

Date of Hearing: July 15, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Alex Lee, Chair

SB 271 (Reyes) – As Amended May 23, 2025

SENATE VOTE: 39-0

SUBJECT: Public postsecondary education: students with dependent children: childcare services, resources, and programs

SUMMARY: Requires each California State University (CSU) and California Community College (CCC) and requests each University of California (UC) financial aid office, childcare development center, and Basic Needs Center to refer their respective students with dependent children to local resource and referral (R&R) agencies for purposes of connecting and informing students of existing childcare services and resources. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the financial aid office on each campus of the CCC and the CSU, and requests the financial aid office on each campus of the UC to provide all of the following information to students with dependent children:
 - a) Information on the campus' childcare development center and childcare offerings, if applicable;
 - b) Referral to the campus Basic Needs Center for support accessing information, including, but not limited to, information and connections to local resource and referral agencies in order to obtain support in applying for state and federal childcare subsidies and programs and finding local childcare providers; and,
 - c) Information on any supplemental awards such as the awards for students with dependent children, established in state law.
- 2) Requires a child development center or preschool established by the CCCs and the CSU, and requests a child development center or preschool established by the UC to provide students with dependent children seeking childcare with both of the following:
 - a) Referral to the campus Basic Needs Center for support accessing information, including, but not limited to, information and connections to local resource and referral agencies in order to obtain support in applying for state and federal childcare subsidies and programs and finding local childcare providers; and,
 - b) Referral to the campus' financial aid office, including information on the awards for students with dependent children.
- 3) Expands the definition of “basic needs services and resources” to include childcare services and resources.
- 4) Authorizes a Basic Needs Center to provide childcare services and resources for parenting students including, but is not limited to, direct financial or service support.

- 5) Authorizes an existing Basic Needs Center or office that supports parenting students that if a student may be better served by that center or office to direct that student to the student parent center or office.
- 6) Requires Basic Needs Centers to also connect students to supplemental awards such as awards for students with dependent children.
- 7) Defines “childcare services and resources,” as it relates to basic needs services, resources, and centers on a CCC, CSU, or UC campus to include, but not be limited to, providing information on affordable childcare options on and near campus and information and connections to local resource and referral agencies in order to obtain support in applying to state and federal childcare subsidies and programs and finding local childcare providers, including, but not limited to, the California State Preschool Program (CSPP), Head Start, the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) childcare program, and general childcare and development programs. Childcare services and resources may also include direct financial or service support.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the Child Care and Development Services Act to provide childcare and development services as part of a coordinated, comprehensive, and cost-effective system serving children from birth to 13 years of age and their parents, including a full range of supervision, health, and support services through full- and part-time programs. (Welfare & Institutions Code [WIC] § 10207 *et seq.*)
- 2) Defines the following terms:
 - a) “Childcare and development services” as services designed to meet a wide variety of needs of children and their families, while their parents or guardians are working, in training, seeking employment, incapacitated, or in need of respite. These services may include direct care and supervision, instructional activities, resource and referral programs, and alternative payment arrangements. (WIC § 10213.5(j))
 - b) “Resource and referral programs” as programs that provide information to parents, including referrals and coordination of community resources for parents and public or private providers of care. Services frequently include, but are not limited to: technical assistance for providers, toy-lending libraries, equipment-lending libraries, toy- and equipment-lending libraries, staff development programs, health and nutrition education, and referrals to social services. (WIC § 10213.5(x))
 - c) “Alternative payment program (APP)” as a local government agency or nonprofit organization that has contracted with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), or a migrant alternative payment program to provide alternative payments and to provide support services to parents and providers. (WIC § 10213.5(b))
- 3) Specifies the roles and responsibilities of childcare resource and referral programs established to serve a defined geographic area. (WIC § 10219-10224.5)

- 4) Specifies the roles and responsibilities of childcare alternative payment programs established to serve an identifiable geographic area approved by CDSS. (WIC § 10225-10234)
- 5) Establishes the Donahoe Higher Education Act, which defines the roles of the UC, CSU, and CCCs to ensure coordinated, accessible, and affordable public higher education across the state. (Education Code [EDC] § 66000 *et seq.*)
- 6) Authorizes public postsecondary institutions to establish and maintain child development programs on or near their campuses. (EDC § 66060)
- 7) Requires each CCC campus and each CSU campus, and requests each UC campus, to establish the position of the basic needs coordinator to assist students, among other responsibilities, with basic needs services and resources, including childcare, and to establish a Basic Needs Center where basic needs services, resources, and staff are made available to students, as provided. Further requires each Basic Needs Center to, among other things, connect students to the financial aid department or financial aid office, as appropriate, to ensure that students are receiving all available financial aid. (EDC § 66023.4-66023.5)

FISCAL EFFECT: According to the Senate Appropriations Committee on May 23, 2025:

- The Chancellor’s Office estimates one-time Proposition 98 General Fund costs of \$1,000 to \$2,000 per community college, or \$116,000 to \$232,000 statewide, to update policies and procedures for Basic Needs Centers and Financial Aid Offices. However, this estimate could be lower since the bill’s provisions would merely codify current practices already in place at some of the colleges.
- While the CSU and UC indicate that the bill’s provisions would result in additional training duties for their Basic Needs Coordinators and Financial Aid staff, the associated costs are expected to be minor and absorbable within existing resources.

COMMENTS:

Background: *Subsidized Childcare.* California’s subsidized childcare system is designed to support families who are working, in training, seeking employment, incapacitated, or in need of respite. Funded through federal and state dollars, the system serves children from birth to 13 years of age through a mixed delivery model that includes local educational agencies, community-based organizations, childcare centers, and family childcare homes.

Key programs include General Child Care, which includes contracted centers and family childcare homes, CSPP for three- and four-year-olds, and APPs, which provide vouchers for use with licensed or license-exempt providers. Participants and families in the CalWORKs program or who are transitioning off aid may access subsidized childcare through a three-stage structure.

Student Parents in Postsecondary Education. California is home to approximately 400,000 undergraduate and graduate student parents, a majority of whom are first-generation and students of color, according to a December 2024 policy brief by Early Edge California titled, *Supporting Student Parents and their Young Children in California’s Institutions of Higher Education*. A statewide level research by the California Alliance for Student Parent Success estimates that 32% of student parents in California have a child under three years of age. Compared to their non-

parenting peers, student parents face additional barriers to educational success, including limited access to affordable, flexible childcare, financial insecurity, and difficulties balancing school, work, and caregiving responsibilities. These challenges are particularly acute for student parents with infants and toddlers and when institutions lack childcare options or coordinated support services, which contribute to higher rates of basic needs insecurity, delayed enrollment, and lower graduation rates.

Without stable and affordable childcare, student parents often face difficult choices. Many are forced to reduce their course load, take a break from college, or drop out altogether. This disrupts their education, limits future earning potential, and negatively impacts the well-being and long-term outcomes of their children. National data from 2012 to 2017 analyzed by the Institute for Women's Policy Research show that more than half of undergraduate student parents leave college without earning a degree within six years, which is nearly twice the rate of students without children. The risk is especially high among certain groups: 62% of community college student parents, 54% of single parents, 58% of Black student parents, and 56% of those with infants do not complete their degree. Stop-out rates are even higher among single fathers (71%), Black and Latino fathers (72% and 66%, respectively), and fathers attending public four-year universities (70%).

On-Campus Childcare & Basic Needs Centers. Student parents in California's public higher education systems have access to varying levels of on-campus childcare and basic needs supports. According to the Senate Education Committee analysis, 20 of 73 CCC districts operate 42 childcare centers; nearly all CSU campuses have childcare centers; and, all 10 UC campuses have childcare centers. However, many centers operate at limited capacity with long waitlists. Eligible student parents may also receive up to \$6,000 in CalGrant supplemental aid.

To address basic needs more broadly, the state has invested in Basic Needs Centers. AB 775 (Berman), Chapter 942, Statutes of 2022, required CCC campuses to establish Basic Needs Center and coordinators by July 1, 2022, to assist students in accessing food, housing, clothing, hygiene products, technology, childcare, mental health services, and other essential resources. According to the CCC Chancellor's May 2025 annual basic needs report, 105,081 CCC students accessed services across all 115 campuses as of Spring 2024, reflecting a 54% increase from Spring 2023. This includes 2,429 who received childcare-related support, such as priority access to on-campus childcare, grants, lactation spaces, and child-friendly study areas. The 2025-26 state budget included a one-time \$60 million Proposition 98 General Fund allocation for a student support block grant, allowing community college districts to use the funds to assist students with food, housing, transportation, and other basic needs.

Alongside the CCC system, the CSU and UC systems have also expanded their basic needs infrastructure. As of August 2022, all CSU and UC campuses had established Basic Needs Centers, according to EdSource. That same year, the Legislature enacted provisions in the Budget Act of 2022 requiring both systems to submit annual reports on basic needs, mental health, and rapid rehousing services. Most recently, AB 2033 (Reyes), Chapter 913, Statutes of 2024, reinforced this commitment by requiring each CSU campus, and requesting each UC campus, to have a Basic Needs Center and coordinator in place by July 1, 2025.

The March 2024 *CSU Basic Needs Annual Report* confirmed that all 23 CSU campuses have on- and off-campus resources to address food insecurity, housing instability, and mental health needs. However, the 2025 CSU report does not provide systemwide data on student usage,

services offered, or student demographics and outcomes. It does highlight several campuses using basic needs funds to support parenting students. For example, Chico State provided diapers, wipes, emergency grants, and subsidized childcare through its Child Development Lab. Fresno State, Long Beach, and Cal State Los Angeles allocated funds for dependent care, with Long Beach and San Francisco State distributing infant supplies through campus pantries. CSU Monterey Bay supported over 100 student parents annually through its Parenting Otter Program, while Cal Poly Pomona helped parenting students access CalWORKs childcare funds. San Diego State offered \$200 grants for student parents, and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo directed funding toward child and dependent care.

Similarly, the March 2025 *UC Basic Needs Annual Report* showed that 73,623 students received support services between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024, at all 10 UC campuses, including support for food, housing, mental health, and rapid rehousing. The report includes staffing and operational data but does not mention childcare support services. While the 2023 Budget Act allocated \$26.3 million in ongoing funding to sustain CSU Basic Needs Centers, the 2025-26 state budget provided no additional funds for CSU or UC basic needs services.

This bill requires financial aid offices at CCC and CSU campuses, and requests financial aid offices at UC campuses, to provide student parents with information about campus childcare options, referrals to Basic Needs Centers for help accessing childcare subsidies and local providers, and details on financial aid available to students with dependent children. *This bill* further requires child development centers or preschools at CCC and CSU campuses, and requests UC campuses, to refer student parents to both the Basic Needs Centers and the campus financial office for support with childcare resources and financial aid eligibility.

Off-Campus Resources: Resource & Referral Programs. Funded by the CDSS, R&R agencies serve as a bridge between families seeking childcare and the network of licensed providers across the state. R&R agencies help parents understand their childcare options, provide referrals tailored to family needs, and offer other consumer education topics such as program quality, licensing standards, and financial assistance. Located in every county, and often operating through contracts with nonprofit organizations or county offices of education, these agencies are well-positioned to understand the localized needs of childcare providers and families. R&Rs also assist potential providers in the licensing process, provide direct services, including training, and coordinate community resources for the benefit of parents and local child care providers.

This bill expands the definition of “basic needs services and resources” to include childcare services and resources, requiring Basic Needs Centers to provide information on on-campus and off-campus childcare programs, connect students with local R&R agencies for support in applying to programs like CSPP, Head Start, CalWORKs, and general childcare programs, and optionally offer direct financial or service support. *This bill* also clarifies that campuses may refer student parents to a dedicated parenting student center if it better meets their needs.

Author’s Statement: According to the Author, “[This bill] requires that when a student parent on a higher education campus is identified at one of the following campus locations: a financial aid office, a child development center, or a basic need center, the student parent shall be notified about the childcare and financial aid resources available to them. The bill also ensures student parents are connected to childcare support services provided in their county. This type of direct notification process is needed because student parents are hindered by the communications silos within higher education campuses. While juggling the demands of parents and earning their

degrees, student parents should not be further delayed by communication gaps on their campuses. [This bill] bridges gaps, ensuring student parents are connected to the resources they need rather than being left in the dark about relevant services. This bill is a step towards making all student parents feel welcomed, supported, and cared for by fostering an environment where their needs are intentionally met.”

Equity Implications: Student parents, particularly those who are low-income, first-generation, students of color, and women, are disproportionately impacted by financial hardship, time poverty, and limited access to affordable, flexible childcare. By explicitly integrating childcare into the definition of basic needs, *this bill* affirms that parenting responsibilities should not be a barrier to educational opportunity.

This bill requires institutions to identify and support student parents through coordinated outreach, resource referrals, and access to supplemental financial aid, which may reduce the burden on individual students to navigate the higher education system and ensure more consistent access to services across campuses. *This bill* also recognizes the unique needs of parenting students, particularly those with infants and toddlers, who often face significant childcare challenges, and provides pathways to state and federal subsidy programs, which may be underutilized due to a lack of awareness or support.

RELATED AND PRIOR LEGISLATION:

AB 2033 (Reyes), Chapter 913, Statutes of 2024, see comments above.

AB 2458 (Berman), Chapter 962, Statutes of 2024, established the Greater Accessibility, Information, Notice, and Support for Student Parents Act. Required the CCC Chancellor's Office and CSU Chancellor's Office and requested the UC President's Office, by July 31, 2025, to develop and disseminate a model policy to estimate and adjust college cost of attendance information for student parents. Required each campus of the CCC and the CSU and requested each campus of the UC to take various steps to adjust the cost of attendance for student parents. Required certain information related to benefits for student parents to be included on college and university webpages.

AB 775 (Berman), Chapter 942, Statutes of 2022, see comments above.

AB 2388 (Berman) of 2020, would have required each CCC campus by February 1, 2021, to develop various methods to increase students' awareness of on- and off- campus basic needs resources. Would have encouraged each CCC campus by July 1, 2021, to establish a Basic Needs Center and the role of a basic needs coordinator, in order to consolidate and centralize the basic needs resources available on campus. *AB 2388 was held in the Senate Education Committee without further action.*

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California State Student Association (Co-Sponsor)
Early Edge California (Co-Sponsor)
Student Senate for California Community Colleges (Co-Sponsor)
University of California Student Association (Co-Sponsor)

California Child Care Resource and Referral Network
California Community Colleges, Chancellor's Office
California Family Resource Association
California Legislative Women's Caucus
California State University, Office of the Chancellor
California Student Aid Commission
California WIC Association
California Women's Law Center
Campaign for College Opportunity
Child Abuse Prevention Center and its Affiliates Safe Kids California, Prevent Child Abuse
California and the California Family Resource Association
Child Action, INC.
Child Care Resource Center
Children Now
Coast Community College District
EdTrust - West
Faculty Association of California's Community Colleges
Lieutenant Governor Eleni Kounalakis
Michelson Center for Public Policy
San Jose-Evergreen Community College District
Unite-LA
University of California
Western Center on Law & Poverty

Opposition

None on file.

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