



General Assembly

February Session, 2024

**Raised Bill No. 286**

LCO No. 2256



Referred to Committee on EDUCATION

Introduced by:  
(ED)

***AN ACT CONCERNING EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION.***

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2024*) Each employee of an early  
2 childhood care and education program shall be paid an annual salary as  
3 prescribed in the compensation schedule developed pursuant to section  
4 10-531 of the general statutes except if such employee's salary is greater  
5 than the amount prescribed in such compensation schedule, then such  
6 employee shall be paid such greater amount. As used in this section,  
7 "early childhood care and education program" means (1) a child care  
8 center or group child care home, as those terms are described in section  
9 19a-77 of the general statutes, (2) a private preschool program, school  
10 readiness program, as defined in section 10-16p of the general statutes,  
11 or program pursuant to section 8-210 of the general statutes, or (3) any  
12 child care services provider or school readiness program that (A)  
13 accepts state funds for infant, toddler or preschool spaces associated  
14 with such program, (B) is not required to be licensed pursuant to  
15 subsection (b) of section 19a-77 of the general statutes, and (C) is located  
16 in a public school building but is not administered by a public school  
17 system.

18 Sec. 2. Subsections (a) to (c), inclusive, of section 17b-749 of the 2024  
19 supplement to the general statutes are repealed and the following is  
20 substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

21 (a) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall establish and operate  
22 a child care subsidy program to increase the availability, affordability  
23 and quality of child care services for families with a parent or caretaker  
24 who (1) is (A) working or attending high school, or (B) subject to the  
25 provisions of subsection (d) of this section, is enrolled or participating  
26 in (i) a public or independent institution of higher education, (ii) a  
27 private career school authorized pursuant to sections 10a-22a to 10a-22o,  
28 inclusive, (iii) a job training or employment program administered by a  
29 regional workforce development board, (iv) an apprenticeship program  
30 administered by the Labor Department's office of apprenticeship  
31 training, (v) an alternate route to certification program approved by the  
32 State Board of Education, (vi) an adult education program pursuant to  
33 section 10-69 or other high school equivalency program, or (vii) a local  
34 Even Start program or other adult education program approved by the  
35 Commissioner of Early Childhood; [or] (2) receives cash assistance  
36 under the temporary family assistance program from the Department of  
37 Social Services and is participating in an education, training or other job  
38 preparation activity approved pursuant to subsection (b) of section 17b-  
39 688i or subsection (b) of section 17b-689d; or (3) is an employee of an  
40 early childhood care and education program, as defined in section 1 of  
41 this act. Services available under the child care subsidy program shall  
42 include the provision of child care subsidies for children under the age  
43 of thirteen or children under the age of nineteen with special needs. The  
44 Commissioner of Early Childhood may institute a protective service  
45 class in which the commissioner may waive eligibility requirements for  
46 at-risk populations that meet the guidelines prescribed by the  
47 commissioner, and subject to review by the Secretary of the Office of  
48 Policy and Management. Such at-risk populations are children placed in  
49 a foster home by the Department of Children and Families and for  
50 whom the parent or legal guardian receives foster care payments,  
51 adopted children for one year from the date of adoption and homeless

52 children and youths, as defined in 42 USC 11434a, as amended from  
53 time to time. The Office of Early Childhood shall open and maintain  
54 enrollment for the child care subsidy program and shall administer such  
55 program within the existing budgetary resources available. The office  
56 shall issue a notice on the office's Internet web site any time the office  
57 closes the program to new applications, changes eligibility  
58 requirements, changes program benefits or makes any other change to  
59 the program's status or terms, except the office shall not be required to  
60 issue such notice when the office expands program eligibility. Any  
61 change in the office's acceptance of new applications, eligibility  
62 requirements, program benefits or any other change to the program's  
63 status or terms for which the office is required to give notice pursuant  
64 to this subsection, shall not be effective until thirty days after the office  
65 issues such notice.

66 (b) The commissioner shall establish income standards for applicants  
67 and recipients at a level to include a family with gross income up to fifty  
68 per cent of the state-wide median income, except the commissioner: (1)  
69 [may] May increase the income level up to the maximum level allowed  
70 under federal law, (2) upon the request of the Commissioner of Children  
71 and Families, may waive the income standards for adoptive families so  
72 that children adopted on or after October 1, 1999, from the Department  
73 of Children and Families are eligible for the child care subsidy program,  
74 [and] (3) shall establish a two-tiered income eligibility threshold in  
75 accordance with 45 CFR 98.21(b), as amended from time to time, and (4)  
76 shall waive the income standards for any employee of an early  
77 childhood care and education program, as defined in section 1 of this  
78 act. The commissioner may adopt regulations in accordance with  
79 chapter 54 to establish income criteria and durational requirements for  
80 such waiver of income standards.

81 (c) The commissioner, in consultation with the Commissioner of  
82 Social Services, shall establish eligibility and program standards  
83 including, but not limited to: (1) A priority intake and eligibility system  
84 with preference given to serving (A) recipients of temporary family  
85 assistance who are employed or engaged in employment activities

86 under the Department of Social Services' "Jobs First" program, (B)  
87 working families whose temporary family assistance was discontinued  
88 not more than five years prior to the date of application for the child care  
89 subsidy program, (C) teen parents, (D) low-income working families,  
90 (E) adoptive families of children who were adopted from the  
91 Department of Children and Families and who are granted a waiver of  
92 income standards under subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this section,  
93 (F) working families who are at risk of welfare dependency, (G) parents  
94 or caretakers participating in an apprenticeship program administered  
95 by the Labor Department's office of apprenticeship training, (H) parents  
96 or caretakers enrolled in an adult education program pursuant to  
97 section 10-69 or other high school equivalency program, (I) parents or  
98 caretakers participating in a job training or employment program  
99 administered by a regional workforce development board, [and] (J)  
100 parents or caretakers enrolled in a public or independent institution of  
101 higher education, and (K) employees of early childhood care and  
102 education programs, as defined in section 1 of this act; (2) health and  
103 safety standards for child care providers not required to be licensed; (3)  
104 a reimbursement system for child care services which account for  
105 differences in the age of the child, number of children in the family, the  
106 geographic region and type of care provided by licensed and unlicensed  
107 caregivers, the cost and type of services provided by licensed and  
108 unlicensed caregivers, successful completion of fifteen hours of annual  
109 in-service training or credentialing of child care directors and  
110 administrators, and program accreditation; (4) supplemental payment  
111 for special needs of the child and extended nontraditional hours; (5) an  
112 annual rate review process for providers which assures that  
113 reimbursement rates are maintained at levels which permit equal access  
114 to a variety of child care settings; (6) a sliding reimbursement scale for  
115 participating families; (7) an administrative appeals process; (8) an  
116 administrative hearing process to adjudicate cases of alleged fraud and  
117 abuse and to impose sanctions and recover overpayments; (9) an  
118 extended period of program and payment eligibility when a parent who  
119 is receiving a child care subsidy experiences a temporary interruption  
120 in employment or other approved activity; and (10) a waiting list for the

121 child care subsidy program that (A) allows the commissioner to exercise  
122 discretion in prioritizing within and between existing priority groups,  
123 including, but not limited to, children described in 45 CFR 98.46, as  
124 amended from time to time, and households with an infant or toddler,  
125 and (B) reflects the priority and eligibility system set forth in subdivision  
126 (1) of this subsection, which is reviewed periodically, with the inclusion  
127 of this information in the annual report required to be issued annually  
128 by the office to the Governor and the General Assembly in accordance  
129 with section 17b-733. Such action will include, but not be limited to,  
130 family income, age of child, region of state and length of time on such  
131 waiting list.

132       Sec. 3. Subsection (l) of section 19a-87b of the 2024 supplement to the  
133 general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu  
134 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

135       (l) For the fiscal [years] year ending June 30, 2022, [to June 30, 2026,  
136 inclusive] and each fiscal year thereafter, the Commissioner of Early  
137 Childhood may issue a license to maintain a family child care home [in  
138 New Britain, New Haven, Bridgeport, Stamford, Hartford, Danbury or  
139 Waterbury] anywhere in the state in accordance with the provisions of  
140 this chapter to a person or group of persons who have partnered with  
141 an association, organization, corporation, institution or agency, public  
142 or private, to provide child care services in a space provided by such  
143 association, organization, corporation, institution or agency, provided  
144 such space has been approved by the commissioner and is not in a  
145 private family home. The commissioner [shall not] may approve more  
146 than one facility in each [such] city or town to be used for licenses issued  
147 under this subsection. An application for a license under this subsection  
148 shall include a copy of the current fire marshal certificate of compliance  
149 with the Fire Safety Code, and written verification of compliance with  
150 the State Building Code, local zoning and building requirements and  
151 local health ordinances. The commissioner may require an applicant for  
152 a license under this subsection to comply with additional conditions  
153 relating to the health and safety of the children who will be served in  
154 such facility. The commissioner may waive any requirement that does

155 not apply to such facility. Any license issued under this subsection shall  
156 [expire on June 30, 2026] be for a term of four years, except that the  
157 commissioner may suspend or revoke any such license at any time in  
158 accordance with the provisions of section 19a-87e.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	17b-749(a) to (c)
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	19a-87b(l)

**Statement of Purpose:**

To require early childhood care and education programs to pay its employees an annual salary that is in accordance with the proposed early childhood educator compensation schedule, to make any employee of an early childhood care and education program eligible for Care 4 Kids and to expand the early childhood incubator program.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*