

Date of Hearing: January 20, 2022

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Chris Holden, Chair

AB 321 (Valladares) – As Amended January 3, 2022

Policy Committee:	Human Services	Vote:	7 - 0
	Education		6 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: No Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill adds an enrollment priority for state-subsidized childcare and preschool programs for children from families in which the primary home language is other than English. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Adds a priority for enrollment in subsidized childcare programs administered by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) for children from a family in which the primary home language is other than English, following existing priorities for recipients of child protective services or those who are at risk of neglect, abuse or exploitation; families with the lowest income; and children with exceptional needs.
- 2) Adds a priority for enrollment of four-year old children in the California State Preschool Program (CSPP), administered by the California Department of Education (CDE), for children from a family in which the primary home language is other than English, following existing priorities for recipients of child protective services or those who at risk of neglect, abuse, or exploitation; those who are not enrolled in a transitional kindergarten (TK) program; families with the lowest income; and children with exceptional needs.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) CDE estimates one-time costs of \$188,000 (GF) in the first year, and \$188,000 (GF) in the second year, to write regulations and provide guidance to the field. These costs include one position for responding to questions from the field, developing and conducting ongoing trainings and providing technical assistance necessary to reconcile this bill's provisions with the implementation of AB 1363 (Luz Rivas), Chapter 498, Statutes of 2021, which requires providers to identify and report data on dual language learners enrolled in the CSPP.

CDE also notes potential costs, unknown at this time, for updating the Child Development Management Information System.

- 2) Negligible costs to CDSS.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** This bill seeks to help low-income English learners acquire English language proficiency prior to entering K-12 by adding children from families whose primary home

language is not English to the priority list for state-subsidized childcare and state preschool programs.

- 2) **Background.** California's subsidized childcare system is designed to assist parents who are working, in training, seeking employment, incapacitated or in need of respite. Childcare is available through a number of programs, including California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs); General Child Care, which includes contracted centers and family child care homes; alternative payment programs (APPs), which provide vouchers to obtain child care in a center, family child care home or from a license-exempt provider; and, the CSPP, which provides developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate curriculum to eligible three- and four-year olds.

In fiscal year 2020-21, there are approximately 299,000 subsidized child care slots offered across the various programs, including 178,000 through CalWORKs, 75,000 APP and 32,000 through General Child Care, as well as over 143,000 CSPP slots (133,000 part-day and 67,000 full-day).

- 3) **Enrollment Prioritization.** To be eligible for subsidized childcare through a program other than CalWORKs, families must meet at least one eligibility requirement and one need requirement, generally meaning being income-eligible, homeless or having children who are receiving protective services. Need requirements also include parents who are engaged in or seeking employment, engaged in vocational training, seeking permanent housing for family stability or are incapacitated. This bill does not impact eligibility requirements.

Once determined eligible, a child is enrolled in a program based on statutorily determined priorities, with highest priority given to children who are recipients of child protective services or who are at risk of abuse. Second priority is given to children from the lowest income families. If two or more families are in the same income priority category, a child with exceptional needs is admitted first, followed by those who have been on the waiting list the longest.

Children are similarly enrolled into CSPP on a priority basis. First priority is for three- or four-year-olds who are receiving child protective services or who at risk of abuse. Second priority is for eligible four-year-olds who are not enrolled in TK. Within this priority category, children are enrolled in income ranking order, followed by children with exceptional needs, and then families who have been on the waiting list the longest. Third priority is for eligible three-year-olds with similar income, exceptional needs and waiting-list duration determinations as four-year-olds.

This bill does not increase the number of children eligible to receive services, but rather, changes the enrollment order of already eligible children within their income level. Specifically, this bill adds a priority ranking for children (four-year-old children in the case of CSPP) from families whose primary home language is not English, following children with exceptional needs and prior to other children who have been on the waiting list the longest.

There is no state-level data of the number of eligible families currently on waiting lists for enrollment into subsidized child-care. However, it is generally understood the number of families on the waiting lists far exceeds the number of available slots. It is likely available

slots will be filled long before enrollment reaches the portion of the waiting list affected by this bill.

- 4) **Dual Language Learners.** A 2017 report from the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research stated about 35% of households in California with children ages zero through five speak only a non-English language in the home. A report from the National Center on Immigration Integration Policy states, for dual-language learners, the quality, type and amount of care outside of the home can make a significant difference in kindergarten readiness, including measures of math and literacy skills, and can lead to later academic successes.

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