



# Senate

General Assembly

**File No. 199**

January Session, 2025

Substitute Senate Bill No. 6

*Senate, March 25, 2025*

The Committee on Children reported through SEN. MAHER, C. of the 26th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT CONCERNING RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS FOR INFANTS, TODDLERS AND DISCONNECTED YOUTHS.***

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

1       Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) The Office of Early Childhood  
2       shall be the lead agency for administering and distributing funds under  
3       the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program, 42 USC 1766, as  
4       amended from time to time. The office shall encourage child care  
5       centers, group child care homes and family child care homes, as such  
6       terms are described in section 19a-77 of the general statutes, to  
7       participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, including, but  
8       not limited to, annually advertising the program to child care centers,  
9       group child care homes and family child care homes that are not  
10      participating in the program and through the sharing of relevant data  
11      between the office and other state agencies.

12      Sec. 2. Section 10-215h of the general statutes is repealed and the  
13      following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

14 (a) The Department of Education shall administer, within available  
15 appropriations and in collaboration with the Office of Early Childhood,  
16 a child nutrition outreach program to increase (1) participation in the  
17 federal School Breakfast Program [.] and federal Summer Food Service  
18 Program; [and federal Child and Adult Care Food Program;] and (2)  
19 federal reimbursement for [such] said programs.

20 (b) The child nutrition outreach program shall:

21 (1) Encourage schools to (A) participate in the federal School  
22 Breakfast Program; (B) employ innovative breakfast service methods  
23 where students eat their breakfast in their classrooms or elsewhere after  
24 school starts, rather than only before school and only in the cafeteria;  
25 and (C) apply to the in-classroom breakfast grant program pursuant to  
26 section 10-215g;

27 (2) (A) Encourage local and regional school districts to sponsor  
28 Summer Food Service Program sites; (B) recruit other sponsors of such  
29 sites; and (C) make grants to site sponsors to assist them in increasing  
30 child participation; and

31 [(3) Encourage child care centers, group child care homes and family  
32 child care homes, as such terms are described in section 19a-77, to  
33 participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, including, but  
34 not limited to, through the sharing of relevant data between the  
35 department and the office; and]

36 [(4)] (3) Publicize the availability of federally funded child nutrition  
37 programs throughout the state.

38 Sec. 3. Section 22 of public act 24-45 is repealed and the following is  
39 substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

40 (a) Not later than January 1, 2025, and annually thereafter, the  
41 executive board of the Connecticut Preschool Through Twenty and  
42 Workforce Information Network, established pursuant to section 10a-  
43 57g of the general statutes, shall submit [an annual] a report on  
44 disconnected youth. In developing such report, the executive board

45 shall use the data model established through the data sharing agreement  
46 0043 regarding Research on Disengaged and Disconnected Youth in  
47 Connecticut. The executive board shall submit such report to the (1) joint  
48 standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
49 matters relating to education, children, the judiciary, labor, human  
50 services, public health and appropriations, (2) Connecticut Advisory  
51 Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, established pursuant to  
52 section 2-79a of the general statutes, and (3) Two-Generational Advisory  
53 Board, established pursuant to section 17b-112/ of the general statutes,  
54 in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.  
55 On or after January first, and prior to February first, of the year  
56 following the submission of the report, the joint standing committees  
57 described in subdivision (1) of this subsection shall hold a hearing on  
58 the report. As used in this section, "disconnected youth" has the same  
59 meaning as provided in section 21 of [this act] public act 24-25.

60 (b) In developing the report for January 1, 2027, the executive board  
61 shall include a plan to incorporate data provided by the Office of Early  
62 Childhood, the Department of Developmental Services, the Connecticut  
63 State Colleges and Universities and the Office of Health Strategy  
64 through an enterprise memorandum of understanding, as defined in  
65 section 10a-57g of the general statutes. Such data provided by the Office  
66 of Early Childhood may include, but need not be limited to, child-level  
67 data regarding the child care subsidy program established pursuant to  
68 section 17b-749 of the general statutes, the birth-to-three program  
69 established pursuant to section 17a-248b of the general statutes, Early  
70 Start CT administered pursuant to section 10-550a of the general  
71 statutes, the family bridge program administered, in part, by the Office  
72 of Early Childhood, early childhood home visiting programs, as  
73 described in section 17b-751b of the general statutes, and early care and  
74 education programs. Such data provided by the Office of Health  
75 Strategy may include, but need not be limited to, data from the all-payer  
76 claims database program established pursuant to section 19a-755a of the  
77 general statutes.

78 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) As used in this section,

79 "kindergarten preparatory academy" means any kindergarten  
80 preparation program established by a local or regional board of  
81 education that enrolls students who turn five years of age on or after  
82 September first of the school year and who are not eligible to enroll in  
83 school during such school year pursuant to section 10-15c of the general  
84 statutes.

85 (b) Not later than July 1, 2026, the Department of Education shall  
86 develop guidance for local and regional boards of education concerning  
87 the administration of kindergarten preparatory academies. Such  
88 guidance shall include, but need not be limited to, information  
89 concerning (1) the availability of grants or subsidies for meals or lunches  
90 for students enrolled in a kindergarten preparatory academy, including  
91 such grants or subsidies through the federal Child and Adult Care Food  
92 Program, 42 USC 1766, as amended from time to time, and free or  
93 reduced-price lunches, (2) whether the families of students enrolled in a  
94 kindergarten preparatory academy are eligible for subsidies under the  
95 child care subsidy program pursuant to section 17b-749 of the general  
96 statutes, (3) whether students enrolled in a kindergarten preparatory  
97 academy may count as resident students, as defined in section 10-262f  
98 of the general statutes, for purposes of equalization aid under section  
99 10-262h of the general statutes, and (4) whether the regulations adopted  
100 by the State Board of Education or the Commissioner of Early  
101 Childhood govern the administration of a kindergarten preparatory  
102 academy, including regulations relating to student-to-teacher ratios,  
103 parental involvement and notification procedures, recess, removal from  
104 the classroom, special education identification and curriculum  
105 requirements.

106 (c) The department shall make such guidance available, upon  
107 request, to a local or regional board of education and shall post such  
108 guidance on the department's Internet web site.

109 Sec. 5. Section 10-506 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
110 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

111 (a) For the fiscal year ending June 30, [2025] 2026, and each fiscal year

112 thereafter, the Office of Early Childhood, in consultation with the  
113 Department of Education, shall design and administer the Connecticut  
114 Smart Start competitive grant program to provide grants to local and  
115 regional boards of education for capital and operating expenses related  
116 to establishing or expanding a preschool program under the jurisdiction  
117 of the board of education for the town or for establishing or expanding  
118 a kindergarten preparatory academy, as defined in section 4 of this act.  
119 A local or regional board of education may submit an application to the  
120 office, in accordance with the provisions of subsection (b) of this section,  
121 and may receive (1) a grant for capital expenses in an amount not to  
122 exceed [seventy-five] one hundred five thousand dollars per classroom  
123 for costs related to the renovation of an existing public school to  
124 accommodate the establishment or expansion of a preschool program or  
125 a kindergarten preparatory academy, and (2) an annual grant for  
126 operating expenses (A) in an amount not to exceed [five] seven  
127 thousand dollars per child served by such grant, or (B) in an amount not  
128 to exceed [seventy-five] one hundred five thousand dollars for each  
129 preschool classroom. Each local or regional board of education that  
130 establishes or expands a preschool program or a kindergarten  
131 preparatory academy under this section shall be eligible to receive an  
132 annual grant for operating expenses for a period of five years, provided  
133 such preschool program meets standards established by the  
134 Commissioner of Early Childhood. Such local or regional board of  
135 education may submit an application for renewal of such grant to the  
136 office.

137 (b) On and after July 1, [2014] 2025, local and regional boards of  
138 education, individually or cooperatively, pursuant to section 10-158a,  
139 may apply, at such time and in such manner as the commissioner  
140 prescribes, to the office for a capital grant and an operating grant for the  
141 purposes described in subsection (a) of this section. To be eligible to  
142 receive such grants under this section, an applicant board of education  
143 shall (1) demonstrate that it has a need for establishing or expanding (A)  
144 a preschool program using information requested by the commissioner  
145 on a form prescribed by the commissioner, such as data collected from  
146 the preschool experience survey, described in section 10-515, or (B) a

147 kindergarten preparatory academy, (2) submit a plan for the  
148 expenditure of grant funds received under this section that outlines how  
149 such board of education will use such funds to establish or expand a  
150 preschool program or a kindergarten preparatory academy, including,  
151 but not limited to, the amount that such board will contribute to the  
152 operation of such preschool program or kindergarten preparatory  
153 academy and how such board of education will provide access to  
154 preschool for children who would not otherwise be able to enroll in a  
155 preschool program or provide access to a kindergarten preparatory  
156 academy for children who would not otherwise be able to enroll in  
157 kindergarten pursuant to section 10-15c, and (3) submit a letter of  
158 support for establishing or expanding a preschool program by the local  
159 or regional school readiness council, described in section 10-16r, if any,  
160 for the school district. The commissioner shall give priority to boards of  
161 education (A) that demonstrate the greatest need for the establishment  
162 or expansion of a preschool program or a kindergarten preparatory  
163 academy, and (B) whose plan allocates at least sixty per cent of the  
164 spaces in such preschool program to children who are members of  
165 families who are at or below seventy-five per cent of the state median  
166 income. The commissioner, in reviewing applications submitted under  
167 this subsection, shall also take into consideration (i) whether an  
168 applicant board of education (I) currently offers a full-day kindergarten  
169 program, (II) will be cooperating and coordinating with other  
170 governmental and community programs to provide services during  
171 periods when the preschool program or kindergarten preparatory  
172 academy is not in session, or (III) will collaborate with other boards of  
173 education, as part of a cooperative arrangement pursuant to section 10-  
174 158a, to offer a regional preschool program, and (ii) current community  
175 capacity for preschool programs or a kindergarten preparatory  
176 academy and current opportunities for preschool for children in the  
177 community.

178 (c) A preschool program or a kindergarten preparatory academy  
179 created or expanded under this section shall (1) contain a classroom  
180 with an individual who holds certification pursuant to section 10-145b  
181 with an endorsement in early childhood education or early childhood

182 special education and is an employee of the board of education  
183 providing a preschool program or a kindergarten preparatory academy  
184 under this section, (2) maintain a classroom size and teacher-child ratio  
185 that is in compliance with standards established by the National  
186 Association for the Education of Young Children, (3) obtain  
187 accreditation, as described in section 10-16p, not later than three years  
188 after the creation or expansion of the preschool program, and (4) be  
189 located in a public school or in a space maintained by an early care and  
190 education and child development program provider, pursuant to an  
191 agreement between a board of education and such early care and  
192 education and child development program provider.

193 (d) Each local or regional board of education receiving a grant under  
194 this section shall submit an annual report, on a form and in a manner  
195 prescribed by the commissioner, to the Office of Early Childhood  
196 regarding the status and operation of the preschool program.

197 (e) A local or regional board of education receiving grant funds under  
198 this section may implement a sliding fee scale for the cost of services  
199 provided to children enrolled in such preschool program.

200 Sec. 6. Subdivision (3) of section 19a-420 of the general statutes is  
201 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
202 *2025*):

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

210 Sec. 7. Subsection (a) of section 19a-421 of the general statutes is  
211 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
212 *2025*):

213 (a) No person or municipal agency shall establish, conduct or  
214 maintain a youth camp without a license issued by the office.  
215 Applications for such license shall be made in writing at least thirty days  
216 prior to the opening of the youth camp on forms provided and in  
217 accordance with procedures established by the commissioner and shall  
218 be accompanied by a fee of eight hundred fifteen dollars or, if the  
219 applicant is a nonprofit, nonstock corporation or association, a fee of  
220 three hundred fifteen dollars or, if the applicant is a day camp affiliated  
221 with a nonprofit organization, for no more than five days duration and  
222 for which labor and materials are donated, no fee. All such licenses shall  
223 be valid for a period of one year from the date of issuance unless  
224 surrendered for cancellation or suspended or revoked by the  
225 commissioner for violation of this chapter or any regulations adopted  
226 under section 19a-428 and shall be renewable upon payment of an eight-  
227 hundred-fifteen-dollar license fee or, if the licensee is a nonprofit,  
228 nonstock corporation or association, a three-hundred-fifteen-dollar  
229 license fee or, if the applicant is a day camp affiliated with a nonprofit  
230 organization, for no more than five days duration and for which labor  
231 and materials are donated, no fee.

232 Sec. 8. Subsection (a) of section 10-16z of the general statutes is  
233 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
234 *2025*):

235 (a) There is established the Early Childhood Cabinet. The cabinet  
236 shall consist of: (1) The Commissioner of Early Childhood, or the  
237 commissioner's designee, (2) the Commissioner of Education, or the  
238 commissioner's designee, (3) the Commissioner of Social Services, or the  
239 commissioner's designee, (4) the chancellor of the Connecticut State  
240 Colleges and Universities, or the chancellor's designee, (5) the  
241 Commissioner of Public Health, or the commissioner's designee, (6) the  
242 Commissioner of Developmental Services, or the commissioner's  
243 designee, (7) the Commissioner of Children and Families, or the  
244 commissioner's designee, (8) the executive director of the Commission  
245 on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity or the executive  
246 director's designee, (9) the project director of the Connecticut Head Start



247 State Collaboration Office, (10) a parent or guardian of a child who  
248 attends or attended a school readiness program appointed by the  
249 minority leader of the House of Representatives, (11) a representative of  
250 a local provider of early childhood education appointed by the minority  
251 leader of the Senate, (12) a representative of the Connecticut Family  
252 Resource Center Alliance appointed by the majority leader of the House  
253 of Representatives, (13) a representative of a state-funded child care  
254 center appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, (14) two  
255 appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, one of whom  
256 is a member of a board of education for a town designated as an alliance  
257 district, as defined in section 10-262u, and one of whom is a parent who  
258 has a child attending a school in an educational reform district, as  
259 defined in section 10-262u, (15) two appointed by the president pro  
260 tempore of the Senate, one of whom is a representative of an association  
261 of early education and child care providers and one of whom is a  
262 representative of a public elementary school with a prekindergarten  
263 program, (16) ten appointed by the Governor, one of whom is a  
264 representative of the Connecticut Head Start Association, one of whom  
265 is a representative of the business community in this state, one of whom  
266 is a representative of the philanthropic community in this state, one of  
267 whom is a representative of the Connecticut State Employees  
268 Association, one of whom is an administrator of the child care  
269 development block grant pursuant to the Child Care and Development  
270 Block Grant Act of 1990, one of whom is responsible for administering  
271 grants received under section 1419 of Part B of the Individuals with  
272 Disabilities Education Act, 20 USC 1419, as amended from time to time,  
273 one of whom is responsible for administering the provisions of Title I of  
274 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 USC 6301 et seq., one  
275 of whom is responsible for coordinating education services to children  
276 and youth who are homeless, one of whom is a licensed family child  
277 care home provider and a member of a staffed family child care network  
278 identified by the Commissioner of Early Childhood, and one of whom  
279 is a parent recommended by a parent advisory group that has been  
280 appointed by the Commissioner of Early Childhood, (17) the Secretary  
281 of the Office of Policy and Management, or the secretary's designee, (18)

282 the Lieutenant Governor, or the Lieutenant Governor's designee, (19)  
283 the Commissioner of Housing, or the commissioner's designee, [and]  
284 (20) the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, or the  
285 commissioner's designee, and (21) the executive director of the  
286 Connecticut Library Consortium, or a cooperating library service unit,  
287 as defined in section 11-9e, or the executive director's designee.

288 Sec. 9. Section 10-514 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
289 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

290 (a) Not later than January 1, 2020, the Office of Early Childhood shall  
291 create, and update as necessary, a one-page document that (1) lists  
292 important developmental milestones experienced by children ages birth  
293 to five years, and (2) contains notice that any parent or guardian who is  
294 concerned that such parent or guardian's child has not met one or more  
295 such developmental milestones may access the Office of Early  
296 Childhood Child Development Infoline for information concerning  
297 appropriate services, and the Help Me Grow program under the Office  
298 of Early Childhood, pursuant to section 17b-751d, for information  
299 concerning (A) access to developmental screening and evaluation  
300 programs at no cost to parents and guardians for children ages birth to  
301 five years, (B) connections to community and in-home programs and  
302 services, (C) support for parenting and healthy child development, and  
303 (D) early intervention and special education services for children ages  
304 birth to five years. The office shall make such document available on its  
305 Internet web site.

306 (b) On and after July 1, 2024, each operator of a child care center,  
307 group child care home or family child care home, as described in section  
308 19a-77, other than those centers or homes that serve school-age children  
309 exclusively, shall post a copy of the document developed pursuant to  
310 subsection (a) of this section in a conspicuous place on the premises of  
311 such child care center, group child care home or family child care home.

312 Sec. 10. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) The Office of Early Childhood  
313 shall conduct a quarterly review to determine the number of children  
314 who were referred to the birth-to-three program, established pursuant

315 to section 17a-248b of the general statutes, and who were subsequently  
316 determined to be ineligible for the birth-to-three program, and the  
317 reasons for such children's ineligibility. The office shall provide notice  
318 to the parents or guardians for each such child determined to be  
319 ineligible for the birth-to-three program that such child may receive  
320 additional supports and services under the Help Me Grow program that  
321 is under said office pursuant to section 17b-751d of the general statutes.  
322 The office shall collect information for any such child that receives  
323 supports and services under the Help Me Grow program, including, but  
324 not limited to, the types of supports and services received by such child  
325 and any information relating to additional referrals for such child.

326       Sec. 11. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) The Office of Early Childhood  
327 shall provide, through the Help Me Grow program that is under said  
328 office pursuant to section 17b-751d of the general statutes, trainings and  
329 other social, educational and workforce support to teenage parents in  
330 those communities with teen birth rates greater than ten per cent,  
331 according to the most recent data collected by the Department of Public  
332 Health.

333       Sec. 12. (*Effective July 1, 2025*) The Office of Early Childhood shall  
334 develop a report on the office's utilization of the mobile application that  
335 provides parents and guardians with children ages birth to five years  
336 with mobile developmental screening, promotion and linkage to  
337 supports. Such report shall address the following areas: (1) How the  
338 mobile application assesses whether or how much children and families  
339 are learning, (2) the intended and achieved outcomes of the coaching  
340 sessions provided by the mobile application, including whether the  
341 mobile application measures the working alliance between the coach  
342 and the parents or guardians, (3) whether the mobile application is  
343 promoting healthy early brain development, and, if so, how such brain  
344 development is being measured, (4) how results are being provided to  
345 parents and guardians, (5) whether the children in families using the  
346 mobile application are growing and developing over time, and how the  
347 mobile application measures and tracks such growth and development  
348 over time, and (6) how the mobile application is linking families with

349 health and education providers and whether the mobile application is  
 350 assisting in the establishment of care teams and coordinated services for  
 351 families. Not later than January 1, 2026, the office shall submit such  
 352 report to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having  
 353 cognizance of matters relating to children, in accordance with the  
 354 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

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>	10-215h
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	PA 24-45, Sec. 22
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10-506
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	19a-420(3)
Sec. 7	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	19a-421(a)
Sec. 8	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10-16z(a)
Sec. 9	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	10-514
Sec. 10	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 11	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 12	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section

***Statement of Legislative Commissioners:***

In Sections 10 and 11, "that is under said office pursuant to section 17b-751d of the general statutes" was inserted after "Help Me Grow program" for clarity, and in Section 12, "Sparkler" was deleted for consistency with standard drafting conventions.

***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:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Treasurer, Debt Serv.	GF - See Below	See Below	See Below
Office of Early Childhood	GF - Cost	At least \$2.2 million	At least \$2 million
Education, Dept.	GF - Potential Cost	See Below	See Below

Note: GF=General Fund

### **Municipal Impact:**

Municipalities	Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Various Municipalities	Cost	See Below	See Below

## **Explanation**

**Section 1** results in a potential cost in FY 26 and FY 27 to the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) to the extent that the agency will need to hire new staff positions to administer the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which is currently administered by the State Department of Education (SDE). Based on an analysis of expenditures in CORE CT, it is estimated that SDE manages \$20 million annually in federal funding for program services. Additionally, SDE currently has four positions, with salary costs of \$482,700 associated with this program.<sup>1</sup> Two of these positions, with costs of \$302,000, are funded via the General Fund and the other two (\$180,700) are federally funded.

Beginning in FY 26, OEC will incur costs if SDE staff and resources

<sup>1</sup> It is unclear if these positions have responsibilities with SDE outside of administering the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

are not transferred to OEC to administer and operate the program.

**Section 4** requires SDE to develop guidance relating to the administration of kindergarten preparatory academies by July 1, 2026 (FY 27). While SDE can complete the guidance with existing resources, the costs of implementing the guidance may be significant to SDE and local and regional boards of education.

The guidance produced by SDE will include whether students enrolled in a kindergarten preparatory academy may count as resident students in the ECS formula. If SDE guidance determines that such students will be included in the ECS formula, the subsequent increase in a town's resident student count (for towns that offer a kindergarten academy) may lead to increased ECS costs for SDE and a corresponding revenue gain to local and regional boards of education. Towns' projected FY 26 ECS grants under current law range from \$115 to \$12,294 per student. The cost to SDE and revenue gain to boards of education associated with increased ECS resident students would occur as enrollment increases (as early as FY 27). The extent of these impacts for a town would be dependent on the number of kindergarten academy students and the town's other ECS formula factors. Towns with lower wealth and higher-need student populations would experience a larger revenue gain.

Other components of the guidance prescribed by the bill (e.g., the student-teacher ratio) may impact the cost to a local or regional Board of Education of providing a kindergarten academy. It is estimated that running a PreK program, which would likely be comparable to a kindergarten academy, currently costs a board of education \$3,000 to \$22,000 per student.

**Section 5** expands eligible uses of funding under the Smart Start capital grant, which is funded through General Obligation (GO) bond funds. Future General Fund debt service costs may be incurred or incurred sooner due to the program's expansion to the degree that it causes authorized GO bond funds to be expended or to be expended more quickly than they otherwise would have been.

As of March 1, 2025, there is an unallocated bond balance of \$45 million for the Smart Start capital grant. The bill does not change GO bond authorizations.

To the extent school districts pursue and are awarded grants under the program expansion, there would be a potential increase in revenue to such districts.

Section 5 also results in a cost to OEC related to 1) increasing operating expense grants from \$5,000 to \$7,000 per child served by the grant, or 2) from \$75,000 to \$105,000 per preschool classroom for a period of five years. The total cost is dependent on the number of grants issued.

**Sections 6 and 7** require municipal youth camps to obtain a license from OEC and extends various licensure requirements including immunizations, medication administration inspections, and criminal background checks to the municipal youth camps. This results in a cost to various municipalities beginning in FY 26 for the license fee and resources to meet the other licensure requirements.<sup>2</sup> Municipalities that do not have municipal youth camps will have no fiscal impact.

OEC would also incur total costs of at least \$1.8 million in FY 26 and FY 27 to create a unit to license municipal youth camps. These costs are driven primarily by new staffing, of which approximately \$1.2 million is for salaries and \$300,000 is for associated fringe benefits. At least \$300,000 is also needed for additional operational costs, including car rentals, fuel, and IT support.

The new full-time positions include at least: 1) one Social Services Program Manager (\$116,635 base salary and \$47,482 in associated fringe benefits), 2) two Child Care Licensing Supervisors (\$103,295 base salary and \$42,051 in associated fringe benefits), 3) two Environmental Sanitarian 1s (\$72,552 base salary with \$29,536 in associated fringe benefits), 4) two Processing Technicians (\$63,748 base salary with

---

<sup>2</sup> License fees are \$815 for for-profit camps and \$315 for nonprofit camps. These must be renewed annually.

\$25,952 in associated fringe benefits), and 5) one Secretary 2 (\$63,748 base salary with \$25,952 in associated fringe benefits).

The new part-time positions include at least: 1) two 24-week Environmental Sanitarian 1s, 2) 20 8-week Environmental Sanitarian 1s, and 3) two 8-week Processing Technicians.

**Section 10** results in a cost in FY 26 and FY 27 to OEC of approximately \$208,788 to hire one Associate Research Analyst to collect data and conduct a quarterly review to determine how many children referred to the Birth-to-Three were deemed ineligible, and the reasons for their ineligibility. For reference, the average starting salary is \$148,382 with associated fringe benefits of \$60,406.

**Section 12** results in a cost in FY 26 to OEC of at least \$200,000 to hire a consultant to design, develop, and conduct a study of the Sparkler app metrics outlined in this section.

**Sections 2-3, 8-9, and 11** make technical, clarifying, or conforming changes that do not result in a fiscal impact.

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

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to any bonds issued and future grant awards.



---

**OLR Bill Analysis****sSB 6*****AN ACT CONCERNING RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS FOR INFANTS, TODDLERS AND DISCONNECTED YOUTHS.***

## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

[SUMMARY](#)[§§ 1 & 2 — CACFP ADMINISTRATION OF CACFP](#)

Designates OEC, instead of SDE, the lead agency for administering and distributing CACFP funds

[§ 3 — ANNUAL REPORT ON DISCONNECTED YOUTH](#)

Requires P20WIN to submit its annual report to the Connecticut Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations and the Two-Generational Advisory Board; requires the legislature to hold a hearing on each annual report; requires P20WIN, when preparing its 2027 annual report, to incorporate data provided by specified state agencies and sets related requirements

[§ 4 — KINDERGARTEN PREPARATORY ACADEMIES](#)

Requires SDE to develop guidance for local and regional boards of education on administering kindergarten preparatory academies

[§ 5 — CONNECTICUT SMART START COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM](#)

Increases maximum grant amounts awarded under the Connecticut Smart Start Competitive Grant Program and allows grants to be used to establish or expand kindergarten preparatory academies

[§§ 6 & 7 — MUNICIPAL YOUTH CAMPS](#)

Subjects municipal youth camps to OEC licensure, which they are exempt from under current law

[§ 8 — EARLY CHILDHOOD CABINET MEMBERSHIP](#)

Adds the Connecticut Library Consortium's executive director to the membership of the Early Childhood Cabinet

[§§ 9-11 — BIRTH-TO-THREE AND HELP ME GROW PROGRAMS](#)

Requires OEC to (1) update and expand the content of its one-page developmental milestone document, (2) conduct a quarterly review of children deemed ineligible for Birth-to-Three, and (3) provide certain supports to teen parents through the Help Me Grow program

#### § 12 — SPARKLER MOBILE APPLICATION

Requires OEC to develop a report on its use of the Sparkler mobile application and submit its report to the Committee on Children by January 1, 2026

### **SUMMARY**

This bill contains various provisions affecting resources and supports for infants, toddlers, and disconnected youth.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

### **§§ 1 & 2 — CACFP ADMINISTRATION OF CACFP**

*Designates OEC, instead of SDE, the lead agency for administering and distributing CACFP funds*

The bill designates the Office of Early Childhood (OEC), instead of the State Department of Education (SDE), as the lead agency for administering and distributing federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) funds.

It correspondingly requires OEC, rather than SDE, to encourage child care centers and group and family child care homes to participate in the program, including by (1) annually advertising the program to non-participating child care centers and group and family child care homes and (2) sharing relevant data between the office and other state agencies.

The bill also makes related technical and conforming changes.

### **§ 3 — ANNUAL REPORT ON DISCONNECTED YOUTH**

*Requires P20WIN to submit its annual report to the Connecticut Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations and the Two-Generational Advisory Board; requires the legislature to hold a hearing on each annual report; requires P20WIN, when preparing its 2027 annual report, to incorporate data provided by specified state agencies and sets related requirements*

By law, the executive board of the Connecticut Preschool Through Twenty and Workforce Information Network (P20WIN) must submit an

annual report on disconnected youth (i.e. certain youth ages 14 to 26 who are at-risk students and not enrolled in high school) to the Appropriations, Children, Education, Human Services, Judiciary, Labor and Public Employees, and Public Health committees. The bill additionally requires the board to give the annual report to the Connecticut Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations and the Two-Generational Advisory Board.

Under the bill, the legislative committees listed above must hold a hearing on the report between January 1 and February 1 in the year after the report's submission.

Additionally, the bill requires the executive board, when preparing its January 1, 2027, report, to include a plan to incorporate data provided by OEC, the Department of Developmental Services, Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, and the Office of Health Strategy (OHS) through an enterprise memorandum of understanding (MOU) (see *Background — Enterprise MOU*).

Under the bill, this data may at least include the following: (1) OEC child-level data on the Care 4 Kids program, Birth-to-Three Program, Early Start CT, Family Bridge Program, early childhood home visiting programs, and early care and education programs, and (2) OHS data from the all-payer claims database.

### ***Background — Enterprise MOU***

By law, an “enterprise MOU” is a foundational, multiparty agreement that sets forth details of how data is shared and the respective legal rights and responsibilities of each party to the process, which may also be used for new agencies to sign on to the data-sharing process, without having to re-sign as agencies sign on (or off) the agreement.

## **§ 4 — KINDERGARTEN PREPARATORY ACADEMIES**

*Requires SDE to develop guidance for local and regional boards of education on administering kindergarten preparatory academies*

The bill requires SDE, by January 1, 2026, to develop guidance for local and regional education boards on administering kindergarten

preparatory academies. These programs enroll students who turn five years old on or after September 1 of the school year and are ineligible to enroll in school that year.

Under the bill, the guidance must include information on the following:

1. the availability of meal and lunch grants or subsidies, including those offered through CACFP, for enrolled students;
2. whether families of enrolled students are eligible for Care 4 Kids subsidies;
3. whether OEC or State Board of Education regulations govern the administration of these academies, including regulations on student-to-teacher ratios, parental involvement and notification procedures, recess, classroom removal, special education identification, and curriculum requirements; and
4. whether these students qualify as “resident students” for purposes of education cost sharing (see *Background — Resident Students*).

The bill requires SDE to post the guidance on its website and make it available to local and regional school boards, upon request.

### ***Background — Resident Students***

“Resident students” is generally the number of students in a town enrolled in its public schools at the town’s expense as of October 1 each year. This definition additionally includes students who are enrolled in schools outside their hometown, such as magnet and vocational-agriculture schools and students in the Open Choice program.

The number of resident students is used as part of various education-related funding calculations, such as cost sharing grants and choice program grants. For Open Choice students, they are counted as 50% in the town the student resides in and 50% in the town where they attend school.

## **§ 5 — CONNECTICUT SMART START COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM**

*Increases maximum grant amounts awarded under the Connecticut Smart Start Competitive Grant Program and allows grants to be used to establish or expand kindergarten preparatory academies*

Under current law, the Connecticut Smart Start Competitive Grant Program provides grants for capital and operating expenses for local and regional boards of education to establish or expand preschool programs. The bill also allows school boards to use the grants to establish or expand kindergarten preparatory academies and makes related conforming changes.

Additionally, the bill increases the program's maximum grant amounts as follows:

1. for capital grants, from \$75,000 to \$105,000 per classroom to renovate an existing public school to accommodate or expand a preschool program or kindergarten preparatory academy and
2. for annual operating expenses grants, (a) from \$5,000 to \$7,000 per child served by the grant or (b) from \$75,000 to \$105,000 per preschool classroom for a period of five years, as long as the program continues to meet OEC standards.

Under existing law and the bill, to be eligible for a grant, an applicant board must demonstrate that they have a need to establish or expand a preschool program or kindergarten preparatory academy, submit a plan for spending grant funds, and submit a letter of support from the local or regional school readiness council, if applicable.

## **§§ 6 & 7 — MUNICIPAL YOUTH CAMPS**

*Subjects municipal youth camps to OEC licensure, which they are exempt from under current law*

The bill subjects municipal youth camps (those serving children ages 3 to 16) to state oversight by requiring them to obtain a license from OEC. Currently, municipal day camps are exempt from state licensure.

In doing so, the bill extends to municipal youth camps existing

licensure requirements for non-municipal youth camps, including requirements related to immunizations, medication administration, inspections and investigations, criminal background checks, and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect.

As under existing law, municipal day camps must apply to OEC for a license at least 30 days before opening the camp and pay the associated fee (currently \$815 for for-profit camps and \$315 for nonprofit camps). Licenses must be renewed annually.

Under the bill, OEC may take various disciplinary actions against municipal youth camps under existing law, such as license suspension or revocation.

## **§ 8 — EARLY CHILDHOOD CABINET MEMBERSHIP**

*Adds the Connecticut Library Consortium's executive director to the membership of the Early Childhood Cabinet*

The bill increases the Early Childhood Cabinet's membership, from 31 to 32, by adding the Connecticut Library Consortium's executive director.

By law, the Early Childhood Cabinet (1) advises OEC, (2) develops an annual action plan that assigns state agencies certain tasks specified in the federal Head Start Act, and (3) submits an annual state-wide strategic report that addresses agencies' progress in meeting the action plan's requirements.

## **§§ 9-11 — BIRTH-TO-THREE AND HELP ME GROW PROGRAMS**

*Requires OEC to (1) update and expand the content of its one-page developmental milestone document, (2) conduct a quarterly review of children deemed ineligible for Birth-to-Three, and (3) provide certain supports to teen parents through the Help Me Grow program*

The bill makes various changes to notice and information collection requirements related to OEC's Help Me Grow and Birth-to-Three programs (see *Background*).

It requires OEC to update, as needed, its one-page developmental document required under existing law. Currently, the document must

(1) list key developmental milestones for children from birth to age five and (2) notify parents and guardians concerned that their child has not yet met any developmental milestones that they may access the OEC Child Development Infoline for information on appropriate services.

The bill additionally requires the document to notify parents and guardians that they may also access the Help Me Grow program for information on the following:

1. accessing no-cost developmental screening and evaluation programs for children ages birth to five,
2. connecting to community and in-home programs and services,
3. parenting and healthy child development supports, and
4. early intervention and special education services.

Under the bill, OEC must also do the following:

1. conduct a quarterly review to determine how many children referred to the Birth-to-Three program were deemed ineligible and why;
2. notify parents and guardians of ineligible children that they may receive additional supports and services from the Help Me Grow program;
3. collect information on these ineligible children including (a) the types of supports and services and (b) additional referrals they receive under the Help Me Grow program; and
4. provide, through the Help Me Grow program, trainings and other social, educational, and workforce supports to teen parents in communities with teen birth rates greater than 10% (according to the Department of Public Health's most recent data).

### **Background — Birth-to-Three**

By law, the Birth-to-Three program is designed to strengthen

families' capacities to meet the developmental and health-related needs of their infants and toddlers who have developmental delays or disabilities. Generally, to be eligible for the program a child must (1) live in Connecticut, (2) be younger than three, and (3) have a developmental delay or a medical condition that most likely will result in a developmental delay.

### ***Background — Help Me Grow Program***

By law, the Help Me Grow program identifies children at risk for developmental or behavioral problems and connects them to existing community resources. Program components include, among other things, (1) training child health providers in effective developmental surveillance; (2) creating a resource inventory of community-based programs supporting child development and families; (3) developing a coordinated, statewide referral system that links young children and families to existing services and support; and (4) collecting data and analyses of children's developmental status and statewide resources.

## **§ 12 — SPARKLER MOBILE APPLICATION**

*Requires OEC to develop a report on its use of the Sparkler mobile application and submit its report to the Committee on Children by January 1, 2026*

The bill requires OEC to develop a report on its use of the "Sparkler" mobile application (see *Background — Sparkler Mobile Application*).

Under the bill, the report must address the following:

1. how Sparkler assesses whether or how much children and families are learning;
2. the intended and achieved outcomes of its coaching sessions, including whether the application measures the working alliance between the coach and parent or guardian;
3. whether Sparkler promotes early healthy brain development, and if so, how that development is measured;
4. how results are given to parents and guardians;



5. whether children are growing and developing over time and how the application measures and tracks this development; and
6. how Sparkler links families with health and education providers and whether it helps establish care teams and coordinated services.

The bill requires OEC to submit its report to the Committee on Children by January 1, 2026.

***Background — Sparkler Mobile Application***

Sparkler is a mobile application that gives parents and guardians with children ages birth to five social and emotional developmental screenings. The application (1) tracks children's developmental progress, (2) provides information on activities that can promote development, and (3) provides access to 211's early childhood providers and care coordinators.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea    12    Nay    5    (03/06/2025)