



Connecticut Office  
of Early Childhood

REPORT PURSUANT TO PA 21-152

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CONNECTICUT OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD  
REPORT ON USE OF BACKGROUND CHECKS

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Submitted by

Commissioner Beth Bye

Connecticut Office of Early Childhood

To the Office of Policy and Management

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JANUARY 2022

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### LEGISLATIVE CHARGE

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PA 21-152 requires the Early Childhood Commissioner to report on:

- (1) the number of employees who perform background checks related to the department's or office's licensing functions, the job classifications of such employees, and the type or level of clearance of the background checks that are being performed,
- (2) the number of hours each such employee spends on average per week performing background checks, and
- (3) for any licenses in which some education or training is required of the applicant prior to obtaining a license, the feasibility of establishing a preclearance assessment of criminal history prior to potential applicants beginning such education or training. Such recommendations shall additionally assess the feasibility of centralizing and standardizing background checks performed by state government agencies and related issues of delegation of authority by such agencies.

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### REPORT

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The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) conducts comprehensive background checks related to the office's function of licensing child care facilities pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes Sections 19a-80(c), and 19a-87b, both when read with Section 29-17a, and Section 10-530, as well as the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (45 CFR 98.43). There are currently 15 staff members, including both full-time contractors and state employee staff, who perform background checks related to these functions. In addition, there are seven vacant permanent state employee positions currently in the hiring process related to the Office's background check functions. These background checks are funded through the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). The chart below provides additional detail about the job classifications of such employees, and the level of clearance of the background checks that are being performed.

The OEC conducts fingerprint-supported state and national criminal history records checks, as well as state and national sex offender registry checks, and child abuse and neglect registry checks based on name and date of birth. Criminal background checks are conducted through the Connecticut Criminal History Request System (CCHRS) maintained by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP). National sex offender registry checks are conducted in collaboration with the DESPP via their access to the National Crime Information Center National Sex Offender Registry. Each OEC employee with access to criminal history record information must complete security awareness training biennially in accordance with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Security Policy.

The background checks performed by the OEC for licensing purposes are related to three license types; child care centers, group child care homes, and family child care homes. There are no pre-licensure education or training requirements to obtain a child care center or group child care home license.

Applicants for a family child care home license must complete education and training related to first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation. These training requirements are completed concurrently with completing background checks after the application is received by the OEC and therefore a preclearance assessment of criminal history would not be feasible. In addition, such a preclearance assessment would not comply with current state and federal requirements for comprehensive background checks.

Centralization and standardization of background checks performed by Connecticut state government agencies could have many potential benefits. However, there are some barriers to the feasibility of centralizing and standardizing background checks performed by the OEC due to restrictions on the dissemination of Criminal History Record Information contained in the FBI CJIS Security Policy. Specifically, this policy states that CHRI cannot be disseminated to another recipient for future anticipated uses, regardless of whether the needs are formally related. This could create barriers, for example, from the OEC sharing CHRI with local school districts, who may also perform background checks on the same individuals who may work in both a local school and an OEC licensed child care facility. In addition, there may be a different set of crimes that are reviewed as potentially disqualifying based on different statutes and regulations that require such background checks as well as varying policies among state agencies and local authorities. There are public policy considerations in favor of centralizing and standardizing background checks including efficiency, cost savings, and convenience, especially for those who may be subject to multiple background check requirements imposed by different authorities. Consultation with federal partners such as the FBI and the Administration for Children and Families Office of Child Care would be important to ensure the practical implementation of changes to Connecticut law related to child care background checks.

| <b>Job Classification</b>    | <b>Type of Checks</b>     | <b>Level of Clearance</b> | <b>Avg # Hours/Week on BC</b> |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Legal Director               | Child Care Licensing/CCDF | CCHRS Web Admin           | 20                            |
| Durational Projects Manager  | Child Care Licensing/CCDF | CCHRS Web User            | 37                            |
| Processing Technician        | Child Care Licensing/CCDF | CCHRS Web User            | 35                            |
| Processing Technician        | Child Care Licensing/CCDF | CCHRS Web User            | 35                            |
| Processing Technician        | Child Care Licensing/CCDF | CCHRS Web User            | 30                            |
| Office Assistant             | Child Care Licensing/CCDF | CCHRS Web User            | 40                            |
| Processing Technician        | Child Care Licensing/CCDF | Intake only               | 15                            |
| Office Assistant (temporary) | Child Care Licensing/CCDF | Intake only               | 40                            |
| Office Assistant (temporary) | Child Care Licensing/CCDF | Intake only               | 40                            |
| Office Assistant (temporary) | Child Care Licensing/CCDF | Intake only               | 40                            |
| Office Assistant (temporary) | Child Care Licensing/CCDF | Intake only               | 40                            |
| Office Assistant (temporary) | Child Care Licensing/CCDF | Intake only               | 40                            |
| Office Assistant (temporary) | Child Care Licensing/CCDF | Intake only               | 40                            |
| Help Desk (contractor)       | Child Care Licensing/CCDF | Intake only               | 40                            |