



General Assembly

***Substitute Bill No. 1369***

*January Session, 2025*



***AN ACT CONCERNING CHILD CARE SUPPORT FOR  
CONNECTICUT'S WORKFORCE.***

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

1       Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) There is established the  
2       Workforce Child Care Program and Portal to assist working families  
3       with the cost of child care and to provide financial assistance to early  
4       care and education program providers to support operational and  
5       workforce needs. The program shall be administered by the Early  
6       Childhood Care and Education Fund Advisory Commission,  
7       established pursuant to section 10-511a of the general statutes.

8       (b) Eligibility for participation in the program shall be limited to the  
9       following:

10       (1) Any family (A) with a child or children under thirteen years of  
11       age, (B) with an individual who is employed, and (C) that is not  
12       currently receiving a subsidy or other financial assistance from or  
13       enrolled in (i) a Head Start or Early Head Start program, (ii) the child  
14       care subsidy program, established pursuant to section 17b-749 of the  
15       general statutes, (iii) an early care and education program receiving  
16       financial assistance under Early Start CT pursuant to section 10-550b of  
17       the general statutes, (iv) a preschool program under the Connecticut  
18       Smart Start competitive grant program pursuant to section 10-506 of the

19 general statutes, (v) the temporary family assistance program pursuant  
20 to section 17b-112 of the general statutes, (vi) foster care placements or  
21 certified relative foster care placements through the Department of  
22 Children and Families, or (vii) any other state or federal program from  
23 which the family is receiving a subsidy or financial assistance for child  
24 care; and

25 (2) Any licensed provider of an early care and education program in  
26 the state providing child care services, as described in section 19a-77 of  
27 the general statutes, including, but not limited to, before-school and  
28 after-school programs, summer camps and youth camps.

29 (c) As part of the program, the cost of child care charged by a  
30 participating early care and education program provider to an eligible  
31 family shall not exceed seven per cent of the annual household income  
32 of such eligible family.

33 (d) The Early Childhood Care and Education Fund Advisory  
34 Commission shall authorize payments from the Early Childhood Care  
35 and Education Fund, established pursuant to section 10-511 of the  
36 general statutes, as follows:

37 (1) For grants to participating early care and education program  
38 providers, in accordance with sliding scale subsidy guidelines  
39 developed by the board, to implement the provisions of subsection (c)  
40 of this section.

41 (2) To implement the early childhood care and education salary  
42 enhancement grant program in accordance with the provisions of  
43 sections 4 and 5 of this act.

44 (3) For grants to employees of early care and education programs for  
45 (A) professional development, (B) scholarships for associate and  
46 bachelor's degrees, certifications and advanced training, and (C)  
47 retention incentives, including, but not limited to, performance-based  
48 bonuses and retention grants.

49       (4) For capital improvements, including renovations, structural  
50 upgrades and purchasing equipment and materials, in order for child  
51 care facilities to meet health and safety standards, expand capacity and  
52 enhance educational resources.

53       (5) To develop and maintain the Workforce Child Care Program  
54 enrollment portal, as described in section 3 of this act.

55       (e) On and after July 1, 2027, the Early Childhood Care and Education  
56 Fund Advisory Commission may expand the program and portal to  
57 authorize payments from the Early Childhood Care and Education  
58 Fund for (1) enrollment in before-school and after-school programs,  
59 summer camps and youth camps, and (2) emergency access and  
60 coverage for three months for parents and guardians who are not  
61 employed, provided the fund will maintain solvency in the subsequent  
62 fiscal year following such program expansion.

63       (f) Not later than January 1, 2029, and annually thereafter, the Early  
64 Childhood Care and Education Fund Advisory Commission shall  
65 prepare a report on the implementation of the program and portal. Such  
66 report shall include, but need not be limited to, (1) the number of eligible  
67 families and participating providers in the program, an analysis of how  
68 the program has impacted the child care workforce and child care  
69 accessibility and if the program has had an effect on economic growth  
70 in the state, and (2) any recommendations for improvements or  
71 enhancements to the program. The board shall submit such report to the  
72 joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
73 matters relating to children in accordance with the provisions of section  
74 11-4a of the general statutes.

75       Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) As used in this section:

76       (1) "Employer" means any person, firm, business, educational  
77 institution, nonprofit agency, corporation, limited liability company or  
78 other entity that employs more than two hundred employees in the state  
79 and is required to deduct and withhold taxes from wages pursuant to  
80 section 12-705 of the general statutes. "Employer" does not include any

81 early care and education program provider; and

82 (2) "Payroll expense" means (A) wages, as defined in Section 3121 of  
83 the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or any subsequent corresponding  
84 internal revenue code of the United States, as amended from time to  
85 time, without regard to Section 3121(a)(1) of said code, and (B)  
86 compensation, as defined in Section 3231 of said code, without regard  
87 to Section 3231(e)(2)(A)(i) of said code, that are paid to all covered  
88 employees.

89 (b) On and after January 1, 2026, each employer shall pay a tax on  
90 such employer's payroll expense at the following rate: For the taxable  
91 year commencing January 1, 2026, one and one-half per cent of such  
92 employer's payroll expense during the year.

93 (c) All amounts collected under this section shall be deposited in the  
94 Early Childhood Care and Education Fund, established pursuant to  
95 section 10-511 of the general statutes.

96 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) The Early Childhood Care and  
97 Education Fund Advisory Commission, in collaboration with the Office  
98 of Early Childhood, shall develop a centralized online enrollment portal  
99 for families to apply for (1) participation in the Workforce Child Care  
100 Program and Portal, established pursuant to section 1 of this act, and (2)  
101 a subsidy or other state or federal financial assistance for child care  
102 under (A) a Head Start or Early Head Start program, (B) the child care  
103 subsidy program, established pursuant to section 17b-749 of the general  
104 statutes, (C) an early care and education program receiving financial  
105 assistance under Early Start CT pursuant to section 10-550b of the  
106 general statutes, (D) a preschool program under the Connecticut Smart  
107 Start competitive grant program pursuant to section 10-506 of the  
108 general statutes, (E) temporary family assistance program pursuant to  
109 section 17b-112 of the general statutes, (F) foster care placements or  
110 certified relative foster care placements through the Department of  
111 Children and Families, or (G) any other state or federal program for  
112 child care assistance.

113 (b) For applicants seeking participation in the Workforce Child Care  
114 Program and Portal, the enrollment portal shall (1) enable families  
115 seeking to participate in the program and portal to determine eligibility  
116 and apply for a subsidy, (2) allow early care and education program  
117 providers to participate in the program and portal, (3) facilitate the  
118 connection of participating providers and eligible families by providing  
119 opportunities for eligible families to enroll in participating provider  
120 programs, (4) ensure secure data management to protect applicant  
121 information and privacy and system integrity, and (5) include  
122 provisions for special enrollment periods for life events, including job  
123 loss, income changes and new parenthood.

124 (c) Any child who is enrolled in an early care and education program  
125 through the enrollment portal shall be assigned a state-assigned student  
126 identifier.

127 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) As used in this section and  
128 section 5 of this act:

129 (1) "Compensation schedule" means the early childhood educator  
130 compensation schedule developed by the Office of Early Childhood  
131 pursuant to section 10-531 of the general statutes, as amended by this  
132 act;

133 (2) "Early childhood care and education program" means any child  
134 care center, group child care home or family child care home, as such  
135 terms are described in section 19a-77 of the general statutes, or youth  
136 camp licensed by the Office of Early Childhood;

137 (3) "Employee" means a person who is employed by an early  
138 childhood care and education program and meets the eligibility criteria  
139 described in the compensation schedule and policy developed by the  
140 Office of Early Childhood pursuant to subsection (e) of this section;

141 (4) "Base salary" means the annual salary that an employee was paid  
142 for a position on December 31, 2024, or, if the position was vacant on  
143 December 31, 2024, the starting annual salary for such position on said

144 date;

145 (5) "Benefits amount" means seven thousand five hundred dollars;

146 (6) "Individual employee salary enhancement amount" means, for  
147 any fiscal year, the sum of (A) the difference between (i) the salary  
148 prescribed in the compensation schedule for an employee, and (ii) the  
149 amount of such employee's base salary, and (B) the benefits amount; and

150 (7) "Salary enhancement amount" means the sum of the total  
151 individual employee salary enhancement amounts for all employees of  
152 an early childhood care and education program for the fiscal year.

153 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year  
154 thereafter, the Office of Early Childhood, in collaboration with the Early  
155 Childhood Care and Education Fund Advisory Commission,  
156 established pursuant to section 10-511a of the general statutes, shall  
157 administer the early childhood care and education salary enhancement  
158 grant program. The office shall annually pay to each early childhood  
159 care and education program a salary enhancement grant in the amount  
160 of such program's salary enhancement amount. Such program shall  
161 distribute such grant funds to its employees in accordance with the  
162 policy developed by the Commissioner of Early Childhood pursuant to  
163 subsection (e) of this section.

164 (c) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, and each fiscal year  
165 thereafter, the office shall annually pay to each family child care home  
166 a salary enhancement grant as follows: (1) Twenty thousand dollars for  
167 each licensee of a family child care home, (2) six thousand dollars for  
168 each full-time assistant or substitute staff member approved by the  
169 Commissioner of Early Childhood pursuant to section 19a-87b of the  
170 general statutes, and (3) three thousand dollars for each part-time  
171 assistant or substitute staff member approved by the commissioner  
172 pursuant to section 19a-87b of the general statutes, and employed by the  
173 family child care home. The licensee shall distribute such grant funds in  
174 accordance with the policy developed by the commissioner pursuant to  
175 subsection (e) of this section.

176 (d) Each early childhood care and education program shall register,  
177 at such time and in such manner as prescribed by the commissioner,  
178 with the Office of Early Childhood to receive a grant under the program.  
179 Upon registration, such program shall provide any information  
180 required by the office, in accordance with the policy developed by the  
181 commissioner pursuant to subsection (e) of this section.

182 (e) Not later than October 1, 2025, the commissioner shall develop a  
183 policy for the administration of the early childhood care and education  
184 salary enhancement grant program. The policy shall include, but need  
185 not be limited to, eligibility criteria for the program, the registration  
186 process for the program, the distribution requirements of the grant and  
187 any other requirements the commissioner deems necessary.

188 Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) Upon receipt of a salary  
189 enhancement grant, each employee of an early childhood care and  
190 education program shall be paid an annual salary as prescribed in the  
191 compensation schedule, developed pursuant to section 10-531 of the  
192 general statutes, as amended by this act, except if the amount of an  
193 employee's salary is greater than the amount prescribed in such  
194 compensation schedule, such employee shall be paid such greater  
195 amount.

196 Sec. 6. Section 10-531 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
197 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

198 (a) As used in this section:

199 (1) "Early childhood education program" means any child care or  
200 school readiness program that accepts state funds for infant, toddler and  
201 preschool spaces associated with such program;

202 (2) "Employee" means any person who is employed by an early  
203 childhood [education program and meets the applicable staff  
204 qualifications requirement, as defined in section 10-16p] care and  
205 education program and meets the eligibility criteria described in the  
206 compensation schedule and policy developed by the Office of Early

207 Childhood pursuant to subsection (e) of section 4 of this act;

208 (3) "Compensation" means the salary, wages, benefits and other  
209 forms of valuable consideration earned by and provided to an employee  
210 in remuneration for services rendered; [and]

211 (4) "Compensation schedule" means a list or lists specifying a series  
212 of compensation steps and ranges; and

213 (5) "Early childhood care and education program" means any child  
214 care center, group child care home or family child care home, as such  
215 terms are described in section 19a-77, or youth camp licensed by the  
216 Office of Early Childhood.

217 (b) The Office of Early Childhood shall establish, after notice and  
218 opportunity for public comment, a proposed early childhood educator  
219 compensation schedule for employees of early childhood education  
220 programs.

221 (c) (1) The office shall consider the following factors in developing the  
222 proposed early childhood educator compensation schedule: (A) Level  
223 of education, (B) training in early childhood education or child  
224 development, (C) relevant employment experience, including the  
225 number of years an individual has been employed in an early childhood  
226 education program, (D) compensation levels for certified teachers  
227 employed in a preschool program operated by a local or regional board  
228 of education or regional educational service center, and (E) cost of living  
229 in the state.

230 (2) In developing the proposed early childhood educator  
231 compensation schedule, the office may (A) consider the findings and  
232 recommendations provided in "A Plan to Assist Early Education State  
233 Funded Providers to Degree Attainment and Increased Compensation"  
234 created by the office, pursuant to section 4 of public act 15-134, to create  
235 a standardized salary scale and incentive package for early childhood  
236 educators, (B) utilize state and federal funding, and (C) examine existing  
237 programs that address early childhood educator compensation and staff

238 retention through financial incentives, such as bonuses for degree or  
239 course completion.

240 (3) The office shall establish a recommended minimum salary for  
241 employees as part of the proposed early childhood educator  
242 compensation schedule.

243 (d) Not later than January 1, 2021, the office shall submit the proposed  
244 early childhood educator compensation schedule and a report to the  
245 joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance  
246 of matters relating to education and appropriations and the budgets of  
247 state agencies, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a. Such  
248 report shall include: (1) Any recommendations for legislation relating to  
249 state-wide implementation of the proposed early childhood educator  
250 compensation schedule, (2) an estimate of the cost of implementing the  
251 proposed early childhood educator compensation schedule state-wide,  
252 (3) an analysis of the effect of the state-wide implementation of the  
253 proposed early childhood educator compensation schedule on the  
254 number of available preschool seats, and (4) an explanation of how the  
255 proposed early childhood educator compensation schedule will be  
256 included in any quality rating and improvement system developed by  
257 the office, pursuant to subdivision (15) of subsection (b) of section 10-  
258 500.

259 (e) Not later than January 1, 2026, the office shall amend the  
260 compensation schedule to include employees of early childhood care  
261 and education programs.

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

Section 1	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 2	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 3	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 4	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 5	July 1, 2025	New section
Sec. 6	July 1, 2025	10-531

***KID***

*Joint Favorable Subst. C/R*

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