

Date of Hearing: May 13, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
 Buffy Wicks, Chair  
 AB 2429 (Blanca Rubio) – As Amended March 26, 2026

Policy Committee:	Human Services	Vote:	7 - 0
	Education		9 - 0

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

**SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the early childhood mental health consultation (ECMHC) service used in a childcare setting to use a classroom observation tool once per year, rather than twice per year, to inform the specific activities and support the consultant will provide.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires the ECMHC service used in a childcare setting, including but not limited to the California State Preschool Program (CSPP), to, at least once (rather than twice) per school or program year, in consultation with the classroom team or childcare provider, use an early care and education classroom observation tool to inform the specific activities and support the consultant will provide.
- 2) Removes references to the specific instrument, “Climate of Healthy Interactions for Learning and Development (CHILD)” to be used for classroom observations.

**FISCAL EFFECT:**

Negligible state costs.

**COMMENTS:**

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

[This bill] modernizes California’s ECMHC model by updating program requirements to allow more flexible, relationship-based consultation that better supports children’s social-emotional development. While ECMHC is a proven strategy for helping early educators address behavioral challenges and reduce suspensions and expulsions in early learning settings, feedback from providers and consultants indicates that some existing requirements create unnecessary administrative burdens that limit flexibility and discourage participation.

- 2) **Background.** ECMHC is a preventive, capacity-building intervention in which mental health professionals partner with early childhood educators to strengthen classroom environments and relationships, rather than providing direct clinical services to children. Consultants work

collaboratively with teachers, staff, and families to improve practices within the classroom. Through observation of classroom dynamics and child behavior, consultants help identify underlying causes of challenging behaviors and provide tailored coaching, strategies, and resources. This includes supporting developmentally appropriate practices, strengthening provider-child interactions, and creating more supportive and inclusive environments.

In California, ECMHC supports children from birth to six years of age and their families within publicly funded early learning settings. AB 2698 (Rubio), Chapter 946, Statutes of 2018, established these services, making them available to CSPP, general childcare, and Family Child Care Home Education Networks. Services may be provided by licensed mental health professionals, including marriage and family therapists, clinical social workers, professional clinical counselors, psychologists, and child and adolescent psychiatrists, as well as supervised or qualified individuals as determined by California Department of Education or the California Department of Social Services.

AB 2806 (Rubio), Chapter 915, Statutes of 2022, further defined the model by establishing requirements related to observation, screening, and implementation of a relationship-based, reflective consultation approach. This bill modifies these requirements by reducing the required frequency of classroom observations to at least once per year and allowing the use of a broader early care and education observation tool to inform consultation.

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