



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 705

January Session, 2025

Substitute House Bill No. 6921

House of Representatives, April 15, 2025

The Committee on Education reported through REP. LEEPER of the 132nd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

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 Section 10-550g of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

3 (a) As used in this section:

4 (1) "Office of Early Childhood funded early care and education
5 program" means an early care and education program that accepts state
6 funds directly from the office or indirectly through office
7 subcontractors, for any combination of infant, toddler [,] and preschool,
8 and any before and after school program for infant, toddler and
9 preschool-age children, but does not include the child care subsidy
10 program established pursuant to section 17b-749.

11 (2) "Designated staff member" means the person assigned the
12 primary responsibility for a classroom of children in an Office of Early

13 Childhood funded early care and education program.

14 (3) "Designated qualified staff member" means a designated staff
15 member who possesses at least one of the following:

16 (A) A bachelor's degree or higher with a concentration in early
17 childhood education from an institution of higher education that is (i)
18 regionally accredited and accredited by the National Association for the
19 Education of Young Children, (ii) regionally accredited and working
20 toward achieving accreditation from the National Association for the
21 Education of Young Children, or (iii) regionally accredited;

22 (B) A certificate issued pursuant to section 10-145b with an
23 endorsement in early childhood education or early childhood special
24 education;

25 (C) Deemed to meet the bachelor's degree requirements by the office
26 without a concentration in early childhood education, but with at least
27 twelve early childhood credits from an institution of higher education
28 that is regionally accredited;

29 (D) A bachelor's degree from an institution of higher education that
30 is regionally accredited, without a concentration in early childhood
31 education, but with at least twelve applicable early childhood credits as
32 determined by the office;

33 (E) Permission from the office if such designated staff member is
34 enrolled in an institution of higher education and engaged in and
35 making progress in an early childhood planned program of study
36 leading to an early childhood bachelor's degree and under supervision
37 in accordance with the provisions of subsections (b) to (d), inclusive, of
38 this section.

39 (b) When a bachelor's degree designated qualified staff member is not
40 assigned, a person may be deemed a designated qualified staff member
41 if such person possesses at least one of the qualifications included in
42 subsection [(c)] (d) of this section and is under the supervision of an on-
43 site [bachelor's degree designated qualified staff member, except any

44 family child care home provider that accepts state funds shall meet the
45 designated qualified staff member qualifications] staff member who is
46 in a teacher or administrator role and meets the bachelor's degree or
47 higher with a concentration in early childhood education requirement.

48 (c) [When a bachelor's degree designated qualified staff member
49 supervises an associate degree designated qualified staff member, the
50 person possessing a bachelor's degree may supervise such associate
51 degree designated qualified staff member at an off-site location.] In the
52 case of a family child care home that is an Office of Early Childhood
53 funded early care and education program, if the designated qualified
54 staff member is working toward an early childhood associate degree or
55 higher, such designated qualified staff member may be supervised by
56 an individual from an off-site location who meets the bachelor's degree
57 requirements for a designated qualified staff member and who provides
58 coaching at the family child care home.

59 (d) The associate degree designated qualified staff member, under the
60 supervision of a bachelor's degree qualified staff member, shall possess
61 at least one of the following:

62 (1) An associate degree or higher with a concentration in early
63 childhood education from an institution of higher education that is (i)
64 regionally accredited and accredited by the National Association for the
65 Education of Young Children, (ii) regionally accredited and working
66 toward achieving accreditation from the National Association for the
67 Education of Young Children, or (iii) regionally accredited;

68 (2) Deemed to meet the associate degree requirements by the office
69 without a concentration in early childhood education, but with at least
70 twelve early childhood credits from an institution of higher education
71 that is regionally accredited;

72 (3) An associate degree from an institution of higher education that is
73 regionally accredited, without a concentration in early childhood
74 education, but with at least twelve applicable early childhood credits as
75 determined by the office;

76 (4) Permission from the office if such associate degree designated
77 qualified staff member is enrolled in an institution of higher education
78 and engaged in an early childhood planned program of study leading
79 to an early childhood associate degree.

80 [(d)] (e) (1) From July 1, [2024] 2025, to June 30, 2027, inclusive,
81 twenty-five per cent of the designated staff members at each Office of
82 Early Childhood funded early childhood education program shall be
83 designated qualified staff members meeting one of the criteria at the
84 bachelor's degree level. If the Office of Early Childhood funded early
85 care and education program is a family child care home, the designated
86 qualified staff member for such family child care home shall have
87 achieved or be working toward an early childhood associate degree or
88 [bachelor's degree] higher.

89 (2) From July 1, 2027, to June 30, 2030, inclusive, fifty per cent of the
90 designated qualified members at each Office of Early Childhood funded
91 early childhood education program shall be designated qualified staff
92 members meeting one of the criteria at the bachelor's degree level. If the
93 Office of Early Childhood funded early care and education program is
94 a family child care home, the designated qualified staff member for such
95 family child care home shall have achieved or be working toward an
96 early childhood associate degree or [bachelor's degree] higher.

97 (3) On and after July 1, 2030, sixty per cent of the designated qualified
98 members at each Office of Early Childhood funded child care program
99 shall be designated qualified staff members meeting one of the criteria
100 at the bachelor's degree level. If the Office of Early Childhood funded
101 early care and education program is a family child care home, the
102 designated qualified staff member for such family child care home shall
103 have achieved or be working toward an early childhood associate
104 degree or [bachelor's degree] higher, except on and after July 1, 2035, the
105 designated qualified staff member for such family child care home shall
106 hold an early childhood associate degree or higher.

107 Sec. 2. Subsection (a) of section 19a-421 of the general statutes is
108 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*

109 2025):

110 (a) No person shall establish, conduct or maintain a youth camp
111 without a license issued by the office. Applications for such license shall
112 be made in writing at least thirty days prior to the opening of the youth
113 camp on forms provided and in accordance with procedures established
114 by the commissioner and shall be accompanied by a fee of eight
115 hundred fifteen dollars or, if the applicant is a nonprofit, nonstock
116 corporation or association, a fee of three hundred fifteen dollars or, if
117 the applicant is a day camp affiliated with a nonprofit organization, for
118 no more than five days duration and for which labor and materials are
119 donated, no fee. All such licenses shall be valid for a period of one year
120 from the date of issuance unless surrendered for cancellation or
121 suspended or revoked by the commissioner for violation of this chapter
122 or any regulations adopted under section 19a-428, shall be
123 nontransferable and shall be renewable upon receipt by the
124 commissioner of a renewal application and payment of an eight-
125 hundred-fifteen-dollar license fee or, if the licensee is a nonprofit,
126 nonstock corporation or association, a three-hundred-fifteen-dollar
127 license fee or, if the applicant is a day camp affiliated with a nonprofit
128 organization, for no more than five days duration and for which labor
129 and materials are donated, no fee.

130 Sec. 3. Section 19a-420 of the general statutes is repealed and the
131 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

132 As used in this chapter:

133 (1) "Youth camp" means any regularly scheduled program or
134 organized group activity advertised as a camp or operated only during
135 school vacations or on weekends, conducted on a parcel of land that has
136 dwelling units or buildings intended to accommodate five or more
137 children, by a person, partnership, corporation, association, the state or
138 a municipal agency for recreational or educational purposes and
139 accommodating for profit or under philanthropic or charitable auspices
140 five or more children, who are at least three years of age and under
141 sixteen years of age, who are (A) not bona fide personal guests in the

142 private home of an individual, and (B) living apart from their relatives,
143 parents or legal guardian, for a period of three days or more per week
144 or portions of three or more days per week, provided any such relative,
145 parent or guardian who is an employee of such camp shall not be
146 considered to be in the position of loco parentis to such employee's child
147 for the purposes of this chapter, but does not include (i) classroom-based
148 summer instructional programs operated by any person, provided no
149 activities that may pose a health risk or hazard to participating children
150 are conducted at such programs, (ii) public schools, or private schools
151 in compliance with section 10-188 and approved by the State Board of
152 Education or accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the
153 State Board of Education, which operate a summer educational
154 program, (iii) licensed child care centers, or (iv) drop-in programs for
155 children who are at least six years of age administered by a nationally
156 chartered boys' and girls' club;

157 (2) "Resident camp" means any youth camp which is established,
158 conducted or maintained [on any parcel or parcels of land on which
159 there are located dwelling units or buildings intended to accommodate
160 five or more children who are at least three years of age and under
161 sixteen years of age] for at least seventy-two consecutive hours and in
162 which the campers attending such camps eat and sleep;

163 (3) "Day camp" means any youth camp which is established,
164 conducted or maintained [on any parcel or parcels of land on which
165 there are located dwelling units or buildings intended to accommodate
166 five or more children who are at least three years of age and under
167 sixteen years of age] during daylight hours for at least three days a week
168 with the campers eating and sleeping at home, except for one meal per
169 day, but does not include programs operated by a municipal agency;

170 (4) "Person" means the state or any municipal agency, individual,
171 partnership, association, organization, limited liability company or
172 corporation;

173 (5) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Early Childhood;
174 and

175 (6) "Office" means the Office of Early Childhood.

176 Sec. 4. Subsections (a) and (b) of section 17a-248b of the general
177 statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
178 (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

179 (a) The lead agency shall establish a State Interagency Birth-to-Three
180 Coordinating Council and shall provide staff assistance and other
181 resources to the council. The council shall consist of the following
182 members, appointed by the Governor: (1) Parents, including [minority]
183 parents [.] of children with disabilities twelve years of age or younger
184 representing culturally diverse communities, with knowledge of, or
185 experience with, programs for children with disabilities from birth to
186 thirty-six months of age, the total number of whom shall equal not less
187 than twenty per cent of the total membership of the council, and at least
188 one of whom shall be a parent of a child six years of age or younger,
189 with a disability; (2) two members of the General Assembly at the time
190 of their appointment, one of whom shall be designated by the speaker
191 of the House of Representatives and one of whom shall be designated
192 by the president pro tempore of the Senate; (3) one person involved in
193 the training of personnel who provide early intervention services; (4)
194 one person who is a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics;
195 (5) the state coordinator of education for homeless children and youth,
196 the state coordinator for early childhood special education and one
197 person from each of the participating agencies, except the Department
198 of Education, who shall be designated by the commissioner or executive
199 director of the participating agency and who have authority to engage
200 in policy planning and implementation on behalf of the participating
201 agency; (6) public or private providers of early intervention services, the
202 total number of whom shall equal not less than twenty per cent of the
203 total membership of the council; and (7) a representative of a Head Start
204 program or agency. The Governor shall designate the chairperson of the
205 council who shall not be the designee of the lead agency.

206 (b) The Governor shall appoint all members of the council for terms
207 of three years. [No appointed member of the council] Members

208 appointed to the council pursuant to subdivisions (1) to (4), inclusive,
209 (6) and (7) of subsection (a) of this section may serve not more than two
210 consecutive terms, except a member may continue to serve until a
211 successor is appointed.

212 Sec. 5. Subsection (c) of section 10-16z of the general statutes is
213 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
214 *2025*):

215 (c) Within available resources, the Early Childhood Cabinet shall (1)
216 advise the Office of Early Childhood, established pursuant to section 10-
217 500, and (2) not later than December 1, 2009, and annually thereafter,
218 develop an annual plan of action that assigns the appropriate state
219 agency to complete the tasks specified in the federal Head Start Act of
220 2007, P.L. 110-134, as amended from time to time, [, and (3) not later than
221 March 1, 2010, and annually thereafter, submit an annual state-wide
222 strategic report, pursuant to said federal Head Start Act, in accordance
223 with the provisions of section 11-4a, addressing the progress such
224 agencies have made toward the completion of such tasks outlined under
225 said federal Head Start Act and this subsection to the Governor and the
226 joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance
227 of matters relating to education and human services.]

228 Sec. 6. Subsection (a) of section 10-550c of the general statutes is
229 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
230 *2025*):

231 (a) There shall be established, within available appropriations, a local
232 or regional governance [partners] partner to assist in the provision of
233 early care and education in a community under Early Start CT. A town
234 or school district and appropriate representatives of groups or entities
235 interested in early care and education in such town or school district
236 may establish a local governance partner. Two or more towns or school
237 districts and appropriate representatives of groups or entities interested
238 in early care and education in a region may establish a regional
239 governance partner.

240 Sec. 7. Section 10-550d of the general statutes is repealed and the
 241 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

242 [The] Not later than July 1, 2027, the Office of Early Childhood shall
 243 establish a sliding fee scale for families that are enrolled in an early care
 244 and education program under Early Start CT. Such sliding scale shall be
 245 based on family income and be consistent with the sliding fee scale used
 246 in the child care subsidy program described in section 17b-249.

247 Sec. 8. Subsection (c) of section 10-550b of the general statutes is
 248 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
 249 *2025*):

250 (c) The office, in operating and administering Early Start CT, may
 251 allocate, [an amount up to ten per cent of the total financial assistance
 252 under the contract with each local or regional governance partner
 253 established pursuant to section 10-550c, but not more than one hundred
 254 fifty thousand dollars, for coordination, program evaluation and
 255 administration. Such amount shall be increased by an amount equal to
 256 local funding provided for early childhood education coordination,
 257 program evaluation and administration, not to exceed fifty thousand
 258 dollars] within available appropriations, an amount determined by the
 259 commissioner for an administrative set-aside for each local or regional
 260 governance partner for coordination, program evaluation and
 261 administration. Each local or regional governance partner shall
 262 designate a staff person to be responsible for such coordination,
 263 program evaluation and administration and to act as a liaison between
 264 the town or towns and the commissioner.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

| | | |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Section 1 | <i>July 1, 2025</i> | 10-550g |
| Sec. 2 | <i>July 1, 2025</i> | 19a-421(a) |
| Sec. 3 | <i>July 1, 2025</i> | 19a-420 |
| Sec. 4 | <i>July 1, 2025</i> | 17a-248b(a) and (b) |
| Sec. 5 | <i>July 1, 2025</i> | 10-16z(c) |
| Sec. 6 | <i>July 1, 2025</i> | 10-550c(a) |

| | | |
|--------|---------------------|------------|
| Sec. 7 | <i>July 1, 2025</i> | 10-550d |
| Sec. 8 | <i>July 1, 2025</i> | 10-550b(c) |

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 1(b), "higher in" was changed to "higher with a concentration in" for consistency.

ED *Joint Favorable Subst. -LCO*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note**State Impact:** None**Municipal Impact:** None**Explanation**

The bill makes technical, clarifying, and conforming changes to various Office of Early Childhood statutes, which do not result in a fiscal impact to the state.

The Out Years**State Impact:** None**Municipal Impact:** None

OLR Bill Analysis**HB 6921*****AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.*****SUMMARY**

The bill makes various changes to statutes affecting early childhood education and programs, including the following:

1. modifying education and supervision requirements for teachers with primary responsibility for a classroom of children in an Office of Early Childhood (OEC) early care and education program (“qualified designated staff members”) (§ 1);
2. specifying that youth camp licensees cannot transfer their licenses, and when renewing them, must apply to OEC, in addition to paying existing law’s renewal fees (§§ 2 & 3);
3. eliminating the current six-year term limit for State Interagency Birth-to-Three Coordination Council members representing participating state agencies (§ 4);
4. eliminating an Early Childhood Cabinet annual reporting requirement on state agencies’ progress made on tasks specified in the federal Head Start Act (§ 5);
5. reducing, from multiple to one, the number of local or regional governance partners in each community that may help provide early care and education under Early Start CT (§ 5);
6. extending by two years, from July 1, 2025, to July 1, 2027, the date by which OEC must establish a sliding fee scale for families enrolled in programs under Early Start CT (§ 6); and

7. modifying Early Start CT's state allocation by allowing the commissioner, within available appropriations, to allocate an amount she determines for each local or regional governance partner (§ 8).

The bill also makes technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

§ 1 — DESIGNATED QUALIFIED STAFF MEMBER REQUIREMENTS

Existing law requires primary classroom teachers at OEC-funded early childhood education programs to meet certain education requirements that phase in from July 1, 2025, to July 1, 2035. It also specifies the degrees or credentials required for these teachers to qualify as “designated qualified staff members” (i.e. the person assigned primary responsibility for a classroom of children in an early care and education program). A teacher may qualify as a designated qualified staff member at a bachelor's degree level or an associate's degree level.

The bill modifies designated qualified staff member education and supervision requirements as described below.

Bachelor's Degree-Designated Qualified Staff Member

Under current law, a person may qualify as a bachelor's degree-designated qualified staff member by meeting one of several criteria, such as having a (1) bachelor's degree or higher with an early childhood concentration or (2) State Board of Education-issued teaching certificate with an early childhood education or special education endorsement.

Another way a person may currently qualify, with OEC's permission, is if he or she is enrolled in a higher education institution and engaged and making progress in an early childhood planned program of study leading to an early childhood bachelor's degree. The bill further requires that the person be supervised by an on-site staff teacher or administrator who has a bachelor's degree or higher with an early childhood concentration.

Associate's Degree-Designated Qualified Staff Member

Under current law, when a bachelor's degree-designated qualified staff member is not assigned, an associate's degree-designated qualified staff member meeting certain education requirements may generally be deemed a designated qualified staff member if they are supervised on-site by a bachelor's degree-designated qualified staff member.

The bill instead requires that these qualified staff members be supervised by an on-site staff teacher or administrator who has a bachelor's degree or higher with a concentration in early childhood education.

The bill also eliminates a provision under current law that allows a bachelor's degree-designated qualified staff member to supervise an associate's degree-designated staff member off-site. But it continues to allow off-site supervision if the associate's degree-designated staff member works at a family child care home. In this case, the associate's degree-designated staff member may be supervised off-site if (1) they are working toward an early childhood associate's degree or higher and (2) the supervisor meets the requirements for a bachelor's degree-designated qualified staff member and provides coaching at the family child care home.

Phase-In of Requirements

Current law phases in the designated qualified staff member requirements from July 1, 2025, to July 1, 2030. Specifically, at least 25% of staff members with primary responsibility for a classroom at each OEC-funded early care and education program must be bachelor's level designated qualified staff members. This requirement increases to (1) 50% from July 1, 2027, to June 30, 2030, and (2) 60% starting July 1, 2030.

Under existing law and the bill, if the OEC-funded early care and education program is a family child care home, the designated qualified staff member for the home must have achieved, or be working toward, an early childhood education associate's degree or higher. But starting July 1, 2035, the bill requires these designated qualified staff members

to have such a degree.

As under existing law, these requirements apply to programs that accept state funds directly from OEC or indirectly through OEC subcontractors, for any combination of infant, toddler, preschool, and before and after school care programs, but does not include Care 4 Kids subsidies.

§§ 2 & 3 — YOUTH CAMPS

By law, youth camps must obtain an annual license from OEC. The bill specifies that (1) these licenses are not transferable and (2) when renewing a license, youth camps must apply to OEC, in addition to paying the renewal fees required under existing law. (Currently, the fees are \$815 for for-profit camps, \$315 for nonprofit camps, and no fee for certain nonprofit day camps that operate for less than six days.)

Additionally, the bill makes technical changes to related statutory definitions.

§ 4 — STATE INTERAGENCY BIRTH-TO-THREE COORDINATING COUNCIL

Under current law, members appointed to the State Interagency Birth-To-Three Coordinating Council may serve up to two consecutive three-year terms. The bill eliminates this term limit for the following council members:

1. the state coordinators of (a) education for homeless children and youth and (b) early childhood special education and
2. members representing each of the participating state agencies (excluding the State Department of Education).

The bill also updates terminology, replacing the term “minority parents” with “parents representing culturally diverse communities” to reflect current OEC policy.

By law, the council helps OEC effectively perform its responsibilities regarding the Birth-To-Three program, including identifying sources of

fiscal support for early intervention services and programs, assigning financial responsibility to the appropriate agency, promoting interagency agreements, and preparing applications and amendments required by federal law.

§ 5 — HEAD START PROGRESS REPORT

Existing law requires the Early Childhood Cabinet to annually develop an action plan that assigns the appropriate state agency to complete the tasks specified in the federal Head Start Act (P.L. 110-134).

The bill eliminates a corresponding requirement that the cabinet annually submit a statewide strategic report on the progress state agencies made on these tasks to the governor and Education and Human Services committees. (In practice, this information is already included in OEC's Blue Ribbon five-year strategic plan.)

§§ 6-8 — EARLY START CT

PA 24-78 consolidated the School Readiness Preschool Grant Program, state-contracted child care centers for disadvantaged children, and the state supplemental Head Start grants into one program (Early Start CT), starting in 2026. The bill makes various changes affecting the program's local and regional governance partnerships, sliding fee scale, and state allocation.

Local and Regional Governance Partners

Current law requires local or regional governance partners, within available appropriations, to help provide early care and education in a community under Early Start CT. The bill instead allows only one partner to do so within a community.

Existing law allows (1) a town or school district, and appropriate representatives of groups or entities interested in early care and education in the town or district, to establish a local governance partner and (2) two or more towns or districts, and appropriate representatives of groups or entities interested in early childhood education in a region, to establish a regional governance partner. These partners' membership must reflect the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic composition of the

community served.

Sliding Fee Scale

The bill extends, from July 1, 2025, to July 1, 2027, the date by which OEC must establish a sliding fee scale for families enrolled in an early care and education program under Early Start CT. By law, the fee scale must be based on family income and consistent with the existing Care 4 Kids fee scale.

Program Allocation

The bill changes the amount OEC may allocate for Early Start CT's coordination, program evaluation, and administration. It authorizes the commissioner to allocate, within available appropriations, an amount she determines for an administrative set-aside for each local or regional governance partner.

Under current law, OEC may allocate the lesser of \$150,000 or up to 10% of the total financial assistance under the contract with each local or regional governance partner for coordination, program evaluation, and administration. The allocated amount must be increased by the lesser of up to \$50,000 or the amount of local funding provided for early childhood education coordination, program evaluation, and administration.

BACKGROUND***Related Bill***

sSB 6 (File 199), favorably reported by the Children Committee, subjects municipal youth camps (those serving children ages 3 to 16) to state oversight by requiring them to obtain a license from OEC.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Education Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 29 Nay 14 (03/28/2025)