



House of Representatives

File No. 774

General Assembly

January Session, 2021 **(Reprint of File No. 646)**

Substitute House Bill No. 6558
As Amended by House Amendment
Schedule "A"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner
June 1, 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 Section 19a-87b of the general statutes is repealed and the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) ~~(1)~~ No person shall act as an assistant or substitute staff member
31 to a 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)]~~ (A) Be made to the
36 commissioner on forms provided by the office, ~~[(2)]~~ (B) contain the
37 information required by regulations adopted under this section, and
38 ~~[(3)]~~ (C) be accompanied by a fee of fifteen dollars. The approval
39 application forms shall contain a notice that false statements made in
40 such form are punishable in accordance with section 53a-157b.

41 (2) A licensee of a family child care home who is attending a medical
42 appointment, receiving medical treatment or completing education or
43 training may use a substitute staff member who has been approved
44 pursuant to this subsection to provide child care services for a duration
45 of time that is greater than one hour while such licensee is absent,
46 provided such licensee provides advance notice to the parents or
47 guardians of children enrolled in the family child care home of the dates

48 and times such substitute staff member will be providing such child care
49 services and such licensee continues to maintain control of the day-to-
50 day operations of the family child care home. No such use of a substitute
51 staff member under this subdivision shall constitute a transfer or
52 franchise of the family child care home.

53 (c) The commissioner, within available appropriations, shall require
54 each initial applicant or prospective employee of a family child care
55 home in a position requiring the provision of care to a child, including
56 an assistant or substitute staff member and each household member
57 who is sixteen years of age or older, to submit to comprehensive
58 background checks, including state and national criminal history
59 records checks. The criminal history records checks required pursuant
60 to this subsection shall be conducted in accordance with section 29-17a.
61 The commissioner shall also request a check of the state child abuse
62 registry established pursuant to section 17a-101k. The commissioner
63 shall notify each licensee of the provisions of this subsection. For
64 purposes of this subsection, "household member" means any person,
65 other than the person who is licensed to conduct, operate or maintain a
66 family child care home, who resides in the family child care home, such
67 as the licensee's spouse or children, tenants and any other occupant.

68 (d) An application for initial licensure pursuant to this section shall
69 be accompanied by a fee of forty dollars and such license shall be issued
70 for a term of four years. An application for renewal of a license issued
71 pursuant to this section shall be accompanied by a fee of forty dollars
72 and a certification from the licensee that any child enrolled in the family
73 child care home has received age-appropriate immunizations in
74 accordance with regulations adopted pursuant to subsection (f) of this
75 section. A license issued pursuant to this section shall be renewed for a
76 term of four years. In the case of an applicant submitting an application
77 for renewal of a license that has expired, and who has ceased operations
78 of a family child care home due to such expired license, the
79 commissioner may renew such expired license within thirty days of the
80 date of such expiration upon receipt of an application for renewal that
81 is accompanied by such fee and such certification.

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

85 (f) The commissioner shall adopt regulations, in accordance with the
86 provisions of chapter 54, to [assure] ensure that family child care homes,
87 as [defined] described in section 19a-77, meet the health, educational
88 and social needs of children utilizing such homes. Such regulations shall
89 ensure that the family child care home is treated as a residence, and not
90 an institutional facility. Such regulations shall specify that each child be
91 protected as age-appropriate by adequate immunization against
92 diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis, measles, mumps, rubella,
93 hemophilus influenzae type B and any other vaccine required by the
94 schedule of active immunization adopted pursuant to section 19a-7f.
95 Such regulations shall provide appropriate exemptions for children for
96 whom such immunization is medically contraindicated and for children
97 whose parents or guardian objects to such immunization on religious
98 grounds and require that any such objection be accompanied by a
99 statement from such parents or guardian that such immunization would
100 be contrary to the religious beliefs of such child or the parents or
101 guardian of such child, which statement shall be acknowledged, in
102 accordance with the provisions of sections 1-32, 1-34 and 1-35, by (1) a
103 judge of a court of record or a family support magistrate, (2) a clerk or
104 deputy clerk of a court having a seal, (3) a town clerk, (4) a notary public,
105 (5) a justice of the peace, or (6) an attorney admitted to the bar of this
106 state. Such regulations shall also specify conditions under which family
107 child care home providers may administer tests to monitor glucose
108 levels in a child with diagnosed diabetes mellitus, and administer
109 medicinal preparations, including controlled drugs specified in the
110 regulations by the commissioner, to a child receiving child care services
111 at a family child care home pursuant to a written order of a physician
112 licensed to practice medicine in this or another state, an advanced
113 practice registered nurse licensed to prescribe in accordance with
114 section 20-94a or a physician assistant licensed to prescribe in
115 accordance with section 20-12d, and the written authorization of a

116 parent or guardian of such child. Such regulations shall specify
117 appropriate standards for extended care and intermittent short-term
118 overnight care. The commissioner shall inform each licensee, by way of
119 a plain language summary provided not later than sixty days after the
120 regulation's effective date, of any new or changed regulations adopted
121 under this subsection with which a licensee must comply.

122 (g) Upon the declaration by the Governor of a civil preparedness
123 emergency pursuant to section 28-9 or a public health emergency
124 pursuant to section 19a-131a, the commissioner may waive the
125 provisions of any regulation adopted pursuant to this section if the
126 commissioner determines that such waiver would not endanger the life,
127 safety or health of any child. The commissioner shall prescribe the
128 duration of such waiver, provided such waiver shall not extend beyond
129 the duration of the declared emergency. The commissioner shall
130 establish the criteria by which a waiver request shall be made and the
131 conditions for which a waiver will be granted or denied. The provisions
132 of section 19a-84 shall not apply to a denial of a waiver request under
133 this subsection.

134 (h) Any family child care home may provide child care services to
135 homeless children and youths, as defined in 42 USC 11434a, as amended
136 from time to time, for a period not to exceed ninety days without
137 complying with any provision in regulations adopted pursuant to this
138 section relating to immunization and physical examination
139 requirements. Any family child care home that provides child care
140 services to homeless children and youths at such home under this
141 subsection shall maintain a record on file of all homeless children and
142 youths who have attended such home for a period of two years after
143 such homeless children or youths are no longer receiving child care
144 services at such home.

145 (i) Any family child care home may provide child care services to a
146 foster child for a period not to exceed forty-five days without complying
147 with any provision in regulations adopted pursuant to this section
148 relating to immunization and physical examination requirements. Any

149 family child care home that provides child care services to a foster child
150 at such home under this subsection shall maintain a record on file of
151 such foster child for a period of two years after such foster child is no
152 longer receiving child care services at such home. For purposes of this
153 subsection, "foster child" means a child who is in the care and custody
154 of the Commissioner of Children and Families and placed in a foster
155 home licensed pursuant to section 17a-114, foster home approved by a
156 child-placing agency licensed pursuant to section 17a-149, facility
157 licensed pursuant to section 17a-145 or with a relative or fictive kin
158 caregiver pursuant to section 17a-114.

159 (j) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2022, to June 30, 2026, inclusive,
160 the Commissioner of Early Childhood may issue a license to maintain a
161 family child care home in New Britain, New Haven, Bridgeport,
162 Stamford, Hartford, Danbury or Waterbury in accordance with the
163 provisions of this chapter to a person or group of persons who have
164 partnered with an association, organization, corporation, institution or
165 agency, public or private, to provide child care services in a space
166 provided by such association, organization, corporation, institution or
167 agency, provided such space has been approved by the commissioner
168 and is not in a private family home. The commissioner shall not approve
169 more than one facility in each such city to be used for licenses issued
170 under this subsection. An application for a license under this subsection
171 shall include a copy of the current fire marshal certificate of compliance
172 with the Fire Safety Code, and written verification of compliance with
173 the State Building Code, local zoning and building requirements and
174 local health ordinances. The commissioner may require an applicant for
175 a license under this subsection to comply with additional conditions
176 relating to the health and safety of the children who will be served in
177 such facility. The commissioner may waive any requirement that does
178 not apply to such facility. Any license issued under this subsection shall
179 expire on June 30, 2026, except that the commissioner may suspend or
180 revoke any such license at any time in accordance with the provisions
181 of section 19a-87e.

182 Sec. 2. (Effective July 1, 2021) (a) There is established a task force to

183 analyze and make recommendations on issues relating to early
184 childhood workforce development needs in the state.

185 (b) The task force shall examine the following: (1) How to encourage
186 equity-based practices in early childhood education preparation and
187 professional development; (2) ways to address inequity in access to
188 employment opportunities and compensation in the early childhood
189 workforce; (3) the feasibility of creating a new co-authored license that
190 would offer multiple levels of flexibility to address the range of ages,
191 settings and roles in the early childhood field, including a professional
192 continuum for assistants, lead teachers, generalists and specialists, such
193 as early intervention, mental health, integrated special education and
194 rehabilitation therapies; and (4) workforce demands in the state related
195 to the need for early childhood educators providing child care services
196 for infants and toddlers and children up to ages six, seven or eight.

197 (c) The task force shall make recommendations concerning: (1)
198 Legislation for educator preparation requirements in the early
199 childhood field; (2) the creation of a new early childhood teacher license
200 or credential jointly issued by the Office of Early Childhood and the
201 Department of Education; (3) the development of a unifying framework
202 for early childhood educator preparation, in accordance with the
203 National Association for the Education of Young Children and the
204 Council for Exceptional Children - Division of Early Childhood, in order
205 to offer definition of levels for competencies and compensation, such as
206 (A) professional development and alternative routes for aides or
207 classroom assistants, (B) associate degree preparation and alternative
208 routes for assistant teachers, (C) bachelor's degree preparation or post-
209 baccalaureate work for head teachers, (D) bachelor's degree preparation,
210 post-baccalaureate work or graduate degree attainment for specialists,
211 and (E) alignment with competencies to address adult learners,
212 experience in the field, as well as capacity in languages, community
213 context and cultural norms; (4) methods to increase compensation
214 related to competency and degree attainment that will work across all
215 sectors of the early care and education sector including subsidized and
216 parent fee supported programs; and (5) workforce development and the

217 creation of job opportunities in early childhood.

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

219 (1) Two appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives,
220 one of whom is a professor of early childhood education at a public
221 institution of higher education in the state and one of whom is a
222 representative of a school readiness program, as defined in section 10-
223 16p of the general statutes, or a state-funded child care center pursuant
224 to section 8-210 of the general statutes, as amended by this act;

225 (2) Two appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, one of
226 whom is a faculty member from a community college and one of whom
227 is a representative of a private child care provider that is not receiving
228 state financial assistance under section 8-210 of the general statutes, as
229 amended by this act, or 10-16p of the general statutes;

230 (3) One appointed by the majority leader of the House of
231 Representatives, who is a representative from the Capitol Region
232 Education Council;

233 (4) One appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, who is an
234 operator of a family child care home or a representative of an
235 organization that represents or supports the interests of family child
236 care homes;

237 (5) One appointed by the minority leader of the House of
238 Representatives, who is a representative from the Connecticut Early
239 Childhood Alliance;

240 (6) One appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, who is a
241 representative from a state or national early childhood accrediting
242 organization;

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

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

246 (9) The cochairs of the Connecticut Consortium for the Advancement
247 of Early Childhood Educators; and

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

250 (e) Any member of the task force appointed under subdivision (3),
251 (4), (5) or (6) of subsection (d) of this section may be a member of the
252 General Assembly.

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

256 (g) The appointments of the speaker of the House of Representatives
257 and the president pro tempore of the Senate shall serve as the
258 chairpersons of the task force. Such chairpersons shall schedule the first
259 meeting of the task force, which shall be held not later than sixty days
260 after the effective date of this section.

261 (h) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
262 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education
263 shall serve as administrative staff of the task force.

264 (i) Not later than January 1, 2023, the task force shall submit a report
265 on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committee of
266 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to
267 education, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the
268 general statutes. The task force shall terminate on the date that it
269 submits such report or January 1, 2023, whichever is later.

270 Sec. 3. Subsections (a) to (d), inclusive, of section 17b-749 of the
271 general statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu
272 thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

273 (a) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall establish and operate
274 a child care subsidy program to increase the availability, affordability
275 and quality of child care services for families with a parent or caretaker

276 who (1) is (A) working or attending high school, or (B) subject to the
277 provisions of subsection (d) of this section, is enrolled or participating
278 in (i) a public or independent institution of higher education, (ii) a
279 private occupational school authorized pursuant to sections 10a-22a to
280 10a-22o, inclusive, (iii) a job training or employment program
281 administered by a regional workforce development board, (iv) an
282 apprenticeship program administered by the Labor Department's office
283 of apprenticeship training, (v) an alternate route to certification program
284 approved by the State Board of Education, (vi) an adult education
285 program pursuant to section 10-69 or other high school equivalency
286 program, or (vii) a local Even Start program or other adult education
287 program approved by the Commissioner of Early Childhood; or (2)
288 receives cash assistance under the temporary family assistance program
289 from the Department of Social Services and is participating in an
290 education, training or other job preparation activity approved pursuant
291 to subsection (b) of section 17b-688i or subsection (b) of section 17b-
292 689d. Services available under the child care subsidy program shall
293 include the provision of child care subsidies for children under the age
294 of thirteen or children under the age of nineteen with special needs. The
295 Office of Early Childhood shall open and maintain enrollment for the
296 child care subsidy program and shall administer such program within
297 the existing budgetary resources available. The office shall issue a notice
298 on the office's Internet web site any time the office closes the program to
299 new applications, changes eligibility requirements, changes program
300 benefits or makes any other change to the program's status or terms,
301 except the office shall not be required to issue such notice when the
302 office expands program eligibility. Any change in the office's acceptance
303 of new applications, eligibility requirements, program benefits or any
304 other change to the program's status or terms for which the office is
305 required to give notice pursuant to this subsection, shall not be effective
306 until thirty days after the office issues such notice.

307 (b) The commissioner shall establish income standards for applicants
308 and recipients at a level to include a family with gross income up to fifty
309 per cent of the state-wide median income, except the commissioner (1)

310 may increase the income level up to the maximum level allowed under
311 federal law, (2) upon the request of the Commissioner of Children and
312 Families, may waive the income standards for adoptive families so that
313 children adopted on or after October 1, 1999, from the Department of
314 Children and Families are eligible for the child care subsidy program,
315 and (3) on and after March 1, 2003, shall reduce the income eligibility
316 level to up to fifty-five per cent of the state-wide median income for
317 applicants and recipients who qualify based on their loss of eligibility
318 for temporary family assistance. The commissioner may adopt
319 regulations in accordance with chapter 54 to establish income criteria
320 and durational requirements for such waiver of income standards.

321 (c) The commissioner, in consultation with the Commissioner of
322 Social Services, shall establish eligibility and program standards
323 including, but not limited to: (1) A priority intake and eligibility system
324 with preference given to serving (A) recipients of temporary family
325 assistance who are employed or engaged in employment activities
326 under the Department of Social Services' "Jobs First" program, (B)
327 working families whose temporary family assistance was discontinued
328 not more than five years prior to the date of application for the child care
329 subsidy program, (C) teen parents, (D) low-income working families,
330 (E) adoptive families of children who were adopted from the
331 Department of Children and Families and who are granted a waiver of
332 income standards under subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this section,
333 [and] (F) working families who are at risk of welfare dependency, (G)
334 parents or caretakers participating in an apprenticeship program
335 administered by the Labor Department's office of apprenticeship
336 training, (H) parents or caretakers enrolled in an adult education
337 program pursuant to section 10-69 or other high school equivalency
338 program, (I) parents or caretakers participating in a job training or
339 employment program administered by a regional workforce
340 development board, and (J) parents or caretakers enrolled in a public or
341 independent institution of higher education; (2) health and safety
342 standards for child care providers not required to be licensed; (3) a
343 reimbursement system for child care services which account for

344 differences in the age of the child, number of children in the family, the
345 geographic region and type of care provided by licensed and unlicensed
346 caregivers, the cost and type of services provided by licensed and
347 unlicensed caregivers, successful completion of fifteen hours of annual
348 in-service training or credentialing of child care directors and
349 administrators, and program accreditation; (4) supplemental payment
350 for special needs of the child and extended nontraditional hours; (5) an
351 annual rate review process for providers which assures that
352 reimbursement rates are maintained at levels which permit equal access
353 to a variety of child care settings; (6) a sliding reimbursement scale for
354 participating families; (7) an administrative appeals process; (8) an
355 administrative hearing process to adjudicate cases of alleged fraud and
356 abuse and to impose sanctions and recover overpayments; (9) an
357 extended period of program and payment eligibility when a parent who
358 is receiving a child care subsidy experiences a temporary interruption
359 in employment or other approved activity; and (10) a waiting list for the
360 child care subsidy program that (A) allows the commissioner to exercise
361 discretion in prioritizing within and between existing priority groups,
362 including, but not limited to, children described in 45 CFR 98.46, as
363 amended from time to time, and households with an infant or toddler,
364 and (B) reflects the priority and eligibility system set forth in subdivision
365 (1) of this subsection, which is reviewed periodically, with the inclusion
366 of this information in the annual report required to be issued annually
367 by the office to the Governor and the General Assembly in accordance
368 with section 17b-733. Such action will include, but not be limited to,
369 family income, age of child, region of state and length of time on such
370 waiting list.

371 (d) Not later than July 1, 2015, an applicant determined to be eligible
372 for program benefits by the Commissioner of Early Childhood shall
373 remain eligible for such benefits for a period prescribed by federal law,
374 except any applicant determined to be eligible for program benefits by
375 the commissioner under subparagraph (B) of subdivision (1) of
376 subsection (a) of this section shall only be eligible for and receive such
377 benefits upon the availability of federal funds received pursuant to

378 Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act,
 379 P.L. 116-260, as amended from time to time, or the American Rescue
 380 Plan Act of 2021, P.L. 117-2, as amended from time to time, and
 381 designated by the commissioner for such benefits.

382 Sec. 4. Section 8-210 of the general statutes is amended by adding
 383 subsection (g) as follows (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

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

| | | |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|
| This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections: | | |
| Section 1 | <i>July 1, 2021</i> | 19a-87b |
| Sec. 2 | <i>July 1, 2021</i> | New section |
| Sec. 3 | <i>July 1, 2021</i> | 17b-749(a) to (d) |
| Sec. 4 | <i>July 1, 2021</i> | 8-210 |

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: See Below

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill results in a cost to the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) associated with expanding eligibility for the Care4kids program to parents and caretakers participating in various higher education, job training, and adult education programs. The bill also specifies those qualifying under these provisions can participate in a program provided at a state-contracted child care center. The extent of the cost depends on the number of qualifying participants and subsidy amount paid under the program. The bill specifies that individuals are only eligible under the expansion if certain federal funds are designated for such benefits, and therefore does not require the expenditure of state funds.

The bill also allows the OEC to issue a family child care home license to provide care in a space outside a private family home from FY 22 through FY 26. The bill limits the issuance of the license to one facility per city in New Britain, New Haven, Bridgeport, Stamford, Hartford, Danbury or Waterbury. This is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact as it does not expand eligibility for state-subsidized childcare, and OEC has the expertise necessary to meet related licensing requirements.

The bill establishes a task force to analyze and make recommendations on issues related to early childhood workforce development needs in the state, which is not anticipated to result in a

fiscal impact. The task force must report and terminate by January 1, 2023.

House "A" expands Care4Kids eligibility pending the designation of federal funds to support such benefits. The amendment makes other technical and conforming changes that have no fiscal impact.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the designation of federal funds.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 6558 (as amended by House "A")******AN ACT CONCERNING ISSUES RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT.*****SUMMARY**

This bill allows the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) commissioner to issue up to seven family child care home licenses to a person or group of people who provide child care services in a commissioner-approved space provided through a partnership with an association, organization, corporation, institution, or public or private agency (§ 1). Under current law, family child care home licenses are for child care services provided in the licensee's private home.

The bill also does the following:

1. allows family child care home licensees to use an OEC-approved substitute staff member to provide more than an hour of child care under specific circumstances (§ 1),
2. creates a 13-member early childhood workforce development needs task force (§ 2),
3. expands eligibility for Care 4 Kids child care subsidies to include people enrolled or participating in certain postsecondary education and workforce training programs (§ 3),
4. requires the OEC commissioner to add new categories of parents and caretakers to the list of people who must receive preference in the Care 4 Kids priority intake and eligibility system (§ 3), and
5. requires OEC to allow Care 4 Kids-eligible families to participate

in a state-contracted child care center program in FYs 22 and 23 (§ 4).

*House Amendment "A" (1) adds Danbury to the list of municipalities where the OEC commissioner may issue a family child care home license to a partnership between a child care provider and space provider, (2) adds the provisions about the use of substitute staff in family child care homes, (3) adds the provisions about Care 4 Kids eligibility and participant access to state-contracted child care centers, and (4) makes technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2021

§ 1 — FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME LICENSE

License Terms and Applicant Eligibility

These licenses must be issued in accordance with existing law (unless otherwise specified under the bill) and may be issued in FYs 22-26 for up to one space in each of the following cities: Bridgeport, Danbury, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, Stamford, or Waterbury. They expire on June 30, 2026, subject to the commissioner's authority to suspend or revoke them under the law (see BACKGROUND).

Application Process

The bill requires prospective licensees for the seven family child care home licenses to submit the following items as part of their licensure application: (1) a copy of the current fire marshal certificate of compliance with the Fire Safety Code and (2) written verification of compliance with the State Building Code, local zoning and building requirements, and local health ordinances. Additionally, the bill allows the OEC commissioner to (1) require applicants to comply with additional conditions related to the health and safety of children to be served in these facilities and (2) waive any requirement that does not apply to these facilities.

§ 1 — SUBSTITUTE STAFF IN FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES

The bill allows family child care home licensees to use an OEC-

approved substitute staff member to provide child care for more than one hour while the licensee attends a medical appointment, receives medical treatment, or completes education or training. The bill specifies that using a substitute staff member for these purposes does not constitute a transfer or franchise of the family child care home. The licensee must (1) provide advance notice to the children's parents and guardians about the dates and times the substitute will be providing child care and (2) continue to maintain control of day-to-day operations of the family child care home.

§ 2 — EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

Scope

The bill requires the task force to examine the following:

1. ways to encourage equity-based practices in early childhood education preparation and professional development;
2. ways to address inequity in access to employment opportunities and compensation in the early childhood workforce;
3. the feasibility of creating a new, co-authored license that would offer multiple levels of flexibility to address the range of ages, settings, and roles in the early childhood field, including a professional continuum for assistants; lead teachers; generalists; and specialists such as early interventionist, mental health, integrated special education, and rehabilitation therapies; and
4. workforce demands in the state related to the need for early childhood educators providing child care services for infants and toddlers to age six or eight.

Additionally, the bill requires the task force to make recommendations about the following topics:

1. legislation for early childhood educator preparation requirements;

2. creating a new early childhood teacher license or credential jointly issued by OEC and the State Department of Education (SDE);
3. developing a unifying framework for early childhood educator preparation, in accordance with the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Council for Exceptional Children - Division of Early Childhood, to offer definition of levels for competencies and compensation such as (a) professional development and alternative routes for aides or classroom assistants; (b) associate degree preparation and alternative routes for assistant teachers; (c) bachelor’s degree preparation or post-baccalaureate work for head teachers; (d) bachelor’s degree preparation, post-baccalaureate work, or graduate degree attainment for specialists; and (e) alignment with competencies to address adult learners, experience in the field, as well as capacity in languages, community content, and cultural norms;
4. methods for increasing compensation related to competency and degree attainment that will work across all sectors of the early care and education sector, including subsidized and parent fee supported programs; and
5. early childhood workforce development and job opportunity creation.

Membership

Table 1 describes the required expertise for the 13 task force members and their respective appointing authorities. The bill allows any members appointed by legislative leaders to be General Assembly members.

Table 1: Task Force Membership

| <i>Appointing Authority</i> | <i>Member(s) and Required Expertise</i> |
|-----------------------------|--|
| House speaker | Early childhood education professor at a Connecticut public higher education |

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| | institution Representative of a school readiness program or state-funded child care center |
| Senate president pro tempore | Community college faculty member Representative of a private child care provider that is not receiving state financial assistance |
| House majority leader | Representative of the Capitol Region Education Council regional education service center |
| Senate majority leader | Family child care home operator or representative of an organization that represents or supports family child care homes |
| House minority leader | Representative of the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance |
| Senate minority leader | Representative of a state or national early childhood accrediting organization |
| N/A | OEC commissioner, or the commissioner's designee |
| N/A | SDE commissioner, or the commissioner's designee |
| N/A | Co-chairs of the Connecticut Consortium for the Advancement of Early Childhood Educators |
| N/A | State Education Resource Center executive director, or the director's designee |

The bill requires the above appointments to be made by July 31, 2021, and appointing authorities to fill any vacancies that may arise.

Leadership, Staff, and Meetings

Under the bill, the House speaker's and Senate president pro tempore's appointees must serve as the task force chairpersons, and the Education Committee administrative staff must serve as task for staff.

The chairpersons must schedule the first meeting by August 30, 2021.

The task force must report its findings to the Education Committee by January 1, 2023. It must terminate on the date it submits the report or on January 1, 2023, whichever is later.

§ 3 — EXPANDED CARE 4 KIDS ELIGIBILITY

The bill expands eligibility for Care 4 Kids child care subsidies to people who are enrolled or participating in any of the following:

1. a public or private college or university,
2. a private occupational school,
3. a job training or employment program administered by a regional workforce development board,
4. a Department of Labor (DOL)-administered apprenticeship program,
5. an alternate route to certification program,
6. an adult education program or other high school equivalency program, or
7. a local Even Start program or other adult education program approved by the OEC commissioner.

The bill specifies that these groups are only eligible for and may receive Care 4 Kids benefits if federal COVID-19 related relief funds are available (i.e., the Coronavirus Response and Related Supplemental Appropriations Act and the American Response Plan).

Additionally, it requires the OEC commissioner to add new categories to the list of people who must receive preference in the Care 4 Kids priority intake and eligibility system. The categories are parents or caretakers who are:

1. participating in a DOL apprenticeship program,

- 2. enrolled in an adult education program or other high school equivalency program,
- 3. participating in a job training or employment program administered by a regional workforce development board, or
- 4. enrolled in a public or private college or university.

BACKGROUND

License Suspension and Revocation

The OEC commissioner may suspend or revoke a family child care home license if the family child care home’s owner or operator, an assistant or substitute staff member or employee, or any household member age 16 or older has a criminal history containing felony convictions for, among other things, (1) use of physical force, (2) risk of injury to or impairing morals of children, (3) abandonment of young children, (4) illegal drug sale or possession, (5) sexual assault, or (6) any felony where the victim is a minor (CGS § 19a-87e).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute Change of Reference - APP
Yea 38 Nay 0 (03/15/2021)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 50 Nay 0 (04/21/2021)