



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 6558

January Session, 2021



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

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

1 Section 1. Section 19a-87b of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

3 (a) No person, group of persons, association, organization,
4 corporation, institution or agency, public or private, shall maintain a
5 family child care home, as [defined] described in section 19a-77, without
6 a license issued by the Commissioner of Early Childhood. Licensure
7 forms shall be obtained from the Office of Early Childhood.
8 Applications for licensure shall be made to the commissioner on forms
9 provided by the office and shall contain the information required by
10 regulations adopted under this section. The licensure and application
11 forms shall contain a notice that false statements made therein are
12 punishable in accordance with section 53a-157b. Applicants shall state,
13 in writing, that they are in compliance with the regulations adopted by
14 the commissioner pursuant to subsection (f) of this section. Before a
15 family child care home license is granted, the office shall make an
16 inquiry and investigation which shall include a visit and inspection of
17 the premises for which the license is requested. Any inspection
18 conducted by the office shall include an inspection for evident sources

19 of lead poisoning. The office shall provide for a chemical analysis of any
20 paint chips found on such premises. Neither the commissioner nor the
21 commissioner's designee shall require an annual inspection for homes
22 seeking license renewal or for licensed homes, except that the
23 commissioner or the commissioner's designee shall make an
24 unannounced visit, inspection or investigation of each licensed family
25 child care home at least once every year. A licensed family child care
26 home shall not be subject to any conditions on the operation of such
27 home by local officials, other than those imposed by the office pursuant
28 to this subsection, if the home complies with all local codes and
29 ordinances applicable to single and multifamily dwellings.

30 (b) No person shall act as an assistant or substitute staff member to a
31 person or entity maintaining a family child care home, as defined in
32 section 19a-77, without an approval issued by the commissioner. Any
33 person seeking to act as an assistant or substitute staff member in a
34 family child care home shall submit an application for such approval to
35 the office. Applications for approval shall: (1) Be made to the
36 commissioner on forms provided by the office, (2) contain the
37 information required by regulations adopted under this section, and (3)
38 be accompanied by a fee of fifteen dollars. The approval application
39 forms shall contain a notice that false statements made in such form are
40 punishable in accordance with section 53a-157b.

41 (c) The commissioner, within available appropriations, shall require
42 each initial applicant or prospective employee of a family child care
43 home in a position requiring the provision of care to a child, including
44 an assistant or substitute staff member and each household member
45 who is sixteen years of age or older, to submit to comprehensive
46 background checks, including state and national criminal history
47 records checks. The criminal history records checks required pursuant
48 to this subsection shall be conducted in accordance with section 29-17a.
49 The commissioner shall also request a check of the state child abuse
50 registry established pursuant to section 17a-101k. The commissioner
51 shall notify each licensee of the provisions of this subsection. For

52 purposes of this subsection, "household member" means any person,
53 other than the person who is licensed to conduct, operate or maintain a
54 family child care home, who resides in the family child care home, such
55 as the licensee's spouse or children, tenants and any other occupant.

56 (d) An application for initial licensure pursuant to this section shall
57 be accompanied by a fee of forty dollars and such license shall be issued
58 for a term of four years. An application for renewal of a license issued
59 pursuant to this section shall be accompanied by a fee of forty dollars
60 and a certification from the licensee that any child enrolled in the family
61 child care home has received age-appropriate immunizations in
62 accordance with regulations adopted pursuant to subsection (f) of this
63 section. A license issued pursuant to this section shall be renewed for a
64 term of four years. In the case of an applicant submitting an application
65 for renewal of a license that has expired, and who has ceased operations
66 of a family child care home due to such expired license, the
67 commissioner may renew such expired license within thirty days of the
68 date of such expiration upon receipt of an application for renewal that
69 is accompanied by such fee and such certification.

70 (e) An application for initial staff approval or renewal of staff
71 approval shall be accompanied by a fee of fifteen dollars. Such
72 approvals shall be issued or renewed for a term of two years.

73 (f) The commissioner shall adopt regulations, in accordance with the
74 provisions of chapter 54, to [assure] ensure that family child care homes,
75 as [defined] described in section 19a-77, meet the health, educational
76 and social needs of children utilizing such homes. Such regulations shall
77 ensure that the family child care home is treated as a residence, and not
78 an institutional facility. Such regulations shall specify that each child be
79 protected as age-appropriate by adequate immunization against
80 diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis, measles, mumps, rubella,
81 hemophilus influenzae type B and any other vaccine required by the
82 schedule of active immunization adopted pursuant to section 19a-7f.
83 Such regulations shall provide appropriate exemptions for children for
84 whom such immunization is medically contraindicated and for children

85 whose parents or guardian objects to such immunization on religious
86 grounds and require that any such objection be accompanied by a
87 statement from such parents or guardian that such immunization would
88 be contrary to the religious beliefs of such child or the parents or
89 guardian of such child, which statement shall be acknowledged, in
90 accordance with the provisions of sections 1-32, 1-34 and 1-35, by (1) a
91 judge of a court of record or a family support magistrate, (2) a clerk or
92 deputy clerk of a court having a seal, (3) a town clerk, (4) a notary public,
93 (5) a justice of the peace, or (6) an attorney admitted to the bar of this
94 state. Such regulations shall also specify conditions under which family
95 child care home providers may administer tests to monitor glucose
96 levels in a child with diagnosed diabetes mellitus, and administer
97 medicinal preparations, including controlled drugs specified in the
98 regulations by the commissioner, to a child receiving child care services
99 at a family child care home pursuant to a written order of a physician
100 licensed to practice medicine in this or another state, an advanced
101 practice registered nurse licensed to prescribe in accordance with
102 section 20-94a or a physician assistant licensed to prescribe in
103 accordance with section 20-12d, and the written authorization of a
104 parent or guardian of such child. Such regulations shall specify
105 appropriate standards for extended care and intermittent short-term
106 overnight care. The commissioner shall inform each licensee, by way of
107 a plain language summary provided not later than sixty days after the
108 regulation's effective date, of any new or changed regulations adopted
109 under this subsection with which a licensee must comply.

110 (g) Upon the declaration by the Governor of a civil preparedness
111 emergency pursuant to section 28-9 or a public health emergency
112 pursuant to section 19a-131a, the commissioner may waive the
113 provisions of any regulation adopted pursuant to this section if the
114 commissioner determines that such waiver would not endanger the life,
115 safety or health of any child. The commissioner shall prescribe the
116 duration of such waiver, provided such waiver shall not extend beyond
117 the duration of the declared emergency. The commissioner shall
118 establish the criteria by which a waiver request shall be made and the

119 conditions for which a waiver will be granted or denied. The provisions
120 of section 19a-84 shall not apply to a denial of a waiver request under
121 this subsection.

122 (h) Any family child care home may provide child care services to
123 homeless children and youths, as defined in 42 USC 11434a, as amended
124 from time to time, for a period not to exceed ninety days without
125 complying with any provision in regulations adopted pursuant to this
126 section relating to immunization and physical examination
127 requirements. Any family child care home that provides child care
128 services to homeless children and youths at such home under this
129 subsection shall maintain a record on file of all homeless children and
130 youths who have attended such home for a period of two years after
131 such homeless children or youths are no longer receiving child care
132 services at such home.

133 (i) Any family child care home may provide child care services to a
134 foster child for a period not to exceed forty-five days without complying
135 with any provision in regulations adopted pursuant to this section
136 relating to immunization and physical examination requirements. Any
137 family child care home that provides child care services to a foster child
138 at such home under this subsection shall maintain a record on file of
139 such foster child for a period of two years after such foster child is no
140 longer receiving child care services at such home. For purposes of this
141 subsection, "foster child" means a child who is in the care and custody
142 of the Commissioner of Children and Families and placed in a foster
143 home licensed pursuant to section 17a-114, foster home approved by a
144 child-placing agency licensed pursuant to section 17a-149, facility
145 licensed pursuant to section 17a-145 or with a relative or fictive kin
146 caregiver pursuant to section 17a-114.

147 (j) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2022, to June 30, 2026, inclusive,
148 the Commissioner of Early Childhood may issue a license to maintain a
149 family child care home in the cities of New Britain, New Haven,
150 Bridgeport, Stamford, Hartford or Waterbury in accordance with the
151 provisions of this chapter to a person or group of persons who have

152 partnered with an association, organization, corporation, institution or
153 agency, public or private, to provide child care services in a space within
154 a facility, other than a private family home and that has been approved
155 by the commissioner, that has been provided by such association,
156 organization, corporation, institution or agency. The commissioner shall
157 not approve more than one facility in each such city to be used for
158 licenses issued under this subsection. An application for a license under
159 this subsection shall include a copy of the current fire marshal certificate
160 of compliance with the Fire Safety Code, and written verification of
161 compliance with the State Building Code, local zoning and building
162 requirements and local health ordinances. The commissioner may
163 require an applicant for a license under this subsection to comply with
164 additional conditions relating to the health and safety of the children
165 who will be served in such facility. The commissioner may waive any
166 requirement that does not apply to such facility. Any license issued
167 under this subsection shall expire on June 30, 2026, except that the
168 commissioner may suspend or revoke any such license at any time in
169 accordance with the provisions of section 19a-87e.

170 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2021*) (a) For the fiscal year ending June
171 30, 2022, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Office of Higher Education,
172 in collaboration with the Office of Early Childhood, shall, within
173 available appropriations, administer an early childhood educator loan
174 forgiveness grant program to persons who meet the eligibility
175 requirements described in subsection (c) of this section.

176 (b) The program shall provide a student loan forgiveness grant to any
177 person (1) who has been continuously employed by a licensed child care
178 center, group child care home or family child care home, as described in
179 section 19a-77 of the general statutes, for at least four years at the time
180 of application, (2) whose annual salary at such licensed child care center
181 is less than fifty thousand dollars per year, and (3) who holds (A) an
182 associate degree with a concentration in early childhood education from
183 a public institution of higher education in the state that is regionally
184 accredited, provided such associate degree program is approved by (i)

185 the Board of Regents for Higher Education or the Office of Higher
186 Education, and (ii) the Office of Early Childhood, or (B) a bachelor's
187 degree with a concentration in early childhood education from a public
188 institution of higher education in the state that is regionally accredited,
189 provided such bachelor's degree program is approved by (i) the Board
190 of Regents for Higher Education or the Office of Higher Education, and
191 (ii) the Office of Early Childhood. As used in this subsection,
192 "concentration in early childhood education" has the same meaning as
193 provided in section 10-16p of the general statutes.

194 (c) Any person who satisfies the eligibility requirements prescribed
195 in subsection (b) of this section shall receive a grant in an amount equal
196 to the remaining balance of such person's federal or state educational
197 loans.

198 (d) Persons may apply to the Office of Higher Education for grants
199 under this section at such time and in such manner as the executive
200 director of the Office of Higher Education prescribes.

201 (e) Any unexpended funds appropriated for purposes of this section
202 shall not lapse at the end of the fiscal year but shall be available for
203 expenditure during the next fiscal year.

204 *Sec. 3. (NEW) (Effective January 1, 2022, and applicable to taxable years*
205 *commencing on or after January 1, 2022)* (a) For taxable years commencing
206 on or after January 1, 2022, there shall be allowed a credit against the tax
207 imposed under chapter 229 of the general statutes, for any individual
208 who (1) has been employed for at least six months during the taxable
209 year by a child care center, group child care home or family child care
210 home that provides child care services, as such terms are described in
211 section 19a-77 of the general statutes, in this state with the primary
212 responsibility for a classroom of children, and (2) has a Connecticut
213 adjusted gross income of not more than fifty thousand dollars during
214 each taxable year in which the credit is claimed.

215 (b) Such credit shall be in the amount of (1) five hundred dollars for

216 an individual who has been issued an early childhood teacher
217 credential, pursuant to section 10-520b of the general statutes, (2) one
218 thousand dollars for an individual who holds an associate degree with
219 a concentration in early childhood education from an institution of
220 higher education that is regionally accredited, and (3) one thousand five
221 hundred dollars for an individual who holds at least a bachelor's degree
222 with a concentration in early childhood education from an institution of
223 higher education that is regionally accredited, provided the
224 requirements under subdivisions (1) and (2) of subsection (a) of this
225 section are met for each taxable year in which the credit is claimed.

226 (c) If the amount of the credit allowed pursuant to this section exceeds
227 the individual's liability for the tax imposed under chapter 229 of the
228 general statutes, the Commissioner of Revenue Services shall treat such
229 excess as an overpayment and, except as provided under section 12-739
230 of the general statutes or 12-742 of the general statutes, shall refund the
231 amount of such excess, without interest, to the individual.

232 (d) Any individual claiming a credit under this section shall provide
233 any documentation required by the Commissioner of Revenue Services
234 in a form and manner prescribed by said commissioner.

235 Sec. 4. Subsection (a) of section 17b-749 of the general statutes is
236 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
237 *2021*):

238 (a) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall establish and operate
239 a child care subsidy program to increase the availability, affordability
240 and quality of child care services for families with a parent or caretaker
241 who (1) is (A) working, [or attending] (B) enrolled in (i) high school, (ii)
242 a public or independent institution of higher education, (iii) a private
243 occupational school authorized pursuant to sections 10a-22a to 10a-22o,
244 inclusive, or (iv) an alternate route to certification program approved by
245 the State Board of Education, or (C) participating in a local Even Start
246 program or other adult education program approved by the
247 Commissioner of Early Childhood; or (2) receives cash assistance under

248 the temporary family assistance program from the Department of Social
249 Services and is participating in an education, training or other job
250 preparation activity approved pursuant to subsection (b) of section 17b-
251 688i or subsection (b) of section 17b-689d. Services available under the
252 child care subsidy program shall include the provision of child care
253 subsidies for children under the age of thirteen or children under the
254 age of nineteen with special needs. The Office of Early Childhood shall
255 open and maintain enrollment for the child care subsidy program and
256 shall administer such program within the existing budgetary resources
257 available. The office shall issue a notice on the office's Internet web site
258 any time the office closes the program to new applications, changes
259 eligibility requirements, changes program benefits or makes any other
260 change to the program's status or terms, except the office shall not be
261 required to issue such notice when the office expands program
262 eligibility. Any change in the office's acceptance of new applications,
263 eligibility requirements, program benefits or any other change to the
264 program's status or terms for which the office is required to give notice
265 pursuant to this subsection, shall not be effective until thirty days after
266 the office issues such notice.

267 Sec. 5. Subsection (d) of section 17b-749 of the general statutes is
268 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
269 *2021*):

270 (d) (1) Not later than July 1, 2015, an applicant determined to be
271 eligible for program benefits by the Commissioner of Early Childhood
272 shall remain eligible for such benefits for a period prescribed by federal
273 law.

274 (2) For purposes of determining the eligibility of an applicant for
275 program benefits under subparagraph (A) of subdivision (1) of
276 subsection (a) of this section, the commissioner shall accept evidence of
277 registration with a job search assistance program administered by the
278 Labor Department. An applicant determined to be eligible for program
279 benefits under this subdivision shall be considered employed half-time
280 and eligible for such benefits for a period of ninety days while such

281 applicant seeks employment.

282 Sec. 6. Section 17b-749 of the general statutes is amended by adding
283 subsection (l) as follows (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

284 (NEW) (l) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, and each fiscal year
285 thereafter, the amount of the subsidy paid to providers under the child
286 care subsidy program shall be at least seventy-five per cent of the market
287 rate, as determined by the Commissioner of Early Childhood pursuant
288 to the current market rate study required under federal law.

289 Sec. 7. Section 8-210 of the general statutes is amended by adding
290 subsection (g) as follows (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

291 (NEW) (g) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2022, and June 30, 2023,
292 the Office of Early Childhood shall permit any family that meets the
293 eligibility requirements described in subdivision (1) or (2) of subsection
294 (a) of section 17b-749, as amended by this act, or subdivision (2) of
295 subsection (d) of section 17b-749, as amended by this act, to participate
296 in a program provided at a state-contracted child care center under this
297 section.

298 Sec. 8. (*Effective July 1, 2021*) (a) There is established a task force to
299 analyze and make recommendations on issues relating to early
300 childhood workforce development needs in the state.

301 (b) The task force shall examine the following: (1) How to encourage
302 equity-based practices in early childhood education preparation and
303 professional development; (2) ways to address inequity in access to
304 employment opportunities and compensation in the early childhood
305 workforce; (3) the feasibility of creating a new co-authored license that
306 would offer multiple levels of flexibility to address the range of ages,
307 settings and roles in the early childhood field, including a professional
308 continuum for assistants, lead teachers, generalists and specialists, such
309 as early interventionist, mental health, integrated special education and
310 rehabilitation therapies; and (4) workforce demands in the state related
311 to the need for early childhood educators providing child care services

312 for infants and toddlers to age six or age eight.

313 (c) The task force shall make recommendations concerning: (1)
314 Legislation for educator preparation requirements in the early
315 childhood field; (2) the creation of a new early childhood teacher license
316 or credential jointly issued by the Office of Early Childhood and the
317 Department of Education; (3) the development of a unifying framework
318 for early childhood educator preparation, in accordance with the
319 National Association for the Education of Young Children and the
320 Council for Exceptional Children - Division of Early Childhood, in order
321 to offer definition of levels for competencies and compensation, such as
322 (A) professional development and alternative routes for aides or
323 classroom assistants, (B) associate degree preparation and alternative
324 routes for assistant teachers, (C) bachelor's degree preparation or post-
325 baccalaureate work for head teachers, (D) bachelor's degree preparation,
326 post-baccalaureate work or graduate degree attainment for specialists,
327 and (E) alignment with competencies to address adult learners,
328 experience in the field, as well as capacity in languages, community
329 context and cultural norms; (4) methods to increase compensation
330 related to competency and degree attainment that will work across all
331 sectors of the early care and education sector including subsidized and
332 parent fee supported programs; and (5) workforce development and the
333 creation of job opportunities in early childhood.

334 (d) The task force shall consist of the following members:

335 (1) Two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives,
336 one of whom is a professor of early childhood education at a public
337 institution of higher education in the state and one of whom is a
338 representative of a school readiness program, as defined in section 10-
339 16p of the general statutes, or a state-funded child care center pursuant
340 to section 8-210 of the general statutes, as amended by this act;

341 (2) Two appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, one of
342 whom is a faculty member from a community college and one of whom
343 is a representative of a private child care provider that is not receiving

344 state financial assistance under section 8-210 of the general statutes, as
345 amended by this act, or 10-16p of the general statutes;

346 (3) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of
347 Representatives who is a representative from the Capitol Region
348 Education Council;

349 (4) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate who is an
350 operator of a family child care home or a representative of an
351 organization that represents or supports the interests of family child
352 care homes;

353 (5) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of
354 Representatives who is a representative from the Connecticut Early
355 Childhood Alliance;

356 (6) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate who is a
357 representative from a state or national early childhood accrediting
358 organization;

359 (7) The Commissioner of Early Childhood, or the commissioner's
360 designee;

361 (8) The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee;

362 (9) The cochair of the Connecticut Consortium for the Advancement
363 of Early Childhood Educators; and

364 (10) The executive director of the State Education Resource Center, or
365 the executive director's designee.

366 (e) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivision (1),
367 (2), (3), (4), (5) or (6) of subsection (d) of this section may be a member
368 of the General Assembly.

369 (f) All initial appointments to the task force shall be made not later
370 than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall
371 be filled by the appointing authority.

