PA 26-26—sHB 5004
Committee on Children
Appropriations Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING CHILD WELFARE ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

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SUMMARY: This act makes numerous changes to child welfare law. A section-by-section analysis follows.
EFFECTIVE DATE: Various, see below.

§ 1 — RELATIVE AND FICTIVE KIN IN EMERGENCY PLACEMENTS

Requires, rather than permits, the DCF commissioner to make an emergency placement of a child to an unlicensed relative or fictive kin caregiver if certain conditions are met; requires the commissioner to document in writing the reasons for denying these placements

The act requires, rather than permits, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) commissioner to make an emergency placement of a child to a relative or fictive kin caregiver (an unrelated person at least 21 years old who has a significant emotional connection with the child or family), even if the person is not DCF-licensed or -approved when the placement is deemed in the child's best interest. By law, an "emergency placement" is the placement of a child in the home of a relative or fictive kin caregiver due to the sudden unavailability of the child's primary caretaker. As under existing law, DCF must first do a basic family assessment, including a home visit, prior to the emergency placement.

After the placement is approved, the commissioner must order a criminal history and child abuse registry check of anyone 18 years old or older living in the home. By law, a criminal history can result in the denial of the placement or removal of the child. The act requires the commissioner to document the reason for any denial of a placement with, or removal from, a relative or fictive kin caregiver.

The act also requires the commissioner, when placing a child with someone who is not a relative or fictive kin caregiver, to document why doing so, rather than placing the child with a relative or fictive kin caregiver, is in the child's best interests.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 1 — FOSTER PARENT LICENSE DENIAL

Provides those denied a foster care license the ability to appeal the decision to the DCF commissioner; requires the commissioner to decide on the appeal within 60 days

Upon the denial of an initial foster care license, the act requires DCF to disclose, in writing, the reason for the denial to the applicant. Any applicant denied an initial license can appeal the denial to the commissioner within 30 days after the denial, in a way the commissioner establishes. The commissioner must grant the license or affirm the denial, in writing, within 60 days after the applicant makes the appeal.
EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 2 — RELATIVE AND FICTIVE KIN AND ABUSE AND NEGLECT PROCEEDINGS

Explicitly includes a fictive kin caregiver in the placement options for an abuse and neglect proceeding; requires the state agency petitioning the court to give primary consideration to placement with them

Under prior law, following a petition by a state agency (or others authorized to make a petition) to the court alleging child abuse or neglect, a court could consider vesting the child's care and custody temporarily with only a relative, agency, or other person. The act explicitly adds a fictive kin caregiver to the list of possible temporary care and custody placement options a court can consider during these proceedings and when these orders are made ex parte (on behalf of one party).

Prior law required the state agency filing the temporary custody petition to give primary consideration to placing the child in the town where the child lives. Under the act, the agency's petition must give primary consideration to placement with a relative or fictive kin caregiver, regardless of where the child was living when removed. If that placement is denied, the agency must give secondary consideration to placing the child in the town where the child lives.

By law, the agency must file in the petition, with the court clerk the reasons for a child's placement if it is not with a relative or fictive kin caregiver or within the town where the child lives. The act adds that when the placement is not with a relative or fictive kin caregiver, the filing must include confirmation that the placement selected for the child serves the best interests of the child.

The act makes related minor and conforming changes.
EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 3 — RELATIVE OR FICTIVE KIN CAREGIVER GRANT FOR NECESSITIES

Establishes a grant program to make payments to certain caregivers for clothing, food, safety-related purchases, and other necessities for children in their care after an emergency placement

The act establishes a grant program to make payments to caregivers for

clothing, food, safety-related purchases, and other necessities for DCF-placed children in their care. For purposes of the grant, a "caregiver" is a relative or fictive kin caregiver who has accepted emergency DCF placement of a child.

It requires the DCF commissioner, by January 1, 2027, to develop a distribution formula for the grant payments, which must set the (1) maximum total grant payment at $625 (the act does not specify, but this appears to be a one-time grant per placement; under a related law, once a placement is processed, the caregiver is eligible for a foster care stipend) and (2) guidelines for the appropriate expenditure of grant payments.

The act requires each caregiver receiving a grant payment to file an expenditure report with the DCF commissioner as she determines. A caregiver must pay back any amount spent in violation of the commissioner's guidelines.

By January 1, 2028, and each following year, the DCF commissioner must submit a report to the Child Welfare Policy and Oversight Committee (see § 18) and the Committee on Children. The report must include, for the preceding year, the number of grant payments made and the amount of each one, and the length of each placement that has ended.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 4 — AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM GRANTS FOR FOSTER CAREGIVERS

Establishes a grant program to give caregivers financial support to help cover the cost of after school programs or child care services for foster children in their care

The act establishes a grant program to give caregivers financial support to cover, either fully or partially, after school program and child care service costs for children in their care by DCF. Under the act, after school programs take place after regular school hours and provide educational, enrichment, and recreational activities for children grades kindergarten through 12. "Caregivers" are generally those who are either a (1) relative or fictive kin caregiver who (a) is licensed or approved to provide foster care or (b) has accepted emergency placement of a child or (2) licensed foster care provider caring for a child for whom reunification with the parent is unlikely within the foreseeable future.

The act requires grant payments to be prioritized for caregivers who are eligible for foster care maintenance payments or a guardianship subsidy, but who have not yet received an initial payment or subsidy. Under the act, no more than 50% of the total funds available in any fiscal year for the grant program can be for either after school program or child care service costs.

For the grant program, the act requires DCF to develop the following by January 1, 2027:

1. an application process;
2. caregiver eligibility criteria;
3. appropriate expenditure guidelines for the caregiver grants; and
4. a grant distribution formula, including the maximum grant available.

Each grant recipient must file an expenditure report with DCF and return unexpended funds to the department.

Beginning by January 1, 2028, the act also requires DCF to annually report to

the Child Welfare Policy and Oversight Committee (see § 18) and the Committee on Children on the number of applications it received and grants it awarded in the previous year.
EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 5 — PROSPECTIVE SOCIAL WORKER INTERNSHIP AND FIRST-YEAR SOCIAL WORKER MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

Requires DCF to establish a (1) first-year social worker mentorship program for their newly hired social workers and (2) prospective social worker internship program for people enrolled in a bachelor's or master's degree program in a relevant field

The act requires DCF to establish a (1) first-year social worker mentorship program for their newly hired social workers and (2) prospective social worker internship program (in consultation with higher education institutions), each of which must include opportunities for job shadowing, support, and coaching. Under the act, DCF must (1) establish both programs by January 1, 2027, and (2) pay a stipend to each intern, first-year social worker, and mentor who successfully completes their applicable program.

For both programs, DCF must establish an application process and acceptance criteria, set mentor-selection criteria, and recruit social workers to be mentors.

Additionally, the act requires DCF to annually report on these two programs to the Child Welfare Policy and Oversight Committee (see § 18 below) and the Committee on Children, beginning by January 1, 2028. The report must include information about each program, for the preceding year, on (1) the number of participants, (2) its cost, (3) whether adequate resources have been allocated, and (4) participant recruitment and retention statistics.

Prospective Social Worker Internship Program

To participate in the prospective social worker internship program, an applicant must be enrolled in a bachelor's or master's degree program in a relevant field, including, among others, social work, applied sociology, child development, clinical psychology, nursing, social services, education, or criminal justice.

The program must (1) last at least one academic semester, (2) include opportunities for internship experiences, and (3) offer participants insight into the challenges and benefits of social work.
EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§§ 6-8 — TRAINING ON PERINATAL MOOD AND ANXIETY, HUMAN TRAFFICKING, AND CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Requires training for DCF staff on perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, human trafficking, and cultural sensitivity and implicit bias

The act requires the DCF commissioner to develop and provide a mandatory educational training program for DCF employees in three areas: (1) perinatal mood

and anxiety disorders, (2) human trafficking, and (3) cultural sensitivity in the delivery of the department's services and implicit bias.

For all three types of training, DCF employees hired before January 1, 2028, must initially complete each training by December 31, 2028. Employees hired on or after January 1, 2028, must initially complete each training not later than one year after beginning employment. The perinatal mood and anxiety disorders and human trafficking trainings must be completed at least once, and the cultural sensitivity and implicit bias training at least once every two years.

All three trainings must be ready by January 1, 2028, and offered at least every six months.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders (§ 6)

The DCF commissioner must develop and provide a mandatory educational training program for DCF employees about (1) perinatal mood and anxiety disorders and (2) trauma-informed, non-stigmatizing practices for interacting with people suffering from these disorders. The commissioner must do this in consultation with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services commissioner.

Human Trafficking (§ 7)

The DCF commissioner must develop and provide a mandatory educational training program for DCF employees about human trafficking and trauma-informed, non-stigmatizing practices for interacting with child and adult victims of human trafficking. The commissioner must do this in consultation with the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity's executive director, and the Emergency Services and Public Protection commissioner.

Cultural Sensitivity and Implicit Bias (§ 8)

The DCF commissioner must develop and provide a mandatory educational training program for DCF employees about implicit bias and delivering the agency's services with cultural sensitivity. Under the act, "implicit bias" means an attitude or internalized stereotype that affects a person's perceptions, actions, and decisions in an unconscious way and often contributes to unequal treatment of someone based on their race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, or other characteristic.

§§ 9 & 10 — POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM FOR YOUTHS IN DCF CARE

Requires DCF to establish a postsecondary education grant program for young people who either were adopted before turning 18 or who consent to stay in DCF care after turning 18 years old; requires the state auditors to audit the program; establishes reporting requirements for DCF and the auditors

The act requires DCF to establish a postsecondary education grant program by January 1, 2027. The program must award grants to fund postsecondary education (programs that lead to an academic degree, vocation certification, or trade) for youths who either (1) were adopted through DCF's foster care program on or after January 1, 2005, before age 18, or (2) consent to remain in DCF care after turning age 18 as allowed under state law. Under the act, young people generally cannot participate in the program after they turn age 21. However, with DCF's permission, they may continue to participate until they (1) turn age 24 or (2) complete their postsecondary education program, whichever happens first.

The act requires DCF to establish:

1. an application process,
2. a list of DCF-approved postsecondary education programs,
3. a grant distribution formula, and
4. eligibility criteria.

It also requires participants to annually complete (1) the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and (2) applications for any appropriate scholarships and grants, including any available through a scholarship application portal administered by an education provider.

The act requires DCF to report to the Committee on Children by July 1, 2027, on (1) the number of applicants received and accepted and (2) any challenges implementing the program. It must also report, by January 1, 2028, to the Appropriations, Children, Government Oversight, and Higher Education and Employment Advancement committees, and to the Auditors of Public Accounts on this program and any similar program. The report must include information on:

1. the number of applicants received and accepted;
2. grant payment information, including the total grant payments offered, amount of each individual grant, and average grant payment amount per participant both for the prior year and over the course of participating in the program;
3. postsecondary education program information, including what postsecondary programs participants enrolled in and the percentage of participants who completed the postsecondary program;
4. the number of participants who requested, and have been approved, to remain in the program after turning age 21;
5. reasons why DCF denied initial applicants and existing participants' requests to remain in the program after turning 21;
6. demographic information; and
7. how long any similar program has existed.

The act requires the auditors to do a performance audit of the program by July 1, 2028, and submit a report to the same committees. The report must include the audit's results and generally the same information that DCF must report as described above, plus any recommendations for improving the program's administrative efficiency or effectiveness.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026, except the provision requiring the program audit is effective October 1, 2026.

§§ 11 & 12 — CHILD WELFARE ONLINE DASHBOARD AND ASSOCIATED WORKING GROUP

Requires DCF to make a public website with an online dashboard and various information related to DCF programs and procedures and child welfare by January 1, 2027; creates a working group to identify information for the online dashboard

The act requires DCF, by January 1, 2027, to make a public, online dashboard with information on DCF's administration and operation of state-wide programs with services for abused, neglected, and uncared for children and young people, as well as children and young people who have mental health needs and substance use disorders. The dashboard must also:

1. include information identified by the Online Dashboard Working Group (see below);
2. include information identified in the annual reports relating to caregiver grant programs and social worker internship and mentorship programs established by the act (see §§ 3, 4 & 5 above);
3. be integrated with any electronic data collection and tracking tools DCF uses; and
4. present information in an accessible way.

The dashboard may be within DCF's existing website, and must also include information on:

1. DCF offices, programs, and services, including the Office of Community Relations, housing and homelessness programs, the child abuse and neglect careline, and text message programs for the public, and
2. child abuse and neglect identification and how to report child abuse and neglect.

The website must also include the mandated reporter video training program the law required DCF to create, and any accompanying training materials, in a publicly-accessible format that does not require a username or password.

Online Dashboard Working Group

The act creates a working group to identify information to be included on the online dashboard. The working group must consist of:

1. any legislators the Committee on Children chairpersons designate;
2. the Committee on Children ranking members, or their designees;
3. any people the chairpersons find relevant and necessary to carry out the working group's duties; and
4. the DCF commissioner or her designee.

The Committee on Children's administrative staff serve as the working group's administrative staff.

The working group must report its findings to the Committee on Children by October 1, 2026, and ends on that date or when it submits its report, whichever is later.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026, except the provision creating the working group

is effective upon passage.

§ 13 — DCF PROCEDURES WHEN A CHILD UNDER PROTECTIVE SUPERVISION OR SERVICES IS TAKEN OUT-OF-STATE BY A PARENT OR GUARDIAN

Sets procedures for when a child who is the subject of a DCF investigation, under protective supervision, receiving protective services, or residing with a child who meets one of these criteria is taken out-of-state by a parent or guardian

The act sets procedures for when a child who is the subject of a DCF investigation, is under protective supervision or receiving protective services, or residing with a child who meets at least one of these criteria will be taken out of the state by his or her parent or guardian. It (1) requires the parent or guardian to notify DCF, in a way the commissioner requires, if the child will be taken out of the state for more than 14 consecutive days and (2) allows DCF to require the parent or guardian to notify DCF if the child will be taken out-of-state for 14 or fewer days.

The act also requires DCF to give written notice of these provisions to the parents or guardians of each eligible child.

Notification Requirements

Under the act, the parent or guardian must give DCF this notice at least 48 hours before taking the child out of state and must include (1) the address of each place where the child will sleep during this period and (2) how long the child will be out-of-state. If this changes, the parent must notify DCF as soon as practicable.

Failure to Notify Procedures

The act requires DCF to follow specified procedures when a parent or guardian removes a covered child out-of-state, or extends the time out-of-state, without the required notification. It also allows DCF to follow these procedures when a covered child is taken out-of-state for 14 or fewer days.

In these situations, DCF must attempt to contact a parent, guardian, or other family member for up to three consecutive days to determine the child's location (if unknown) and evaluate the child's safety (DCF may stop attempting to make contact if they determine the child's location). If it determines the child's location, DCF must:

1. contact the child welfare or law enforcement agency in the jurisdiction where the child is located (the "local agency") and ask them to do an in-person visit to ensure the child's safety;
2. follow-up with the local agency for up to three consecutive days after the initial visit request to see if the child was actually visited and to discuss any findings (DCF may stop these efforts early if they determine the visit was conducted);
3. directly visit with the child in-person (or virtually if in-person is not feasible) to evaluate the child's safety; and

4. document in writing all attempts to contact the child, parent, guardian, family member, and local agency.

Under the act, if DCF is not notified about the child's removal from the state until after they have already returned, it does not need to follow the above procedures.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 14 — PROHIBITION ON USING MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT AS SOLE OR PRIMARY REASON FOR DCF ACTION

Generally prohibits DCF from using evidence that a parent or guardian has voluntarily sought or received mental health treatment as the sole reason to pursue certain actions

The act generally prohibits DCF from using evidence that a parent or guardian has voluntarily sought or received professional mental health treatment, such as for perinatal mood or anxiety disorders, as the sole reason to pursue any action or proceeding related to harm or risk of harm. But the act specifies that DCF can still (1) act when a child is harmed or at risk of harm and (2) use mental health treatment evidence in an action or proceeding if otherwise authorized.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 15 — CONSIDERATION OF CHILD'S EXPRESSED OPINION IN DCF HOME VISITS

Requires DCF personnel to consider children's opinions during home visits when investigating a report of child abuse or neglect of a young child

By law, all DCF investigations into reports of child abuse or neglect for children from birth to age three must include a home visit to, among other things:

1. observe the child and any siblings;
2. evaluate the parents, home, and condition of other children living in the household; and
3. if appropriate, determine the nature and extent of, and who is responsible for, the reported abuse or neglect.

The act requires DCF personnel, during these home visits, to consider any opinions expressed by the child or other children living in the household about whether the child was abused or neglected.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 16 — PERSONAL EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION DEVICES FOR DCF STAFF DURING HOME VISITS

Requires DCF to offer employees who do visits to the homes of children under DCF supervision personal emergency communication devices

The act requires the DCF commissioner, beginning January 1, 2027, to give all DCF employees who regularly do visits to, or evaluations of, the homes of children

under the commissioner's supervision personal emergency communication devices if the employees would like to use the devices during these visits or evaluations. The commissioner must also develop guidelines and a training program for their use.

The act defines "personal emergency communication device" as a GPS-enabled, wearable device that allows someone to contact local police by pressing a button or through another mechanism.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 17 — URGENT CRISIS CENTER

Requires DCF to establish an urgent crisis center in Stamford for FY 27

The act requires DCF to establish an urgent crisis center in Stamford for FY 27. Urgent crisis centers are walk-in DCF-certified clinics that treat the urgent mental or behavioral health needs of children who do not require medical emergency department care.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026

§ 18 — CHILD WELFARE POLICY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Establishes a Child Welfare Policy and Oversight Committee charged with making recommendations about the state agencies providing child welfare services

The act establishes a 32-member Child Welfare Policy and Oversight Committee. It charges the committee with evaluating and making recommendations about the (1) operation, policies, and service outcomes of state agencies providing services relating to and supporting child welfare in the state and (2) efficacy and continued operation of existing statewide boards, committees, and councils charged with oversight and evaluation of child welfare services. The committee consists of the Children and Appropriations committees' chairpersons and ranking members, and the following officials or their designees: (1) the commissioners of Children and Families, Education, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Developmental Services, Social Services, Housing, and Correction; (2) the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) secretary; (3) the chief court administrator; (4) the probate court administrator; (5) the chief public defender; and (6) the child advocate.

The committee also includes 12 appointed members, as shown in the table below with their appointing authorities and qualifications.

Appointed Committee Members

Appointing Authority	*Number of Members*	*Qualifying Description*
House speaker	2	One mental health professional employed at an urgent crisis center
Senate president pro tempore	2	One DCF regional social worker supervisor

Appointing Authority	*Number of Members*	*Qualifying Description*
House majority leader	2	One private provider of child welfare services
Senate majority leader	2	One licensed foster parent
House minority leader	2	One expert in child welfare employed by an in-state higher education institution
Senate minority leader	2	One relative or fictive kin caregiver with whom a child in DCF's care and custody has been placed

Under the act, any vacancy must be filled by the appointing authority. Committee members serve without compensation. The Committee on Children chairpersons and the OPM secretary, or their designees, must serve as co-chairpersons. They must schedule and hold the first committee meeting by November 30, 2026. The committee must meet quarterly but can meet more often upon the call of the co-chairpersons. The co-chairpersons may designate subcommittees to carry out committee duties.

The committee must submit its first annual report on its evaluation and recommendations to the Committee on Children by January 1, 2028. Starting January 1, 2031, the committee may choose, by its own majority vote, to terminate if it finds its work is no longer necessary or beneficial.

The committee must complete its duties under the act in consultation with one or more organizations that focus on child welfare-related issues, including an independent in-state higher education institution. The committee can accept administrative support as well as technical and research assistance from any such organization.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 19 — DCF AND DESPP COMMUNICATION IMPROVEMENT AND CHILD WELFARE POLICIES STUDY

Requires DCF and DESPP to study and report on improving their communication with one another and their policies on removing children from home

The act requires DCF and the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to study ways to improve (1) communication between DCF and DESPP on child welfare services and (2) existing policies and practices on removing children from their homes. DCF and DESPP must report their findings and associated recommendations to the Committee on Children by January 1, 2027.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 20 — IMMEDIATE REMOVAL FOR CHILD VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT FROM OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS REPORT

Requires DCF and OCA to study and report on ways to improve department policies and practices to ensure a child's immediate removal from an out-of-home placement if they become a victim of physical or sexual assault

The act requires DCF and the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) to jointly study ways to improve department policies and practices to ensure children are immediately removed from out-of-home placements made by DCF if they become a victim of physical or sexual assault occurring in, or because of, the out-of-home placement (presumably, this would apply when the perpetrator was someone living in the home or with access to it). DCF and OCA must report the study's findings and associated recommendations to the Committee on Children by January 1, 2027.
EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

§ 21 — RELEASING ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PARENTAGE INFORMATION

Permits DPH to release acknowledgment of parentage information to DCF

By law, the Department of Public Health (DPH) may release information relating to an acknowledgment of parentage to certain parties, including, among others, (1) someone who signed the acknowledgment; (2) the child, if they are at least age 18; (3) a guardian of the person whose parentage is acknowledged; and (4) an authorized representative of the Department of Social Services. The act also allows the information to be released to an authorized DCF representative.
EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Background — Related Act

PA 26-130, § 4, also authorizes DPH to release acknowledgment of parentage information to an authorized DCF representative but only allows them to do so when the information being requested is to further the department's duties or responsibilities in a pending superior court for juvenile matter where the child's parentage is at issue.

§ 22 — REQUIRING AN INVESTIGATION AND NEW DCF INVESTIGATOR IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES

Requires DCF assignment of a new investigator in certain circumstances of alleged abuse or neglect

The act requires the DCF commissioner to begin a new investigation into reports of child abuse or neglect when a third report of abuse or neglect is accepted within a 12-month period concerning a child or a combination of children who are related or living in the same home. The investigation must be done by a DCF employee that did not do the previous investigations of the child or children during the 12-month period.

The requirement applies after the third accepted report of child abuse or neglect in which the following has been identified as the subject of prior accepted reports during the previous 12-month period: (1) the child who is the subject of the report;

(2) a sibling, half-sibling, step-sibling, or other child residing in the same home as the child; or (3) any combination of these children.

The act requires the investigation to be done as required by law, which includes (1) a home visit with observation of the child or children; (2) an evaluation of the parents; (3) a determination of the nature, extent, and cause or causes of the abuse or neglect; (4) a determination of the person or persons suspected to be responsible for the abuse or neglect; (5) and the name, age, and condition of other children residing in the same household.

The act specifies that it does not (1) prevent the commissioner from removing a child from the child's surroundings under her existing authority or (2) require the department to assign a second, new investigator for any further reports of abuse or neglect about a child made after completion of the investigation of a third report as required by the act.

Additionally, existing law allows DCF to evaluate accepted reports and choose to forgo an investigation for a family assessment and services referral if it determines that doing so is a lower risk for the child. The act waives this ability when these third accepted report situations occur.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

§ 23 — ADDITIONAL OVERSIGHT AND NOTIFICATIONS ON PEOPLE CONVICTED OF CERTAIN CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN

Requires additional follow-up and oversight of people who are convicted of certain crimes and then live with a minor child; requires notification to DCF when people convicted of these crimes are released from incarceration

Beginning October 1, 2026, the act requires notification to DCF and additional oversight of anyone convicted of certain crimes against children when they are released from a correctional institution and then live in a home with a minor child. The table below shows the 14 crimes for which this applies and a high-level summary for each. A minor child is a person under age 18.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2026

Crimes Triggering Additional Oversight When Living With a Minor Child

Crime	*CGS §*	*Description*
Cruelty to persons	53-20	When a person intentionally tortures, torments, or unlawfully punishes another person or deprives them of necessary food, clothing, shelter, or physical care
Injury or risk of injury to, or impairing morals of, children; sale of children	53-21	When a person (1) causes or allows a child under age 16 to be placed in a situation where the child's life or limb is endangered or morals are likely to be impaired, (2) has sexual or indecent contact with the child's intimate parts, or (3) sells or buys permanent custody of the child

Crime	*CGS §*	*Description*
Abandonment of child under the age of six years	53-23	When a person having charge of a child under age six leaves the child in any place, with intent to abandon the child
Aggravated sexual assault of a minor	53a-70c	When any person commits certain crimes (for example, sexual assault) against a child under 13 and the crime is compounded by certain factors (for example, the victim was kidnapped, illegally restrained, or stalked, or the accused was previously convicted of a violent sexual assault)
Promoting prostitution of a person less than 18 years old in the first degree	53a-86(a)(2)	When a person knowingly advances or profits from the prostitution of a person under age 18
Enticing a minor	53a-90a	When a person uses an interactive computer service (such as the Internet) to knowingly persuade, induce, entice, or coerce someone under age 18, or who the person reasonably believes to be under 18, to engage in prostitution or unlawful sexual activity
Obscenity as to minors	53a-196	When a person knowingly promotes to a minor, for money, any material or performance that is obscene for minors
Employing a minor in an obscene performance	53a-196a	When a person employs a minor or allows a minor to be employed to promote any material or performance that is obscene for minors, regardless of whether the minor receives any consideration (is paid)
Promoting a minor in an obscene performance	53a-196b	When a person knowingly promotes any material or performance that employs a minor, whether or not the minor receives consideration, and the material or performance is obscene for minors
Importing child sexual abuse material	53a-196c	When a person knowingly imports or causes to be imported into the state three or more visual depictions of child sexual abuse material (often referred to as “child pornography”)
Possessing child sexual abuse material in the first degree	53a-196d	When a person knowingly possesses (1) 50 or more images of child sexual abuse material, (2) one or more images of child sexual abuse material depicting the infliction or threatened infliction of serious injury, or (3) a series of images or a video depicting either multiple children engaging in sexually explicit conduct or more than one act of explicit conduct by one or more children

Crime	CGS §	Description
Possessing child sexual abuse material in the second degree	53a-196e	When a person knowingly possesses (1) between 20 and 49 images of child sexual abuse material or (2) a series of images or a video depicting a single act of sexually explicit conduct by one child
Possessing child sexual abuse material in the third degree	53a-196f	When a person knowingly possesses (1) fewer than 20 images of child sexual abuse material or (2) a series of images or a video depicting a single act of sexually explicit conduct by one child
Commercial sexual exploitation of a minor	53a-196i	When a person knowingly buys advertising space for an advertisement for a commercial sex act that includes a depiction of a minor

Under the act, when someone convicted of a crime in the table above is released from incarceration and sentenced to a period of parole or probation, the correction commissioner or the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) executive director, as applicable, must notify the DCF commissioner within one week after the release if a minor child resides at the residential address to which the person was released.

Child Receiving DCF Services

Upon receiving the notification, the act requires the DCF commissioner or her designee to check if any minor child residing at the residential address is under protective supervision or receiving protective services. Within a week of determining that there is a minor child under protective supervision or receiving protective services, the commissioner or designee must visit the address to evaluate the child's safety. The visits must continue monthly until the probation or parole ends or a minor child no longer resides at the address.

By law, a child is under "protective supervision" when a court determined a child was neglected, but DCF or another social agency is, at the court's request, helping correct the neglect while the child stays in the home. "Protective services" are public welfare services provided to a family following a complaint of abuse, neglect, or abandonment, but where there is no ruling on the complaint.

Child Not Receiving DCF Services

The act requires DCF to notify the correction commissioner or the CSSD executive director, as applicable, if no minor child at the residential address is under supervision or receiving protective services. Upon that notification and then at least every three months, the correction commissioner or the CSSD executive director, as applicable, must ask the probationer or parolee about the welfare of any minor child residing with them and must do so until the person's probation or parole ends.