



# Senate

General Assembly

**File No. 9**

February Session, 2024

Senate Bill No. 127

*Senate, March 12, 2024*

The Committee on Children reported through SEN. MAHER, C. of the 26th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES RELATING TO BACKGROUND CHECKS, CERTAIN SUBSIDIES, URGENT CRISIS CENTERS, DEPARTMENTAL RECORDS AND SPECIAL POLICE OFFICERS.***

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

1 Section 1. Section 17a-114 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

3 (a) As used in this section, (1) "approval" or "approved" means that a  
4 person has been approved to adopt or provide foster care by a child-  
5 placing agency licensed pursuant to section 17a-149, (2) "licensed"  
6 means a person holds a license to provide foster care issued by the  
7 Department of Children and Families, and (3) "fictive kin caregiver"  
8 means a person who is twenty-one years of age or older and who is  
9 unrelated to a child by birth, adoption or marriage but who has an  
10 emotionally significant relationship with such child or such child's  
11 family amounting to a familial relationship, and (4) "regular  
12 unsupervised access" means periodic interaction with a child in the

13 home for purposes of unsupervised child care, medical or other services  
14 to the child.]

15 (b) (1) No child in the custody of the Commissioner of Children and  
16 Families shall be placed in foster care with any person, unless (A) (i)  
17 such person is licensed for that purpose by the department or the  
18 Department of Developmental Services pursuant to the provisions of  
19 section 17a-227, [or] (ii) such person's home is approved by a child  
20 placing agency licensed by the commissioner pursuant to section 17a-  
21 149, or (iii) such person has received approval as provided in this  
22 section, and (B) on and after January 1, 2017, for a child twelve years of  
23 age or older, such child has received a foster family profile in accordance  
24 with the provisions of section 17a-114e. Any person licensed by the  
25 department may be a prospective adoptive parent. The commissioner  
26 shall adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54,  
27 to establish the licensing procedures and standards.

28 (2) [The] (A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B) of this  
29 subdivision, the commissioner shall require each applicant for licensure  
30 or approval pursuant to this section and any person [sixteen] eighteen  
31 years of age or older living in the household of such applicant to submit  
32 to state and national criminal history records checks prior to issuing a  
33 license or approval to such applicant to accept placement of a child for  
34 purposes of foster care or adoption. Such criminal history records  
35 checks shall be conducted in accordance with section 29-17a. The  
36 commissioner shall check the [(A)] (i) state child abuse and neglect  
37 registry established pursuant to section 17a-101k for the name of such  
38 applicant and for the name of any person [sixteen] eighteen years of age  
39 or older living in the household of such applicant, and [(B)] (ii) child  
40 abuse and neglect registry in any state in which such applicant or person  
41 resided in the preceding five years for the name of such applicant or  
42 person.

43 (B) If an applicant for licensure or approval or any person eighteen  
44 years of age or older living in the household of such applicant has  
45 submitted to the state and national criminal history records checks

46 described in subsection (c) of this section within the previous twelve-  
47 month period, the commissioner shall not require such applicant or  
48 person to submit to the state and national criminal history records  
49 checks described in subparagraph (A) of this subdivision in connection  
50 with the issuance of a license or approval.

51 (3) The commissioner shall require each individual licensed or  
52 approved pursuant to this section and any person [sixteen] eighteen  
53 years of age or older living in the household of such individual to submit  
54 to state and national criminal history records checks prior to renewing  
55 a license or approval for any individual providing foster care or  
56 adopting. Such criminal history records checks shall be conducted in  
57 accordance with section 29-17a. Prior to such renewal, the commissioner  
58 shall check the (A) state child abuse and neglect registry established  
59 pursuant to section 17a-101k for the name of such applicant and for the  
60 name of any person [sixteen] eighteen years of age or older living in the  
61 household of such applicant, and (B) child abuse and neglect registry in  
62 any state in which such applicant or person resided in the preceding five  
63 years for the name of such applicant or person.

64 (4) The commissioner shall comply with any request to check the  
65 child abuse and neglect registry established pursuant to section 17a-  
66 101k made by the child welfare agency of another state.

67 (c) (1) Notwithstanding the requirements of subsection (b) of this  
68 section, the commissioner may place a child with a relative or fictive kin  
69 caregiver who has not been issued a license or approval, when such  
70 placement is in the best interests of the child, provided a satisfactory  
71 home visit is conducted [.] and a basic assessment of the family is  
72 completed. [and such relative or fictive kin caregiver attests that such  
73 relative or fictive kin caregiver and any adult living within the  
74 household has not been convicted of a crime or arrested for a felony  
75 against a person, for injury or risk of injury to or impairing the morals  
76 of a child, or for the possession, use or sale of a controlled substance.]  
77 When the commissioner makes such a placement, the commissioner  
78 shall (A) request a criminal justice agency to perform a federal name-

79 based criminal history search of each person eighteen years of age or  
80 older residing in the home, and (B) check the state child abuse and  
81 neglect registry established pursuant to section 17a-101k for the name  
82 of each person eighteen years of age or older residing in the home. The  
83 results of such name-based search shall be provided to the  
84 commissioner.

85 (2) Not later than ten calendar days after a name-based search is  
86 performed pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, the  
87 commissioner shall request the State Police Bureau of Identification to  
88 perform a state and national criminal history records checks of each  
89 person eighteen years of age or older residing in the home, in  
90 accordance with section 29-17a. Such criminal history records checks  
91 shall be deemed as required by this section for the purposes of section  
92 29-17a and the commissioner may request that such criminal history  
93 records checks be performed in accordance with subsection (c) of said  
94 section. The results of such criminal history records checks shall be  
95 provided to the commissioner. If any person refuses to provide  
96 fingerprints or other positive identifying information for the purposes  
97 of such criminal history records checks when requested, the  
98 commissioner shall immediately remove the child from the home.

99 (3) If the commissioner denies a placement with a relative or fictive  
100 kin caregiver or removes a child from such home based on the results of  
101 a federal name-based criminal history search performed pursuant to  
102 subdivision (1) of this subsection, the person whose name-based search  
103 was the basis for such denial or removal may contest such denial or  
104 removal by requesting that state and national criminal history records  
105 checks be performed pursuant to subdivision (2) of this subsection.

106 (4) Any such relative or fictive kin caregiver who accepts placement  
107 of a child shall be subject to licensure by the commissioner, pursuant to  
108 regulations adopted by the commissioner in accordance with the  
109 provisions of chapter 54 to implement the provisions of this section or  
110 approval by a child-placing agency licensed pursuant to section 17a-149.  
111 The commissioner may grant a waiver from such regulations, including

112 any standard regarding separate bedrooms or room-sharing  
113 arrangements, for a child placed with a relative or fictive kin caregiver,  
114 on a case-by-case basis, if such placement is otherwise in the best  
115 interests of such child, provided no procedure or standard that is safety-  
116 related may be so waived. The commissioner shall document, in writing,  
117 the reason for granting any waiver from such regulations.

118 (d) Any individual who has been licensed or approved to adopt or  
119 provide foster care and any relative or fictive kin caregiver with whom  
120 a child has been placed pursuant to subsection (c) of this section shall  
121 apply a reasonable and prudent parent standard, as defined in  
122 subsection (a) of section 17a-114d, on behalf of the child.

123 Sec. 2. Subsection (i) of section 17a-126 of the general statutes is  
124 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
125 *2024*):

126 (i) In the case of the death, severe disability or serious illness of a  
127 caregiver who is receiving a guardianship subsidy or an adoptive parent  
128 who is receiving a subsidy pursuant to section 17a-117 or 17a-118, the  
129 commissioner may transfer [the guardianship] such subsidy to a  
130 successor guardian who meets the department's foster care safety  
131 requirements and who is appointed as legal guardian by a court of  
132 competent jurisdiction. For purposes of maximizing federal  
133 reimbursement for the costs of the subsidized guardianship program,  
134 the commissioner shall request that the caregiver or adoptive parent  
135 identify such successor guardian in the subsidy agreement and any  
136 addendum thereto.

137 Sec. 3. Subsection (b) of section 19a-179f of the general statutes is  
138 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
139 *2024*):

140 (b) On or before January 1, 2024, the Office of Emergency Medical  
141 Services shall develop protocols for a licensed or certified emergency  
142 medical services organization or provider to transport a pediatric  
143 patient with mental or behavioral health needs by ambulance to an

144 urgent crisis center. As used in this subsection, "urgent crisis center"  
145 means a center [licensed] certified as an urgent crisis center by the  
146 Department of Children and Families that is dedicated to treating  
147 children's urgent mental or behavioral health needs.

148 Sec. 4. Subdivision (7) of subsection (a) of section 38a-477aa of the  
149 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
150 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

151 (7) "Urgent crisis center" means a center [licensed] that is certified as  
152 an urgent crisis center by the Department of Children and Families that  
153 is dedicated to treating children's urgent mental or behavioral health  
154 needs.

155 Sec. 5. Subdivision (30) of subsection (g) of section 17a-28 of the 2024  
156 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is  
157 substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

158 (30) The Department of Public Health for (A) the purpose of  
159 notification when the Commissioner of Children and Families places an  
160 individual licensed or certified by the Department of Public Health on  
161 the child abuse and neglect registry established pursuant to section 17a-  
162 101k, and (B) purposes relating to the licensure of the Albert J. Solnit  
163 Children's Center and the administration of licensing requirements  
164 established pursuant to or set forth in sections 19a-134 and 19a-498;

165 Sec. 6. Subsection (e) of section 17a-3b of the general statutes is  
166 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
167 *2024*):

168 (e) (1) The unit shall employ a uniform system of state-wide electronic  
169 record transfers for maintaining and sharing educational records for any  
170 child who resides in a juvenile justice facility and any incarcerated child  
171 in an educational program to be overseen by a directory manager as  
172 designated by the commissioner. Such system shall be aligned with  
173 recommendations by the Individualized Education Program Advisory  
174 Council established pursuant to section 10-76nn.

175       (2) Educational records of any child who resides in a juvenile justice  
176 facility and any incarcerated child in an educational program to be  
177 overseen by a directory manager as designated by the commissioner  
178 shall be disclosed to the department upon request, in accordance with  
179 the department's status as a state educational authority pursuant to the  
180 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 USC 1232g, as  
181 amended from time to time.

182       Sec. 7. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2024*) The Commissioner of Emergency  
183 Services and Public Protection shall appoint not more than two persons  
184 nominated by the Commissioner of Children and Families to act as  
185 special police officers. Each such special police officer shall serve at the  
186 pleasure of the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public  
187 Protection, and have all powers conferred on state police officers while  
188 conducting state and national criminal history records checks in  
189 accordance with section 17a-6a of the general statutes, conducting and  
190 responding to threat assessments in and around any building or facility  
191 under the supervision or control of the Department of Children and  
192 Families and responding to acute crises or security concerns in and  
193 around such buildings and facilities.

194       Sec. 8. Subdivision (9) of section 7-294a of the general statutes is  
195 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
196 *2024*):

197       (9) "Police officer" means a sworn member of an organized local  
198 police department or of the Division of State Police within the  
199 Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, an appointed  
200 constable who performs criminal law enforcement duties, a special  
201 policeman appointed under section 29-18, 29-18a, [or] 29-19 or section 7  
202 of this act, or any member of a law enforcement unit who performs  
203 police duties;

204       Sec. 9. Section 17a-3 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
205 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

206       (a) The department shall plan, create, develop, operate or arrange for,

207 administer and evaluate a comprehensive and integrated state-wide  
208 program of services, including preventive services, for children and  
209 youths [whose behavior does not conform to the law or to acceptable  
210 community standards, or who are mentally ill, including deaf and hard  
211 of hearing children and youths who are mentally ill, emotionally  
212 disturbed, substance abusers,] who have mental health needs and  
213 substance use disorders and who have been abused, neglected or  
214 uncared for. [, including all] The department shall provide such services  
215 to all children and youths, including children and youths who are deaf,  
216 deafblind and hard of hearing, who are or may be committed to it by  
217 any court, and all children and youths voluntarily admitted to, or  
218 remaining voluntarily under the supervision of, the commissioner for  
219 services of any kind. [Services shall not be denied] The department shall  
220 not deny such services to any such child or youth solely because of other  
221 complicating or multiple disabilities. The department shall work in  
222 cooperation with other child-serving agencies and organizations to  
223 provide or arrange for preventive programs, including, but not limited  
224 to, teenage pregnancy and youth suicide prevention programs, for  
225 children and youths and their families.

226 (b) The [program] state-wide program of services shall provide  
227 services and placements that are clinically indicated and appropriate to  
228 the needs of [the] each child or youth. In furtherance of this purpose, the  
229 department shall: (1) Develop a comprehensive program for prevention  
230 and treatment of problems [of] experienced by children and youths and  
231 provide a flexible, innovative and effective program for the placement,  
232 care and treatment of children and youths committed by any court to  
233 the department, transferred to the department by other departments, or  
234 voluntarily admitted to the department; (2) provide appropriate  
235 services to the families of children and youths as needed to achieve the  
236 purposes of sections 17a-1 to 17a-26, inclusive, 17a-28 to 17a-49,  
237 inclusive, and 17a-51; (3) establish incentive paid work programs for  
238 children and youths under the care of the department and the rates to  
239 be paid such children and youths for work done in such programs, and  
240 may provide allowances to children and youths in the custody of the  
241 department; (4) [be responsible to] collect, interpret and publish



242 statistics relating to children and youths [within] committed to the  
243 department; (5) conduct studies of any program, service or facility  
244 developed, operated, contracted for, licensed or supported by the  
245 department in order to evaluate its effectiveness; (6) establish staff  
246 development and other training and educational programs designed to  
247 improve the quality of departmental services and programs, which shall  
248 include, but not be limited to, training in the prevention, identification  
249 and effects of family violence, [provided no] and may establish  
250 educational or training programs for children, youths, parents or other  
251 interested persons on any matter related to the promotion of the well-  
252 being of children, including, but not limited to, the prevention and  
253 treatment of mental illness, substance use disorders and other  
254 disabilities in children and youths; (7) require each social worker trainee  
255 [shall be assigned a case load prior to completing training, and may  
256 establish educational or training programs for children, youths, parents  
257 or other interested persons on any matter related to the promotion of  
258 the well-being of children, or the prevention of mental illness, emotional  
259 disturbance and other disabilities in children and youths; (7)] to  
260 complete the training in the prevention, identification and effects of  
261 family violence established pursuant to subdivision (6) of this  
262 subsection prior to being assigned a case load; (8) develop and  
263 implement aftercare and follow-up services appropriate to the needs of  
264 any child or youth under the care of the department; [(8)] (9) establish a  
265 case audit unit to monitor each regional office's compliance with  
266 regulations and procedures; [(9)] (10) develop and maintain a database  
267 listing available community service programs funded by the  
268 department; [(10)] (11) provide outreach and assistance to persons  
269 caring for children whose parents are unable to [do so] care for such  
270 children by informing such persons of programs and benefits for which  
271 they may be eligible; and [(11)] (12) collect data sufficient to identify the  
272 housing needs of children served by the department and share such data  
273 with the Department of Housing.

274 [(b)] (c) Not later than July 1, 2021, the Commissioner of Children and  
275 Families shall submit, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-  
276 4a, to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having

277 cognizance of matters relating to children and appropriations and the  
 278 budgets of state agencies and to the State Advisory Council of Children  
 279 and Families the following reports for which the commissioner most  
 280 recently received approval from the Administration for Children and  
 281 Families pursuant to federal law: (1) The Child and Family Services  
 282 Plan, (2) the Annual Progress and Services Report, (3) the Final Report  
 283 of the Child and Family Services Review, and (4) any Program  
 284 Improvement Plan. Thereafter, the commissioner shall submit, in  
 285 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing  
 286 committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
 287 relating to children and appropriations and the budgets of state agencies  
 288 and to the State Advisory Council of Children and Families said reports  
 289 not later than thirty days after the Administration for Children and  
 290 Families approves the reports.

291 [(c)] (d) The Department of Children and Families shall maintain on  
 292 the department's Internet web site information on services provided to  
 293 persons with disabilities. The department's Internet web site shall  
 294 include a link to the Internet web page maintained by the Department  
 295 of Aging and Disability Services pursuant to section 46a-33a, containing  
 296 information about services for deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing  
 297 individuals.

298 Sec. 10. Section 17a-115a of the general statutes is repealed. (*Effective*  
 299 *July 1, 2024*)

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2024	17a-114
Sec. 2	July 1, 2024	17a-126(i)
Sec. 3	July 1, 2024	19a-179f(b)
Sec. 4	July 1, 2024	38a-477aa(a)(7)
Sec. 5	July 1, 2024	17a-28(g)(30)
Sec. 6	July 1, 2024	17a-3b(e)
Sec. 7	July 1, 2024	New section
Sec. 8	July 1, 2024	7-294a(9)
Sec. 9	July 1, 2024	17a-3

Sec. 10	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	Repealer section
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**KID**      *Joint Favorable*

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*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.*

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### **OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:** None

**Municipal Impact:** None

### **Explanation**

The bill, which makes various statutory changes to achieve certain recommendations of the Department of Children and Families, is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact to the state or municipalities.

### **The Out Years**

**State Impact:** None

**Municipal Impact:** None

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**OLR Bill Analysis****SB 127*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES RELATING TO BACKGROUND CHECKS, CERTAIN SUBSIDIES, URGENT CRISIS CENTERS, DEPARTMENTAL RECORDS AND SPECIAL POLICE OFFICERS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill makes the following changes to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) statutes:

1. modifies one method of foster care emergency placement, including changes to background checks, and repeals another method (§§ 1 & 10);
2. allows for the transfer of DCF adoptive parent subsidies to and from an adoptive parent in the case of the death, severe disability, or serious illness of an adoptive parent (§ 2);
3. allows urgent crisis centers to be DCF-certified rather than DCF-licensed (§§ 3-4);
4. specifies, for the purpose of satisfying Solnit Center licensure requirements, that DCF must disclose records without the subject's consent to the Department of Public Health (DPH) (§ 5);
5. requires the educational records of (1) a child residing in a juvenile justice facility and (2) any incarcerated child in an educational program to be disclosed to DCF upon request (§ 6);
6. requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) commissioner to appoint up to two people to act as special police officers at DCF to assist with background checks, among other things (§§ 7-8); and
7. makes other minor and conforming changes.

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EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

**RELATIVE AND FICTIVE KIN FOSTER EMERGENCY PLACEMENT  
(§§ 1 & 10)**

Under current law, there are two methods for DCF to place a child in the agency's custody with a relative or fictive kin caregiver without DCF license or approval. The bill repeals the emergency placement method but adds similar provisions to the remaining placement method.

The method the bill repeals authorizes DCF to request a federal name-based criminal history search from a criminal justice agency for anyone living in the home where a child has been placed. These emergency placements include private homes of the child's neighbors, friends, or relatives and are the result of the sudden unavailability of his or her primary caregiver.

For the remaining method of placement, the bill modifies some placement conditions while leaving others unchanged. Current law requires a satisfactory home visit and a basic assessment of the family before the DCF commissioner can place a child with a relative or fictive kin caregiver who has not been approved or issued a license as a foster home. The bill adds that when making the placement, the commissioner must (1) request a criminal justice agency to do a federal name-based criminal history search of each person age 18 or over residing in the household and (2) check the state's child abuse and neglect registry for each person age 18 or over in the household.

The bill eliminates the requirement that the relative or fictive kin caregiver attests that they and any adult living in the home have not been convicted of or arrested for certain felonies, including injury or risk of injury to, or impairing the morals of, a child or the possession or sale of a controlled substance.

By law, a fictive kin caregiver is a person who is age 21 or older and unrelated to a child by birth, adoption, or marriage, but who has an emotionally significant relationship with the child amounting to a familial relationship (CGS § 17a-114).

The bill also states that any relative or fictive kin caregiver with whom a child has been placed with under this provision must apply a reasonable and prudent parent standard as defined in law on behalf of the child.

### **Background Checks Request Deadline**

The bill increases, from five to 10 calendar days after the name-based search is done, the period in which DCF must ask the State Police Bureau of Identification to do a full state and national criminal history record check for anyone 18 years old or older living in the home. By law, if anyone refuses to give fingerprints or other identifying information for these checks when requested, the department must immediately remove the child from the home.

### **APPROVED AND LICENSED FOSTER CARE PROVIDER BACKGROUND CHECKS (§ 1)**

Additionally, the bill changes the background check requirements in two places for the licensure and approval process. Current law requires checks for all household members age 16 or over. The bill changes this to apply these background checks to household members age 18 and older. The bill also applies this age change to those applying for license renewal or approval.

The bill eliminates the requirement that any person in the household submit to state and national criminal history records checks if they have already done so within the previous year as part of the DCF licensing process.

### **ADOPTIVE PARENT SUBSIDIES (§ 2)**

Existing law allows the transfer of a guardianship subsidy from one caregiver to another if the subsidy recipient dies, becomes seriously ill or severely disabled. The bill additionally allows these transfers to and from adoptive parents.

By law, if the caregiver receiving the subsidy dies or becomes seriously ill or severely disabled, DCF may transfer the subsidy to a successor guardian who (1) meets the department's foster care safety requirements (e.g., passes a criminal background check), (2) is the child's court-appointed legal guardian, and (3) can be identified in the

subsidy agreement or any related addendum (CGS § 17a-126). Under the bill, these conditions also apply to a successor adoptive parent.

#### **URGENT CRISIS CENTERS (§§ 3-4)**

The bill allows urgent crisis centers to be DCF-certified, rather than DCF-licensed, allowing these centers to be licensed by other state agencies. (For example, a hospital emergency department or other DPH-licensed facility would be able to operate an urgent crisis center, as long as the center was certified by DCF.)

Under current law, an “urgent crisis center” is a DCF-licensed center dedicated to treating children’s urgent mental or behavioral health needs.

#### **DCF RECORD DISCLOSURES AND THE SOLNIT CHILDREN’S CENTER (§ 5)**

The bill expands the entities to whom DCF must disclose certain records without the subject’s consent. Existing law generally requires the department to obtain consent from the subject of a record before disclosing information created or obtained in connection with its child protection activities, activities of a child while in DCF care or custody, or the department’s abuse or neglect registry. The bill creates exceptions for disclosures to DPH for the purposes of licensing the Albert J. Solnit Children’s Center and conducting other necessary inspections, investigations, and audits of the institution (see BACKGROUND).

By law, DCF may not disclose its records to anyone unless (1) state law or federal regulations require or allow the disclosure or (2) the subject of the record or his or her authorized representative consents to the disclosure.

#### **JUVENILE JUSTICE FACILITY EDUCATIONAL RECORD TRANSFERS (§ 6)**

The bill requires a DCF-designated directory manager who oversees the educational records of (1) a child residing in a juvenile justice facility and (2) any incarcerated child in an educational program to disclose these records to DCF upon request, in keeping with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232g).



### **SPECIAL POLICE OFFICERS (§§ 7-8)**

The bill requires the DESPP commissioner to appoint up to two people the DCF commissioner nominates to act as special police officers serving at the pleasure of the DESPP commissioner. Under the bill, the special police officers:

1. have all powers conferred on state police officers while conducting state and national criminal history records checks on (a) each applicant for a department position and (b) all vendors or contractors and their employees who provide direct services to children in DCF custody,
2. conduct and respond to threat assessments in and around any building or facility under DCF supervision or control, and
3. respond to acute crises or security concerns in DCF-supervised or -controlled buildings or facilities.

The bill also makes a conforming change.

### **UPDATES TERMINOLOGY (§ 9)**

The bill updates terminology in statutes relating to the provision of services to children with behavioral health needs. Among other things, it refers to children and youths who have “mental health needs and substance use disorders” rather than children and youths who are “mentally ill, emotionally disturbed, substance abusers.”

It makes other and minor and technical changes.

### **BACKGROUND**

#### ***Albert J. Solnit Children’s Center***

PA 21-2 required the Albert J. Solnit Children’s Center hospital and psychiatric residential treatment facility to be licensed by DPH; under prior law it was licensed by DCF. The act also requires the DPH commissioner to adopt regulations on the licensure of these facilities.

### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable

Yea 17    Nay 0    (02/29/2024)