



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 6

January Session, 2025



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 Section 10-215h of the general statutes is repealed and the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.*