
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 2324	Hearing Date:	June 17, 2026
Author:	Jeff Gonzalez		
Version:	April 20, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
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Subject: Vocational education: youth caregivers.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the California Department of Education (CDE), during the next revision of the California Career Technical Education (CTE) Model Curriculum Standards, to consider adding content related to youth caregivers within the Personal Care and Services career pathway. The bill also requires CDE, by July 1, 2028, to develop implementation guidance for the pathway, including guidance related to caregiving skills, work-based learning opportunities, and the potential use of work experience education (WEE) credit for youth who provide care to family members in the home.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Authorizes school districts that maintain high schools to establish WEE programs to provide pupils with instruction in the skills, attitudes, and understandings necessary for success in employment.
- 2) Requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to coordinate the development and periodic revision of California CTE Model Curriculum Standards for grades 7 to 12, inclusive.
- 3) Establishes California's CTE system, including industry sectors and career pathways that provide students with academic and technical preparation for employment and postsecondary education.
- 4) Establishes the Education, Child Development, and Family Services industry sector, which includes pathways related to careers in family and human services.
- 5) Requires local educational agencies receiving state CTE funding to provide high-quality curriculum and work-based learning opportunities aligned with state CTE standards.

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Defines a “youth caregiver” as a child or youth of an age typical of a pupil in grades 9 through 12 who provides help or care to an individual with an ongoing health condition, chronic illness, disability, mental illness, frailty, or advanced age.
- 2) Requires CDE, during the next revision of the California CTE Model Curriculum Standards, to consult with the standards development committees responsible for updating the Healthcare and Human Services career cluster and consider adding content addressing the role of youth caregivers within the Personal Care and Services career pathway.
- 3) Requires CDE, by July 1, 2028, and in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to develop guidance for implementation of the Personal Care and Services career pathway that may include, but is not limited to, all of the following:
 - a) Skills associated with Personal Care and Services occupations, including in-home caregiving provided by youth caring for family members.
 - b) Instructional content related to direct support professions, including Home and Community-Based Services waivers and services for individuals with developmental, mental health, and physical disabilities, as well as older adults.
 - c) The social, emotional, academic, and physical risks that may be experienced by youth caregivers and the need for referrals to supportive services.
 - d) Work-based learning strategies that may consider the family home an appropriate location for work-based learning activities within the Personal Care and Services pathway.
 - e) The eligibility of youth caregivers to receive WEE credit for caring for a family member in the family member’s home.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “Youth caregivers play a vital yet often unseen role in families and communities. Across the country, young people provide daily care and support for siblings, parents, grandparents, and other loved ones who are aging, ill, or living with disabilities. These responsibilities require maturity, compassion, resilience, and practical problem-solving skills. Despite the value of their contributions, youth caregivers frequently carry these responsibilities without recognition, resources, or structured support. Balancing school, personal development, and caregiving duties can place significant pressure on young people and limit their access to educational and career opportunities. Recognizing youth caregivers means not only acknowledging their work but also ensuring they have pathways that allow their experience to become a strength rather than a barrier. When we invest in programs that connect caregiving experience with education and workforce development, we create meaningful career pathways into fields such as healthcare, community health,

and direct care. These pathways honor the skills youth caregivers already possess while equipping them with professional credentials, economic mobility, and long-term career stability. At the same time, strengthening these pathways helps address growing workforce needs in caregiving professions. By valuing lived experience and making entry points more accessible, we can build a workforce that is compassionate, culturally aware, and deeply connected to the communities it serves.”

- 2) ***Recognition of an often-overlooked student population.*** This bill is premised on the idea that many young people provide substantial care for parents, grandparents, siblings, or other family members with disabilities, chronic illnesses, or age-related needs. The bill’s findings cite research suggesting that youth caregivers may experience increased social isolation, stress, depression, and educational challenges while simultaneously developing skills related to responsibility, communication, and caregiving. Rather than creating a new program, this bill seeks to recognize those experiences within an existing CTE pathway and encourage consideration of how caregiving experiences may connect to future education and employment opportunities.
- 3) ***Narrowed significantly from its original form.*** As introduced, this bill proposed the creation of a standalone Youth Caregivers Career Pathway program, including development of a new curriculum framework, advisory structures, and specific programmatic requirements. Amendments taken in the Assembly substantially narrowed the measure. The bill now takes a considerably more limited approach by requiring CDE to consider youth caregiver content during the next scheduled update of the CTE Model Curriculum Standards and by directing CDE to develop implementation guidance for the existing Personal Care and Services pathway. As amended, the bill largely relies on California’s existing CTE infrastructure rather than creating a new pathway or program.
- 4) ***Relationship to ongoing CTE standards revisions.*** The CDE is currently engaged in a multiyear effort to update California’s CTE Model Curriculum Standards and align them with the national Advance CTE Career Clusters Framework, with adoption anticipated in 2027. The Health and Human Services career cluster already includes a Personal Care Services pathway that is intended to prepare students for careers supporting individuals across a range of care settings. This bill effectively directs attention to youth caregiving experiences during that standards revision process and may provide an opportunity for stakeholders to examine whether existing pathway content sufficiently addresses caregiving responsibilities performed by young people.
- 5) ***Questions regarding WEE credit.*** The bill authorizes implementation guidance to address the eligibility of youth caregivers to receive WEE credit for providing care to a family member in the family home. Existing WEE programs are generally designed around structured workplace learning experiences that include supervision, training plans, and educational objectives. The bill does not change WEE statutes or establish a new entitlement to credit. However, the Committee may wish to consider the extent to which caregiving provided within the home can or should be incorporated into existing work-based learning

frameworks and whether additional statutory changes would ultimately be necessary if broader implementation is envisioned.

- 6) ***Workforce development and direct support professional shortages.*** The author's broader rationale for the bill is tied to persistent workforce shortages in caregiving and direct support professions. California continues to face growing demand for workers who support older adults and individuals with disabilities in home and community-based settings. Supporters contend that youth caregivers often develop relevant skills through lived experience and may represent a potential pipeline into health, human services, and direct support careers if provided with appropriate educational pathways and support. While this bill does not create a workforce development program, it reflects a growing policy interest in connecting caregiving experiences to career exploration and workforce preparation opportunities.

SUPPORT

Association of Regional Center Agencies (co-sponsor)
California Association of Local Behavioral Health Boards and Commissions (co-sponsor)
Alzheimer's Greater Los Angeles
Alzheimer's Orange County
Alzheimer's San Diego
California Coalition for Behavioral Health
California Disability Services Association
California Foundation for Independent Living Centers
The Arc and United Cerebral Palsy California Collaboration
The California Baptist Capitol Ministry

OPPOSITION

None received

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