



# Senate

General Assembly

**File No. 5**

February Session, 2026

Substitute Senate Bill No. 155

*Senate, March 9, 2026*

The Committee on Children reported through SEN. MAHER, C. of the 26th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.***

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2026*) Not later than October 15,  
2 2027, and annually thereafter, the Department of Children and Families  
3 shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a  
4 of the general statutes, to the joint standing committees of the General  
5 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children and  
6 appropriations concerning the business of the department during the  
7 preceding fiscal year. Such report shall not contain personally  
8 identifying information and shall include, but need not be limited to:

9 (1) Data illustrating the utilization of the department's services by  
10 race and ethnicity, an assessment of any trends in such utilization and  
11 recommendations for results-based accountability measures to ensure  
12 parity in access to such services;

13 (2) Data sufficient to demonstrate the Commissioner of Children and

14 Families' compliance with the provisions of subsections (a), (c) and (e)  
15 of section 17a-10a of the general statutes, as amended by this act,  
16 including the (A) total number of children who have one or more  
17 siblings and are in the care and custody of the commissioner pursuant  
18 to temporary placements or orders of commitment, (B) total number of  
19 such children who have had documented sibling visitation, and (C)  
20 number of sibling pairs involved in each placement;

21 (3) Information regarding the facilities enumerated in section 17a-32  
22 of the general statutes, including (A) aggregate profiles of the residents  
23 of such facilities, (B) descriptions of and updates concerning major  
24 initiatives affecting such facilities, (C) the outcomes and benefits derived  
25 from such initiatives, (D) costs associated with operating each such  
26 facility, and (E) descriptions of educational, vocational and literacy  
27 programs and behavioral, treatment and other services available to  
28 residents of such facilities and the outcomes associated with such  
29 programs and services;

30 (4) The number of written reports concerning suspected animal harm,  
31 neglect or cruelty (A) made by employees of the department pursuant  
32 to section 17a-100a of the general statutes, and (B) indicated in reports  
33 received by the commissioner pursuant to section 22-329b of the general  
34 statutes;

35 (5) Information regarding the department's family assessment  
36 response program established pursuant to section 17a-101g of the  
37 general statutes, as amended by this act, including (A) the number of  
38 accepted reports of child abuse or neglect and the percentage of such  
39 reports assigned to such program, (B) the disposition of families  
40 assigned to such program, (C) the number of each type of reporter who  
41 made reports that were assigned to such program, (D) the number and  
42 percentage of reports assigned to such program that resulted in an  
43 investigation, (E) an analysis of the department's prior or subsequent  
44 involvement with each family that was the subject of a report assigned  
45 to such program, as applicable, (F) an analysis of the department's prior  
46 or subsequent involvement with each family assigned to a community

47 partner agency, (G) a description of services commonly provided to  
48 families referred to the department's community support for families  
49 program, (H) a description of the department's staff development and  
50 training practices concerning report intake, (I) the number and  
51 percentage of families referred to the family assessment response  
52 program who were enrolled in the community support for families  
53 program, (J) the reasons identified by community providers for families'  
54 discharge from services pursuant to subdivision (7) of subsection (g) of  
55 section 17a-101g of the general statutes, as amended by this act,  
56 categorized by race and ethnicity, (K) a comparison of the family needs  
57 identified and addressed by the department's community support for  
58 families program, and (L) an analysis of the efficacy of the department's  
59 risk and safety assessment practices, including information concerning  
60 the (i) methodology used to determine the reliability of such practices,  
61 (ii) utilization of evidence-based practices and tools, and (iii)  
62 effectiveness of such practices for identifying children at risk for abuse  
63 or neglect;

64 (6) Information regarding private providers that contract with the  
65 department, including the (A) number of service types provided  
66 pursuant to each provider's contract with the department and  
67 measurable outcomes for each such type, (B) incorporation of such  
68 outcomes into contracts, (C) achievement of such outcomes and other  
69 quality indicators as noted in annual evaluations of each provider, and  
70 (D) application of outcome information into quality improvement  
71 efforts;

72 (7) Information regarding the (A) methods used by the department  
73 to ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory foster care licensing  
74 requirements, (B) methods used by the department to assess the needs  
75 of children and youths in foster care and provide support for foster  
76 parents to enable such parents to meet the needs of such children and  
77 youths, (C) safeguards employed by the department when licensing  
78 relative caregivers with histories of child abuse or neglect or psychiatric  
79 illness or criminal records, (D) processes used by the department to  
80 reverse substantiated findings of child abuse or neglect or child abuse

81 and neglect registry findings with respect to prospective relative  
82 caregivers, (E) number of reports of child abuse or neglect concerning  
83 children and youths residing in foster homes licensed by the department  
84 and the number of substantiated reports, (F) number of foster home  
85 licenses revoked and foster home license applications denied by the  
86 department, (G) results of departmental audits of licensing practices,  
87 and (H) number and type of safety concerns with respect to licensed  
88 foster homes identified by the department through the department's  
89 assessment of regulatory compliance system and any corresponding  
90 corrective actions taken; and

91 (8) Information regarding the diversion of children under the age of  
92 eighteen from the juvenile justice and court systems, including the (A)  
93 number of times any such child was diverted, (B) total number of such  
94 children diverted, (C) type of services provided to each such child, (D)  
95 program or process through which each such child was diverted, and  
96 (E) age of each such child.

97 Sec. 2. Section 17a-22m of the general statutes is repealed and the  
98 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

99 The Commissioners of Children and Families, Social Services and  
100 Mental Health and Addiction Services shall, not later than October 1,  
101 2026, and annually thereafter, conduct an [annual] evaluation of the  
102 Behavioral Health Partnership and [shall] submit a report, in accordance  
103 with section 11-4a, to the joint standing committees of the General  
104 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to appropriations and  
105 the budgets of state agencies, public health, human services and  
106 children on the provision of behavioral health services under the  
107 Behavioral Health Partnership, including information on the status of  
108 any administrative services organization implementation, the status of  
109 [the collaboration among] collaborative efforts between the  
110 Departments of Children and Families, Social Services and Mental  
111 Health and Addiction Services, the services provided, the number of  
112 persons served, program outcomes, [and] spending by child and adult  
113 populations and estimated cost savings, if any, resulting from the

114 implementation of the Behavioral Health Partnership.

115 Sec. 3. Section 17a-8b of the general statutes is repealed and the  
116 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

117 The Department of Children and Families shall report any missing or  
118 abducted child who was committed to the custody of the commissioner  
119 to the (1) law enforcement authority having jurisdiction over the  
120 geographical area from which the child was reported missing or was  
121 abducted, and (2) National Center for Missing or Exploited Children.  
122 The department shall make such report immediately, but in no case later  
123 than twenty-four hours after the child is determined to be missing or  
124 abducted. [ to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Crime  
125 Information Center and to the National Center for Missing and  
126 Exploited Children.]

127 Sec. 4. Section 10-19m of the general statutes is repealed and the  
128 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

129 (a) For the purposes of this section, "youth" means a person from birth  
130 to eighteen years of age. Any one or more municipalities or any one or  
131 more private youth-serving organizations, designated to act as agents  
132 of one or more municipalities or local or regional boards of education,  
133 may establish a multipurpose youth service bureau for the purposes of  
134 evaluation, planning, coordination and implementation of services,  
135 including prevention and intervention programs for delinquent,  
136 predelinquent, pregnant, parenting and troubled youths referred to  
137 such bureau by local or regional boards of education, police, juvenile  
138 courts, adult courts, local youth-serving agencies, parents and self-  
139 referrals. A youth service bureau shall be the coordinating unit of  
140 community-based services to provide comprehensive delivery of  
141 prevention, intervention, treatment and follow-up services.

142 (b) A youth service bureau established pursuant to subsection (a) of  
143 this section may provide, but shall not be limited to the delivery of, the  
144 following services: (1) Individual and group counseling; (2) parent  
145 training and family therapy; (3) work placement and employment

146 counseling; (4) alternative and special educational opportunities; (5)  
147 recreational and youth enrichment programs; (6) outreach programs to  
148 ensure participation and planning by the entire community for the  
149 development of regional and community-based youth services; (7)  
150 preventive programs, including youth pregnancy, youth suicide,  
151 violence, alcohol and drug prevention; and (8) programs that develop  
152 positive youth involvement. Such services shall be designed to meet the  
153 needs of youths by the diversion of troubled youths from the justice  
154 system as well as by the provision of opportunities for all youths to  
155 function as responsible members of their communities.

156 (c) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall adopt  
157 regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54,  
158 establishing minimum standards for such youth service bureaus and the  
159 criteria for qualifying for state cost-sharing grants, including, but not  
160 limited to, allowable sources of funds covering the local share of the  
161 costs of operating such bureaus, acceptable in-kind contributions and  
162 application procedures. [The commissioner shall, on December 1, 2011,  
163 and biennially thereafter, report to the General Assembly on the referral  
164 or diversion of children under the age of eighteen years from the  
165 juvenile justice system and the court system. Such report shall include,  
166 but not be limited to, the number of times any child is so diverted, the  
167 number of children diverted, the type of service provided to any such  
168 child, by whom such child was diverted, the ages of the children  
169 diverted and such other information and statistics as the General  
170 Assembly may request from time to time. Any such report shall contain  
171 no identifying information about any particular child.]

172 Sec. 5. Section 17a-10a of the general statutes is repealed and the  
173 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2026*):

174 (a) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall ensure that a  
175 child placed in the care and custody of the commissioner pursuant to an  
176 order of temporary custody or an order of commitment is provided  
177 visitation with such child's parents and siblings, unless otherwise  
178 ordered by the court.

179 (b) The commissioner shall ensure that such child's visits with his or  
180 her parents, or opportunities to communicate with such child's parents  
181 and siblings by telephonic, video or other conferencing platform in  
182 accordance with the provisions of subsection (d) of this section, shall  
183 occur as frequently as reasonably possible, based upon consideration of  
184 the best interests of the child, including the age and developmental level  
185 of the child, and shall be sufficient in number and duration to ensure  
186 continuation of the relationship.

187 (c) If such child has an existing relationship with a sibling and is  
188 separated from such sibling as a result of intervention by the  
189 commissioner including, but not limited to, placement in a foster home  
190 or in the home of a relative, the commissioner shall, based upon  
191 consideration of the best interests of the child, ensure that such child has  
192 access to and visitation rights with such sibling throughout the duration  
193 of such placement. In determining the number, frequency and duration  
194 of sibling visits, the commissioner shall consider the best interests of  
195 each sibling, given each child's age and developmental level and the  
196 continuation of the sibling relationship. If the child and his or her sibling  
197 both reside within the state and within fifty miles of each other, the  
198 commissioner shall, within available appropriations, ensure that such  
199 child's visits with his or her sibling occur, on average, not less than once  
200 per week, unless the commissioner finds that the frequency of such  
201 visitation is not in the best interests of each sibling.

202 (d) In the event of a pandemic or outbreak of a communicable disease  
203 resulting in a declaration of a public health emergency by the Governor  
204 pursuant to section 19a-131a, or a declaration of a national emergency  
205 by the President of the United States, such child shall be provided  
206 opportunities to communicate with such child's parents and siblings by  
207 telephonic, video or other conferencing platform in lieu of in-person  
208 visitation, for the duration of any such declaration. Not later than  
209 January 1, 2022, the commissioner shall develop a policy that requires  
210 the temporary cessation of in-person visitation provided pursuant to  
211 this section, on a case-by-case basis, in the event that a child or such  
212 child's parent or sibling is seriously ill due to a communicable disease,

213 and visitation could result in the contraction of such disease by one or  
214 more participants in the visitation. Such policy shall require that such  
215 child be provided an opportunity to communicate with such child's  
216 parents and siblings by telephonic, video or other conferencing platform  
217 in lieu of such visitation. The commissioner shall define "seriously ill"  
218 and "communicable disease" for the purposes of carrying out this  
219 subsection.

220 (e) The commissioner shall include in each child's case record  
221 information relating to the factors considered in making visitation  
222 determinations pursuant to this section. If the commissioner determines  
223 that such visits are not in the best interests of the child, that the  
224 occurrence of, on average, not less than one visit per week with his or  
225 her sibling is not in the best interests of each sibling, or that the number,  
226 frequency or duration of the visits requested by the child's attorney or  
227 guardian ad litem is not in the best interests of the child, the  
228 commissioner shall include the reasons for such determination in the  
229 child's case record.

230 [(f) On or before October first of each year, the commissioner shall  
231 report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint  
232 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
233 matters relating to children, data sufficient to demonstrate compliance  
234 with subsections (a), (c) and (e) of this section. Such data shall include  
235 the total annual number of children in out-of-home placements who  
236 have siblings, the total number of child cases with documented sibling  
237 visitation and the number of individual siblings involved in each case.]

238 Sec. 6. Section 17a-22ii of the 2026 supplement to the general statutes  
239 is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
240 *1, 2026*):

241 (a) There is established a Mental and Behavioral Health Treatment  
242 Fund, which shall be a separate, nonlapsing account. The account shall  
243 contain any moneys required by law to be deposited in the account, the  
244 resources of which shall be used by the Commissioner of Children and  
245 Families to assist families with the cost of obtaining (1) a drug or

246 treatment prescribed for a child by a health care provider for the  
247 treatment of a mental or behavioral health condition if the cost of such  
248 drug or treatment is not covered by insurance or Medicaid, and (2)  
249 intensive evidence-based services or other intensive services to treat  
250 mental and behavioral health conditions in children and adolescents,  
251 including, but not limited to, intensive in-home child and adolescent  
252 psychiatric services and services provided by an intensive outpatient  
253 program, if the cost of such services is not covered by insurance or  
254 Medicaid. The Commissioner of Children and Families shall establish  
255 eligibility criteria for families to receive such assistance. Such eligibility  
256 requirements (A) shall include that a family has sought and been denied  
257 coverage or reimbursement for such drug or treatment or such intensive  
258 services by the family's health carrier, and (B) may include, but need not  
259 be limited to, a family's financial need. Not later than January 1, 2023,  
260 the Commissioner of Children and Families shall begin accepting  
261 applications for such assistance.

262 (b) The Commissioner of Children and Families may accept on behalf  
263 of the fund any federal funds or private grants or gifts made for  
264 purposes of this section. The commissioner shall use such funds to make  
265 grants to families for the purposes described in this section.

266 (c) Not later than January 1, 2023, the Departments of Children and  
267 Families and Consumer Protection and the Office of Policy and  
268 Management shall post in a conspicuous location on their respective  
269 Internet web sites a description of the grant program, including, but not  
270 limited to, the eligibility requirements and application process for the  
271 grant program. Not later than January 1, 2023, the Department of  
272 Children and Families shall (1) post such description on the Internet web  
273 site administered by the department that contains information  
274 regarding resources for connecting children and families to behavioral  
275 health services, (2) include such description on the documents  
276 developed by the department pursuant to section 17a-22r, and (3)  
277 provide such description to the 2-1-1 Infoline program operated by the  
278 United Way of Connecticut. The Secretary of the Office of Policy and  
279 Management may request that another state agency post such

280 description on such agency's Internet web site.

281 [(d) On or before January 1, 2024, and annually thereafter, the  
282 Commissioner of Children and Families shall report, in accordance with  
283 the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing committee of the  
284 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public  
285 health regarding the effectiveness of the grant program established  
286 under subsection (b) of this section.]

287 Sec. 7. Subsection (g) of section 17a-101g of the general statutes is  
288 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
289 *2026*):

290 (g) (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (a) to (f),  
291 inclusive, of this section, the commissioner may establish a program of  
292 family assessment response to reports of child abuse and neglect  
293 whereby the report may be referred to appropriate community  
294 providers for family assessment and services without an investigation  
295 or at any time during an investigation, provided there has been an initial  
296 safety assessment of the circumstances of a family and child and  
297 criminal background checks have been performed on all adults involved  
298 in the report. Services provided through family assessment response  
299 shall include an array of community-based services and supports  
300 designed to meet the individual needs of families, build upon their  
301 strengths, enhance child development, reduce child abuse and neglect  
302 and increase the health, safety and well-being of children.

303 (2) In response to an accepted family assessment report, the  
304 department shall conduct a comprehensive family assessment that shall  
305 include a safety and risk assessment and an assessment of family  
306 strengths and needs. Such assessment shall include personal interviews  
307 with the child and the child's parent or primary caretaker, an evaluation  
308 of the home environment and the performance of criminal background  
309 checks on all adults residing in the same household. Such assessment  
310 may include, as appropriate, personal interviews with other children or  
311 adults residing in the same household as well as any other caregivers,  
312 family members and collateral contacts. In conducting such assessment,

313 the department shall consider the age and vulnerability of the child,  
314 family functioning, family history of abuse and neglect and family  
315 history of involvement with the department. The department shall,  
316 upon securing any necessary releases, request any relevant out-of-state  
317 history of child abuse or neglect involving any adults residing in the  
318 same household.

319 (3) The following reports of suspected child abuse or neglect shall not  
320 be referred for family assessment response: (A) Sexual abuse, (B) abuse  
321 or neglect occurring in an out-of-home placement, (C) abuse or neglect  
322 resulting in the death or serious physical or mental injury of a child, or  
323 (D) where the department's safety assessment reveals that the child is  
324 unsafe. A case supervisor or manager shall approve all referrals to  
325 family assessment response.

326 (4) Prior to referring a report to an appropriate community provider,  
327 the department shall develop a service plan designed to meet the  
328 family's immediate needs for services and supports and to guide the  
329 community provider's development of a long-term plan of care for the  
330 family.

331 (5) Following a referral pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection,  
332 a community provider shall schedule an in-person meeting with the  
333 family and shall develop a plan of care. Such plan of care shall be  
334 developed in consultation with the family and shall include (A) a review  
335 of the department's family assessment and service plan and any services  
336 and supports the family is currently receiving, and (B) an identification  
337 of the family's ongoing needs and the services and supports that may be  
338 available to meet such needs. Such plan of care shall identify the family's  
339 strengths and needs and describe the services and supports to be offered  
340 to (i) address the family's needs, (ii) build upon the family's strengths,  
341 and (iii) increase the health, safety and well-being of the child. The  
342 provider shall monitor the family's participation and progress with the  
343 plan of care.

344 (6) The community provider shall maintain ongoing contact with the  
345 family through in-person meetings, visits to the home, child and family

346 team meetings and phone calls. If at any time following the referral or  
347 during the implementation of the plan of care, the provider has  
348 reasonable cause to suspect or believe that any child under eighteen  
349 years of age (A) has been abused or neglected, as defined in section 46b-  
350 120, (B) has suffered a nonaccidental physical injury or an injury that is  
351 at variance with the history given for such injury, or (C) is placed at  
352 imminent risk of serious harm, the provider shall report or cause a  
353 report to be made in accordance with the provisions of sections 17a-101b  
354 to 17a-101d, inclusive.

355 (7) The community provider shall schedule an in-person meeting  
356 with the family prior to the end of services. The determination to end  
357 services shall be based upon the family's preference and progress in  
358 meeting the goals outlined in the plan of care. The community provider  
359 shall submit individual child and family specific data and  
360 administrative service data to the department not later than thirty days  
361 after ending services. Such data shall identify the needs of the family,  
362 the services and supports made available to address those needs, the  
363 family's met and unmet treatment goals, the final disposition at the time  
364 of ending services and the reasons for the family's discharge from  
365 services, including, but not limited to, met treatment goals, family  
366 relocation, the receipt of a new report by the department or transfer of  
367 the family to another provider.

368 (8) Subdivisions (5) to (7), inclusive, of this subsection shall apply to  
369 all community provider service contracts in effect on June 9, 2016, to the  
370 extent they are not in conflict with such contracts, and shall apply to all  
371 contracts entered into, amended, extended or renewed on or after June  
372 9, 2016.

373 (9) The commissioner shall adopt procedures to establish a method  
374 for the department to monitor the progress of the child and family  
375 referred to a community provider pursuant to subdivision (1) of this  
376 subsection and to set standards for reopening an investigation pursuant  
377 to this section. Such standards shall include, but need not be limited to,  
378 provisions for the reassignment of a report referred for family

379 assessment response for an immediate investigation based on (A) a  
380 reassessment of the initial report of child abuse or neglect or the  
381 discovery of new or additional facts indicating that the child is unsafe,  
382 or (B) a determination that the report meets the criteria of subdivision  
383 (3) of this subsection and, as a result, does not qualify for family  
384 assessment response. Not later than January 1, 2017, the commissioner  
385 shall submit a report regarding such procedures and standards, in  
386 accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint standing  
387 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
388 relating to children.

389 (10) Consistent with the provisions of section 17a-28, the department  
390 shall disclose all relevant information in its possession concerning the  
391 child and family, including prior child protection activity, to each  
392 provider to whom a report has been referred for use by the provider in  
393 the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of unique needs of the family  
394 and the prevention of future reports. Each provider who has received a  
395 report of child abuse or neglect referred pursuant to this subsection shall  
396 disclose to the department, consistent with the provisions of section 17a-  
397 28, all relevant information gathered during assessment, diagnosis and  
398 treatment of the child and family. The department may use such  
399 information solely to monitor and ensure the continued safety and well-  
400 being of the child or children.

401 [(11) Not later than July 1, 2016, and annually thereafter, the  
402 department shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of  
403 section 11-4a, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly  
404 having cognizance of matters relating to children for inclusion in the  
405 annual report card prepared pursuant to section 2-53m on the status of  
406 family assessment response. Such report shall include data from the  
407 previous calendar year, including, but not limited to: (A) The number of  
408 accepted reports of child abuse or neglect, and the percentage of reports  
409 assigned to the family assessment response track; (B) the disposition of  
410 families assigned a family assessment response; (C) for cases assigned  
411 to the family assessment response track, a breakdown by reporter type;  
412 (D) the number and percentage of family assessment response cases that

413 changed track to investigations; (E) an analysis of the department's prior  
414 or subsequent involvement with a family that has been assigned to  
415 family assessment response, if applicable; (F) an analysis of the  
416 department's prior or subsequent involvement with a family that has  
417 been assigned to a community partner agency; (G) a description of  
418 services that are commonly provided to families referred to the  
419 community support for families program; (H) a description of the  
420 department's staff development and training practices relating to intake;  
421 (I) the number and percentage of referred families who were ultimately  
422 enrolled in the community support for families program; (J) the number  
423 and percentage of families receiving a family assessment response  
424 broken down by race and ethnicity; (K) the reason for discharge from  
425 the community support for families program, as identified in  
426 subdivision (7) of this subsection, broken down by race and ethnicity;  
427 (L) a comparison of the needs identified and the needs addressed for  
428 families referred to the community support for families program; and  
429 (M) an analysis of the efficacy of the department's risk and safety  
430 assessment practices, including information concerning the  
431 methodology used to determine the reliability of such practices, the  
432 utilization of evidence-based practices and tools, and the effectiveness  
433 of such assessment practices for identifying children at risk for abuse or  
434 neglect.]

435 Sec. 8. Section 4-68y of the general statutes is repealed and the  
436 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

437 Not later than September 30, 2011, and biennially thereafter, [the  
438 Commissioner of Children and Families,] the Commissioner of  
439 Emergency Services and Public Protection, the Chief State's Attorney,  
440 the Chief Public Defender, the Chief Court Administrator and the Police  
441 Officer Standards and Training Council shall submit a report, on behalf  
442 of the respective department, division, office or council, to the Secretary  
443 of the Office of Policy and Management on the plans established by the  
444 department, division, office or council to address disproportionate  
445 minority contact in the juvenile justice system and the steps taken to  
446 implement those plans during the previous two fiscal years. Any reports

447 submitted by the [Commissioner of Children and Families and the]  
448 Chief Court Administrator, or on behalf of any other such department,  
449 division, office or council that has responsibility for providing child  
450 welfare services, including services in abuse and neglect cases, shall (1)  
451 indicate efforts undertaken in the previous two fiscal years to address  
452 disproportionate minority contact in the child welfare system, and (2)  
453 include an evaluation of the relationship between the child welfare  
454 system and disproportionate minority contact in the juvenile justice  
455 system. The Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management shall  
456 compile the submissions and shall submit a report on such submissions,  
457 in accordance with section 11-4a, to the Governor and the General  
458 Assembly not later than December thirty-first biennially. For the  
459 purposes of this section, "disproportionate minority contact" means that  
460 a disproportionate number of juvenile members of minority groups  
461 come into contact with the juvenile justice system.

462 Sec. 9. Subdivision (5) of subsection (j) of section 46b-129 of the 2026  
463 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is  
464 substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2026*):

465 (5) The commissioner shall be the guardian of such child or youth for  
466 the duration of the commitment, provided the child or youth has not  
467 reached the age of eighteen years, or until another guardian has been  
468 legally appointed, and in like manner, upon such vesting of the care of  
469 such child or youth, such other public or private agency or individual  
470 shall be the guardian of such child or youth until such child or youth  
471 has reached the age of eighteen years or, in the case of a child or youth  
472 in full-time attendance in a secondary school, a technical education and  
473 career school, a college or a state-accredited job training program, until  
474 such child or youth has reached the age of twenty-one years or until  
475 another guardian has been legally appointed. The commissioner may  
476 place any child or youth so committed to the commissioner in a suitable  
477 foster home or in the home of a fictive kin caregiver, relative caregiver,  
478 or in a licensed child-caring institution or in the care and custody of any  
479 accredited, licensed or approved child-caring agency, within or without  
480 the state, provided a child shall not be placed outside the state except

481 for good cause and unless the [parent or guardian] parents or guardians  
482 of such child are notified in advance of such placement and given an  
483 opportunity to be heard, or in a receiving home maintained and  
484 operated by the commissioner. When placing such child or youth, the  
485 commissioner shall provide written notification of the placement,  
486 including the name, address and other relevant contact information  
487 relating to the placement, to any attorney or guardian ad litem  
488 appointed to represent the child or youth pursuant to subsection (c) of  
489 this section. The commissioner shall provide written notification to such  
490 attorney or guardian ad litem of any change in placement of such child  
491 or youth, including a hospitalization or respite placement, and if the  
492 child or youth absconds from care. The commissioner shall provide such  
493 written notification not later than ten business days prior to the date of  
494 change of placement in a nonemergency situation, or not later than two  
495 business days following the date of a change of placement in an  
496 emergency situation. In placing such child or youth, the commissioner  
497 shall, if possible, select a home, agency, institution or person of like  
498 religious faith to that of a parent of such child or youth, if such faith is  
499 known or may be ascertained by reasonable inquiry, provided such  
500 home conforms to the standards of the commissioner and the  
501 commissioner shall, when placing siblings, if possible, place such  
502 children together. At least ten days prior to transferring a child or youth  
503 to a second or subsequent placement, the commissioner shall give  
504 written notice to such child or youth and such child's or youth's attorney  
505 of said commissioner's intention to make such transfer, unless an  
506 emergency or risk to such child's or youth's well-being necessitates the  
507 immediate transfer of such child or youth and renders such notice  
508 impossible. Upon the issuance of an order committing the child or youth  
509 to the commissioner, or not later than sixty days after the issuance of  
510 such order, the court shall determine whether the department made  
511 reasonable efforts to keep the child or youth with his or her [parent or  
512 guardian] parents or guardians prior to the issuance of such order and,  
513 if such efforts were not made, whether such reasonable efforts were not  
514 possible, taking into consideration the child's or youth's best interests,  
515 including the child's or youth's health and safety.

516 Sec. 10. Sections 17a-6e, 17a-22n, 17a-32a, 17a-63a, 17a-100c and 17a-  
517 114g of the general statutes are repealed. (*Effective July 1, 2026*)

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

Section 1	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	17a-22m
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	17a-8b
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	10-19m
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	17a-10a
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	17a-22ii
Sec. 7	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	17a-101g(g)
Sec. 8	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	4-68y
Sec. 9	<i>October 1, 2026</i>	46b-129(j)(5)
Sec. 10	<i>July 1, 2026</i>	Repealer section

**Statement of Legislative Commissioners:**

In Section 1(5)(K), "by the community" was changed to "by the department's community" and in Section 1(5)(L), "analysis for" was changed to "analysis of" for clarity.

**KID**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

*The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.*

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**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:** None

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Explanation**

The bill makes various procedural, technical, and conforming changes that primarily adjust the Department of Children and Families (DCF) reporting requirements, resulting in no fiscal impact.

**OLR Bill Analysis****sSB 155*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.*****SUMMARY**

This bill merges current Department of Children and Families (DCF) reporting requirements from eight statutes into one report. It does so by repealing certain reporting requirements and moving others to a new consolidated report that DCF must submit to the General Assembly on its activities for the prior fiscal year. The bill's consolidated report is due each year, starting on October 15, 2027. The current reporting requirements are generally kept.

The bill also:

1. merges two existing DCF reporting requirements on the Behavioral Health Partnership,
2. removes the requirement that DCF report any missing or abducted child in DCF custody to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) National Crime Information Center to align with FBI requirements for submitting these reports,
3. eliminates an annual DCF reporting requirement on the effectiveness of the Mental and Behavioral Health Treatment Fund grant program, and
4. eliminates a DCF reporting requirement on racial disparities in the population of children in the juvenile justice system.

Lastly, it makes minor and technical changes (§ 9).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2026, except the provisions on the juvenile

justice racial disparities report (§ 8) and the technical change (§ 9) are effective October 1, 2026.

**§§ 1, 4, 5, 7 & 10 — CONSOLIDATED REPORT**

The bill generally consolidates eight separate DCF reporting requirements into one report to the legislature on DCF’s activities and makes various changes to the information it must provide. The table below describes the bill’s changes for each of these reporting requirements, listed by topic. The bill also makes other minor and technical changes.

In consolidating the current reporting requirements, the bill (1) shifts their due dates, from the current dates in the table below to October 15 of each year, starting in 2027, and (2) requires DCF to report on all of these topics on a fiscal year basis. It requires DCF to submit the consolidated report to both the Appropriations and Children committees, rather than only the latter as current law requires for most of the separate reports. (The two exceptions are described in the table below.)

The bill specifies that the report must not include personally identifying information.

**Table: Consolidated Report Requirements Included in § 1**

<i>Topic, Bill §, and Statutory Citation</i>	<i>Current Reporting Requirement and Due Date</i>	<i>Changes Under the Bill</i>
Race and Ethnicity Data (§ 10) (CGS § 17a-6e)	Data showing DCF services use by race and ethnicity, an assessment of usage trends, and recommendations for results-based accountability measures for parity in access to services  Due by February 15 each year	None
Visitation of Children in DCF Care (§ 5) (CGS § 17a-10a(f))	Data showing compliance with the law on visitation for children in DCF care due to temporary placements or commitment orders; must include the number of (1) children with out-of-home	Requires the report to have the number of sibling pairs in each placement, rather than the number of individual siblings involved in each case

<b>Topic, Bill §, and Statutory Citation</b>	<b>Current Reporting Requirement and Due Date</b>	<b>Changes Under the Bill</b>
	placements who have siblings, (2) child cases with documented sibling visits, and (2) individual siblings involved in each case  Due by October 1 each year	
DCF-Operated Facilities (§ 10) (CGS § 17a-32a)	For each DCF-operated facility, (1) aggregate resident profiles; (2) descriptions of, and updates on, major initiatives; (3) key outcome indicators and results; (4) operating costs; and (5) descriptions of educational, vocational and literacy programs, behavioral treatment and other services for residents, and their outcomes  No specified due date	Requires this information to be submitted to the Appropriations and Children committees, rather than the State Advisory Council on Children and Families and each facility's respective advisory group; eliminates related requirements that (1) these advisory groups respond to their facilities' annual report and recommend improvements and enhancements they find necessary and (2) DCF serve as administrative staff to these groups and post these reports on its website
Reports of Animal Harm, Neglect, or Cruelty (§ 10) (CGS § 17a-100c)	Number of written reports made by DCF employees and animal control officers of actual or suspected instances of animal harm, neglect, or cruelty they received (currently, both the DCF and Department of Agriculture (DoAg) commissioner must report this information)  Due by February 15 each year	Eliminates the DoAg commissioner's reporting requirement and instead requires DCF to include in its report data from DoAg's monthly animal abuse reports to DCF, required under existing law
Family Assessment Response Program (§ 7) (CGS § 17a-101g(g))	Status of the family assessment response (FAR) program, including specified data, statistics, and analysis for the previous 12 months, such as the number of accepted reports of child abuse or neglect and percentage of reports assigned to the FAR program  Due by July 1 each year	Removes the requirement to include the percentage of families receiving a family assessment response broken down by race and ethnicity and makes minor and technical changes  Eliminates the current requirement that this information be included in the annual children's report card
Private Provider Outcomes (§ 10) (CGS 17a-63a)	Information on DCF's efforts to determine measurable outcomes and incorporate them in provider contracts, including the (1) number	Requires DCF to also include information on outcome achievement and other quality indicators as noted in annual

<b>Topic, Bill §, and Statutory Citation</b>	<b>Current Reporting Requirement and Due Date</b>	<b>Changes Under the Bill</b>
	of service types with outcomes, (2) types of outcomes, (3) application of outcome information to quality improvement  No due date specified	evaluations of each provider
Foster Care Licensing Practices (§ 10) (CGS § 17a-114g)	Specified information on DCF foster care licensing practices including (1) its methods of ensuring it complies with foster care licensing laws and regulations, (2) its methods of assessing the needs of children and youths in foster care and providing support for foster parents to meet these needs, (3) DCF safeguards used when it seeks to license a relative caregiver with a history of child abuse or neglect or psychiatric illness or a criminal record, and (4) the results of DCF's random audits of its licensing practices  Due by January 1 each year	Requires the report to include the results of any DCF audits of its licensing practices, rather than just random audits
Juvenile Referrals and Diversions (§ 4) (CGS § 10-19m(c))	Information on the referral or diversion of children under 18 from the juvenile justice and court systems; must include specified statistics and demographic information (but not identifying information) and any other statistics and information the legislature may periodically request  Due to the entire General Assembly by December 1 every other year	Requires DCF to report this same information annually, rather than every two years, and eliminates the provision allowing the legislature to request other statistics and information

## §§ 2 & 10 — BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP REPORTING

The bill merges two existing DCF reporting requirements on the Behavioral Health Partnership. It repeals a provision that requires DCF and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)

to monitor the Behavioral Health Partnership's implementation and annually report to the legislature on any related estimated cost savings. The bill instead adds this cost savings reporting requirement to the existing annual report that DCF, DMHAS, and the Department of Social Services must make evaluating the Behavioral Health Partnership program and its services. By law, this annual program evaluation must, among other things, include information on the services provided, number of people served, program outcomes, and spending on child and adult populations under the program.

The bill requires the agencies to submit the next annual program evaluation by October 1, 2026. By law, and under the bill, they must submit the report to the Appropriations, Children, Human Services, and Public Health committees.

### **§ 3 — FBI NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENT**

The bill removes the requirement that DCF report any missing or abducted child in DCF custody to the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC). In practice, only law enforcement authorities may access the NCIC to make these reports.

By law, unchanged by the bill, DCF must, within 24 hours after a child in its custody is determined to be missing or abducted, notify the (1) law enforcement authority with jurisdiction where the child was reported missing or abducted and (2) National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

### **§ 6 — MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TREATMENT FUND GRANT PROGRAM REPORT**

The bill eliminates the requirement that DCF report annually on the effectiveness of the Mental and Behavioral Health Treatment Fund grant program. By law, this program is designed to help families with the costs of prescribed drugs or treatments and intensive services for children with mental and behavioral health conditions if insurance or Medicaid does not cover them. Under current law, DCF must submit the report to the Public Health Committee by January 1 of each year.

**§ 8 — DCF DISPROPORTIONATE MINORITY CONTACT REPORT**

Under current law, the DCF commissioner and other specified state officials and entities must each submit a report every two years to the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) on the plans they have developed and steps taken in the previous two fiscal years to address racial disparities in the juvenile justice system. The bill eliminates this reporting requirement for DCF, including the related requirement that its report include (1) efforts made to address racial disparities in the child welfare system and (2) an evaluation of the relationship between the child welfare system and racial disparity in the juvenile justice system.

The bill keeps the existing reporting requirement for the other officials and entities, specifically the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection commissioner, chief state’s attorney, chief public defender, chief court administrator, and Police Officer Standards and Training Council. By law, OPM must compile these reports into one report for the governor and the General Assembly by December 31 of each odd-numbered year.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 17    Nay 0    (02/24/2026)