



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 62

January Session, 2023

Substitute House Bill No. 6719

House of Representatives, March 14, 2023

The Committee on Children reported through REP. LINEHAN of the 103rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING EMERGENCY SERVICES AND INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER, COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENTS AND NONVERBAL LEARNING DISORDERS.

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) For the purposes of this
2 section, "emergency services" means law enforcement, fire fighting,
3 medical, ambulance and other emergency services.

4 (b) Not later than December 31, 2023, the Departments of
5 Developmental Services, Children and Families, and Emergency
6 Services and Public Protection shall jointly develop guidelines and best
7 practices for municipalities for the creation and implementation of
8 emergency services awareness programming for children and adults
9 with autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairments and nonverbal
10 learning disorders. Such programming shall include, but need not be
11 limited to, opportunities for such children and adults to observe and
12 interact, in a setting that is suited to the developmental and sensory
13 needs of such children and adults, with (1) uniformed emergency

14 services personnel and vehicles used by such personnel, (2) flashing
15 lights and sirens associated with such vehicles, and (3) mock traffic
16 stops.

17 (c) Not later than January 1, 2024, the Departments of Developmental
18 Services, Children and Families, and Emergency Services and Public
19 Protection shall publish the guidelines and best practices developed
20 pursuant to subsection (b) of this section on said departments' Internet
21 web sites.

22 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) For the purposes of this
23 section, "emergency services" means law enforcement, fire fighting,
24 medical, ambulance and other emergency services.

25 (b) Not later than January 1, 2024, the Department of Emergency
26 Services and Public Protection, in consultation with the Departments of
27 Developmental Services and Children and Families and at least one
28 organization that advocates for individuals with autism spectrum
29 disorder, shall develop and assemble sensory kits to be utilized by
30 emergency services personnel who, in the performance of their duties,
31 interact with children and adults with autism spectrum disorder,
32 cognitive impairments or nonverbal learning disorders. Such sensory
33 kits shall (1) assist such children and adults in managing emotions and
34 anxiety during interactions with such personnel and during
35 emergencies to which such personnel respond, and (2) include, but need
36 not be limited to, noise-canceling headphones, dark tinted glasses and
37 tactile objects or toys used to reduce anxiety.

38 (c) On or before September 1, 2025, any municipality that created and
39 implemented emergency services awareness programming pursuant to
40 the guidelines and best practices published pursuant to subsection (c) of
41 section 1 of this act may apply to the Department of Emergency Services
42 and Public Protection, in a form and manner prescribed by the
43 department, to receive sensory kits developed and assembled pursuant
44 to subsection (b) of this section, for use by emergency services personnel
45 in such municipality. Upon receipt of any such application, the
46 department shall provide such municipality three sensory kits per ten

47 thousand residents of such municipality.

48 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) For the purposes of this
49 section, "emergency services" means law enforcement, fire fighting,
50 medical, ambulance and other emergency services.

51 (b) Not later than December 31, 2023, the Department of Emergency
52 Services and Public Protection shall develop a form for distribution by
53 municipal police departments to parents and guardians of children and
54 adults with autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairments and
55 nonverbal learning disorders. Such form shall record information that
56 may assist emergency services personnel in their interactions with such
57 individuals, including, but not limited to, the following:

58 (1) The individual's name, nickname, date of birth, sex, height,
59 weight, eye color, hair color and address and any scars or identifying
60 marks the individual has;

61 (2) The name of a person who may be contacted by such personnel in
62 an emergency pertaining to the individual, and such person's telephone
63 number;

64 (3) The individual's language and communication skills, including,
65 but not limited to, whether the individual (A) is verbal or nonverbal, (B)
66 speaks American Sign Language, and (C) can read or write,
67 communicate by pointing to pictures, repeat questions or respond "yes"
68 or "no" to questions;

69 (4) Whether the individual is sensitive to noise, touch, light, crowds
70 or other stimuli;

71 (5) Conditions, circumstances or items the individual dislikes or
72 avoids, including, but not limited to, eye contact, being wet or dirty,
73 interacting with strangers and certain clothing or shoes;

74 (6) Atypical behaviors the individual exhibits, including, but not
75 limited to, speaking loudly, self-injury, running if chased, vocal
76 stimming, making high-pitched noises, disregarding or having no sense

77 of danger and sensory seeking;

78 (7) Pertinent medical information, including, but not limited to,
79 whether the individual is hearing or visually impaired or has a seizure
80 disorder, motor or vocal tics or a high pain tolerance; and

81 (8) Methods such personnel may use to calm the individual,
82 including, but not limited to, use of a calm and quiet voice or noise-
83 canceling headphones, providing the individual with time alone or
84 specific food items and asking the individual how such personnel can
85 help the individual.

86 (c) Not later than January 1, 2024, the Department of Emergency
87 Services and Public Protection shall publish the form developed
88 pursuant to subsection (a) of this section on its Internet web site. On and
89 after January 15, 2024, each municipal police department shall make
90 copies of such form available in a publicly accessible area of such
91 department.

92 (d) The parent or guardian of any child or adult with autism spectrum
93 disorder, a cognitive impairment or nonverbal learning disorder may
94 complete the form published and made available pursuant to subsection
95 (c) of this section and return it to the municipal police department in the
96 municipality in which such child or adult resides.

97 (e) Upon receipt of a completed form returned pursuant to subsection
98 (d) of this section, a municipal police department shall record the
99 information provided on such form in a searchable electronic database
100 maintained by such police department, and make such database
101 available to (1) each police officer employed by such department for
102 purposes of determining whether a child or adult with autism spectrum
103 disorder, a cognitive impairment or nonverbal learning disorder resides
104 at an address to which such police officer is responding, and (2) the
105 public safety answering point established and operated by the
106 municipality pursuant to section 28-25a of the general statutes in which
107 such police department is located, for use in accordance with section 4
108 of this act.

109 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) On and after January 15, 2024,
 110 each emergency dispatcher employed by a public safety answering
 111 point established and operated pursuant to section 28-25a of the general
 112 statutes shall, when practicable, conduct a search of the electronic
 113 database made available to such public safety answering point pursuant
 114 to section 3 of this act, when dispatching law enforcement, fire fighting,
 115 medical, ambulance or other emergency services to a residential
 116 address, for the purposes of (1) determining whether a child or adult
 117 with autism spectrum disorder, a cognitive impairment or nonverbal
 118 learning disorder resides at such address, and (2) communicating
 119 information concerning any such child or adult to any such responding
 120 emergency services personnel.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>from passage</i>	New section

KID *Joint Favorable Subst.*

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

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection	GF - Potential Cost	Up to \$43,000	See Below

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$
Municipal Police Departments	STATE MANDATE ¹ - Potential Cost	See Below	See Below

Explanation

The bill addresses emergency services awareness programming for children and adults with autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairments, and nonverbal learning disorders. It results in a one-time cost of up to \$43,000 to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) and a potential cost to municipal police departments.

Section 1 requires the Departments of Developmental Services, Children and Families, and DESPP to jointly develop guidelines and best practices for awareness programming resulting in no fiscal impact to the state.

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

If a municipality decides to adopt this programming, there will be a potential cost for staffing and training.

Section 2 requires DESPP to assemble and provide three sensory kits per 10,000 residents of a requesting municipality resulting in a potential one-time cost of up to \$43,000 applied in FY 24 and through the first quarter of FY 25. Each kit will cost up to \$40 and up to 1,080 kits would be required to cover the entire state's population of 3.6 million.

The actual cost will vary depending on how many municipalities apply for kits. DESPP may be able to reduce costs through bulk purchase orders and if private donations are made.²

Sections 3 and 4 require DESPP to develop and distribute a form regarding the covered disorders to municipal police departments resulting in no fiscal impact to the state.

These sections also require municipal police departments to enter information recorded on these forms into a searchable electronic database maintained by the department and made available to public safety answering points, resulting in a potential cost to municipalities.

The costs for municipalities to implement these procedures will vary based on the extent to which police departments will have to adjust their current systems and processes.³

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the costs of municipalities to maintain databases and inflation.

²Some in-state and out-of-state non-profit organizations can offer sensory kits at a lower cost and may donate a limited number of such kits to law enforcement agencies.

³At least 30 municipalities in the state already have similar forms and processes in place to incorporate this information into their dispatching procedures.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 6719*****AN ACT CONCERNING EMERGENCY SERVICES AND INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER, COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENTS AND NONVERBAL LEARNING DISORDERS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill makes several changes concerning interactions between emergency services personnel and children and adults with autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairments, and nonverbal learning disorders. Under the bill, “emergency services” means law enforcement, firefighting, medical, ambulance, and other emergency services.

Specifically, the bill requires the departments of Children and Families (DCF), Developmental Services (DDS), and Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to jointly develop and publish guidelines and best practices for municipalities for creating and implementing emergency services awareness programming.

It also requires DESPP, in consultation with DDS, DCF, and at least one organization that advocates for people with autism spectrum disorder, to develop and assemble sensory kits for use by emergency services personnel. It allows municipalities that implement the awareness programming to apply to DESPP on or before September 1, 2025, to receive the sensory kits.

Additionally, the bill allows the parent or guardian of a person with any of the disorders listed earlier to submit a form to a municipal police department with information about the person. The municipal police department must enter this information into a searchable database, which 9-1-1 emergency dispatchers must use, when practicable, when dispatching emergency services to a residential address.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

EMERGENCY SERVICES AWARENESS PROGRAM

Guidelines and Best Practices

The bill requires DCF, DDS, and DESPP to (1) jointly develop guidelines and best practices for municipalities by December 31, 2023, and (2) publish the guidelines and best practices on their websites by January 1, 2024.

Under the bill, the programming must include opportunities for children and adults with autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairments, and nonverbal learning disorders to observe and interact, in a setting that is suited to their developmental and sensory needs, with (1) uniformed emergency services personnel and the vehicles they use, (2) flashing lights and sirens associated with the vehicles, and (3) mock traffic stops.

Sensory Kits

By January 1, 2024, the bill requires DESPP, in consultation with DCF, DDS, and at least one organization that advocates for people with autism spectrum disorder to develop and assemble sensory kits to be used by emergency personnel who, in doing their duties, interact with people with these disorders. The sensory kits must (1) help people manage emotions and anxiety during emergencies and in interactions with the emergency services personnel and (2) include noise-canceling headphones, dark tinted glasses, and tactile objects or toys used to reduce anxiety.

By September 1, 2025, any municipality that created and implemented emergency services awareness programming following the published guidelines and best practices may apply to DESPP, as the department prescribes, to receive sensory kits. The bill requires DESPP to give the municipality three sensory kits per 10,000 residents.

INTERACTIONS WITH EMERGENCY SERVICES PERSONNEL

DESPP Form

The bill requires DESPP, by December 31, 2023, to develop a form for municipal police departments to distribute to parents and guardians of

people with autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairments, and nonverbal learning disorders.

The form must record information that may help emergency services personnel in their interactions with the above people, including the following:

1. the person's name, nickname, date of birth, sex, height, weight, eye color, hair color, and address and any scars or identifying marks;
2. the name and telephone number of a person who may be contacted in an emergency pertaining to the person;
3. the person's language and communication skills, including, whether the person (a) is verbal or nonverbal; (b) speaks American Sign Language; and (c) can read or write, communicate by pointing to pictures, repeat questions or respond "yes" or "no" to questions;
4. whether the person is sensitive to noise, touch, light, crowds, or other stimuli;
5. conditions, circumstances, or items the person dislikes or avoids, including eye contact, being wet or dirty, interacting with strangers, and certain clothing or shoes;
6. atypical behaviors the person exhibits, including speaking loudly, self-injury, running if chased, vocal stimming (i.e., making sounds with one's mouth, lips, or vocal chords to self-soothe), making high-pitched noises, disregarding or having no sense of danger, and sensory seeking;
7. pertinent medical information, including whether the person is hearing or visually impaired or has a seizure disorder, motor or vocal tics, or a high pain tolerance; and

8. methods the personnel may use to calm the person, including using a calm and quiet voice or noise-canceling headphones, giving the person time alone or specific food items, and asking the person how the personnel can help him or her.

Form Availability and Submission

The bill requires DESPP to publish the form on the department's website by January 1, 2024. Each municipal police department must make copies of the form available in a publicly accessible area of the department starting January 15, 2024.

The bill allows the parent or guardian of any person with autism spectrum disorder, a cognitive impairment, or nonverbal learning disorder to complete the DESPP form and return it to the municipal police department in the municipality where the person with the above condition lives.

Electronic Database

Upon receiving the form, the municipal police department must record the information provided in a searchable electronic database the department maintains and make it available to:

1. each police officer the department employs for purposes of determining whether a person with autism spectrum disorder, a cognitive impairment, or nonverbal learning disorder resides where the officer is responding and
2. the municipality's public safety answering point (9-1-1 emergency service).

9-1-1 Emergency Dispatchers

By January 15, 2024, the bill requires each 9-1-1 emergency dispatcher to, when practicable, search the electronic database described above when dispatching law enforcement, firefighting, medical, ambulance, or other emergency services to a residential address. The dispatcher must do so to (1) determine whether someone with autism spectrum disorder, a cognitive impairment, or nonverbal learning disorder resides at the

address, and (2) communicate information about the person to the responding emergency services personnel.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 19 Nay 0 (03/03/2023)