

THIRD READING

Bill No: SB 557
Author: Hurtado (D)
Amended: 1/5/26
Vote: 21

SENATE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE: 5-0, 1/12/26

AYES: Arreguín, Ochoa Bogh, Becker, Menjivar, Pérez

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 1/22/26

AYES: Caballero, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

SUBJECT: Child abuse: family resource centers

SOURCE: California Family Resource Association and Child Abuse Prevention Center

DIGEST: This bill expands and refines the definition of “family resource center,” aligning it more closely with the federal definition.

ANALYSIS:

Existing Law:

- 1) Makes legislative findings and declarations that child abuse is a growing concern in the state, and that current methods of coping with child abuse problems are resulting in family breakups that are both expensive and nonproductive to the state. Provides it is the intent of the Legislature to provide for the establishment of a State Office of Child Abuse Prevention to plan, improve, develop, and carry out programs and activities relating to the prevention, identification and treatment of child abuse and neglect. (Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) § 18950)
- 2) Defines “family resource center” as an entity providing family-centered and family-strengthening services that are embedded in communities, culturally sensitive, and include cross-system collaboration to assist in transforming

families and communities through reciprocity and asset development based on impact-driven and evidence-informed approaches with the goal of preventing child abuse and neglect and strengthening children and families. A family resource center may be located in, or administered by, multiple entities, including, but not limited to, a local education agency, a community resource center, or a neighborhood resource center. (WIC § 18951)

- 3) Creates within the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) an Office of Child Abuse Prevention. (WIC § 18952)
- 4) Provides that the Office of Child Abuse Prevention shall apply for federal funding for the administration of its functions and shall use these funds to do all of the following:
 - a) Provide technical assistance, either directly or through grant or contract pursuant to Section 16304 of the Government Code, to public and private agencies and organizations to assist them in planning, improving, developing, and carrying out programs and activities relating to the prevention, identification, and treatment of child abuse and neglect.
 - b) Compile training materials for personnel who are engaged or intend to engage in the prevention, identification, and treatment of child abuse and neglect.
 - c) Assist and provide funds for the coordination of child abuse prevention programs.
 - d) Develop and establish other innovation programs in child abuse prevention where the office finds a need for the programs.
 - e) Conduct research and collect data relevant to the determination of the effectiveness of child abuse prevention programs.
 - f) Support coordination and sharing of best practices implemented by family resource centers with other agencies, when the best practices reflect strategies and outcomes that were achieved and supported by evidence-informed programs and data. (WIC § 18958)
- 5) Defines “family resource center” as a community or school-based hub of support services for families that
 - a) Utilizes an approach that is multi-generational, strengths-based, and family-centered;

- b) Reflects, and is responsive to, community needs and interests;
- c) Provides support at no or low cost for participants; and
- d) Builds communities of peer support for families, including kinship families, to develop social connections that reduce isolation and stress. (42 United States Code (USC) § 629a)

This bill expands and refines the definition of “family resource center” to specify that family resource centers are family-friendly, are a hub for multigenerational support services, and that the services a family resource center provide shall be provided at low or no cost, be reflective of and response to community needs and interests, build communities of peer support for families, and develop social connections that reduce isolation and stress.

Comments

According to the author. “Across California, families often turn for help not after a crisis, but at the moment they feel overwhelmed, isolated, or unsure where to go. Family Resource Centers are often the first place those families find support. They are trusted, community-based hubs where parents can access guidance, peer connection, and practical services that strengthen families before problems escalate into harm.

“SB 557 updates state law to reflect this reality. By modernizing the statutory definition of Family Resource Centers, the bill recognizes the culturally responsive, low- or no-cost, and family-centered work these centers already do every day to prevent child abuse and neglect. This bill does not create new programs or mandates. It simply ensures that California’s statutes align with proven, prevention-focused practices that help families stay strong, connected, and safe.”

Office of Child Abuse Prevention. Established in 1978 and located within CDSS, the Office of Child Abuse Prevention administers federal grants, contracts, and state programs which are designed to promote best practices, as well as innovative approaches, to child abuse prevention, intervention, and treatment. The Office of Child Abuse Prevention’s mission is to shape policy and practice to promote the safety and well-being of California’s children and families.

The Office of Child Abuse Prevention administers federal grants, contracts, and state programs designed to promote best practices and innovative approaches to child abuse prevention, intervention and treatment. The Office serves as a statewide source of information, developing and disseminating educational

material regarding prevention/early intervention programs, activities, and research. The federal grants administered by the Office of Child Abuse Prevention are the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act; Community Based Child Abuse Prevention; and Promoting Safe and Stable Families.

Family Resource Centers. There are over 3,000 Family Resource Centers across the United States funded by a combination of federal, state, local, and grant funds. They are “community-based resource hubs where families can access formal and informal supports to promote child safety and child and family well-being”¹ and are designed to help to stabilize families before Child Protective Services involvement is warranted. Family Resource Centers partner and collaborate with different community partners including school districts, county agencies, health and mental health providers, local businesses, law enforcement partners, food banks, and other local nonprofits. Family Resource Centers and their services may, and often do, look very different from another as these centers are specifically tailored to the unique needs of their individual communities and evolve as the community around them changes. The current statutory definition no longer aligns with current best practices or how Family Resource Centers operate in practice. According to the sponsors, the definition changes in this bill better reflect the modern, prevention-focused role of Family Resource Centers.

A federal definition of “Family Resource Centers” was enacted in 2025. That definition contains elements not in the current California definition. The federal definition states: “A ‘family resource center’ is a community or school-based hub of support services for families that: utilizes an approach that is multi-generational, strengths-based, and family-centered; reflects, and is responsive to, community needs and interests; provides support at no or low cost for participants; and builds communities of peer support for families, including kinship families, to develop social connections that reduce isolation and stress.”

Current California law does not reflect several elements in the federal definition. This bill seeks to bridge that gap by including the following federal elements to the California definition:

- Specify that family resource centers are a hub for services;
- Provide that these services utilize an approach that is multigenerational;
- Services are provided at no cost or low cost to participants;

¹ <https://www.casey.org/media/24.07-QFF-SCom-Family-Resource-Centers.pdf>

- Services are reflective of and response to community needs and interests;
- Services build communities of peer support for families; and
- Develop social connections that reduce isolation and stress.

In addition to aligning with federal law, these changes also reflect the way modern Family Resource Centers operate.

Related/Prior Legislation:

SB 436 (Hurtado, Chapter 476, Statutes of 2019) made a number of changes to the Office of Child Abuse Prevention, including: defining “family resource center”; adding a representative of a local child abuse prevention council or family strengthening organization as a potential member of an multidisciplinary personnel team; and requiring the Office of Child Abuse Prevention to use their federal funding to support coordination and sharing of best practices implemented by family resource centers with other agencies.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee Analysis:

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) anticipates one-time General Fund costs, potentially ranging from \$50,000-\$75,000, for state operations to inform counties and update materials.

SUPPORT: (Verified 1/22/26)

California Family Resource Association (Sponsor)
Child Abuse Prevention Center (Sponsor)

OPPOSITION: (Verified 1/22/26)

None received

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