



General Assembly

January Session, 2023

Raised Bill No. 6686

LCO No. 3398



Referred to Committee on EDUCATION

Introduced by:
(ED)

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.

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

1 Section 1. Section 10-16p of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2023*):

3 (a) As used in sections 10-16o to 10-16r, inclusive, 10-16u, 17b-749a
4 and 17b-749c:

5 (1) "School readiness program" means a nonsectarian program that
6 (A) meets the standards set by the Office of Early Childhood pursuant
7 to subsection (b) of this section and the requirements of section 10-16q,
8 and (B) provides a developmentally appropriate learning experience of
9 not less than four hundred fifty hours and one hundred eighty days for
10 eligible children, except as provided in subsection (d) of section 10-16q;

11 (2) "Eligible children" means children [three and] from birth to four
12 years of age, inclusive, and children five years of age who are not
13 eligible to enroll in school pursuant to section 10-15c, or who are eligible
14 to enroll in school and will attend a school readiness program pursuant

15 to section 10-16t, as amended by this act;

16 (3) "Priority school" means a school in which forty per cent or more
17 of the lunches served are served to students who are eligible for free or
18 reduced price lunches pursuant to federal law and regulations,
19 excluding such a school located in a priority school district pursuant to
20 section 10-266p or in a former priority school district receiving a grant
21 pursuant to subsection (c) of this section and, on and after July 1, 2001,
22 excluding such a school in a transitional school district receiving a grant
23 pursuant to section 10-16u;

24 (4) "Severe need school" means a school in a priority school district
25 pursuant to section 10-266p or in a former priority school district in
26 which forty per cent or more of the lunches served are served to students
27 who are eligible for free or reduced price lunches;

28 (5) "Accredited" means accredited by the National Association for the
29 Education of Young Children, National Association for Family Child
30 Care, a Head Start on-site program review instrument or a successor
31 instrument pursuant to federal regulations, or otherwise meeting such
32 criteria as may be established by the commissioner, unless the context
33 otherwise requires;

34 (6) "Year-round" means forty-eight weeks per year, except as
35 provided in subsection (d) of section 10-16q;

36 (7) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Early Childhood;

37 (8) "Office" means the Office of Early Childhood;

38 (9) "Seeking accreditation" means a school readiness program seeking
39 accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young
40 Children, National Association for Family Child Care or a Head Start
41 on-site program review instrument or successor instrument pursuant to
42 federal regulations, or attempting to meet criteria as may be established
43 by the commissioner; [and]

44 (10) "Concentration in early childhood education" means a program

45 of study in early childhood education, including, but not limited to,
46 early childhood education, child study, child development or human
47 growth and development;

48 (11) "Designated staff member" means a person assigned the primary
49 responsibility for a classroom of children;

50 (12) "State-funded child care program" means an early childhood
51 education program that accepts state funds from the office, whether
52 directly or through a subcontractor, for any combination of infant,
53 toddler and preschool spaces, but "state-funded child care program"
54 does not include the child care subsidy program established pursuant
55 to section 17b-749, as amended by this act; and

56 (13) "Minimum qualifications" means at least one of the following
57 qualifications: (A) A bachelor's degree or higher with a concentration in
58 early childhood education from a regionally accredited institution of
59 higher education, (B) a bachelor's degree or higher without a
60 concentration in early childhood education, but with not less than
61 twelve credits applicable to early childhood education from a regionally
62 accredited institution of higher education, (C) certification pursuant to
63 section 10-145b with an endorsement in early childhood education or
64 early childhood special education, or (D) being deemed qualified by the
65 office on the basis of having (i) verified employment in a state-funded
66 child care program, and (ii) obtained not less than twelve credits
67 applicable to early childhood education from a regionally accredited
68 institution of higher education.

69 (b) (1) The office shall be the lead agency for school readiness. For
70 purposes of this section and section 10-16u, school readiness program
71 providers eligible for funding from the office shall include local and
72 regional boards of education, regional educational service centers,
73 family resource centers and providers of child care centers, group child
74 care homes and family child care homes, as described in section 19a-77,
75 Head Start programs, preschool programs and other programs that
76 meet any standards established by the commissioner. The office shall

77 establish standards for school readiness programs. The standards may
78 include, but need not be limited to, guidelines for staff-child
79 interactions, curriculum content, including preliteracy development,
80 lesson plans, parental involvement, staff qualifications, in accordance
81 with subdivision (2) of this this subsection, and training, transition to
82 school and administration. The office shall develop age-appropriate
83 developmental skills and goals for children attending such programs.
84 The commissioner, in consultation with the president of the Connecticut
85 State Colleges and Universities, the Commissioners of Education and
86 Social Services and other appropriate entities, shall develop a
87 professional development program for the staff of school readiness
88 programs.

89 [(2) For purposes of this section:

90 (A) Prior to July 1, 2022, "staff qualifications" means that for each
91 early childhood education program accepting state funds for infant,
92 toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's child care
93 program or school readiness program, there is in each classroom an
94 individual who has at least the following: (i) A childhood development
95 associate credential or an equivalent credential issued by an
96 organization approved by the commissioner and twelve credits or more
97 in early childhood education or child development, as determined by
98 the commissioner or the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and
99 Universities, after consultation with the commissioner, from an
100 institution of higher education (I) accredited by the Board of Regents for
101 Higher Education or Office of Higher Education, and (II) regionally
102 accredited; (ii) an associate degree with twelve credits or more in early
103 childhood education or child development, as determined by the
104 commissioner or the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and
105 Universities, after consultation with the commissioner, from such an
106 institution; (iii) a four-year degree with twelve credits or more in early
107 childhood education or child development, as determined by the
108 commissioner or the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and
109 Universities, after consultation with the commissioner, from such an
110 institution; (iv) certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an

111 endorsement in early childhood education or special education; (v) an
112 associate degree with a concentration in early childhood education from
113 an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited; or (vi) a
114 bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education
115 from an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited;

116 (B) From July 1, 2022, until June 30, 2025, "staff qualifications" means
117 that for each early childhood education program accepting state funds
118 for infant, toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's
119 child care program or school readiness program, (i) at least fifty per cent
120 of those individuals with the primary responsibility for a classroom of
121 children (I) hold certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an
122 endorsement in early childhood education or early childhood special
123 education, (II) have been issued an early childhood teacher credential,
124 pursuant to section 10-520b, (III) hold at least an associate degree with a
125 concentration in early childhood education from an institution of higher
126 education that is regionally accredited, or (IV) satisfy the requirements
127 of subdivision (3), (4) or (5) of this subsection, and (ii) such remaining
128 individuals with the primary responsibility for a classroom of children
129 hold a childhood development associate credential or an equivalent
130 credential issued by an organization approved by the commissioner and
131 twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child
132 development, as determined by the commissioner or the president of
133 the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, after consultation with
134 the commissioner, from an institution of higher education (I) accredited
135 by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher
136 Education, and (II) regionally accredited;

137 (C) From July 1, 2025, until June 30, 2029, "staff qualifications" means
138 that for each early childhood education program accepting state funds
139 for infant, toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's
140 child care program or school readiness program, (i) at least fifty per cent
141 of those individuals with the primary responsibility for a classroom of
142 children (I) hold certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an
143 endorsement in early childhood education or early childhood special
144 education, (II) have been issued an early childhood teacher credential,

145 pursuant to subdivision (2) of section 10-520b, (III) hold at least a
146 bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education
147 from an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited, or
148 (IV) satisfy the requirements of subdivision (3), (4) or (5) of this
149 subsection, and (ii) such remaining individuals with the primary
150 responsibility for a classroom of children (I) hold an associate degree
151 with a concentration in early childhood education from an institution of
152 higher education that is regionally accredited, or (II) have been issued
153 an early childhood teacher credential, pursuant to subdivision (1) of
154 section 10-520b; and

155 (D) On and after July 1, 2029, "staff qualifications" means that for each
156 early childhood education program accepting state funds for infant,
157 toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's child care
158 program or school readiness program, one hundred per cent of those
159 individuals with the primary responsibility for a classroom of children
160 (i) hold certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in
161 early childhood education or early childhood special education, (ii) have
162 been issued an early childhood teacher credential, pursuant to
163 subdivision (2) of section 10-520b, (iii) hold at least a bachelor's degree
164 with a concentration in early childhood education from an institution of
165 higher education that is regionally accredited, or (iv) satisfy the
166 requirements of subdivision (3), (4) or (5) of this subsection.

167 (3) Any individual with a bachelor's degree in early childhood
168 education or child development or a bachelor's degree and twelve
169 credits or more in early childhood education or child development,
170 who, on or before June 30, 2015, is employed by an early childhood
171 education program that accepts state funds for infant, toddler and
172 preschool spaces associated with such program's child care program or
173 school readiness program shall be considered to meet the staff
174 qualifications required under subparagraphs (B) to (D), inclusive, of
175 subdivision (2) of this subsection. No such early childhood education
176 program shall terminate any such individual from employment for
177 purposes of meeting the staff qualification requirements set forth in
178 subparagraph (B), (C) or (D) of subdivision (2) of this subsection.

179 (4) Any individual with an associate degree or a bachelor's degree in
180 early childhood education or child development or an associate degree
181 or a bachelor's degree and twelve credits or more in early childhood
182 education or child development from an institution of higher education
183 that is regionally accredited, other than an associate degree or a
184 bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education,
185 may submit documentation concerning such degree for review and
186 assessment by the office as to whether such degree has a sufficient
187 concentration in early childhood education so as to satisfy the
188 requirements set forth in subparagraphs (B) to (D), inclusive, of
189 subdivision (2) of this subsection.

190 (5) Any individual with an associate degree with twelve credits or
191 more in early childhood education or child development, as determined
192 by the commissioner or the president of the Connecticut State Colleges
193 and Universities, after consultation with the commissioner, from an
194 institution of higher education (A) accredited by the Board of Regents
195 for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education, and (B) regionally
196 accredited, who has been employed in the same early childhood
197 education program that accepts state funds for infant, toddler and
198 preschool spaces associated with such program's child care program or
199 school readiness program since 1995 shall be considered to meet the staff
200 qualifications required under subparagraphs (B) to (D), inclusive, of
201 subdivision (2) of this subsection until June 30, 2025. On and after July
202 1, 2025, such individual shall hold a childhood development associate
203 credential or an equivalent credential, described in subparagraph (A) of
204 subdivision (2) of this subsection, or otherwise meet the staff
205 qualifications required under subparagraphs (C) and (D) of subdivision
206 (2) of this subsection. Any such individual who terminates his or her
207 employment with such early childhood education program on or before
208 June 30, 2025, and accepts a position at another early childhood
209 education program accepting state funds for spaces associated with
210 such program's child care program or school readiness program shall
211 submit documentation of such individual's progress toward meeting
212 the staff qualification requirements set forth in subparagraph (B) to (D),

213 inclusive, of subdivision (2) of this subsection in a manner determined
214 by the office.]

215 (2) (A) From July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2027, inclusive, not less than
216 twenty-five per cent of the designated staff members at each state-
217 funded child care program shall meet minimum qualifications.

218 (B) From July 1, 2027, to June 30, 2030, inclusive, not less than fifty
219 per cent of the designated staff members at each state-funded child care
220 program shall meet minimum qualifications.

221 (C) From July 1, 2030, to June 30, 2033, inclusive, not less than
222 seventy-five per cent of the designated staff members at each state-
223 funded child care program shall meet minimum qualifications.

224 (D) On and after July 1, 2033, not less than one hundred per cent of
225 designated staff members at each state-funded child care program shall
226 meet minimum qualifications.

227 (c) The commissioner shall establish a grant program to provide
228 spaces in accredited school readiness programs located in priority
229 school districts, as described in section 10-266p, or in former priority
230 school districts for eligible children. The state, acting by and in the
231 discretion of the Commissioner of Early Childhood, in consultation with
232 a town or regional school readiness council, may enter into a contract
233 with a municipality, local or regional board of education, regional
234 educational service center, family resource center, provider of a child
235 care center, group child care home or family child care home, as
236 described in section 19a-77, Head Start program, preschool program or
237 other program that meets such standards established by the
238 commissioner, to provide, within available appropriations, state
239 financial assistance. Eligibility shall be determined for a five-year period
240 based on an applicant's designation as a priority school district for the
241 initial year of application, except that if a school district that receives a
242 grant pursuant to this subsection is no longer designated as a priority
243 school district at the end of such five-year period, such former priority
244 school district shall continue to be eligible to receive a grant pursuant to

245 this subsection. Grant awards shall be made [annually] for the fiscal year
246 ending June 30, 2023, and biennially thereafter, contingent upon
247 available funding and a satisfactory annual evaluation. The chief elected
248 official of such town and the superintendent of schools for such priority
249 school district or former priority school district shall submit a plan for
250 the expenditure of grant funds and responses to the local request for
251 proposal process to the commissioner. The commissioner shall review
252 and approve such plans. The plan shall: (1) Be developed in consultation
253 with the local or regional school readiness council established pursuant
254 to section 10-16r; (2) be based on a needs and resource assessment; (3)
255 provide for the issuance of requests for proposals for providers of
256 accredited school readiness programs, provided, after the initial
257 requests for proposals, facilities that have been approved to operate a
258 child care program financed through the Connecticut Health and
259 Education Facilities Authority and have received a commitment for debt
260 service from the Department of Social Services, pursuant to section 17b-
261 749i, on or before June 30, 2014, and on or after July 1, 2014, from the
262 office, are exempt from the requirement for issuance of annual requests
263 for proposals; and (4) identify the need for funding pursuant to section
264 17b-749a in order to extend the hours and days of operation of school
265 readiness programs in order to provide child care services for children
266 attending such programs.

267 (d) (1) The commissioner shall establish a competitive grant program
268 to provide spaces in accredited school readiness programs or school
269 readiness programs seeking accreditation located in (A) an area served
270 by a priority school or a former priority school, (B) a town ranked one
271 to fifty when all towns are ranked in ascending order according to town
272 wealth, as defined in subdivision (26) of section 10-262f, whose school
273 district is not a priority school district pursuant to section 10-266p, (C) a
274 town formerly a town described in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision,
275 as provided for in subdivision (2) of this subsection, or (D) a town
276 designated as an alliance district, as defined in section 10-262u, whose
277 school district is not a priority school district pursuant to section 10-
278 266p. A town in which a priority school is located, a regional school

279 readiness council, pursuant to subsection (c) of section 10-16r, for a
280 region in which such a school is located or a town described in
281 subparagraph (B) of this subdivision may apply for such a grant in an
282 amount equal to the number of spaces in an accredited school readiness
283 program or a school readiness program seeking accreditation multiplied
284 by the per child cost set forth in subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of
285 section 10-16q. Eligibility shall be determined for a three-year period
286 based on an applicant's designation as having a priority school or being
287 a town described in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision for the initial
288 year of application. The state, acting by and in the discretion of the
289 Commissioner of Early Childhood, in consultation with a town or
290 regional school readiness council, may enter into a contract with a
291 municipality, local or regional board of education, regional educational
292 service center, family resource center, provider of a child care center,
293 group child care home or family child care home, as described in section
294 19a-77, Head Start program, preschool program or other program that
295 meets such standards established by the commissioner, to provide,
296 within available appropriations, state financial assistance. The chief
297 elected official of such town and the superintendent of schools of the
298 school district or the regional school readiness council shall submit a
299 plan, as described in subsection (c) of this section, for the expenditure of
300 such grant funds to the commissioner. In awarding grants pursuant to
301 this subsection, the commissioner shall give preference to applications
302 submitted by regional school readiness councils and may, within
303 available appropriations, provide a grant to such town or regional
304 school readiness council that increases the number of spaces for eligible
305 children who reside in an area or town described in subparagraphs (A)
306 to (D), inclusive, of this subdivision, in an accredited school readiness
307 program or a school readiness program seeking accreditation.

308 (2) (A) Except as provided in subparagraph (C) of this subdivision,
309 commencing with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2005, if a town received
310 a grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection and is no longer
311 eligible to receive such a grant, the town may receive a phase-out grant
312 for each of the three fiscal years following the fiscal year such town

313 received its final grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

314 (B) The amount of such phase-out grants shall be determined as
315 follows: (i) For the first fiscal year following the fiscal year such town
316 received its final grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, in
317 an amount that does not exceed seventy-five per cent of the grant
318 amount such town received for the town or school's final year of
319 eligibility pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection; (ii) for the
320 second fiscal year following the fiscal year such town received its final
321 grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, in an amount that
322 does not exceed fifty per cent of the grant amount such town received
323 for the town's or school's final year of eligibility pursuant to subdivision
324 (1) of this subsection; and (iii) for the third fiscal year following the fiscal
325 year such town received its final grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of
326 this subsection, in an amount that does not exceed twenty-five per cent
327 of the grant amount such town received for the town's or school's final
328 year of eligibility pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

329 (C) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2011, and each fiscal year
330 thereafter, any town that received a grant pursuant to subparagraph (B)
331 of subdivision (1) of this subsection for the fiscal year ending June 30,
332 2010, shall continue to receive a grant under this subsection even if the
333 town no longer meets the criteria for such grant pursuant to
334 subparagraph (B) of subdivision (1) of this subsection.

335 (e) (1) If funds appropriated for the purposes of subsection (c) of this
336 section are not expended, the commissioner may deposit such
337 unexpended funds in the account established under section 10-16aa and
338 use such unexpended funds in accordance with the provisions of section
339 10-16aa.

340 (2) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015, and each fiscal year
341 thereafter, if funds appropriated for the purposes of subsection (c) of
342 this section are not expended, an amount up to one million dollars of
343 such unexpended funds may be available for the provision of
344 professional development for early childhood care and education

345 program providers, and staff employed in such programs, provided
346 such programs accept state funds for infant, toddler and preschool slots.
347 Such unexpended funds may be available for use in accordance with the
348 provisions of this subparagraph for the subsequent fiscal year. The
349 commissioner may use such unexpended funds on and after July 1, 2015,
350 to support early childhood education programs accepting state funds in
351 satisfying the staff qualifications requirements of subparagraphs (B) and
352 (C) of subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this section. The commissioner
353 shall use any such funds to provide assistance to individual staff
354 members, giving priority to those staff members (A) attending an
355 institution of higher education accredited by the Board of Regents for
356 Higher Education or the Office of Higher Education, and approved by
357 the Office of Early Childhood, and regionally accredited, at a maximum
358 of ten thousand dollars per staff member per year for the cost of higher
359 education courses leading to a bachelor's degree or, not later than
360 December 31, 2015, an associate degree, as such degrees are described
361 in said subparagraphs (B) and (C), or (B) receiving noncredit
362 competency-based training approved by the office, at a maximum of one
363 thousand dollars per staff member per year, provided such staff
364 members have applied for all available federal and state scholarships
365 and grants, and such assistance does not exceed such staff members'
366 financial need. Individual staff members shall apply for such
367 unexpended funds in a manner determined by the commissioner. The
368 commissioner shall determine how such unexpended funds shall be
369 distributed.

370 (3) If funds appropriated for the purposes of subsection (c) of this
371 section are not expended pursuant to subsection (c) of this section,
372 deposited pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, or used
373 pursuant to subdivision (2) of this subsection, the commissioner may
374 use such unexpended funds to support local school readiness programs.
375 The commissioner may use such funds for purposes including, but not
376 limited to, (A) assisting local school readiness programs in meeting and
377 maintaining accreditation requirements, (B) providing training in
378 implementing the preschool assessment and curriculum frameworks,

379 including training to enhance literacy teaching skills, (C) developing a
380 state-wide preschool curriculum, (D) developing student assessments
381 for students in grades kindergarten to two, inclusive, (E) developing
382 and implementing best practices for parents in supporting preschool
383 and kindergarten student learning, (F) developing and implementing
384 strategies for children to successfully transition to preschool and from
385 preschool to kindergarten, including through parental engagement and
386 whole-family supports that may be utilized through the two-
387 generational initiative, established pursuant to section 17b-112l, or
388 through other available resources, (G) providing for professional
389 development, including assisting in career ladder advancement, for
390 school readiness staff, (H) providing supplemental grants to other
391 towns that are eligible for grants pursuant to subsection (c) of this
392 section, and (I) developing a plan to provide spaces in an accredited
393 school readiness program or a school readiness program seeking
394 accreditation to all eligible children who reside in an area or town
395 described in subparagraphs (A) to (D), inclusive, of subdivision (1) of
396 subsection (d) of this section.

397 (f) Any school readiness program that receives funds pursuant to this
398 section or section 10-16u shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color,
399 national origin, gender, religion or disability. For purposes of this
400 section, a nonsectarian program means any public or private school
401 readiness program that is not violative of the Establishment Clause of
402 the Constitution of the State of Connecticut or the Establishment Clause
403 of the Constitution of the United States of America.

404 (g) Subject to the provisions of this subsection, no funds received by
405 a town pursuant to subsection (c) or (d) of this section or section 10-16u
406 shall be used to supplant federal, state or local funding received by such
407 town for early childhood education, provided a town may use an
408 amount determined in accordance with this subsection for coordination,
409 program evaluation and administration. Such amount shall be at least
410 five per cent of the total grant allocation, but not more than seventy-five
411 thousand dollars and shall be determined by the commissioner based
412 on the school readiness grant award allocated to the town pursuant to

413 subsection (c) or (d) of this section or section 10-16u and the number of
414 operating sites for coordination, program evaluation and
415 administration. Such amount shall be increased by an amount equal to
416 local funding provided for early childhood education coordination,
417 program evaluation and administration, not to exceed twenty-five
418 thousand dollars. Each town that receives a grant pursuant to
419 subsection (c) or (d) of this section or section 10-16u shall designate a
420 person to be responsible for such coordination, program evaluation and
421 administration and to act as a liaison between the town and the
422 commissioner. Each school readiness program that receives funds
423 pursuant to this section or section 10-16u shall provide information to
424 the commissioner or the school readiness council, as requested, that is
425 necessary for purposes of any school readiness program evaluation.

426 (h) Any town receiving a grant pursuant to this section may use such
427 grant, with the approval of the commissioner, to prepare a facility or
428 staff for operating a school readiness program and shall be adjusted
429 based on the number of days of operation of a school readiness program
430 if a shorter term of operation is approved by the commissioner.

431 (i) A town may use grant funds to purchase spaces for eligible
432 children who reside in such town at an accredited school readiness
433 program located in another town. A regional school readiness council
434 may use grant funds to purchase spaces for eligible children who reside
435 in the region covered by the council at an accredited school readiness
436 program located outside such region.

437 (j) Children enrolled in school readiness programs funded pursuant
438 to this section shall not be counted (1) as resident students for purposes
439 of subdivision (22) of section 10-262f, or (2) in the determination of
440 average daily membership pursuant to subdivision (2) of subsection (a)
441 of section 10-261.

442 (k) (1) Up to two per cent of the amount of the appropriation for this
443 section may be allocated to the competitive grant program pursuant to
444 subsection (d) of this section. The determination of the amount of such

445 allocation shall be made on or before August first.

446 (2) Up to two per cent of the amount of the appropriation for this
447 section may be used by the commissioner in a manner consistent with
448 the provisions of section 10-509.

449 [(1) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, and each fiscal year
450 thereafter, any school readiness program that (1) is licensed by the
451 Office of Early Childhood pursuant to chapter 368a, (2) provides full-
452 day and year-round child care and education programs for children,
453 and (3) receives funds pursuant to this section or section 10-16u, shall
454 use any amount of the per child cost as described in subdivision (1) of
455 subsection (b) of section 10-16q that is over the amount of eight
456 thousand nine hundred twenty-seven dollars, exclusively to increase
457 the salaries of those individuals with direct responsibility for teaching
458 or caring for children in a classroom at such school readiness program.]

459 Sec. 2. Section 10-16t of the general statutes is repealed and the
460 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2023*):

461 A local school readiness council may elect to reserve up to five per
462 cent of the spaces in its school readiness programs for children who are
463 five years of age and are eligible to attend school pursuant to section 10-
464 15c. Such children shall only be eligible to participate in the school
465 readiness program if (1) they have been in the program for at least one
466 year, [and] (2) the parent or legal guardian of such a child, the school
467 readiness program provider and the local or regional school district in
468 which the child would otherwise be attending school agree that the
469 child [is not ready for kindergarten] would benefit from another year in
470 the program and to defer attendance in kindergarten until the following
471 year, and (3) a written authorization, signed by the parent or guardian
472 of such a child, indicating that such child will not attend kindergarten
473 until the following year is filed with the local or regional school district
474 in which such child would otherwise be attending school.

475 Sec. 3. Subdivision (3) of subsection (a) of section 10-505 of the general
476 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof

477 (Effective July 1, 2023):

478 (3) "Eligible children" means children (A) [three and] from birth to
479 four years of age, inclusive, and children five years of age who are not
480 eligible to enroll in school pursuant to section 10-15c, or who are eligible
481 to enroll in school and will attend a school readiness program pursuant
482 to section 10-16t, as amended by this act, and (B) who reside (i) in an
483 area served by a priority school or a former priority school, as described
484 in subdivision (2) of subsection (d) of section 10-16p, as amended by this
485 act, (ii) in a town ranked one to fifty when all towns are ranked in
486 ascending order according to town wealth, as defined in subdivision
487 (26) of section 10-262f, whose school district is not a priority school
488 district pursuant to section 10-266p, (iii) in a town formerly a town
489 described in clause (ii) of this subparagraph, as provided for in
490 subdivision (2) of subsection (d) of section 10-16p, as amended by this
491 act, or (iv) in a town designated as an alliance district, as defined in
492 section 10-262u, whose school district is not a priority school district
493 pursuant to section 10-266p;

494 Sec. 4. Subsection (b) of section 8-210 of the general statutes is
495 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
496 *2023*):

497 (b) The state, acting by and in the discretion of the Commissioner of
498 Early Childhood, may enter into a contract with a municipality, a group
499 child care home or family child care home, as described in section 19a-
500 77, a human resource development agency or a nonprofit corporation
501 for state financial assistance in developing and operating child care
502 centers, group child care homes and family child care homes for
503 children disadvantaged by reasons of economic, social or environmental
504 conditions, provided no such financial assistance shall be available for
505 the operating costs of any such child care center, group child care home
506 or family child care home unless it has been licensed by the
507 Commissioner of Early Childhood pursuant to section 19a-80. Such
508 financial assistance shall be available for a program of a municipality, of
509 a group child care home or family child care home, of a human resource

510 development agency or of a nonprofit corporation which may provide
511 for personnel, equipment, supplies, activities, program materials and
512 renovation and remodeling of the physical facilities of such child care
513 centers, group child care homes or family child care homes. Such
514 contract shall provide for state financial assistance, within available
515 appropriations, in the form of a state grant-in-aid (1) for a portion of the
516 cost of such program, as determined by the Commissioner of Early
517 Childhood, if not federally assisted, (2) equal to one-half of the amount
518 by which the net cost of such program, as approved by the
519 Commissioner of Early Childhood, exceeds the federal grant-in-aid
520 thereof, or (3) in an amount not less than (A) the per child cost as
521 described in subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of section 10-16q, for each
522 child in such program that is three or four years of age and each child
523 that is five years of age who is not eligible to enroll in school, pursuant
524 to section 10-15c, while maintaining services to children under three
525 years of age under this section, and (B) thirteen thousand five hundred
526 dollars for each child three years of age or under who is in infant or
527 toddler care and not in a preschool program. Any such contract entered
528 into on or after July 1, 2022, shall include a provision that at least sixty
529 per cent of the children enrolled in such child care center, group child
530 care home or family child care home are members of families [that] who
531 are at or below seventy-five per cent of the state median income. [For
532 the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, and each fiscal year thereafter, the
533 amount per child pursuant to subdivision (3) of this subsection that is
534 over the amount of the per child cost that was prescribed pursuant to
535 the contract under said subdivision (3) for the fiscal year ending June 30,
536 2023, shall be used exclusively to increase the salaries of early childhood
537 educators employed at the child care center.] The Commissioner of
538 Early Childhood may authorize child care centers, group child care
539 homes and family child care homes receiving financial assistance under
540 this subsection to apply a program surplus to the next program year.
541 The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall consult with directors of
542 child care centers in establishing fees for the operation of such centers.
543 For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, the Commissioner of Early
544 Childhood shall, within available appropriations, enter into contracts

545 under this section for the purpose of expanding the number of spaces
546 available to children three years of age or under who are in infant or
547 toddler care and not in a preschool program.

548 Sec. 5. Subsections (a) and (b) of section 10-506 of the general statutes
549 are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
550 *1, 2023*):

551 (a) For the fiscal [years] year ending June 30, 2015, [to June 30, 2024,
552 inclusive] and each fiscal year thereafter, the Office of Early Childhood,
553 in consultation with the Department of Education, shall design and
554 administer the Connecticut Smart Start competitive grant program to
555 provide grants to local and regional boards of education for capital and
556 operating expenses related to establishing or expanding a preschool
557 program under the jurisdiction of the board of education for the town.
558 A local or regional board of education may submit an application to the
559 office, in accordance with the provisions of subsection (b) of this section,
560 and may receive (1) a grant for capital expenses in an amount not to
561 exceed seventy-five thousand dollars per classroom for costs related to
562 the renovation of an existing public school to accommodate the
563 establishment or expansion of a preschool program, and (2) an annual
564 grant for operating expenses (A) in an amount not to exceed five
565 thousand dollars per child served by such grant, or (B) in an amount not
566 to exceed seventy-five thousand dollars for each preschool classroom,
567 provided no town shall receive a total annual grant for operating
568 expenses greater than three hundred thousand dollars. Each local or
569 regional board of education that establishes or expands a preschool
570 program under this section shall be eligible to receive an annual grant
571 for operating expenses for a period of five years, provided such
572 preschool program meets standards established by the Commissioner
573 of Early Childhood. Such local or regional board of education may
574 submit an application for renewal of such grant to the office.

575 (b) On and after July 1, 2014, local and regional boards of education,
576 individually or cooperatively, pursuant to section 10-158a, may apply,
577 at such time and in such manner as the commissioner prescribes, to the

578 office for a capital grant and an operating grant for the purposes
579 described in subsection (a) of this section. To be eligible to receive such
580 grants under this section, an applicant board of education shall (1)
581 demonstrate that it has a need for establishing or expanding a preschool
582 program using information requested by the commissioner on a form
583 prescribed by the commissioner, such as data collected from the
584 preschool experience survey, described in section 10-515, (2) submit a
585 plan for the expenditure of grant funds received under this section that
586 outlines how such board of education will use such funds to establish
587 or expand a preschool program, including, but not limited to, the
588 amount that such board will contribute to the operation of such
589 preschool program and how such board of education will provide
590 access to preschool for children who would not otherwise be able to
591 enroll in a preschool program, and (3) submit a letter of support for
592 establishing or expanding a preschool program by the local or regional
593 school readiness council, described in section 10-16r, if any, for the
594 school district. The commissioner shall give priority to boards of
595 education (A) that demonstrate the greatest need for the establishment
596 or expansion of a preschool program, and (B) whose plan allocates at
597 least sixty per cent of the spaces in such preschool program to children
598 who are members of families [that] who are at or below seventy-five per
599 cent of the state median income. [, or fifty per cent of the spaces in such
600 preschool program to children who are eligible for free and reduced
601 price lunches.] The commissioner, in reviewing applications submitted
602 under this subsection, shall also take into consideration (i) whether an
603 applicant board of education (I) currently offers a full-day kindergarten
604 program, (II) will be cooperating and coordinating with other
605 governmental and community programs to provide services during
606 periods when the preschool program is not in session, or (III) will
607 collaborate with other boards of education, as part of a cooperative
608 arrangement pursuant to section 10-158a, to offer a regional preschool
609 program, and (ii) current community capacity for preschool programs
610 and current opportunities for preschool for children in the community.

611 Sec. 6. Subsection (b) of section 17b-749 of the general statutes is

612 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
613 *2023*):

614 (b) The commissioner shall establish income standards for applicants
615 and recipients at a level to include a family with gross income up to fifty
616 per cent of the state-wide median income, except the commissioner (1)
617 may increase the income level up to the maximum level allowed under
618 federal law, (2) upon the request of the Commissioner of Children and
619 Families, may waive the income standards for adoptive families so that
620 children adopted on or after October 1, 1999, from the Department of
621 Children and Families are eligible for the child care subsidy program,
622 and (3) [on and after March 1, 2003, shall reduce the income eligibility
623 level to up to fifty-five per cent of the state-wide median income for
624 applicants and recipients who qualify based on their loss of eligibility
625 for temporary family assistance] shall establish a two-tiered income
626 eligibility threshold in accordance with 45 CFR 98.21(b), as amended
627 from time to time. The commissioner may adopt regulations in
628 accordance with chapter 54 to establish income criteria and durational
629 requirements for such waiver of income standards.

630 Sec. 7. Subsection (b) of section 10-500 of the general statutes is
631 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
632 *2023*):

633 (b) The office shall be responsible for:

634 (1) Delivering services to young children and their families to ensure
635 optimal health, safety and learning for each young child, including, but
636 not limited to, coordinating agency efforts and data sharing in the two-
637 generational initiative established pursuant to section 17b-112l;

638 (2) Developing and implementing the early childhood information
639 system, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-501;

640 (3) Developing and reporting on the early childhood accountability
641 plan, in accordance with the provisions of section 10-503;

642 (4) Implementing a communications strategy for outreach to families,
643 service providers and policymakers;

644 (5) Beginning a state-wide longitudinal evaluation of the school
645 readiness program examining the educational progress of children from
646 prekindergarten programs to grade four, inclusive;

647 (6) Developing, coordinating and supporting public and private
648 partnerships to aid early childhood initiatives;

649 (7) Developing a state-wide developmentally appropriate
650 kindergarten entrance inventory that measures a child's level of
651 preparedness for kindergarten, but shall not be used as a measurement
652 tool for program accountability;

653 (8) Creating a unified set of reporting requirements for the purpose
654 of collecting the data elements necessary to perform quality assessments
655 and longitudinal analysis;

656 (9) Comparing and analyzing data collected pursuant to reporting
657 requirements created under subdivision (8) of this subsection with the
658 data collected in the state-wide public school information system,
659 pursuant to section 10-10a, for population-level analysis of children and
660 families;

661 (10) Continually monitoring and evaluating all early care and
662 education and child development programs and services, focusing on
663 program outcomes in satisfying the health, safety, developmental and
664 educational needs of all children;

665 (11) Coordinating home visitation services across programs for
666 young children;

667 (12) Providing information and technical assistance to persons
668 seeking early care and education and child development programs and
669 services;

670 (13) Assisting state agencies and municipalities in obtaining available

671 federal funding for early care and education and child development
672 programs and services;

673 (14) Providing technical assistance to providers of early care and
674 education programs and services to obtain licensing and improve
675 program quality;

676 (15) Establishing a quality rating and improvement system
677 developed by the office that covers home-based, center-based and
678 school-based early child care and learning;

679 (16) Maintaining an accreditation facilitation initiative to assist early
680 childhood care and education program and service providers in
681 achieving national standards and program improvement;

682 (17) Consulting with the Early Childhood Cabinet, established
683 pursuant to section 10-16z, and the Head Start advisory committee,
684 established pursuant to section 10-16n;

685 (18) Ensuring a coordinated and comprehensive state-wide system of
686 professional development for providers and staff of early care and
687 education and child development programs and services;

688 (19) Providing families with opportunities for choice in services
689 including quality child care and community-based family-centered
690 services;

691 (20) Integrating early childhood care and education and special
692 education services;

693 (21) Promoting universal access to early childhood care and
694 education;

695 (22) Ensuring nonduplication of monitoring and evaluation;

696 (23) Performing any other activities that will assist in the provision of
697 early care and education and child development programs and services;

698 (24) Developing early learning and development standards to be

699 used by early care and education providers;

700 (25) Developing and implementing a performance-based evaluation
701 system to evaluate licensed child care centers, in accordance with the
702 provisions of section 17b-749f; [and]

703 (26) Promoting the delivery of services to infants and toddlers to
704 ensure optimal health, safety and learning of children from birth to three
705 years of age; and

706 (27) Establishing a parent cabinet to advise the office on ways to
707 strengthen partnership and communication with families, bring
708 awareness to gaps and barriers to services, increase access to services for
709 families and help make improvements to the lives of young children and
710 families in the state.

711 Sec. 8. Section 10-502 of the general statutes is repealed and the
712 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2023*):

713 The Office of Early Childhood shall collaborate with and may, within
714 available appropriations, provide funding to local [and regional] early
715 childhood [councils] collaboratives for the implementation of early care
716 and education and child development programs at the local level. Such
717 local early childhood [councils] collaboratives shall: (1) Develop and
718 implement a comprehensive plan for an early childhood system for the
719 community served by such local early childhood [council] collaborative,
720 (2) develop policy and program planning, (3) encourage community
721 participation by emphasizing substantial parental involvement, (4)
722 collect, analyze and evaluate data with a focus on program and service
723 outcomes, (5) allocate resources, and (6) perform any other functions
724 that will assist in the provision of early childhood programs and
725 services. Such local early childhood [councils] collaboratives may enter
726 into memoranda of agreement with the local or regional school
727 readiness council, described in section 10-16r, of the town or region
728 served by such local early childhood [council] collaborative to perform
729 the duties and functions of a school readiness council, in accordance
730 with the provisions of section 10-16r, or if no such local or regional

731 school readiness council exists for the town or region of such local early
732 childhood [council] collaborative, perform the duties and functions of a
733 school readiness council, in accordance with the provisions of section
734 10-16r.

735 Sec. 9. Subsections (d) and (e) of section 19a-87a of the general statutes
736 are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*
737 *1, 2023*):

738 (d) Any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child care
739 center or a group child care home is operating without a current and
740 valid license or in violation of regulations adopted under section 19a-79
741 or in a manner which may pose a potential danger to the health, welfare
742 and safety of a child receiving child care services, may report such
743 information to the Office of Early Childhood. The office shall investigate
744 any report or complaint received pursuant to this subsection. The name
745 of the person making the report or complaint shall not be disclosed
746 unless (1) such person consents to such disclosure, (2) a judicial or
747 administrative proceeding results therefrom, [or] (3) a license action
748 pursuant to subsection (a) of this section results therefrom, or (4) a state
749 or federal law enforcement officer, including, but not limited to, a
750 military law enforcement authority under the United States Department
751 of Defense, requests such information. All records obtained by the office
752 in connection with any such investigation shall not be subject to the
753 provisions of section 1-210 for a period of thirty days from the date of
754 the petition or other event initiating such investigation, or until such
755 time as the investigation is terminated pursuant to a withdrawal or
756 other informal disposition or until a hearing is convened pursuant to
757 chapter 54, whichever is earlier, except such records, whether obtained
758 or generated by the office, shall be disclosed, without redaction, to a
759 state or federal law enforcement officer, including, but not limited to, a
760 military law enforcement authority under the United States Department
761 of Defense upon written request. A formal statement of charges issued
762 by the office shall be subject to the provisions of section 1-210 from the
763 time that it is served or mailed to the respondent. Records which are
764 otherwise public records shall not be deemed confidential merely

765 because they have been obtained in connection with an investigation
766 under this section.

767 (e) In addition to any powers the office may have, in any investigation
768 (1) concerning an application, reinstatement or renewal of a license for
769 a child care center, a group child care home or a family child care home,
770 as such terms are defined in section 19a-77, (2) of a complaint concerning
771 child care services, as described in section 19a-77, or (3) concerning the
772 possible provision of unlicensed child care services, the office may
773 administer oaths, issue subpoenas, compel testimony, [and] order the
774 production of books, records and documents and order any person who
775 (A) owns, conducts, maintains or operates a child care center, group
776 child care home or family child care home or who has an ownership
777 interest in or serves as an officer, corporate director or managing
778 member of such center or home, and (B) provides child care or
779 participates in the management of the provision of child care to submit
780 to a medical examination by a physician, physician assistant or
781 advanced practice registered nurse. Such physician, physician assistant
782 or advanced practice registered nurse shall make a written statement of
783 the findings from such medical examination. If any person refuses to
784 appear, testify, [or] produce any book, record or document or submit to
785 a medical examination when so ordered, a judge of the Superior Court
786 shall have jurisdiction and may make such order as may be appropriate
787 to aid in the enforcement of this section.

788 Sec. 10. Subsection (e) of section 19a-87e of the general statutes is
789 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
790 *2023*):

791 (e) Any person having reasonable cause to believe that a family child
792 care home, as defined in section 19a-77, is operating without a current
793 and valid license or in violation of the regulations adopted under section
794 19a-87b or in a manner which may pose a potential danger to the health,
795 welfare and safety of a child receiving child care services, may report
796 such information to the Office of Early Childhood. The office shall
797 investigate any report or complaint received pursuant to this subsection.

798 The name of the person making the report or complaint shall not be
799 disclosed unless (1) such person consents to such disclosure, (2) a
800 judicial or administrative proceeding results from such report or
801 complaint, [or] (3) a license action pursuant to subsection (a) of this
802 section results from such report or complaint, or (4) a state or federal
803 law enforcement officer, including, but not limited to, a military law
804 enforcement authority under the United States Department of Defense,
805 requests such information. All records obtained by the office in
806 connection with any such investigation shall not be subject to the
807 provisions of section 1-210 for a period of thirty days from the date of
808 the petition or other event initiating such investigation, or until such
809 time as the investigation is terminated pursuant to a withdrawal or
810 other informal disposition or until a hearing is convened pursuant to
811 chapter 54, whichever is earlier, except such records, whether obtained
812 or generated by the office, shall be disclosed, without redaction, to a
813 state or federal law enforcement officer, including, but not limited to, a
814 military law enforcement authority under the United States Department
815 of Defense upon written request. A formal statement of charges issued
816 by the office shall be subject to the provisions of section 1-210 from the
817 time that it is served or mailed to the respondent. Records which are
818 otherwise public records shall not be deemed confidential merely
819 because they have been obtained in connection with an investigation
820 under this section.

821 Sec. 11. Section 19a-429 of the general statutes is repealed and the
822 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2023*):

823 Any person having reasonable cause to believe that a youth camp, as
824 defined in section 19a-420, is operating without a current and valid
825 license or in violation of regulations adopted under section 19a-428 or
826 in a manner which may pose a potential danger to the health, welfare
827 and safety of a child receiving youth camp services, may report such
828 information to the office. The office shall investigate any report or
829 complaint received pursuant to this section. In connection with any
830 investigation of a youth camp, the commissioner or the commissioner's
831 authorized agent may administer oaths, issue subpoenas, compel

832 testimony and order the production of books, records and documents.
 833 If any person refuses to appear, to testify or to produce any book, record
 834 or document when so ordered, a judge of the Superior Court may make
 835 such order as may be appropriate to aid in the enforcement of this
 836 section. The name of the person making the report or complaint shall
 837 not be disclosed unless (1) such person consents to such disclosure, (2)
 838 a judicial or administrative proceeding results therefrom, [or] (3) a
 839 license action pursuant to section 19a-423 results from such report or
 840 complaint, or (4) a state or federal law enforcement officer, including,
 841 but not limited to, a military law enforcement authority under the
 842 United States Department of Defense, requests such information. All
 843 records obtained by the office in connection with any such investigation
 844 shall not be subject to the provisions of section 1-210 for a period of
 845 thirty days from the date of the petition or other event initiating such
 846 investigation, or until such time as the investigation is terminated
 847 pursuant to a withdrawal or other informal disposition or until a
 848 hearing is convened pursuant to chapter 54, whichever is earlier, except
 849 such records, whether obtained or generated by the office, shall be
 850 disclosed, without redaction, to a state or federal law enforcement
 851 officer, including, but not limited to, a military law enforcement
 852 authority under the United States Department of Defense upon written
 853 request. A formal statement of charges issued by the office shall be
 854 subject to the provisions of section 1-210 from the time that it is served
 855 or mailed to the respondent. Records which are otherwise public
 856 records shall not be deemed confidential merely because they have been
 857 obtained in connection with an investigation under this section.

858 Sec. 12. Section 10-520b of the general statutes is repealed. (*Effective*
 859 *July 1, 2023*)

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	10-16p
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	10-16t
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	10-505(a)(3)
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	8-210(b)

Sec. 5	July 1, 2023	10-506(a) and (b)
Sec. 6	July 1, 2023	17b-749(b)
Sec. 7	July 1, 2023	10-500(b)
Sec. 8	July 1, 2023	10-502
Sec. 9	July 1, 2023	19a-87a(d) and (e)
Sec. 10	July 1, 2023	19a-87e(e)
Sec. 11	July 1, 2023	19a-429
Sec. 12	July 1, 2023	Repealer section

Statement of Purpose:

To (1) amend school readiness programs by allowing children to become eligible at birth rather than age three, requiring grant awards every two years rather than annually, removing the requirement that rate increases be used exclusively for staff salaries and requiring that a written authorization signed by parents be filed with a school district upon agreement that a child will attend a school readiness program for another year rather than attend school; (2) remove the requirement that rate increases for child care centers be used exclusively for staff salaries; (3) amend the Smart Start program by removing the sunset date and by removing the requirement that programs in which fifty per cent or more of children are eligible for free or reduced priced lunches be given a priority for grants; (4) simplify and extend staff qualification requirements at state-funded child care programs and repeal the requirement to issue early childhood teacher credentials; (5) require the establishment of a two-tier income eligibility threshold for the child care subsidy program to comply with federal regulations; (6) allow the establishment of a parent cabinet; (7) rename "early childhood council" to "local early childhood collaborative"; (8) allow the Office of Early Childhood to order a medical examination during an investigation of a child care center, group child care home or family child care home; and (9) to allow the disclosure, without redaction, to a law enforcement officer, upon request, of the name of a person making a report or complaint and any records resulting from an investigation of a child care center, group child care home, family child care home or youth camp.

[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.]