



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 235**

January Session, 2025

Substitute House Bill No. 6952

*House of Representatives, March 25, 2025*

The Committee on Children reported through REP. PARIS of the 145th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## **AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN RECREATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS.**

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

- 1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) For the purposes of this
- 2 section, "recreational or educational children's program" means any
- 3 regularly scheduled program or organized group activity operated only
- 4 during school vacations or on weekends by a person, a partnership, a
- 5 corporation, an association, the state or a municipal agency for
- 6 recreational or educational purposes that accommodates, for a period of
- 7 three days or more per week or portions of three or more days per week,
- 8 five or more children who are (1) at least three years of age and under
- 9 sixteen years of age, (2) not bona fide personal guests in the private
- 10 home of an individual, and (3) living apart from their relatives, parents
- 11 or legal guardian, including, but not limited to, (A) classroom-based
- 12 summer instructional programs operated by any person, (B) summer
- 13 educational programs operated by public schools, or private schools in
- 14 compliance with section 10-188 of the general statutes, and approved by

15 the State Board of Education or accredited by an accrediting agency  
16 recognized by the State Board of Education, (C) licensed child care  
17 centers, and (D) drop-in programs for children who are at least six years  
18 of age administered by a nationally chartered boys' and girls' club.

19 (b) On and after January 1, 2026, a recreational or educational  
20 children's program that does not hold a license to operate a youth camp  
21 issued pursuant to section 19a-421 of the general statutes shall not use  
22 the term "camp" in the name of such program in any advertising  
23 materials unless such advertising materials state that such program  
24 does not hold a license to operate as a youth camp issued by the Office  
25 of Early Childhood.

26 (c) A violation of subsection (b) of this section shall be deemed an  
27 unfair or deceptive trade practice under subsection (a) of section 42-110b  
28 of the general statutes.

29 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) For the purposes of this  
30 section, "municipal recreational or educational children's program"  
31 means any regularly scheduled program or organized group activity  
32 operated only during school vacations or on weekends by a municipal  
33 agency for recreational or educational purposes that accommodates, for  
34 a period of three days or more per week or portions of three or more  
35 days per week, five or more children who are at least three years of age  
36 and under sixteen years of age.

37 (b) On and after January 1, 2026, each municipal agency that operates  
38 a municipal recreational or educational children's program shall require  
39 any prospective employee eighteen years of age or older, who is  
40 applying for a position at such program that requires the provision of  
41 care to a child or involves unsupervised access to a child, to submit to a  
42 comprehensive background check. The background check shall include,  
43 but not be limited to, a (1) (A) criminal history records check conducted  
44 (i) in accordance with section 29-17a of the general statutes, or (ii) by  
45 searching the electronic criminal record system maintained on the  
46 Internet web site of the Judicial Department for convictions matching  
47 the prospective employee's name and year of birth, (B) check of the state

48 child abuse registry established pursuant to section 17a-101k of the  
49 general statutes, (C) check of the registry established and maintained  
50 pursuant to section 54-257 of the general statutes, and (D) check of the  
51 National Sex Offender Registry Public Website maintained by the  
52 United States Department of Justice, or (2) check by a third-party  
53 provider of national criminal history record checks.

54 (c) Pending completion of all comprehensive background check  
55 components described in subsection (b) of this section, a prospective  
56 employee may begin work on a provisional basis, provided such  
57 prospective employee shall be supervised at all times by an employee  
58 who was subjected to a comprehensive background check described in  
59 subsection (b) of this section within the past five years.

60 (d) Each municipal agency shall require each employee of a  
61 municipal recreational or educational children's program operated by  
62 such agency who is eighteen years of age or older and holds a position  
63 that requires the provision of care to a child or involves unsupervised  
64 access to a child to submit to a comprehensive background check  
65 described in subsection (b) of this section not later than five years after  
66 the date such employee was hired, and at least once every five years  
67 thereafter. Nothing in this section shall prohibit a municipal agency  
68 from requiring any such employee to submit to a comprehensive  
69 background check more than once during a five-year period.

70 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) On and after January 1, 2026, each  
71 municipal recreational or educational children's program, as defined in  
72 section 2 of this act, shall maintain (1) a ratio of not less than one staff  
73 person for every twelve children on the program's premises during the  
74 hours of such program's daily operation, and (2) not less than one staff  
75 person who is trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid on  
76 the program's premises during the hours of such program's daily  
77 operation and at any activities conducted off-site from such premises  
78 during such hours at which children enrolled in such program are  
79 present.

80 Sec. 4. Subsection (b) of section 17a-101 of the general statutes is

81 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
82 *2025*):

83 (b) The following persons shall be mandated reporters: (1) Any  
84 physician or surgeon licensed under the provisions of chapter 370, (2)  
85 any resident physician or intern in any hospital in this state, whether or  
86 not so licensed, (3) any registered nurse, (4) any licensed practical nurse,  
87 (5) any medical examiner, (6) any dentist, (7) any dental hygienist, (8)  
88 any psychologist, (9) any school employee, as defined in section 53a-65,  
89 (10) any social worker, (11) any person who holds or is issued a coaching  
90 permit by the State Board of Education, is a coach of intramural or  
91 interscholastic athletics and is eighteen years of age or older, (12) any  
92 individual who is employed as a coach or director of youth athletics and  
93 is eighteen years of age or older, (13) any individual who is employed  
94 as a coach or director of a private youth sports organization, league or  
95 team and is eighteen years of age or older, (14) any paid administrator,  
96 faculty, staff, athletic director, athletic coach or athletic trainer employed  
97 by a public or private institution of higher education who is eighteen  
98 years of age or older, excluding student employees, (15) any police  
99 officer, (16) any juvenile or adult probation officer, (17) any juvenile or  
100 adult parole officer, (18) any member of the clergy, (19) any pharmacist,  
101 (20) any physical therapist, (21) any optometrist, (22) any chiropractor,  
102 (23) any podiatrist, (24) any mental health professional, (25) any  
103 physician assistant, (26) any person who is a licensed or certified  
104 emergency medical services provider, (27) any person who is a licensed  
105 or certified alcohol and drug counselor, (28) any person who is a  
106 licensed marital and family therapist, (29) any person who is a sexual  
107 assault counselor or a domestic violence counselor, as defined in section  
108 52-146k, (30) any person who is a licensed professional counselor, (31)  
109 any person who is a licensed foster parent, (32) any person paid to care  
110 for a child in any public or private facility, child care center, group child  
111 care home or family child care home licensed by the state, (33) any  
112 employee of the Department of Children and Families or any person  
113 who, in the performance of such person's duties, has regular contact  
114 with and provides services to or on behalf of children pursuant to a  
115 contract with or credential issued by the Department of Children and

116 Families, (34) any employee of the Office of Early Childhood who is  
117 responsible for the licensing of child care centers, group child care  
118 homes, family child care homes or youth camps, (35) any paid youth  
119 camp director, assistant director and staff member who is twenty-one  
120 years of age or older, (36) any paid director, assistant director or staff  
121 member of a municipal recreational or educational children's program,  
122 as defined in section 2 of this act, who is twenty-one years of age or  
123 older, (37) the Child Advocate and any employee of the Office of the  
124 Child Advocate, [(37)] (38) any person who is a licensed behavior  
125 analyst, [(38)] (39) any family relations counselor, family relations  
126 counselor trainee or family services supervisor employed by the Judicial  
127 Department, [(39)] (40) any victim services advocate employed by the  
128 Office of Victim Services within the Judicial Department, [(40)] (41) any  
129 employee of a juvenile justice program operated by or pursuant to a  
130 contract with the Court Support Services Division of the Judicial  
131 Department, and [(41)] (42) any person employed, including any person  
132 employed under contract and any independent ombudsperson, to work  
133 at a juvenile detention facility or any other facility where children under  
134 eighteen years of age are detained and who has direct contact with  
135 children as part of such employment.

136 Sec. 5. Section 17a-101b of the general statutes is repealed and the  
137 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

138 (a) An oral or electronic report shall be made by a mandated reporter  
139 as soon as practicable but not later than twelve hours after the mandated  
140 reporter has reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been  
141 abused or neglected or placed in imminent risk of serious harm. An oral  
142 report made pursuant to this subsection shall be made by telephone or  
143 in person to the Commissioner of Children and Families or a law  
144 enforcement agency. If a law enforcement agency receives an oral  
145 report, it shall immediately notify the commissioner. An electronic  
146 report made pursuant to this subsection shall be made in a manner  
147 prescribed by the commissioner. A mandated reporter who makes an  
148 electronic report pursuant to this section shall respond to further  
149 inquiries from the commissioner or the commissioner's designee made

150 within twenty-four hours of such report.

151 (b) If the commissioner or the commissioner's designee suspects or  
152 knows that such person has knowingly made a false report, the identity  
153 of such person shall be disclosed to the appropriate law enforcement  
154 agency and to the perpetrator of the alleged abuse.

155 (c) If the Commissioner of Children and Families, or the  
156 commissioner's designee, receives a report alleging sexual abuse or  
157 serious physical abuse, including, but not limited to, a report that: (1) A  
158 child has died; (2) a child has been sexually assaulted; (3) a child has  
159 suffered brain damage or loss or serious impairment of a bodily function  
160 or organ; (4) a child has been sexually exploited; or (5) a child has  
161 suffered serious nonaccidental physical injury, the commissioner shall,  
162 within twelve hours of receipt of such report, notify the appropriate law  
163 enforcement agency.

164 (d) Whenever a mandated reporter, as described in section 17a-101,  
165 as amended by this act, has reasonable cause to suspect or believe that  
166 any child has been abused or neglected by a member of the staff of a  
167 public or private institution or facility that provides care for such child  
168 or a public or private school, the mandated reporter shall report as  
169 required in subsection (a) of this section. The Commissioner of Children  
170 and Families or the commissioner's designee shall notify the principal,  
171 headmaster, executive director or other person in charge of such  
172 institution, facility or school, or the person's designee, unless such  
173 person is the alleged perpetrator of the abuse or neglect of such child. In  
174 the case of a public school, the commissioner shall also notify the  
175 person's employing superintendent. Such person in charge, or such  
176 person's designee, shall then immediately notify the child's parent or  
177 other person responsible for the child's care that a report has been made.

178 (e) If a mandated reporter described in subdivision (36) of subsection  
179 (b) of section 17a-101, as amended by this act, makes a report pursuant  
180 to subsection (a) of this section concerning abuse or neglect of or  
181 imminent risk of serious harm to a child that occurred on the premises  
182 of a municipal recreational or educational children's program, as

183 defined in section 2 of this act, or during an activity conducted by such  
 184 program off-site from such premises, the Commissioner of Children and  
 185 Families shall notify the chief executive officer of the municipality in  
 186 which such program is located. Such notice shall not include any  
 187 personally identifying information concerning the child that is the  
 188 subject of such report.

189 [(e)] (f) For purposes of this section, "child" includes any victim  
 190 described in subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of section 17a-101a.

191 Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) Not later than July 1, 2026, and  
 192 annually thereafter, each paid director, assistant director or staff  
 193 member of a municipal recreational or educational children's program,  
 194 as defined in section 2 of this act, who is twenty-one years of age or  
 195 older, shall complete the educational training program or refresher  
 196 training program, as applicable, developed pursuant to subsection (c) of  
 197 section 17a-101 of the general statutes.

198 (b) Not later than August 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the director  
 199 or equivalent employee of each municipal agency that operates a  
 200 municipal recreational or educational children's program shall certify,  
 201 in a form and manner prescribed by the Commissioner of Children and  
 202 Families, whether each paid director, assistant director and staff  
 203 member of such program who is twenty-one years of age or older  
 204 complied with the provisions of subsection (a) of this section in the  
 205 preceding twelve-month period.

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

Section 1	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	17a-101(b)
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	17a-101b
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section

***Statement of Legislative Commissioners:***

In Section 1(b), "from" was changed to "issued by" for consistency with the general statutes, in Section 2(d), "recreational or educational children's program" was changed to "municipal recreational or educational children's program" and "is eighteen years of age or older and" was inserted for consistency, and in Section 6(b), "that each paid director" was changed to "whether each paid director" for clarity.

**KID**        *Joint Favorable Subst.*



*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:**

<b>Agency Affected</b>	<b>Fund-Effect</b>	<b>FY 26 \$</b>	<b>FY 27 \$</b>
Consumer Protection, Dept.	GF - Potential Cost	43,879	82,758
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits <sup>1</sup>	GF - Potential Cost	14,810	29,620

Note: GF=General Fund

### **Municipal Impact:**

<b>Municipalities</b>	<b>Effect</b>	<b>FY 26 \$</b>	<b>FY 27 \$</b>
Various Municipalities	Potential Cost	See Below	See Below

### **Explanation**

The bill makes various changes to statutes concerning certain recreational and educational children's programs, which have fiscal impacts as follows:

**Section 1** makes it an unfair trade practice violation for any unlicensed recreational or educational children's program to use the term "camp" in its title, resulting in a potential cost to the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) and the Office of the State Comptroller. Depending on the number of violations, DCP may have to hire one special investigator, for a salary and other expenses cost of \$43,879 in FY

<sup>1</sup>The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 40.71% of payroll in FY 26.

26<sup>2</sup> and \$82,758 in FY 27, along with associated fringe benefit costs of \$14,810 in FY 26 and \$29,620 FY 27.

**Section 2** results in no fiscal impact to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) from conducting criminal history records checks. This section also results in no potential revenue gain to DESPP or municipal police departments for fingerprinting.<sup>3</sup>

The potential number of additional child abuse registry checks requiring Department of Children and Families (DCF) staff review is not anticipated to be great enough to necessitate additional resources. The department processes over 210,000 child abuse registry checks annually. DCF does not charge a fee for a registry check.

**Section 3** results in a potential cost to various municipalities, beginning in FY 26, to the extent that additional staff is required to meet the staffing ratio requirement of one staff person per twelve children. Municipal recreational or educational children's programs with staffing ratios of at least 1:12 will not be affected by this requirement.

**Section 4**, which makes any paid director, assistant director, or staff of a municipal recreational or educational children's program, age 21 or older, a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse or neglect, does not result in a fiscal impact. It is anticipated that any resulting increase in mandated reports can be accommodated within DCF's routinely budgeted resources.

**Section 5**, which requires DCF to notify municipal leaders of reports made pursuant to Section 4, results in no fiscal impact. The department routinely provides similar notice to law enforcement, school leaders,

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<sup>2</sup>The potential costs in FY 26 reflect a half year of expenditures due to violations beginning on January 1, 2026.

<sup>3</sup> While Section 2 does allow municipal employers to request criminal history checks through the State Police or from a third-party national criminal history check provider, it is unlikely that any municipal employer will choose these options as the section provides a free option that does not require fingerprinting. Though some municipal employers may already require fingerprinting for state and national criminal history checks as a condition of employment, it is unlikely that this section will change current hiring practices.

and directors of institutions or facilities that care for children, and can provide redacted notice, as required by the bill, without undue burden.

**Section 6** requires each new mandated reporter (added in Section 4) to complete, by 7/1/26 and annually thereafter, DCF's initial or refresher training program. This results in no cost to the state or municipalities. The department currently offers online training at no fee to participants.

### ***The Out Years***

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation and the number of required staff.

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**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 6952*****AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN RECREATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS.*****SUMMARY**

Starting in 2026, this bill prohibits any recreational or educational children's program that does not hold a youth camp license from using the term "camp" in the program's name in any advertisements, unless the advertisement states that the program is unlicensed. A violation of this provision is an unfair or deceptive trade practice.

Starting in 2026, the bill also requires all prospective employees who are at least 18, work at a municipal recreational or educational children's program, and have unsupervised access to a child to undergo a comprehensive background check. Pending completion of this background check, an employee can work provisionally if they are under supervision.

For existing employees, a background check must be done no later than five years after the employee's hiring date, and then redone every five years.

Furthermore, starting in 2026, the bill requires that municipal recreational or educational children's programs have at least one staff person (1) for every 12 children, and (2) who is CPR and first aid trained during the program's daily operation.

The bill also requires that any paid director, assistant director, or staff member of a municipal recreational or educational children's program who is 21 years of age or older be a mandated reporter of child abuse or neglect and complete an educational training program or refresher training program annually. In addition, when a child abuse or neglect

report is associated with a municipal recreational or educational children's program, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) commissioner must notify the chief executive officer of the municipality where the program is located.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

### **§ 1 — ADVERTISING AS A “YOUTH CAMP”**

Beginning January 1, 2026, the bill prohibits a recreational or educational children's program that does not hold a license to operate a youth camp issued by the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) from using the term “camp” in the name of their program in any associated advertising materials, unless the materials state that they do not hold a license. A violation is an unfair or deceptive trade practice under the Connecticut Unfair Trade Practices Act (CUTPA) (see BACKGROUND).

The bill defines a “recreational or educational children's program” as a regularly scheduled program or group, of those types, activity that operates only during school vacations or on weekends, and meets at least portions of three or more days per week. The term includes private, municipal, or state programs. These programs must accommodate five or more children who are age 3 to 15 and are participating apart from their parent or legal guardian.

The term specifically includes (1) classroom-based summer instructional programs, (2) public or private school summer educational programs, (3) licensed child care centers, and (4) drop-in programs for children who are at least age six run by a nationally chartered boys' and girls' club.

### **§§ 2-6 — MUNICIPAL RECREATIONAL OR EDUCATIONAL CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS**

#### ***Definition***

The bill defines a “municipal recreational or educational children's program” as a municipally run regularly scheduled program or group activity, of those types, that operates only during school vacations or on weekends, meets at least portions of three days per week, and

accommodates five or more children age 3 to 15.

**Background Checks (§ 2)**

Beginning January 1, 2026, the bill requires all prospective employees of municipal recreational or educational children's programs who are (1) 18 years of age or older, and (2) applying for a position requiring care or unsupervised access to a child to complete a background check. Pending completion of the background check, a prospective employee can work on a provisional basis if they are always supervised by an employee who has completed a background check in the last five years.

Under the bill, existing employees with the same access to children must complete a background check no later than five years after the employee was hired and which must be repeated at least once during every five-year period after that. The bill specifies that the employers may require more frequent checks.

The bill provides two options to meet this background check requirement. Under the first option, the check must include the following:

1. a criminal history records check done either (a) through the existing process for background checks from the State Police (see BACKGROUND) or (b) by searching the Judicial Department's online criminal record system using the prospective employee's name and birth year,
2. a state child abuse registry check,
3. a state sexual offender registry check, and
4. a check of the National Sex Offender Registry Public Website.

Alternatively, the check can be done by a third-party national criminal history check provider.

**Staff-to-Children Ratio at Municipal Programs (§ 3)**

Beginning January 1, 2026, the bill requires that municipal

recreational or educational children's programs have at least one staff person for every 12 children during all hours of the program's daily operation. They also must have at least one staff person who is CPR and first aid trained during these hours and at off-site activities when children enrolled in the program are present.

Presumably, if a municipal recreational or educational children's program is licensed as a youth camp by OEC, the program would instead follow the staff-to-children ratios in the existing youth camp regulations (see BACKGROUND).

### ***Mandated Reporter Provisions (§§ 4-6)***

The bill requires any paid director, assistant director, or staff member of a municipal recreational or educational children's program who is 21 years of age or older to be a mandated reporter of child abuse or neglect (see BACKGROUND). If a report involves a situation that occurred on the premises of such a program or during an off-site activity conducted by the program, the DCF commissioner must notify the chief executive officer of the municipality where the program is located. This notice cannot include personally identifying information of the child associated with the report.

Furthermore, the bill requires each such paid director, assistant director, and staff member 21 years of age or older to complete DCF's educational training program or refresher training program on the mandated reporter law (see BACKGROUND) by July 1, 2026, and repeated annually thereafter. Starting by August 1, 2026, the director or equivalent employee of each municipal agency that operates a municipal recreational or educational children's program must annually certify whether the training program has been completed by the listed individuals in the proceeding 12-month period.

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Connecticut Unfair Trade Practices Act***

By law, CUTPA prohibits businesses from engaging in unfair and deceptive acts or practices. It allows the consumer protection

commissioner, under specified procedures, to issue regulations defining an unfair trade practice; investigate complaints; issue cease and desist orders; order restitution in cases involving less than \$10,000; impose civil penalties of up to \$5,000; enter into consent agreements; ask the attorney general to seek injunctive relief; and accept voluntary statements of compliance. It also allows individuals to sue. Courts may issue restraining orders; award actual and punitive damages, costs, and reasonable attorney's fees; and impose civil penalties of up to \$5,000 for willful violations and up to \$25,000 for a restraining order violation.

### ***Staff-to-Children Ratio of Resident Youth Camps***

By law, the OEC commissioner must adopt regulations on camper to staff ratios. Under the regulations, resident youth camps must maintain a camper to staff ratio of 6:1 for children less than age eight and 8:1 for campers aged eight and older. Day camps must maintain a ratio of 9:1 for campers less than age six and 12:1 for children aged six or older. In both cases, these staff must be at least age 16. These ratios must be maintained at all times, including during camp trips and outings (CGS § 19a-428 and Conn. Agencies Regs., § 19a-428-2(n)).

### ***Existing Criminal History Records Check Process***

A state criminal history records check must be requested from the State Police Bureau of Identification. The requesting party must arrange for the fingerprinting of the individual or for conducting any other method of positive identification the bureau requires (CGS § 29-17a).

### ***Mandated Reporters, Abuse or Neglect Reports, and Educational Training Program***

People in specified professions or occupations that have contact with children or whose primary focus is children are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect to DCF or a law enforcement agency.

A mandated reporter must file a report when, in the ordinary course of their employment or profession, they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child (1) has been abused or neglected; (2) is placed in imminent risk of serious harm; or (3) suffered a nonaccidental physical



injury or injury that varies from its given history. These reports must be filed as soon as practicable but no later than 12 hours after they have reasonable cause to make the report (and for oral reports, they must follow up with a written report to DCF within 48 hours).

DCF's training program and refresher training program for mandated reporters includes training on accurately and promptly identifying and reporting cases of child abuse and neglect (CGS § 17a-101(c)).

### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea    14    Nay    3    (03/06/2025)