
OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6899

AN ACT CONCERNING EARLY EDUCATOR PAY EQUITY.

SUMMARY

This bill makes various changes concerning early childhood care and education employee salaries, including:

1. requiring the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) to annually give salary enhancement grants to early childhood care and education programs and family child care homes;
2. requiring employees of early childhood care and education programs to receive an annual salary equal to at least what is set in OEC's compensation schedule; and
3. requiring OEC to amend the compensation schedule to include employees of other early childhood care and education programs, rather than just certain state-funded programs as under current law.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION SALARY ENHANCEMENT GRANT PROGRAM ESTABLISHMENT

The bill requires OEC to establish and administer the early childhood care and education salary enhancement grant program. Under the program, beginning in FY 26, OEC must annually issue grants to "early childhood care and education programs." These programs include the following:

1. child care services providers (OEC-licensed child care centers or group child care homes);
2. early childhood education programs (private preschool programs or early care and education programs under Early Start

CT, see BACKGROUND); and

3. license-exempt early childhood providers (child care services providers or school readiness programs that accept state funds for infant, toddler, and preschool spaces, are exempt from OEC licensure, and are located in public school buildings, but not run by the school).

Under the bill, each early childhood care and education program must register with OEC to receive a salary enhancement grant. When registering, they must provide any information the office requires. OEC must annually pay each program a grant equal to each program's salary enhancement amount and then the program must distribute the funds to its employees.

Grant Amount

Under the bill, an early childhood care and education program's salary enhancement amount is the sum of all employees' individual employee salary enhancements. An individual's employee salary enhancement is equal to:

1. the difference between their salary prescribed in OEC's compensation schedule and their base salary as of December 31, 2024 (or the position's starting salary if it was vacant on the date), plus
2. the benefits amount (\$7,500).

Program Administration

OEC must develop an administration policy for the program by October 1, 2025. This policy must include the eligibility criteria, registration process, grant distribution requirements, and any other requirements the commissioner considers necessary for the program's administration.

Family Child Care Homes

Additionally, the bill requires OEC, starting in FY 2026, to annually pay to each family child care home a salary enhancement grant equal to:

1. \$20,000 for each licensee; plus
2. \$6,000 for each OEC-approved full-time assistant or substitute staff member; plus
3. \$3,000 for each OEC-approved part-time assistant or substitute staff member.

Each licensee must distribute the grant funds in line with OEC's policy (see above).

COMPENSATION SCHEDULE AND SALARY REQUIREMENTS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAM EMPLOYEES

Current law required OEC to set a proposed early childhood educator compensation schedule for state-qualified employees of child care or school readiness programs that accept state funds for infant, toddler, and preschool spaces.

The bill requires OEC, by January 1, 2026, to amend the compensation schedule to include employees of other early childhood care and education programs who meet eligibility criteria in OEC's policy (see above). The amended compensation schedule must additionally cover (1) OEC-licensed child care centers and group child care homes and (2) private preschool programs or early care and education programs under Early Start CT. (The bill includes the programs under (2) within a new definition of "early childhood education program," but does not repeal an existing, narrower definition within the same statute.)

The bill also requires that early childhood care and education program employees be paid an annual salary equal to the amount set in OEC's compensation schedule, unless that employee already makes greater than that set amount.

BACKGROUND

Early Start CT

PA 24-78 consolidated the School Readiness Preschool Grant Program, state-contracted child care centers for disadvantaged children,

and the state supplemental Head Start grants into one program (Early Start CT), starting in FY 26.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Change of Reference - ED
Yea 17 Nay 0 (02/18/2025)

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Change of Reference - APP
Yea 31 Nay 14 (03/24/2025)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable
Yea 43 Nay 11 (04/24/2025)