

Date of Hearing: May 15, 2024

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

AB 1925 (Rendon) – As Introduced January 25, 2024

Policy Committee: Human Services

Vote: 5 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

**SUMMARY:**

This bill extends eligibility for subsidized childcare and development programs to a family whose child is eligible for services under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and to a the family who needs the childcare services because the child is identified as eligible for services under IDEA.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

Ongoing costs of an unknown amount, potentially in the millions of dollars or more annually (General Fund, federal funds), to the Department of Social Services (CDSS) due to the categorical expansion of subsidized childcare.

According to the Legislative Analyst's Office, the General Fund faces a structural deficit in the tens of billions of dollars over the next several fiscal years.

**COMMENTS:**

1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

Families who have children with disabilities face serious challenges in meeting the requirements to use California's childcare and development programs. We should be making it easier, not harder, for these families to get the services they need. By aligning California's eligibility requirements with those at the federal level, families across the state who are in need of support will now have access to these underutilized and life-changing programs.

2) **Background.** California's subsidized childcare is a complex system of programs serving children from birth through 13 years of age, funded through a mix of federal and state dollars, and administered through a mix of local educational agencies, community-based providers, and family childcare providers. Most children enrolled in subsidized childcare programs receive care through licensed family childcare homes, centers, and license-exempt settings.

Certain eligibility and prioritization rules, based primarily on income and need, apply to subsidized childcare in California. State law and regulations specify the detailed and extensive methods for the verification of these requirements by relevant agencies before confirming a family's eligibility for services.

In 1975, the federal government enacted IDEA to ensure infants and toddlers with developmental delays receive early intervention services and to require schools to provide special education services to school-aged children with disabilities to meet their unique educational needs. IDEA also guarantees the right to fully take part in school life, including after-school activities.

California has a shortage of available childcare slots generally, but families of children with disabilities face even greater difficulties finding specialized childcare facilities equipped to manage the diverse needs of children with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act stipulates childcare programs cannot exclude children with disabilities unless including them would require a “fundamental alteration of the program” and programs must make “reasonable modifications” to integrate disabled individuals.

This bill extends eligibility for subsidized childcare and development services to families with a child with disabilities up to age 21. Specifically, it includes families with children who are eligible for childcare services under the federal IDEA as a way to increase access to subsidized childcare.

- 3) **Arguments in Support.** According to the Los Angeles County Office of Education, sponsors of the bill:

Children with disabilities should be made categorically eligible for the General Child Care and Development (CCTR), as AB 210 did California State Preschool Program (CSPP) in 2022. Often, one parent of a child with a moderate to severe disability must quit their job to support the child full-time, which would exclude them from CCTR based on the need criteria, but such parents also need training and resources to support their child. Programs that partner CCTR with Early Head Start are especially well equipped to serve such families, as they are mandated to serve at least 10 percent of children with disabilities and to provide comprehensive services to the family.

By including children with disabilities in the eligibility criteria, the bill ensures that families facing unique challenges have access to essential child development services. Additionally, simplifying the need requirements acknowledges the economic disparities within the region and ensures that families struggling with employment or housing issues can still access much-needed care for their children. This approach addresses the existing gaps in eligibility criteria and fosters greater equity in access to early learning programs for families.

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