute or household member of a child care facility, (B) a family child
895 care provider, or (C) any other person who provides child care services
896 under the child care subsidy program established pursuant to section
897 17b-749 but does not include a person who is providing child care
898 services under the child care subsidy program (i) exclusively to children
899 with whom such person is related, and (ii) without being issued a license

900 to provide child care services by the Office of Early Childhood; and

901 (3) "Family child care provider" means any person who provides
902 child care services under the child care subsidy program established
903 pursuant to section 17b-749 (A) in a family child care home, as defined
904 in section 19a-77, or (B) in a home not requiring a license pursuant to
905 subdivision (4) of subsection (b) of section 19a-77.

906 (b) The comprehensive background checks required pursuant to
907 subsection (c) of section 19a-80, as amended by this act, subsection (c) of
908 section 19a-87b, as amended by this act, and subsection (a) of section
909 17b-749k, shall be conducted at least once every five years for each child
910 care services provider or staff member in accordance with the
911 provisions of 45 CFR 98.43, as amended from time to time.

912 (c) Any person who applies for a position at a child care facility in the
913 state shall not be required to submit to such comprehensive background
914 checks if such person (1) is an employee of a child care facility in the
915 state, or has not been separated from employment as a child care
916 services provider or staff member in the state for a period of more than
917 one hundred eighty days, and (2) has successfully completed such
918 comprehensive background checks in the previous five years. Nothing
919 in this section prohibits the Commissioner of Early Childhood from
920 requiring that a person applying for a position as a child care services
921 provider or staff member submit to comprehensive background checks
922 more than once during a five-year period.

923 (d) Any person required to submit to comprehensive background
924 checks pursuant to subsection (c) of section 19a-80, as amended by this
925 act, subsection (c) of section 19a-87b, as amended by this act, and
926 subsection (a) of section 17b-749k, may submit a request, in writing, to
927 the Commissioner of Early Childhood for a waiver of the requirement
928 to submit fingerprints. Such request shall include such person's name
929 and date of birth, and evidence that such person is unable to satisfy such
930 fingerprints requirement due to a medical condition, including, but not
931 limited to, a birth defect, physical deformity, skin condition or
932 psychiatric condition. Upon the granting of a waiver to a person under

933 this subsection, the Office of Early Childhood shall conduct a state
934 criminal history records check of such person by using the name and
935 date of birth that was provided in the request for a waiver by such
936 person.

937 Sec. 11. Section 17b-751b of the general statutes is repealed and the
938 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

939 (a) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall establish the
940 structure for a state-wide [system for a Nurturing Families Network]
941 Connecticut Home Visiting System, which demonstrates the benefits of
942 preventive services by significantly reducing the abuse and neglect of
943 infants and young children, and by enhancing parent-child
944 relationships through [hospital-based] community-based assessment
945 with home outreach follow-up on infants and young children and their
946 families within families identified as high risk.

947 (b) The commissioner shall: (1) [Develop the comprehensive risk
948 assessment to be used by the Nurturing Families Network's providers;
949 (2) develop the training program, standards, and protocols for the pilot
950 programs] Ensure that all home visiting programs are one or more of
951 the evidence-based home visiting models that meet the criteria for
952 evidence of effectiveness developed by the federal Department of
953 Health and Human Services; (2) provide oversight of home visiting
954 programs to insure model fidelity; and (3) develop, issue and evaluate
955 requests for proposals to procure the services required by this section.
956 In evaluating the proposals, the commissioner shall take into
957 consideration the most effective and consistent service delivery system
958 allowing for the continuation of current public and private programs.

959 (c) The commissioner shall establish a data system to enable the
960 programs to document the following information in a standard manner:
961 (1) The level of screening and assessment; (2) profiles of risk and family
962 demographics; (3) the incidence of child abuse and neglect; (4) rates of
963 child development; and (5) any other information the commissioner
964 deems appropriate.

965 (d) The commissioner shall report to the General Assembly, in
966 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, on the establishment,
967 implementation and progress of the [Nurturing Families Network]
968 Connecticut Home Visiting System, on July first of each year.

969 (e) The commissioner may expend an amount not to exceed two per
970 cent of the amount appropriated for purposes of this section in a manner
971 consistent with the provisions of section 10-509, as amended by this act.

972 Sec. 12. Section 17b-751d of the general statutes is repealed and the
973 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

974 The Office of Early Childhood shall be the lead state agency for
975 community-based, prevention-focused programs and activities
976 designed to strengthen and support families to prevent child abuse and
977 neglect. The responsibilities of the office shall include, but not be limited
978 to, collaborating with state agencies, hospitals, clinics, schools and
979 community service organizations, to: (1) Initiate programs to support
980 families at risk for child abuse or neglect; (2) assist organizations to
981 recognize child abuse and neglect; (3) encourage community safety; (4)
982 increase broad-based efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect; (5)
983 create a network of agencies to advance child abuse and neglect
984 prevention; and (6) increase public awareness of child abuse and neglect
985 issues. The office, subject to available state, federal and private funding,
986 shall be responsible for implementing and maintaining programs and
987 services, including, but not limited to: (A) [The Nurturing Families
988 Network] Connecticut Home Visiting System, established pursuant to
989 [subsection (a) of] section 17b-751b, as amended by this act; (B) [Family
990 Empowerment Initiative programs; (C)] Help Me Grow; [(D) Family
991 School Connection; (E) support services for residents of a respite group
992 home for girls; (F) volunteer services; (G)] (C) family development
993 training; [(H)] (D) shaken baby syndrome prevention; [and (I) child
994 sexual abuse prevention] (E) working with parents who are
995 incarcerated; (F) promoting the work of doulas to help women with the
996 highest risk of poor pregnancy outcomes to achieve healthy birth
997 outcomes; and (G) supporting homeless diversion for families with

998 young children.

999 Sec. 13. Subsection (a) of section 17b-261 of the general statutes is
1000 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
1001 *2021*):

1002 (a) Medical assistance shall be provided for any otherwise eligible
1003 person whose income, including any available support from legally
1004 liable relatives and the income of the person's spouse or dependent
1005 child, is not more than one hundred forty-three per cent, pending
1006 approval of a federal waiver applied for pursuant to subsection (e) of
1007 this section, of the benefit amount paid to a person with no income
1008 under the temporary family assistance program in the appropriate
1009 region of residence and if such person is an institutionalized individual
1010 as defined in Section 1917 of the Social Security Act, 42 USC 1396p(h)(3),
1011 and has not made an assignment or transfer or other disposition of
1012 property for less than fair market value for the purpose of establishing
1013 eligibility for benefits or assistance under this section. Any such
1014 disposition shall be treated in accordance with Section 1917(c) of the
1015 Social Security Act, 42 USC 1396p(c). Any disposition of property made
1016 on behalf of an applicant or recipient or the spouse of an applicant or
1017 recipient by a guardian, conservator, person authorized to make such
1018 disposition pursuant to a power of attorney or other person so
1019 authorized by law shall be attributed to such applicant, recipient or
1020 spouse. A disposition of property ordered by a court shall be evaluated
1021 in accordance with the standards applied to any other such disposition
1022 for the purpose of determining eligibility. The commissioner shall
1023 establish the standards for eligibility for medical assistance at one
1024 hundred forty-three per cent of the benefit amount paid to a household
1025 of equal size with no income under the temporary family assistance
1026 program in the appropriate region of residence. In determining
1027 eligibility, the commissioner shall not consider as income Aid and
1028 Attendance pension benefits granted to a veteran, as defined in section
1029 27-103, or the surviving spouse of such veteran. Except as provided in
1030 section 17b-277 and section 17b-292, the medical assistance program
1031 shall provide coverage to persons under the age of nineteen with

1032 household income up to one hundred ninety-six per cent of the federal
1033 poverty level without an asset limit and to persons under the age of
1034 nineteen, who qualify for coverage under Section 1931 of the Social
1035 Security Act, with household income not exceeding one hundred
1036 ninety-six per cent of the federal poverty level without an asset limit,
1037 and their parents and needy caretaker relatives, who qualify for
1038 coverage under Section 1931 of the Social Security Act, with household
1039 income not exceeding one hundred fifty-five per cent of the federal
1040 poverty level without an asset limit. Such levels shall be based on the
1041 regional differences in such benefit amount, if applicable, unless such
1042 levels based on regional differences are not in conformance with federal
1043 law. Any income in excess of the applicable amounts shall be applied as
1044 may be required by said federal law, and assistance shall be granted for
1045 the balance of the cost of authorized medical assistance. The
1046 Commissioner of Social Services shall provide applicants for assistance
1047 under this section, at the time of application, with a written statement
1048 advising them of (1) the effect of an assignment or transfer or other
1049 disposition of property on eligibility for benefits or assistance, (2) the
1050 effect that having income that exceeds the limits prescribed in this
1051 subsection will have with respect to program eligibility, and (3) the
1052 availability of, and eligibility for, services provided by the [Nurturing
1053 Families Network] Connecticut Home Visiting System, established
1054 pursuant to section 17b-751b, as amended by this act. For coverage dates
1055 on or after January 1, 2014, the department shall use the modified
1056 adjusted gross income financial eligibility rules set forth in Section
1057 1902(e)(14) of the Social Security Act and the implementing regulations
1058 to determine eligibility for HUSKY A, HUSKY B and HUSKY D
1059 applicants, as defined in section 17b-290. Persons who are determined
1060 ineligible for assistance pursuant to this section shall be provided a
1061 written statement notifying such persons of their ineligibility and
1062 advising such persons of their potential eligibility for one of the other
1063 insurance affordability programs as defined in 42 CFR 435.4.

1064 Sec. 14. Section 17b-277a of the general statutes is repealed and the
1065 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

1066 The Commissioners of Public Health, Social Services and Mental
1067 Health and Addiction Services shall jointly establish a program to
1068 inform applicants to the Healthy Start program about the availability of,
1069 and eligibility for, services provided by the [Nurturing Families
1070 Network] Connecticut Home Visiting System, established pursuant to
1071 section 17b-751b, as amended by this act.

1072 Sec. 15. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2021*) Upon the request of a director
1073 of an early intervention service program participating in the birth-to-
1074 three program, established pursuant to section 17a-248b of the general
1075 statutes, the Commissioner of Education may permit any person who
1076 holds an endorsement in the areas of (1) comprehensive special
1077 education, (2) integrated early childhood and special education, (3)
1078 partially sighted, (4) blind, and (5) hard of hearing, to teach within the
1079 birth-to-three program. Such permission shall be valid during the
1080 period of such person's certificate, permit or authorization and may be
1081 extended by the commissioner, upon request of the birth-to-three
1082 service provider, upon renewal of such person's certificate, permit or
1083 authorization by the commissioner.

1084 Sec. 16. Section 19a-425 of the general statutes is repealed and the
1085 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

1086 (a) Any person who establishes, conducts or maintains a youth camp
1087 without a license as required by this chapter for a first offense shall be
1088 subject to a civil penalty of not more than one thousand dollars, and for
1089 a second or subsequent offense shall be subject to a civil penalty of not
1090 more than one thousand five hundred dollars, and each day during
1091 which a youth camp is conducted or maintained without a license, after
1092 notification to such person by the commissioner, shall constitute a
1093 separate offense. The commissioner may apply to the superior court for
1094 the judicial district of Hartford, or for the judicial district where the
1095 defendant named in such application resides, for an injunction to
1096 restrain the operation or maintenance of a youth camp by any person
1097 other than a licensed operator. The application for such injunction or the
1098 issuance of the same shall be in addition to and shall not relieve any

1099 such person from the imposition of a civil penalty under this section. In
1100 connection with any such application for an injunction, it shall not be
1101 necessary to prove that an adequate remedy at law does not exist.

1102 (b) If the Commissioner of Early Childhood has reason to believe that
1103 a violation has occurred for which a civil penalty is authorized by
1104 subsection (a) of this section, the commissioner may send to such person
1105 or officer by certified mail, return receipt requested or personally serve
1106 upon such person or officer, a notice that shall include: (1) A reference
1107 to the section or sections of the general statutes or regulations involved;
1108 (2) a short and plain statement of the matters asserted or charged; (3) a
1109 statement of the maximum civil penalty that may be imposed for such
1110 violation; and (4) a statement of the party's right to request a hearing.
1111 Such person or officer shall submit any request for a hearing in writing
1112 to the commissioner not later than thirty days after the notice is mailed
1113 or served.

1114 (c) If such person or officer so requests, the commissioner shall cause
1115 a hearing to be held. The hearing shall be held in accordance with the
1116 provisions of chapter 54. If such person or officer fails to request a
1117 hearing or fails to appear at the hearing or if, after the hearing, the
1118 commissioner finds that the person or officer has committed such
1119 violation, the commissioner may, in his or her discretion, order that a
1120 civil penalty be imposed that is not greater than the penalty stated in the
1121 notice. The commissioner shall send a copy of any order issued pursuant
1122 to this subsection by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the
1123 person or officer named in such order.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2021	10-16o
Sec. 2	July 1, 2021	10-16p
Sec. 3	July 1, 2021	10-16r
Sec. 4	July 1, 2021	10-509
Sec. 5	July 1, 2021	8-210
Sec. 6	July 1, 2021	10-500(b)
Sec. 7	October 1, 2021	19a-80(c)

Sec. 8	<i>October 1, 2021</i>	19a-87b(c)
Sec. 9	<i>October 1, 2021</i>	19a-421
Sec. 10	<i>October 1, 2021</i>	10-530
Sec. 11	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	17b-751b
Sec. 12	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	17b-751d
Sec. 13	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	17b-261(a)
Sec. 14	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	17b-277a
Sec. 15	<i>July 1, 2021</i>	New section
Sec. 16	<i>from passage</i>	19a-425

ED *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 22 \$	FY 23 \$
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection	Applicant Fingerprint Card Submission Account - Potential Revenue Loss	See Below	See Below
Resources of the General Fund	GF - Potential Revenue Loss	See Below	See Below

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 22 \$	FY 23 \$
Various Municipalities	STATE MANDATE ¹ - Potential Revenue Gain/Loss; Potential Cost	See Below	See Below

Explanation

The bill makes various changes resulting in the fiscal impacts described below.

Section 2 allows the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) to administer funding for school readiness programs through contracts, rather than the current grant-based system. This has no fiscal impact to the state as it is not anticipated to materially alter the distribution of school

¹ State mandate is defined in Sec. 2-32b(2) of the Connecticut General Statutes, "state mandate" means any state initiated constitutional, statutory or executive action that requires a local government to establish, expand or modify its activities in such a way as to necessitate additional expenditures from local revenues.

readiness funds. To the extent this change does impact the amounts received by town-based providers, they could experience an associated revenue gain or revenue loss.

Sections 2 and 5 allow group child care homes and family child care homes to receive funding available to school readiness programs and child care centers. While this does not change the total amount of funds expended, it may alter the distribution among providers, which could result in a revenue loss to town-based providers.

Section 3 makes changes to school readiness council membership and allows certain members to be compensated for time, travel, and other related activities, which could result in associated costs to towns who choose to do so.

Section 8 increases the age requirement, from 16 to 18 years, for background checks for certain individuals in family child care homes, resulting in a potential revenue loss to the General Fund and the Applicant Finger Card Submission Account² to the extent fewer background checks occur. The Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) conducts state background checks for \$75 per person. DESPP conducts federal background checks for a fee of \$13.25 but remits the fee to the federal government resulting in no fiscal impact to the state. Both state and federal background checks require fingerprinting, which DESPP conducts for \$15 per person resulting in a potential revenue gain to the Applicant Fingerprint Card Submission Account.

Section 9 requires certain prospective youth camp employees to complete a background check, including the Child Abuse and Neglect Registry. DCF is in the process of implementing an automated Child Abuse and Neglect Registry system, which will be in place before the bill becomes effective, therefore, no fiscal impact to the agency is anticipated from the bill. DCF does not charge a fee for a check of the

² Funds in the Applicant Fingerprint Card Submission Account are used for IT support and maintenance for the fingerprinting systems.

Registry.

The bill makes other changes related to background checks that have no state or municipal impact. The bill also expands the accreditations accepted for school readiness programs and allows additional qualifications to be considered for purposes of teaching within the Birth to Three program. These changes have no fiscal impact as they do not require additional program funding.

The bill makes other changes that are technical and conforming in nature and have no fiscal impact.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 6559*****AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.*****SUMMARY**

This bill makes numerous changes to the laws related to the Office of Early Childhood (OEC). It:

1. adds facilitating racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of children, families, and staff to the list of goals for the network of school readiness programs (§ 1);
2. expands the type of entities that can receive school readiness financial assistance (i.e., grants) beyond towns with a priority school district (PSD) and eliminates the current way these grant amounts are determined (§ 2);
3. requires that parents of program-eligible children comprise at least 25% of local school readiness council members and changes how the council chairperson is selected (§ 3);
4. changes the name of the Nurturing Families Network to the Connecticut Home Visiting System and modifies the program's scope and criteria (§§ 4, 11-14);
5. adds group and family child care homes to the definition of "early care and education and childhood development programs" in the law requiring OEC to conduct program evaluations and pilot innovative service delivery (§ 4);
6. expands eligibility for state contracts for grants-in-aid to develop child care facilities to include group and family child care homes, (§ 5);

7. removes the condition that OEC keep its quality improvement services and licensing services separate and distinct when monitoring and evaluating child care centers, group child care homes, and family child care homes (§ 6);
8. expands the types of child care employees who must undergo pre-employment background checks and conforms current restrictions on when these new employees can begin working with federal regulations (§ 7);
9. increases the minimum age threshold, from 16 to 18, for mandatory background checks for prospective employees of family child care homes (§ 8);
10. requires background checks for youth camp prospective employees who are age 18 and older (§ 9);
11. authorizes OEC to grant waivers for prospective child care employees who, due to a medical condition, are unable to satisfy the background check fingerprint requirement (§ 10);
12. adds (a) working with incarcerated parents, (b) promoting the work of doulas to help women with high-risk pregnancies, and (c) supporting homeless diversion for families with young children to OEC's list of required programs and services (§ 12);
13. authorizes the education commissioner to allow someone to teach within the Birth-to-Three program if they hold a teaching endorsement in (a) special education, (b) integrated early childhood and special education, (c) partially sighted, (d) blind, and (e) hard of hearing (§ 15); and
14. creates a notification and hearing process for youth camp operators who OEC cites for operating without a license (§ 16).

It also makes numerous minor, conforming, and technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2021, unless otherwise noted.

§ 2 — ENTITIES ELIGIBLE FOR SCHOOL READINESS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Under current law governing school readiness grants, grants can be awarded to either (1) the town where a current or former PSD is located or (2) for competitive grants, a town with a priority school or a school readiness council serving one of the state's 50 lowest ranking towns by wealth.

The bill expands the type of entities that can receive school readiness financial assistance (i.e., PSD grants or competitive grants) to include a town, local or regional board of education, regional educational service center (RESC), family resource center, child care center, group child care home, family child care home, Head Start program, preschool program, or other program that meets the commissioner's standards. It does this by:

1. allowing an eligible entity to enter into a contract with OEC to provide for state financial assistance within available appropriations, and
2. eliminating the requirements that program grants must be provided:
 - a. to the town in which current or former PSDs are located,
 - b. annually contingent upon available funding and a satisfactory annual evaluation, and
 - c. for use by a town or regional school readiness council to purchase spaces for certain children from providers of accredited school readiness programs or programs seeking that accreditation.

The bill also requires the OEC commissioner to consult with the town or regional school readiness council when entering into these contracts.

By law and unchanged by the bill, the municipality's chief elected official and the school superintendent for a current or former PSD must

submit a plan for spending the grant funds that includes responses from a request for proposals (RFP) from accredited school readiness programs. The commissioner must review and approve the plans. (Presumably, the chief elected official and the superintendent would obtain this information from the new entities through the RFP process.)

The bill also eliminates the current method of determining the amount of school readiness grants for current and former PSDs. It does not indicate the new method of determining the grant amounts (presumably this will be addressed in the contract terms).

The bill expands the accreditations accepted for school readiness programs to include the National Association of Family Child Care. By law, accreditation by the National Association for Education and Young Children or a Head Start program review instrument are already accepted.

§ 3 — SCHOOL READINESS COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP & DUTIES

By law, a town seeking school readiness grants must form a local or regional school readiness council. The bill requires each council to document efforts to ensure that its racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic composition reflects its town or region, as applicable. It also requires that parents or guardians of program-eligible children comprise at least 25% council membership. Under the bill, these parents and guardians may be compensated, within available appropriations, for time and travel related to council meetings and any activities related to training, leadership, and community engagement. It directs council meetings to be held at convenient times and locations for the members, including the parent and guardian members.

Beginning July 1, 2021, the bill makes the chairperson of each council elected by its membership, rather than appointed by the municipal chief elected official. By law, unchanged by the bill, the chief elected official and the superintendent jointly appoint the council members.

The bill requires that the councils be expanded to include representatives of:

1. state-financed child care providers,
2. a workforce or job-training community organization, and
3. a local business in the community.

The law spells out several duties of school readiness councils. The bill adds to this the requirement that they collaborate with OEC on planning improvements to the state early care and education governance structure.

§ 5 — CONTRACTS FOR ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOP OR RENOVATE GROUP OR FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES

Under current law, the OEC commissioner may enter into a contract with a municipality, human resources development agency, or nonprofit corporation for state grants-in-aid to develop, operate, or renovate any child care center. The bill expands eligibility for these contracts to include group child care homes and family child care homes.

The bill makes other conforming changes to current requirements for OEC and these entities when contracting with the office.

§§ 7 & 8 — CHILD CARE EMPLOYEE BACKGROUND CHECKS

The bill expands the types of employees who must undergo pre-employment comprehensive background checks to include any position involving unsupervised access to a child in the care center or group care home. It conforms current law's restrictions on when new employees can begin working with federal regulation requirements (i.e., either upon completion of the background check, or, pending its completion, under supervision at all times by someone who has successfully completed the background check within the last five years (45 C.F.R. 98.43(d)(4)). Current law bars a prospective employee from having unsupervised access to children in the center or group care home until a comprehensive background check is completed and the OEC commissioner permits the employee to work there.

The bill raises the minimum age threshold, from 16 to 18 years, for

required family child care home background checks of prospective employees in a position requiring care to a child, including an assistant or substitute employee and each household member.

It also eliminates (1) the condition that the commissioner require these background checks within available appropriations and (2) an authorization for the Department of Social Services to transfer funds appropriated for background checks to OEC.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2021

§ 9 — YOUTH CAMP EMPLOYEE BACKGROUND CHECK

The bill requires OEC-licensed youth camps (e.g., summer camps) to require prospective employees age 18 and older to undergo comprehensive background checks, including criminal history record checks, for positions providing child care or involving unsupervised access to children, including checks of:

1. national criminal records history,
2. state and federal sex offender registries, and
3. the state Department of Children and Families (DCF) child abuse and neglect registry.

For the DCF abuse registry check, the camp licensee must submit a release authorization form from each prospective employee to OEC; the office then makes a registry check request of DCF.

Under the bill, licensees must maintain all records and documentation associated with the background checks on-site and provide OEC with access to these records.

Checks must take place at least once every five years for staff who work at the camp for more than five years. Child care workers who have already met other background check requirements under child care laws within the last five years are deemed to have satisfied the camp background check.

The bill exempts from the background check requirement prospective international employees who hold a J-1 (visitor sponsored work and study), H-1B (temporary foreign worker in specialty occupation), or R-1 (visitor for ministry services or other religious occupation) visa.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2021

§ 10 — FINGERPRINT WAIVER FOR BACKGROUND CHECKS

The bill authorizes the OEC commissioner to grant a waiver from the requirement to submit fingerprints as part of a child care employment background check for those who cannot satisfy the requirement due to a medical condition. If the OEC commissioner grants a waiver, OEC will conduct a state criminal history records check using the individual's name and date of birth as provided with the waiver request.

The request must be in writing to the commissioner and include name, date of birth, and evidence the person is unable to satisfy the fingerprint requirement due to a medical condition, including birth defect, physical deformity, skin condition, or a psychiatric condition.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2021

§ 11 — CONNECTICUT HOME VISITING SYSTEM

The bill adds (in addition to infants under current law) young children to the scope of the Connecticut Home Visiting System and requires assessments to be community-based rather than hospital-based. It also requires the commissioner to (1) ensure that all home visiting programs are one of the evidence-based home visitation models that meet effectiveness criteria developed by the federal Department of Health and Human Services and (2) provide oversight to ensure model fidelity for the home visiting programs. The bill removes the commissioner's duty under current law to develop a comprehensive risk assessment for the former Nurturing Families Network.

§ 15 — BIRTH-TO-THREE TEACHING PERMITS

The bill authorizes the education commissioner, upon the request of

a Birth-to-Three Early Intervention program's director, to permit a person to teach within the program if he or she holds the following teaching endorsements: (1) special education, (2) integrated early childhood and special education, (3) partially sighted, (4) blind, and (5) hard of hearing.

The permission is valid for the duration of the person's teaching credential and may be extended by the education commissioner upon the request of the Birth-to-Three provider, when renewing these teaching credentials.

§ 16 — YOUTH CAMP LICENSE VIOLATIONS

The bill creates a notification and hearing process for youth camp operators that OEC cites for operating without a license. Current law allows for a civil penalty (up to \$1,000 for a first offense) and authorizes the commissioner to seek an injunction to halt unlicensed operation, but is silent regarding steps for the process, including a hearing.

The bill permits the OEC commissioner to send a notice detailing the alleged violation, by certified mail, return receipt requested, or by personally serving the person or officer of the camp. The notice must include the following:

1. the specific statutes or regulations involved,
2. a short and plain statement of the matters asserted or charged,
3. the maximum civil penalty that may be imposed for the violation,
and
4. a statement of the party's right to request a hearing.

Under the bill, a request for a hearing must be submitted in writing to the commissioner within 30 days after the notice was mailed or served.

If a hearing is requested, the commissioner must hold one in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act. If no

hearing is requested, or the person requesting one fails to appear, or if, after the hearing, the commissioner finds that the person has committed the violation, the commissioner may impose a civil penalty at her discretion that is not greater than the penalty stated in the notice. The commissioner must send a copy of any order issued by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the named person or officer.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

BACKGROUND

Related Bill

sHB 6417 (File 157), favorably reported by the Committee on Children, makes the same background check requirements for prospective employees of youth summer camps as in § 9.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 37 Nay 1 (03/15/2021)