



Substitute House Bill No. 6559

Public Act No. 21-172

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:

Section 1. Section 10-16o of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

The state shall encourage the development of a network of school readiness programs pursuant to sections 10-16p to 10-16r, inclusive, as amended by this act, 10-16u and 17b-749a in order to:

- (1) Provide open access for children to quality programs that promote the health and safety of children and prepare them for formal schooling;
- (2) Provide opportunities for parents to choose among affordable and accredited programs;
- (3) Encourage coordination and cooperation among programs and prevent the duplication of services;
- (4) Recognize the specific service needs and unique resources available to particular municipalities and provide flexibility in the implementation of programs;
- (5) Prevent or minimize the potential for developmental delay in

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children prior to their reaching the age of five;

(6) Enhance federally funded school readiness programs;

(7) Strengthen the family through: (A) Encouragement of [parental involvement] family engagement and partnership in a child's development and education; and (B) enhancement of a family's capacity to meet the special needs of the children, including children with disabilities;

(8) Reduce educational costs by decreasing the need for special education services for school age children and to avoid grade repetition;

(9) Assure that children with disabilities are integrated into programs available to children who do not have disabilities; [and]

(10) Improve the availability and quality of school readiness programs and their coordination with the services of child care providers; [.] and

(11) Facilitate the racial, ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of the children, families and staff in school readiness programs.

Sec. 2. Section 10-16p of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

(a) As used in sections 10-16o to 10-16r, inclusive, as amended by this act, 10-16u, 17b-749a and 17b-749c:

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

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(2) "Eligible children" means children three and four years of age and children five years of age who are not eligible to enroll in school pursuant to section 10-15c, or who are eligible to enroll in school and will attend a school readiness program pursuant to section 10-16t;

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

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

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

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

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

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

(9) "Seeking accreditation" means a school readiness program seeking accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young

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Children, National Association for Family Child Care or a Head Start on-site program review instrument or successor instrument pursuant to federal regulations, or attempting to meet criteria as may be established by the commissioner; and

(10) "Concentration in early childhood education" means a program of study in early childhood education, including, but not limited to, early childhood education, child study, child development or human growth and development.

(b) (1) The office shall be the lead agency for school readiness. For purposes of this section and section 10-16u, school readiness program providers eligible for funding from the office shall include local and regional boards of education, regional educational service centers, family resource centers and providers of child care centers, group child care homes and family child care homes, as described in section 19a-77, Head Start programs, preschool programs and other programs that meet any standards established by the commissioner. The office shall establish standards for school readiness programs. The standards may include, but need not be limited to, guidelines for staff-child interactions, curriculum content, including preliteracy development, lesson plans, parental involvement, staff qualifications and training, transition to school and administration. The office shall develop age-appropriate developmental skills and goals for children attending such programs. The commissioner, in consultation with the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, the Commissioners of Education and Social Services and other appropriate entities, shall develop a professional development program for the staff of school readiness programs.

(2) For purposes of this section:

(A) Prior to July 1, 2022, "staff qualifications" means that for each early childhood education program accepting state funds for infant,

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toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's child care program or school readiness program, there is in each classroom an individual who has at least the following: (i) A childhood development associate credential or an equivalent credential issued by an organization approved by the commissioner and twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child development, as determined by the commissioner or the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, after consultation with the commissioner, from an institution of higher education (I) accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education, and (II) regionally accredited; (ii) an associate degree with twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child development, as determined by the commissioner or the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, after consultation with the commissioner, from such an institution; (iii) a four-year degree with twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child development, as determined by the commissioner or the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, after consultation with the commissioner, from such an institution; (iv) certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in early childhood education or special education; (v) an associate degree with a concentration in early childhood education from an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited; or (vi) a bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education from an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited;

(B) From July 1, 2022, until June 30, 2025, "staff qualifications" means that for each early childhood education program accepting state funds for infant, toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's child care program or school readiness program, (i) at least fifty per cent of those individuals with the primary responsibility for a classroom of children (I) hold certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in early childhood education or early childhood special education, (II) have been issued an early childhood teacher credential,

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pursuant to section 10-520b, (III) hold at least an associate degree with a concentration in early childhood education from an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited, or (IV) satisfy the requirements of subdivision (3), (4) or (5) of this subsection, and (ii) such remaining individuals with the primary responsibility for a classroom of children hold a childhood development associate credential or an equivalent credential issued by an organization approved by the commissioner and twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child development, as determined by the commissioner or the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, after consultation with the commissioner, from an institution of higher education (I) accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education, and (II) regionally accredited;

(C) From July 1, 2025, until June 30, 2029, "staff qualifications" means that for each early childhood education program accepting state funds for infant, toddler and preschool spaces associated with such program's child care program or school readiness program, (i) at least fifty per cent of those individuals with the primary responsibility for a classroom of children (I) hold certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in early childhood education or early childhood special education, (II) have been issued an early childhood teacher credential, pursuant to subdivision (2) of section 10-520b, (III) hold at least a bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education from an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited, or (IV) satisfy the requirements of subdivision (3), (4) or (5) of this subsection, and (ii) such remaining individuals with the primary responsibility for a classroom of children (I) hold an associate degree with a concentration in early childhood education from an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited, or (II) have been issued an early childhood teacher credential, pursuant to subdivision (1) of section 10-520b; and

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

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

(4) Any individual with an associate degree or a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development or an associate degree or a bachelor's degree and twelve credits or more in early childhood education or child development from an institution of higher education that is regionally accredited, other than an associate degree or a bachelor's degree with a concentration in early childhood education, may submit documentation concerning such degree for review and

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assessment by the office as to whether such degree has a sufficient concentration in early childhood education so as to satisfy the requirements set forth in subparagraphs (B) to (D), inclusive, of subdivision (2) of this subsection.

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

(c) The commissioner shall establish a grant program to provide spaces in accredited school readiness programs located in priority

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school districts, as described in section 10-266p, or in former priority school districts for eligible children. [Under the program, the grant shall be provided, in accordance with this section, to the town in which such priority school district or former priority school district is located.] The state, acting by and in the discretion of the Commissioner of Early Childhood, in consultation with a town or regional school readiness council, may enter into a contract with a municipality, local or regional board of education, regional educational service center, family resource center, provider of a child care center, group child care home or family child care home, as described in section 19a-77, Head Start program, preschool program or other program that meets such standards established by the commissioner, to provide, within available appropriations, state financial assistance. Eligibility shall be determined for a five-year period based on an applicant's designation as a priority school district for the initial year of application, except that if a school district that receives a grant pursuant to this subsection is no longer designated as a priority school district at the end of such five-year period, such former priority school district shall continue to be eligible to receive a grant pursuant to this subsection. Grant awards shall be made annually contingent upon available funding and a satisfactory annual evaluation. The chief elected official of such town and the superintendent of schools for such priority school district or former priority school district shall submit a plan for the expenditure of grant funds and responses to the local request for proposal process to the commissioner. The commissioner shall review and approve such plans. The plan shall: (1) Be developed in consultation with the local or regional school readiness council established pursuant to section 10-16r, as amended by this act; (2) be based on a needs and resource assessment; (3) provide for the issuance of requests for proposals for providers of accredited school readiness programs, provided, after the initial requests for proposals, facilities that have been approved to operate a child care program financed through the Connecticut Health and Education Facilities Authority and have received a commitment for debt

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service from the Department of Social Services, pursuant to section 17b-749i, on or before June 30, 2014, and on or after July 1, 2014, from the office, are exempt from the requirement for issuance of annual requests for proposals; and (4) identify the need for funding pursuant to section 17b-749a in order to extend the hours and days of operation of school readiness programs in order to provide child care services for children attending such programs.

(d) (1) The commissioner shall establish a competitive grant program to provide spaces in accredited school readiness programs or school readiness programs seeking accreditation located in (A) an area served by a priority school or a former priority school, (B) a town ranked one to fifty when all towns are ranked in ascending order according to town wealth, as defined in subdivision (26) of section 10-262f, whose school district is not a priority school district pursuant to section 10-266p, (C) a town formerly a town described in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision, as provided for in subdivision (2) of this subsection, or (D) a town designated as an alliance district, as defined in section 10-262u, whose school district is not a priority school district pursuant to section 10-266p. A town in which a priority school is located, a regional school readiness council, pursuant to subsection (c) of section 10-16r, as amended by this act, for a region in which such a school is located or a town described in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision may apply for such a grant in an amount equal to the number of spaces in an accredited school readiness program or a school readiness program seeking accreditation multiplied by the per child cost set forth in subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of section 10-16q. Eligibility shall be determined for a three-year period based on an applicant's designation as having a priority school or being a town described in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision for the initial year of application. [Grant awards shall be made annually contingent upon available funding and a satisfactory annual evaluation.] The state, acting by and in the discretion of the Commissioner of Early Childhood, in consultation with a town or

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regional school readiness council, may enter into a contract with a municipality, local or regional board of education, regional educational service center, family resource center, provider of a child care center, group child care home or family child care home, as described in section 19a-77, Head Start program, preschool program or other program that meets such standards established by the commissioner, to provide, within available appropriations, state financial assistance. The chief elected official of such town and the superintendent of schools of the school district or the regional school readiness council shall submit a plan, as described in subsection (c) of this section, for the expenditure of such grant funds to the commissioner. In awarding grants pursuant to this subsection, the commissioner shall give preference to applications submitted by regional school readiness councils and may, within available appropriations, provide a grant to such town or regional school readiness council that increases the number of spaces for eligible children who reside in an area or town described in subparagraphs (A) to (D), inclusive, of this subdivision, in an accredited school readiness program or a school readiness program seeking accreditation. [A town or regional school readiness council awarded a grant pursuant to this subsection shall use the funds to purchase spaces for such children from providers of accredited school readiness programs or school readiness programs seeking accreditation.]

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

(B) The amount of such phase-out grants shall be determined as follows: (i) For the first fiscal year following the fiscal year such town received its final grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, in

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an amount that does not exceed seventy-five per cent of the grant amount such town received for the town or school's final year of eligibility pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection; (ii) for the second fiscal year following the fiscal year such town received its final grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, in an amount that does not exceed fifty per cent of the grant amount such town received for the town's or school's final year of eligibility pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection; and (iii) for the third fiscal year following the fiscal year such town received its final grant pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, in an amount that does not exceed twenty-five per cent of the grant amount such town received for the town's or school's final year of eligibility pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.

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

[(e) (1) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, and each fiscal year thereafter, priority school districts and former priority school districts shall receive grants based on the sum of the products obtained by (A) multiplying the district's number of contracted slots on March thirtieth of the fiscal year prior to the fiscal year in which the grant is to be paid, by the per child cost pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of section 10-16q, except that such per child cost shall be reduced for slots that are less than year-round, and (B) multiplying the number of additional or decreased slots the districts have requested for the fiscal year in which the grant is to be paid by the per child cost pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of section 10-16q, except such per child cost shall be reduced for slots that are less than year-round. If said sum exceeds the available appropriation, such number of requested

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additional slots shall be reduced, as determined by the commissioner, to stay within the available appropriation.]

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

[(B)] (2) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015, and each fiscal year thereafter, if funds appropriated for the purposes of subsection (c) of this section are not expended, an amount up to one million dollars of such unexpended funds may be available for the provision of professional development for early childhood care and education program providers, and staff employed in such programs, provided such programs accept state funds for infant, toddler and preschool slots. Such unexpended funds may be available for use in accordance with the provisions of this subparagraph for the subsequent fiscal year. The commissioner may use such unexpended funds on and after July 1, 2015, to support early childhood education programs accepting state funds in satisfying the staff qualifications requirements of subparagraphs (B) and (C) of subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of this section. The commissioner shall use any such funds to provide assistance to individual staff members, giving priority to those staff members [(i)] (A) attending an institution of higher education accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or the Office of Higher Education, and approved by the Office of Early Childhood, and regionally accredited, at a maximum of ten thousand dollars per staff member per year for the cost of higher education courses leading to a bachelor's degree or, not later than December 31, 2015, an associate degree, as such degrees are described in said subparagraphs (B) and (C), or [(ii)] (B) receiving noncredit competency-based training approved by the office, at a maximum of one thousand dollars per staff member per year, provided such staff

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members have applied for all available federal and state scholarships and grants, and such assistance does not exceed such staff members' financial need. Individual staff members shall apply for such unexpended funds in a manner determined by the commissioner. The commissioner shall determine how such unexpended funds shall be distributed.

[(C)] (3) If funds appropriated for the purposes of subsection (c) of this section are not expended pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, deposited pursuant to [subparagraph (A) of this] subdivision (1) of this subsection, or used pursuant to [subparagraph (B) of this] subdivision (2) of this subsection, the commissioner may use such unexpended funds to support local school readiness programs. The commissioner may use such funds for purposes including, but not limited to, [(i)] (A) assisting local school readiness programs in meeting and maintaining accreditation requirements, [(ii)] (B) providing training in implementing the preschool assessment and curriculum frameworks, including training to enhance literacy teaching skills, [(iii)] (C) developing a state-wide preschool curriculum, [(iv)] (D) developing student assessments for students in grades kindergarten to two, inclusive, [(v)] (E) developing and implementing best practices for parents in supporting preschool and kindergarten student learning, [(vi)] (F) developing and implementing strategies for children to successfully transition to preschool and from preschool to kindergarten, including through parental engagement and whole-family supports that may be utilized through the two-generational initiative, established pursuant to section 17b-112l, or through other available resources, [(vii)] (G) providing for professional development, including assisting in career ladder advancement, for school readiness staff, [(viii)] (H) providing supplemental grants to other towns that are eligible for grants pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, and [(ix)] (I) developing a plan to provide spaces in an accredited school readiness program or a school readiness program seeking accreditation to all eligible children who

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reside in an area or town described in subparagraphs (A) to (D), inclusive, of subdivision (1) of subsection (d) of this section.

[(3) Notwithstanding subdivision (2) of this subsection, for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2015, to June 30, 2016, inclusive, the office may retain up to one hundred ninety-eight thousand two hundred dollars of the amount appropriated for purposes of this section for coordination, program evaluation and administration.]

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

(g) Subject to the provisions of this subsection, no funds received by a town pursuant to subsection (c) or (d) of this section or section 10-16u shall be used to supplant federal, state or local funding received by such town for early childhood education, provided a town may use an amount determined in accordance with this subsection for coordination, program evaluation and administration. Such amount shall be at least five per cent of the total grant allocation, but not more than seventy-five thousand dollars and shall be determined by the commissioner based on the school readiness grant award allocated to the town pursuant to subsection (c) or (d) of this section or section 10-16u and the number of operating sites for coordination, program evaluation and administration. Such amount shall be increased by an amount equal to local funding provided for early childhood education coordination, program evaluation and administration, not to exceed twenty-five thousand dollars. Each town that receives a grant pursuant to subsection (c) or (d) of this section or section 10-16u shall designate a person to be responsible for such coordination, program evaluation and

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administration and to act as a liaison between the town and the commissioner. Each school readiness program that receives funds pursuant to this section or section 10-16u shall provide information to the commissioner or the school readiness council, as requested, that is necessary for purposes of any school readiness program evaluation.

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

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

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

(k) (1) Up to two per cent of the amount of the appropriation for this section may be allocated to the competitive grant program pursuant to subsection (d) of this section. The determination of the amount of such allocation shall be made on or before August first.

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

(l) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, and each fiscal year

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

Sec. 3. Section 10-16r of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

(a) A town seeking to apply for a grant pursuant to subsection (c) of section 10-16p, as amended by this act, or section 10-16u shall convene a local school readiness council or shall establish a regional school readiness council pursuant to subsection (c) of this section. Any other town may convene such a council. The chief elected official of the town or, in the case of a regional school district, the chief elected officials of the towns in the school district and the superintendent of schools for the school district shall jointly appoint and convene such council. Each school readiness council shall be composed of: (1) The chief elected official, or the official's designee; (2) the superintendent of schools, or a management level staff person as the superintendent's designee; (3) parents; (4) representatives from local programs such as Head Start, child care providers receiving state financial assistance pursuant to section 8-210, as amended by this act, family resource centers, nonprofit and for-profit child care centers, group child care homes, prekindergarten and nursery schools, and family child care home providers; (5) a representative from a health care provider in the community; (6) the local homeless education liaison designated by the local or regional board of education for the school district, pursuant to Subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act,

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42 USC 11431 et seq., as amended from time to time; (7) a representative from a workforce or job training entity in the community; (8) a representative from a local business in the community; and [(7)] (9) other representatives from the community who provide services to children. [The chief elected official shall designate] On and after July 1, 2021, the members of the school readiness council shall elect the chairperson of the school readiness council. Each school readiness council is required to document efforts to ensure that the racial, ethnic and socioeconomic composition of the council reflects that of its town or region, as applicable. At least twenty-five per cent of the membership of the school readiness council shall be parents or guardians of children eligible to attend a school readiness program. Such parents or guardians may, within available appropriations, be compensated for any time and travel related to council meetings, and any activities related to training, leadership and community engagement. School readiness council meetings shall be held at times and locations that are convenient for the council members, including the parent and guardian members.

(b) The local school readiness council shall: (1) Make recommendations to the chief elected official and the superintendent of schools on issues relating to school readiness, including any applications for grants pursuant to sections 10-16p, as amended by this act, 10-16u, 17b-749a and 17b-749c; (2) foster partnerships among providers of school readiness programs; (3) cooperate with the Office of Early Childhood in any evaluation of a school readiness program; (4) identify existing and prospective resources and services available to children and families; (5) facilitate the coordination of the delivery of services to children and families, including (A) referral procedures, and (B) before and after-school child care for children attending kindergarten programs; (6) exchange information with other councils, the community and organizations serving the needs of children and families; (7) make recommendations to school officials concerning transition from school readiness programs to kindergarten; [and] (8)

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encourage public participation; and (9) collaborate with the Office of Early Childhood related to planning improvements to the state early care and education governance structure.

(c) Two or more towns or school districts and appropriate representatives of groups or entities interested in early childhood education in a region may establish a regional school readiness council. If a priority school is located in at least one of such school districts, the regional school readiness council may apply for a grant pursuant to subsection (d) of section 10-16p, as amended by this act. The regional school readiness council may perform the duties outlined in subdivisions (2) to (8), inclusive, of subsection (b) of this section.

Sec. 4. Section 10-509 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

(a) As used in this subsection, "early care and education and childhood development programs" includes the child care subsidy program, established pursuant to section 17b-749, the school readiness program, as defined in section 10-16p, as amended by this act, the supplemental quality enhancement grant program, established pursuant to section 17b-749c, the [Nurturing Families Network] Connecticut Home Visiting System, established pursuant to section 17b-751b, as amended by this act, family child care homes and group child care homes, as described in section 19a-77, and the program for state financial assistance for neighborhood facilities, including child care centers, pursuant to section 8-210, as amended by this act.

(b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Commissioner of Early Childhood may expend in any year an amount not to exceed two per cent of the total amount appropriated to the office for early care and education and child development programs for the purpose of carrying out its responsibilities pursuant to section 10-500, as amended by this act,

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including, but not limited to, piloting innovative and results-driven service delivery, program evaluation and improvement, funding and procurement models that are performance-driven and results-accountable, interagency coordination and collaboration and evaluative tools and infrastructure, provided if the total amount of such two per cent exceeds one million dollars, all funds in excess of one million dollars shall be used for service delivery. The commissioner may not expend any funds under this section for administrative or other overhead costs of the Office of Early Childhood. The commissioner may develop policies and procedures to implement the provisions of this section.

(c) Not later than January first of each year, the office shall submit a report relating to how the commissioner has expended funds pursuant to subsection (b) of this section to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a. Such report shall include, but need not be limited to, (1) the results of any program evaluations conducted by the office, (2) an assessment of the relationship between the cost and the value of the service delivery outcomes achieved, and (3) any policies and procedures developed by the commissioner to implement the provisions of this section.

Sec. 5. Section 8-210 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

(a) The state, acting by and in the discretion of the Commissioner of Social Services or the Commissioner of Early Childhood, as appropriate, may enter into a contract with a municipality or a qualified private, nonprofit corporation for state financial assistance for the planning, construction, renovation, site preparation and purchase of improved or unimproved property as part of a capital development project for neighborhood facilities. Such facilities may include, but need not be limited to, child care centers, elderly centers, multipurpose human

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resource centers, emergency shelters for the homeless and shelters for victims of domestic violence. The financial assistance shall be in the form of state grants-in-aid equal to (1) all or any portion of the cost of such capital development project if the grantee is a qualified private nonprofit corporation, or (2) up to two-thirds of the cost of such capital development project if the grantee is a municipality, as determined by the Commissioner of Social Services or the Commissioner of Early Childhood, as appropriate.

(b) The state, acting by and in the discretion of the Commissioner of Early Childhood, may enter into a contract with a municipality, a group child care home or family child care home, as described in section 19a-77, a human resource development agency or a nonprofit corporation for state financial assistance in developing and operating child care centers, group child care homes and family child care homes for children disadvantaged by reasons of economic, social or environmental conditions, provided no such financial assistance shall be available for the operating costs of any such child care center, group child care home or family child care home unless it has been licensed by the Commissioner of Early Childhood pursuant to section 19a-80, as amended by this act. Such financial assistance shall be available for a program of a municipality, of a group child care home or family child care home, of a human resource development agency or of a nonprofit corporation which may provide for personnel, equipment, supplies, activities, program materials and renovation and remodeling of the physical facilities of such child care centers, group child care homes or family child care homes. Such contract shall provide for state financial assistance, within available appropriations, in the form of a state grant-in-aid (1) for a portion of the cost of such program, as determined by the Commissioner of Early Childhood, if not federally assisted, (2) equal to one-half of the amount by which the net cost of such program, as approved by the Commissioner of Early Childhood, exceeds the federal grant-in-aid thereof, or (3) in an amount not less than the per child cost

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as described in subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of section 10-16q, for each child in such program that is three or four years of age and each child that is five years of age who is not eligible to enroll in school, pursuant to section 10-15c, while maintaining services to children under three years of age under this section. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, and each fiscal year thereafter, the amount per child pursuant to subdivision (3) of this subsection that is over the amount of the per child cost that was prescribed pursuant to the contract for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019, shall be used exclusively to increase the salaries of early childhood educators employed at the child care center. The Commissioner of Early Childhood may authorize child care centers, group child care homes and family child care homes receiving financial assistance under this subsection to apply a program surplus to the next program year. The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall consult with directors of child care centers in establishing fees for the operation of such centers.

(c) The Office of Early Childhood, in consultation with representatives from child care centers, group child care homes and family child care homes, within available appropriations, shall develop guidelines for programs provided at state-contracted child care centers, group child care home and family child care homes. The guidelines shall include standards for program quality and design and identify short and long-term outcomes for families participating in such programs. The Office of Early Childhood, within available appropriations, shall provide a copy of such guidelines to each state-contracted child care center, group child care home and family child care home. Each state-contracted child care center, group child care home and family child care home shall use the guidelines to develop a program improvement plan for the next twelve-month period and shall submit the plan to the Office of Early Childhood. The plan shall include goals to be used for measuring such improvement. The Office of Early Childhood shall use the plan to monitor the progress of such child care center, group child

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care home or family child care home.

(d) The state, acting by and in the discretion of the Commissioner of Early Childhood, may enter into a contract with a municipality, a group child care home or family child care home, a human resource development agency or a nonprofit corporation for state financial assistance for a project of renovation of any child care center, group child care home or family child care home receiving assistance under this section, to make such center accessible to persons with physical disabilities, in the form of a state grant-in-aid equal to (1) the total net cost of the project, as approved by the Commissioner of Early Childhood, or (2) the total amount by which the net cost of the project, as approved by the Commissioner of Early Childhood, exceeds the federal grant-in-aid thereof.

(e) Any municipality, group child care home or family child care home, human resource development agency or nonprofit corporation that enters into a contract pursuant to this section for state financial assistance for a child care center, group child care home or family child care home shall have sole responsibility for the development of the budget of the program provided at such child care center, group child care home or family child care home, including, but not limited to, personnel costs, purchases of equipment, supplies, activities and program materials, within the resources provided by the state under such contract. Upon local determination of a change in the type of child care services required in the area, a municipality, group child care home or family child care home, human resource development agency or nonprofit corporation may, within the limits of its annual budget and subject to the provisions of this subsection and sections 19a-77 to 19a-80, inclusive, as amended by this act, and 19a-82 to 19a-87a, inclusive, change its child care service. An application to change the type of child care service provided shall be submitted to the Commissioner of Early Childhood. Not later than forty-five days after the Commissioner of

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Early Childhood receives the application, the Commissioner of Early Childhood shall advise the municipality, human resource development agency or nonprofit corporation of the Commissioner of Early Childhood's approval, denial or approval with modifications of the application. If the Commissioner of Early Childhood fails to act on the application not later than forty-five days after the application's submittal, the application shall be deemed approved.

(f) The Commissioner of Early Childhood may (1) with the approval of the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, authorize the expenditure of such funds for the purposes of this section as shall enable the Commissioner of Early Childhood to apply for, qualify for and provide the state's share of federally assisted child care services, and (2) expend an amount not to exceed two per cent of the amount appropriated for purposes of this section in a manner consistent with the provisions of section 10-509, as amended by this act.

Sec. 6. Subsection (b) of section 10-500 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

(b) The office shall be responsible for:

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

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

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

(4) Implementing a communications strategy for outreach to families,

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service providers and policymakers;

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

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

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

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

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

(10) Continually monitoring and evaluating all early care and education and child development programs and services, focusing on program outcomes in satisfying the health, safety, developmental and educational needs of all children; [, while retaining distinct separation between quality improvement services and licensing services for child care centers, group child care homes and family child care homes;]

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

(12) Providing information and technical assistance to persons

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seeking early care and education and child development programs and services;

(13) Assisting state agencies and municipalities in obtaining available federal funding for early care and education and child development programs and services;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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(22) Ensuring nonduplication of monitoring and evaluation;

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

(24) Developing early learning and development standards to be used by early care and education providers;

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

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

Sec. 7. Subsection (c) of section 19a-80 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2021*):

(c) The commissioner [, within available appropriations,] shall require each prospective employee of a child care center or group child care home [in] for a position [requiring] that requires the provision of care to a child or involves unsupervised access to any child in such child care center or group child care home, to submit to comprehensive background checks, including state and national criminal history records checks. The criminal history records checks required pursuant to this subsection shall be conducted in accordance with section 29-17a. The commissioner shall also request a check of the state child abuse registry established pursuant to section 17a-101k. [The Department of Social Services may agree to transfer funds appropriated for criminal history records checks to the Office of Early Childhood.] The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall notify each licensee of the provisions of this subsection. No such prospective employee shall [have unsupervised access to children in the child care center or group child

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care home until such comprehensive background check is completed and the Commissioner of Early Childhood permits such prospective employee to work in such child care center or group child care home] begin working in such child care center or group child care home until the provisions of 45 CFR 98.43(d)(4), as amended from time to time, have been satisfied.

Sec. 8. Subsection (c) of section 19a-87b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2021*):

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

Sec. 9. Section 17b-749k of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2021*):

(a) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall, within available appropriations, require any person, other than a relative, who provides child care services to a child and who receives a child care subsidy from

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the Office of Early Childhood, to submit to comprehensive background checks, including state and national criminal history records checks. The criminal history records checks required pursuant to this subsection shall be conducted in accordance with section 29-17a. The commissioner shall also request a check of the state child abuse registry established pursuant to section 17a-101k.

(b) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall, within available appropriations, require any relative who provides child care services to a child and who receives a child care subsidy from the Office of Early Childhood, to submit to a check of (1) [state and national sexual offender registry databases] the National Sex Offender Public Website maintained by the United States Department of Justice and the registry established and maintained pursuant to section 54-257, (2) the state child abuse registry established pursuant to section 17a-101k, and (3) the Connecticut On-Line Law Enforcement Communication Teleprocessing System maintained by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. If such check reveals that the name of any such relative appears in such databases, on said registry or in said system, the commissioner may require such relative to submit to state and national criminal history records checks conducted in accordance with section 29-17a.

(c) The commissioner shall have the discretion to refuse payments for child care under any financial assistance program administered by him or her if the person or relative providing such child care has been convicted in this state or any other state of a felony, as defined in section 53a-25, involving the use, attempted use or threatened use of physical force against another person, of cruelty to persons under section 53-20, injury or risk of injury to or impairing morals of children under section 53-21, abandonment of children under the age of six years under section 53-23 or any felony where the victim of the felony is a child under eighteen years of age, or of a violation of section 53a-70b of the general

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statutes, revision of 1958, revised to January 1, 2019, or section 53a-70, 53a-70a, 53a-71, 53a-72a, 53a-72b or 53a-73a, or has a criminal record or was the subject of a substantiated report of child abuse in this state or any other state that the commissioner reasonably believes renders the person or relative unsuitable to provide child care.

Sec. 10. Section 10-530 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2021*):

(a) As used in this section:

(1) "Child care facility" means a "child care center", "group child care home" or "family child care home" that provides "child care services", each as described in section 19a-77, or any provider of child care services under the child care subsidy program established pursuant to section 17b-749;

(2) "Child care services provider or staff member" means any person who is (A) a licensee, employee, volunteer or alternate staff, assistant, substitute or household member of a child care facility, (B) a family child care provider, or (C) any other person who provides child care services under the child care subsidy program established pursuant to section 17b-749 but does not include a person who is providing child care services under the child care subsidy program (i) exclusively to children with whom such person is related, and (ii) without being issued a license to provide child care services by the Office of Early Childhood; and

(3) "Family child care provider" means any person who provides child care services under the child care subsidy program established pursuant to section 17b-749 (A) in a family child care home, as defined in section 19a-77, or (B) in a home not requiring a license pursuant to subdivision (4) of subsection (b) of section 19a-77.

(b) The comprehensive background checks required pursuant to subsection (c) of section 19a-80, as amended by this act, subsection (c) of

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section 19a-87b, as amended by this act, and subsection (a) of section 17b-749k, as amended by this act, shall be conducted at least once every five years for each child care services provider or staff member in accordance with the provisions of 45 CFR 98.43, as amended from time to time.

(c) Any person who applies for a position at a child care facility in the state shall not be required to submit to such comprehensive background checks if such person (1) is an employee of a child care facility in the state, or has not been separated from employment as a child care services provider or staff member in the state for a period of more than one hundred eighty days, and (2) has successfully completed such comprehensive background checks in the previous five years. Nothing in this section prohibits the Commissioner of Early Childhood from requiring that a person applying for a position as a child care services provider or staff member submit to comprehensive background checks more than once during a five-year period.

(d) Any person required to submit to comprehensive background checks pursuant to subsection (c) of section 19a-80, as amended by this act, subsection (c) of section 19a-87b, as amended by this act, and subsection (a) of section 17b-749k, as amended by this act, may submit a request, in writing, to the Commissioner of Early Childhood for a waiver of the requirement to submit fingerprints. Such request shall include such person's name and date of birth, and evidence that such person is unable to satisfy such fingerprints requirement due to a medical condition, including, but not limited to, a birth defect, physical deformity, skin condition or psychiatric condition. Upon the granting of a waiver to a person under this subsection, the Office of Early Childhood shall conduct a state criminal history records check of such person by using the name and date of birth that was provided in the request for a waiver by such person.

Sec. 11. Section 17b-751b of the general statutes is repealed and the

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following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

(a) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall establish the structure for a state-wide [system for a Nurturing Families Network] Connecticut Home Visiting System, which demonstrates the benefits of preventive services by significantly reducing the abuse and neglect of infants and young children, and by enhancing parent-child relationships through [hospital-based] community-based assessment with home outreach follow-up on infants and young children and their families within families identified as high risk.

(b) The commissioner shall: (1) [Develop the comprehensive risk assessment to be used by the Nurturing Families Network's providers; (2) develop the training program, standards, and protocols for the pilot programs] Ensure that all home visiting programs are one or more of the evidence-based home visiting models that meet the criteria for evidence of effectiveness developed by the federal Department of Health and Human Services; (2) provide oversight of home visiting programs to insure model fidelity; and (3) develop, issue and evaluate requests for proposals to procure the services required by this section. In evaluating the proposals, the commissioner shall take into consideration the most effective and consistent service delivery system allowing for the continuation of current public and private programs.

(c) The commissioner shall establish a data system to enable the programs to document the following information in a standard manner: (1) The level of screening and assessment; (2) profiles of risk and family demographics; (3) the incidence of child abuse and neglect; (4) rates of child development; and (5) any other information the commissioner deems appropriate.

(d) The commissioner shall report to the General Assembly, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, on the establishment, implementation and progress of the [Nurturing Families Network]

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Connecticut Home Visiting System, on July first of each year.

(e) The commissioner may expend an amount not to exceed two per cent of the amount appropriated for purposes of this section in a manner consistent with the provisions of section 10-509, as amended by this act.

Sec. 12. Section 17b-751d of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

The Office of Early Childhood shall be the lead state agency for community-based, prevention-focused programs and activities designed to strengthen and support families to prevent child abuse and neglect. The responsibilities of the office shall include, but not be limited to, collaborating with state agencies, hospitals, clinics, schools and community service organizations, to: (1) Initiate programs to support families at risk for child abuse or neglect; (2) assist organizations to recognize child abuse and neglect; (3) encourage community safety; (4) increase broad-based efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect; (5) create a network of agencies to advance child abuse and neglect prevention; and (6) increase public awareness of child abuse and neglect issues. The office, subject to available state, federal and private funding, shall be responsible for implementing and maintaining programs and services, including, but not limited to: (A) [The Nurturing Families Network] Connecticut Home Visiting System, established pursuant to [subsection (a) of] section 17b-751b, as amended by this act; (B) [Family Empowerment Initiative programs; (C)] Help Me Grow; [(D) Family School Connection; (E) support services for residents of a respite group home for girls; (F) volunteer services; (G)] (C) family development training; [(H)] (D) shaken baby syndrome prevention; [and (I) child sexual abuse prevention] (E) working with parents who are incarcerated; (F) promoting the work of doulas to help women with the highest risk of poor pregnancy outcomes to achieve healthy birth outcomes; and (G) supporting homeless diversion for families with young children.

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Sec. 13. Subsection (a) of section 17b-261 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

(a) Medical assistance shall be provided for any otherwise eligible person whose income, including any available support from legally liable relatives and the income of the person's spouse or dependent child, is not more than one hundred forty-three per cent, pending approval of a federal waiver applied for pursuant to subsection (e) of this section, of the benefit amount paid to a person with no income under the temporary family assistance program in the appropriate region of residence and if such person is an institutionalized individual as defined in Section 1917 of the Social Security Act, 42 USC 1396p(h)(3), and has not made an assignment or transfer or other disposition of property for less than fair market value for the purpose of establishing eligibility for benefits or assistance under this section. Any such disposition shall be treated in accordance with Section 1917(c) of the Social Security Act, 42 USC 1396p(c). Any disposition of property made on behalf of an applicant or recipient or the spouse of an applicant or recipient by a guardian, conservator, person authorized to make such disposition pursuant to a power of attorney or other person so authorized by law shall be attributed to such applicant, recipient or spouse. A disposition of property ordered by a court shall be evaluated in accordance with the standards applied to any other such disposition for the purpose of determining eligibility. The commissioner shall establish the standards for eligibility for medical assistance at one hundred forty-three per cent of the benefit amount paid to a household of equal size with no income under the temporary family assistance program in the appropriate region of residence. In determining eligibility, the commissioner shall not consider as income Aid and Attendance pension benefits granted to a veteran, as defined in section 27-103, or the surviving spouse of such veteran. Except as provided in section 17b-277 and section 17b-292, the medical assistance program

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shall provide coverage to persons under the age of nineteen with household income up to one hundred ninety-six per cent of the federal poverty level without an asset limit and to persons under the age of nineteen, who qualify for coverage under Section 1931 of the Social Security Act, with household income not exceeding one hundred ninety-six per cent of the federal poverty level without an asset limit, and their parents and needy caretaker relatives, who qualify for coverage under Section 1931 of the Social Security Act, with household income not exceeding one hundred fifty-five per cent of the federal poverty level without an asset limit. Such levels shall be based on the regional differences in such benefit amount, if applicable, unless such levels based on regional differences are not in conformance with federal law. Any income in excess of the applicable amounts shall be applied as may be required by said federal law, and assistance shall be granted for the balance of the cost of authorized medical assistance. The Commissioner of Social Services shall provide applicants for assistance under this section, at the time of application, with a written statement advising them of (1) the effect of an assignment or transfer or other disposition of property on eligibility for benefits or assistance, (2) the effect that having income that exceeds the limits prescribed in this subsection will have with respect to program eligibility, and (3) the availability of, and eligibility for, services provided by the [Nurturing Families Network] Connecticut Home Visiting System, established pursuant to section 17b-751b, as amended by this act. For coverage dates on or after January 1, 2014, the department shall use the modified adjusted gross income financial eligibility rules set forth in Section 1902(e)(14) of the Social Security Act and the implementing regulations to determine eligibility for HUSKY A, HUSKY B and HUSKY D applicants, as defined in section 17b-290. Persons who are determined ineligible for assistance pursuant to this section shall be provided a written statement notifying such persons of their ineligibility and advising such persons of their potential eligibility for one of the other insurance affordability programs as defined in 42 CFR 435.4.

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Sec. 14. Section 17b-277a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2021*):

The Commissioners of Public Health, Social Services and Mental Health and Addiction Services shall jointly establish a program to inform applicants to the Healthy Start program about the availability of, and eligibility for, services provided by the [Nurturing Families Network] Connecticut Home Visiting System, established pursuant to section 17b-751b, as amended by this act.

Sec. 15. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2021*) Upon the request of a director of an early intervention service program participating in the birth-to-three program, established pursuant to section 17a-248b of the general statutes, the Commissioner of Education may permit any person who holds an endorsement in the areas of (1) comprehensive special education, (2) integrated early childhood and special education, (3) partially sighted, (4) blind, and (5) hard of hearing, to teach within the birth-to-three program. Such permission shall be valid during the period of such person's certificate, permit or authorization and may be extended by the commissioner, upon request of the birth-to-three service provider, upon renewal of such person's certificate, permit or authorization by the commissioner.

Sec. 16. Section 19a-425 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

(a) Any person who establishes, conducts or maintains a youth camp without a license as required by this chapter for a first offense shall be subject to a civil penalty of not more than one thousand dollars, and for a second or subsequent offense shall be subject to a civil penalty of not more than one thousand five hundred dollars, and each day during which a youth camp is conducted or maintained without a license, after notification to such person by the commissioner, shall constitute a separate offense. The commissioner may apply to the superior court for

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the judicial district of Hartford, or for the judicial district where the defendant named in such application resides, for an injunction to restrain the operation or maintenance of a youth camp by any person other than a licensed operator. The application for such injunction or the issuance of the same shall be in addition to and shall not relieve any such person from the imposition of a civil penalty under this section. In connection with any such application for an injunction, it shall not be necessary to prove that an adequate remedy at law does not exist.

(b) If the Commissioner of Early Childhood has reason to believe that a violation has occurred for which a civil penalty is authorized by subsection (a) of this section, the commissioner may send to such person or officer by certified mail, return receipt requested or personally serve upon such person or officer, a notice that shall include: (1) A reference to the section or sections of the general statutes or regulations involved; (2) a short and plain statement of the matters asserted or charged; (3) a statement of the maximum civil penalty that may be imposed for such violation; and (4) a statement of the party's right to request a hearing. Such person or officer shall submit any request for a hearing in writing to the commissioner not later than thirty days after the notice is mailed or served.

(c) If such person or officer so requests, the commissioner shall cause a hearing to be held. The hearing shall be held in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54. If such person or officer fails to request a hearing or fails to appear at the hearing or if, after the hearing, the commissioner finds that the person or officer has committed such violation, the commissioner may, in his or her discretion, order that a civil penalty be imposed that is not greater than the penalty stated in the notice. The commissioner shall send a copy of any order issued pursuant to this subsection by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the person or officer named in such order.