



# House of Representatives

**File No. 784**

General Assembly

January Session, 2021

**(Reprint of File No. 244)**

Substitute House Bill No. 6559  
As Amended by House Amendment  
Schedule "A"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner  
June 3, 2021

***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 Section 10-16o of the general statutes is repealed and the  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 Section 10-16p of the general statutes is repealed and the  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 10-16r,  
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 17b-749k of the general statutes is repealed and the  
831 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2021*):

832 (a) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall, within available  
833 appropriations, require any person, other than a relative, who provides  
834 child care services to a child and who receives a child care subsidy from  
835 the Office of Early Childhood, to submit to comprehensive background  
836 checks, including state and national criminal history records checks. The  
837 criminal history records checks required pursuant to this subsection  
838 shall be conducted in accordance with section 29-17a. The commissioner  
839 shall also request a check of the state child abuse registry established  
840 pursuant to section 17a-101k.

841 (b) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall, within available  
842 appropriations, require any relative who provides child care services to  
843 a child and who receives a child care subsidy from the Office of Early  
844 Childhood, to submit to a check of (1) [state and national sexual offender  
845 registry databases] the National Sex Offender Public Website  
846 maintained by the United States Department of Justice and the registry  
847 established and maintained pursuant to section 54-257, (2) the state child  
848 abuse registry established pursuant to section 17a-101k, and (3) the  
849 Connecticut On-Line Law Enforcement Communication Teleprocessing  
850 System maintained by the Department of Emergency Services and  
851 Public Protection. If such check reveals that the name of any such  
852 relative appears in such databases, on said registry or in said system, the  
853 commissioner may require such relative to submit to state and national  
854 criminal history records checks conducted in accordance with section  
855 29-17a.

856 (c) The commissioner shall have the discretion to refuse payments for  
857 child care under any financial assistance program administered by him  
858 or her if the person or relative providing such child care has been  
859 convicted in this state or any other state of a felony, as defined in section  
860 53a-25, involving the use, attempted use or threatened use of physical  
861 force against another person, of cruelty to persons under section 53-20,  
862 injury or risk of injury to or impairing morals of children under section  
863 53-21, abandonment of children under the age of six years under section  
864 53-23 or any felony where the victim of the felony is a child under  
865 eighteen years of age, or of a violation of section 53a-70b of the general  
866 statutes, revision of 1958, revised to January 1, 2019, or section 53a-70,  
867 53a-70a, 53a-71, 53a-72a, 53a-72b or 53a-73a, or has a criminal record or  
868 was the subject of a substantiated report of child abuse in this state or  
869 any other state that the commissioner reasonably believes renders the  
870 person or relative unsuitable to provide child care.

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

873 (a) As used in this section:

874 (1) "Child care facility" means a "child care center", "group child care  
875 home" or "family child care home" that provides "child care services",  
876 each as described in section 19a-77, or any provider of child care services  
877 under the child care subsidy program established pursuant to section  
878 17b-749;

879 (2) "Child care services provider or staff member" means any person  
880 who is (A) a licensee, employee, volunteer or alternate staff, assistant,  
881 substitute or household member of a child care facility, (B) a family child  
882 care provider, or (C) any other person who provides child care services  
883 under the child care subsidy program established pursuant to section  
884 17b-749 but does not include a person who is providing child care  
885 services under the child care subsidy program (i) exclusively to children  
886 with whom such person is related, and (ii) without being issued a license  
887 to provide child care services by the Office of Early Childhood; and

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

893 (b) The comprehensive background checks required pursuant to  
894 subsection (c) of section 19a-80, as amended by this act, subsection (c) of  
895 section 19a-87b, as amended by this act, and subsection (a) of section  
896 17b-749k, as amended by this act, shall be conducted at least once every  
897 five years for each child care services provider or staff member in  
898 accordance with the provisions of 45 CFR 98.43, as amended from time  
899 to time.

900 (c) Any person who applies for a position at a child care facility in the  
901 state shall not be required to submit to such comprehensive background  
902 checks if such person (1) is an employee of a child care facility in the  
903 state, or has not been separated from employment as a child care  
904 services provider or staff member in the state for a period of more than  
905 one hundred eighty days, and (2) has successfully completed such  
906 comprehensive background checks in the previous five years. Nothing  
907 in this section prohibits the Commissioner of Early Childhood from  
908 requiring that a person applying for a position as a child care services  
909 provider or staff member submit to comprehensive background checks  
910 more than once during a five-year period.

911 (d) Any person required to submit to comprehensive background  
912 checks pursuant to subsection (c) of section 19a-80, as amended by this  
913 act, subsection (c) of section 19a-87b, as amended by this act, and  
914 subsection (a) of section 17b-749k, as amended by this act, may submit  
915 a request, in writing, to the Commissioner of Early Childhood for a  
916 waiver of the requirement to submit fingerprints. Such request shall  
917 include such person's name and date of birth, and evidence that such  
918 person is unable to satisfy such fingerprints requirement due to a  
919 medical condition, including, but not limited to, a birth defect, physical  
920 deformity, skin condition or psychiatric condition. Upon the granting of

921 a waiver to a person under this subsection, the Office of Early Childhood  
922 shall conduct a state criminal history records check of such person by  
923 using the name and date of birth that was provided in the request for a  
924 waiver by such person.

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

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

935 (b) The commissioner shall: (1) [Develop the comprehensive risk  
936 assessment to be used by the Nurturing Families Network's providers;  
937 (2) develop the training program, standards, and protocols for the pilot  
938 programs] Ensure that all home visiting programs are one or more of  
939 the evidence-based home visiting models that meet the criteria for  
940 evidence of effectiveness developed by the federal Department of  
941 Health and Human Services; (2) provide oversight of home visiting  
942 programs to insure model fidelity; and (3) develop, issue and evaluate  
943 requests for proposals to procure the services required by this section.  
944 In evaluating the proposals, the commissioner shall take into  
945 consideration the most effective and consistent service delivery system  
946 allowing for the continuation of current public and private programs.

947 (c) The commissioner shall establish a data system to enable the  
948 programs to document the following information in a standard manner:  
949 (1) The level of screening and assessment; (2) profiles of risk and family  
950 demographics; (3) the incidence of child abuse and neglect; (4) rates of  
951 child development; and (5) any other information the commissioner  
952 deems appropriate.

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

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

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

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

986 young children.

987 Sec. 13. Subsection (a) of section 17b-261 of the general statutes is  
988 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
989 *2021*):

990 (a) Medical assistance shall be provided for any otherwise eligible  
991 person whose income, including any available support from legally  
992 liable relatives and the income of the person's spouse or dependent  
993 child, is not more than one hundred forty-three per cent, pending  
994 approval of a federal waiver applied for pursuant to subsection (e) of  
995 this section, of the benefit amount paid to a person with no income  
996 under the temporary family assistance program in the appropriate  
997 region of residence and if such person is an institutionalized individual  
998 as defined in Section 1917 of the Social Security Act, 42 USC 1396p(h)(3),  
999 and has not made an assignment or transfer or other disposition of  
1000 property for less than fair market value for the purpose of establishing  
1001 eligibility for benefits or assistance under this section. Any such  
1002 disposition shall be treated in accordance with Section 1917(c) of the  
1003 Social Security Act, 42 USC 1396p(c). Any disposition of property made  
1004 on behalf of an applicant or recipient or the spouse of an applicant or  
1005 recipient by a guardian, conservator, person authorized to make such  
1006 disposition pursuant to a power of attorney or other person so  
1007 authorized by law shall be attributed to such applicant, recipient or  
1008 spouse. A disposition of property ordered by a court shall be evaluated  
1009 in accordance with the standards applied to any other such disposition  
1010 for the purpose of determining eligibility. The commissioner shall  
1011 establish the standards for eligibility for medical assistance at one  
1012 hundred forty-three per cent of the benefit amount paid to a household  
1013 of equal size with no income under the temporary family assistance  
1014 program in the appropriate region of residence. In determining  
1015 eligibility, the commissioner shall not consider as income Aid and  
1016 Attendance pension benefits granted to a veteran, as defined in section  
1017 27-103, or the surviving spouse of such veteran. Except as provided in  
1018 section 17b-277 and section 17b-292, the medical assistance program  
1019 shall provide coverage to persons under the age of nineteen with



1020 household income up to one hundred ninety-six per cent of the federal  
1021 poverty level without an asset limit and to persons under the age of  
1022 nineteen, who qualify for coverage under Section 1931 of the Social  
1023 Security Act, with household income not exceeding one hundred  
1024 ninety-six per cent of the federal poverty level without an asset limit,  
1025 and their parents and needy caretaker relatives, who qualify for  
1026 coverage under Section 1931 of the Social Security Act, with household  
1027 income not exceeding one hundred fifty-five per cent of the federal  
1028 poverty level without an asset limit. Such levels shall be based on the  
1029 regional differences in such benefit amount, if applicable, unless such  
1030 levels based on regional differences are not in conformance with federal  
1031 law. Any income in excess of the applicable amounts shall be applied as  
1032 may be required by said federal law, and assistance shall be granted for  
1033 the balance of the cost of authorized medical assistance. The  
1034 Commissioner of Social Services shall provide applicants for assistance  
1035 under this section, at the time of application, with a written statement  
1036 advising them of (1) the effect of an assignment or transfer or other  
1037 disposition of property on eligibility for benefits or assistance, (2) the  
1038 effect that having income that exceeds the limits prescribed in this  
1039 subsection will have with respect to program eligibility, and (3) the  
1040 availability of, and eligibility for, services provided by the [Nurturing  
1041 Families Network] Connecticut Home Visiting System, established  
1042 pursuant to section 17b-751b, as amended by this act. For coverage dates  
1043 on or after January 1, 2014, the department shall use the modified  
1044 adjusted gross income financial eligibility rules set forth in Section  
1045 1902(e)(14) of the Social Security Act and the implementing regulations  
1046 to determine eligibility for HUSKY A, HUSKY B and HUSKY D  
1047 applicants, as defined in section 17b-290. Persons who are determined  
1048 ineligible for assistance pursuant to this section shall be provided a  
1049 written statement notifying such persons of their ineligibility and  
1050 advising such persons of their potential eligibility for one of the other  
1051 insurance affordability programs as defined in 42 CFR 435.4.

1052 Sec. 14. Section 17b-277a of the general statutes is repealed and the  
1053 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

1054 The Commissioners of Public Health, Social Services and Mental  
1055 Health and Addiction Services shall jointly establish a program to  
1056 inform applicants to the Healthy Start program about the availability of,  
1057 and eligibility for, services provided by the [Nurturing Families  
1058 Network] Connecticut Home Visiting System, established pursuant to  
1059 section 17b-751b, as amended by this act.

1060 Sec. 15. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2021*) Upon the request of a director  
1061 of an early intervention service program participating in the birth-to-  
1062 three program, established pursuant to section 17a-248b of the general  
1063 statutes, the Commissioner of Education may permit any person who  
1064 holds an endorsement in the areas of (1) comprehensive special  
1065 education, (2) integrated early childhood and special education, (3)  
1066 partially sighted, (4) blind, and (5) hard of hearing, to teach within the  
1067 birth-to-three program. Such permission shall be valid during the  
1068 period of such person's certificate, permit or authorization and may be  
1069 extended by the commissioner, upon request of the birth-to-three  
1070 service provider, upon renewal of such person's certificate, permit or  
1071 authorization by the commissioner.

1072 Sec. 16. Section 19a-425 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
1073 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

1074 (a) Any person who establishes, conducts or maintains a youth camp  
1075 without a license as required by this chapter for a first offense shall be  
1076 subject to a civil penalty of not more than one thousand dollars, and for  
1077 a second or subsequent offense shall be subject to a civil penalty of not  
1078 more than one thousand five hundred dollars, and each day during  
1079 which a youth camp is conducted or maintained without a license, after  
1080 notification to such person by the commissioner, shall constitute a  
1081 separate offense. The commissioner may apply to the superior court for  
1082 the judicial district of Hartford, or for the judicial district where the  
1083 defendant named in such application resides, for an injunction to  
1084 restrain the operation or maintenance of a youth camp by any person  
1085 other than a licensed operator. The application for such injunction or the  
1086 issuance of the same shall be in addition to and shall not relieve any

1087 such person from the imposition of a civil penalty under this section. In  
 1088 connection with any such application for an injunction, it shall not be  
 1089 necessary to prove that an adequate remedy at law does not exist.

1090 (b) If the Commissioner of Early Childhood has reason to believe that  
 1091 a violation has occurred for which a civil penalty is authorized by  
 1092 subsection (a) of this section, the commissioner may send to such person  
 1093 or officer by certified mail, return receipt requested or personally serve  
 1094 upon such person or officer, a notice that shall include: (1) A reference  
 1095 to the section or sections of the general statutes or regulations involved;  
 1096 (2) a short and plain statement of the matters asserted or charged; (3) a  
 1097 statement of the maximum civil penalty that may be imposed for such  
 1098 violation; and (4) a statement of the party's right to request a hearing.  
 1099 Such person or officer shall submit any request for a hearing in writing  
 1100 to the commissioner not later than thirty days after the notice is mailed  
 1101 or served.

1102 (c) If such person or officer so requests, the commissioner shall cause  
 1103 a hearing to be held. The hearing shall be held in accordance with the  
 1104 provisions of chapter 54. If such person or officer fails to request a  
 1105 hearing or fails to appear at the hearing or if, after the hearing, the  
 1106 commissioner finds that the person or officer has committed such  
 1107 violation, the commissioner may, in his or her discretion, order that a  
 1108 civil penalty be imposed that is not greater than the penalty stated in the  
 1109 notice. The commissioner shall send a copy of any order issued pursuant  
 1110 to this subsection by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the  
 1111 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	<i>October 1, 2021</i>	19a-80(c)
Sec. 8	<i>October 1, 2021</i>	19a-87b(c)
Sec. 9	<i>October 1, 2021</i>	17b-749k
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

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	GF - 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 <sup>1</sup> - 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 readiness funds. To the extent this change does impact the amounts received by town-based providers, they could experience an associated

<sup>1</sup> 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.

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 Account<sup>2</sup> 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.

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

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

nature and have no fiscal impact.

House "A" specifies the source of information that must be used for certain background checks required for relatives who provide care to children who receive a child care subsidy from OEC and has no fiscal impact

***The Out Years***

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

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**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 6559 (as amended by House "A")\******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 may 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 to federal regulations on when these new employees can begin working (§ 7);
9. increases the minimum age threshold, from 16 to 18, for mandatory background checks for household members of family child care homes (§ 8);
10. specifies that as part of the existing background checks required of a relative who provides OEC-subsidized childcare services (a) the national sex offender registry check must use the U.S. Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Website and (b) the state offender database check must use the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection's registry (§ 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 to OEC's list of required programs and services (a) working with incarcerated parents, (b) promoting doula work to help women with high-risk pregnancies, and (c) supporting homeless diversion for families with young children (§ 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.

\*House Amendment "A" (1) strikes a provision in the underlying bill on background checks for youth camp prospective employees and replaces it with one specifying the national and state sexual offender database websites that must be used for certain background checks (§ 9) and (2) clarifies that the provision raising the minimum age threshold for background checks from 16 to 18 applies only to household members in a family child care home (§ 8).

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. Existing law already accepts accreditation by the National Association for Education and Young Children or a Head Start program review instrument.

### **§ 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% of 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.

Existing 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's 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 a 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 to federal regulation requirements (i.e., either upon completion of the background check, or, pending its completion, subject to 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 background checks of each household member in a family child care home.

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

**§ 10 — FINGERPRINT WAIVER FOR BACKGROUND CHECKS**

The bill authorizes the OEC commissioner to waive the requirement to submit fingerprints as part of a child care employment background check for those who cannot satisfy it 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 allow someone 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 about 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 (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 hearing request 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 none is requested, or the person requesting one fails to appear, or if, after the hearing, the commissioner finds that the person committed the violation, then 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

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 37 Nay 1 (03/15/2021)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 36 Nay 12 (05/03/2021)