
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Benjamin Allen, Chair

2017 - 2018 Regular

Bill No: AB 2960 **Hearing Date:** June 20, 2018
Author: Thurmond
Version: May 25, 2018
Urgency: No **Fiscal:** Yes
Consultant: Olgalilia Ramirez

Subject: Child care and development services: online portal.

NOTE: This bill has been referred to the Committees on Education and Human Services. A "do pass" motion should include referral to the Committee on Human Services.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop a comprehensive child care and development services online portal for families and providers.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Child Care and Development Services Act to provide child care and development services as part of a coordinated, comprehensive, and cost-effective system serving children from birth to 13 years old and their parents, and including a full range of supervision, health, and support services through full- and part-time programs. (Education Code § 8200 et seq.)
- 2) Defines "child care and development programs" as those programs that offer a full range of services for children from infancy through 13 years of age, for any part of a day, by a public or private agency in centers and family child care homes. These programs include, but are not limited to, all of the following: (EC§ 8208)
 - a) General child care and development.
 - b) Migrant child care and development.
 - c) Childcare provided by the California School Age Families Education Program.
 - d) California state preschool program.
 - e) Resource and referral.
 - f) Child care and development services for children with exceptional needs.
 - g) Family child care home education network.
 - h) Alternative payment.

- i) Schoolage community child care
- 3) States the intent of the Legislature that all families have access to child care and development services, through resource and referral where appropriate, and regardless of demographic background or special needs, and that families are provided the opportunity to attain financial stability through employment, while maximizing growth and development of their children, and enhancing their parenting skills through participation in child care and development programs. (EC § 8202)
 - 4) Appropriate funds annually for allocation to child care and development resource and referral (R&R) agencies operated by public or private nonprofit entities. Specifies that R&R programs serve a defined geographic area and must provide the following services: (EC 8210 - 8212).
 - a) Identification of the full range of existing child care services and the development, maintenance, and quarterly updating of a resource file, including information by type of program, hours of service, ages of children served, fees and eligibility for services, and significant program information.
 - b) A referral process which responds to parental need for information, makes referrals to child care facilities, and conducts outreach to parents through a toll-free line, conveniently located office space, referrals in languages spoken in the community, and publicizing of services through all available media sources or other methods.
 - c) Maintenance of ongoing documentation of requests for service through the internal referral process.
 - d) Provision of technical assistance to existing and potential providers of all types of child care services.
 - e) Provision of a child care navigator to support children in foster care.
 - 5) Requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to coordinate with the State Department of Social Services (DSS), the California Children and Families Commission, and other stakeholders to develop the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan and submit to the federal government for approval (EC § 8206.1).
 - 6) Requires, as a condition of receiving federal CCDF, California to maintain a consumer education website with provider-specific information, including, if available, quality information through a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) or other transparent system of quality indicators. Also requires the inclusion of the following information:
 - a) Provider-specific reports and results from child care monitoring inspections in a consumer-friendly and easily accessible format.

- b) Provider-specific consumer education statement that includes a summary of the state's health and safety and licensing policies.
- c) Annual number of deaths, serious injuries, and instances of substantiated child abuse that occurred in all Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)-eligible child care settings. (The Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Reauthorization Act of 2014)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires, by June 30, 2022, the Superintendent to develop and post on the California Department of Education's (CDE's) Web site, for use by the general public, an online portal for California's comprehensive child care and development services.
- 2) Requires the Superintendent, in planning for future enhancements to the online portal, to convene, by June 30, 2019, a workgroup made up of stakeholders, including but not limited to, representatives of child care resource and referral programs, alternative payment programs, contracted center-based programs, Quality Rating and Improvement System data systems, school-based providers, the California Early Care and Education Workforce Registry, private center-based care providers, and family child care homes.
- 3) Requires, by June 30, 2020, the specified workgroup to evaluate, and provide recommendations to the Superintendent on possible models for, and plans for inclusion in the online portal developed pursuant to the bill, both of the following:
 - a) Establishing and maintaining a statewide waiting list for child care and development services programs where subsidized slots are not readily available.
 - b) Developing a single, uniform application for use in applying for subsidies.
- 4) Requires, by January 1, 2021, the Superintendent to submit to the appropriate committees of the Legislature a report proposing plans for enhancements to the online portal, as specified.
- 5) Authorizes the Superintendent to contract with an outside entity for purposes of completing the report required in 4) above.
- 6) Makes the reporting requirement provisions inoperative on January 1, 2025.
- 7) Declares that it is the Legislature's intent in adopting the provisions of this bill that every family in California have access to current and robust information regarding the state's vast array of child care and development services through a publicly available online portal hosted and maintained by CDE, as described.

- 8) States legislative declarations and findings relative to the importance of informing families about child development services.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, “the current early childhood education system in California is extremely complicated for parents and providers to navigate. The state has over a dozen publicly funded early childhood education programs for children under 5, each with their own eligibility requirements and enrollment process. Resource and referral agencies are limited in the amount of assistance they can provide due to insufficient resources outdated technology, and a lack of coordination among publicly funded ECE and expanded learning programs. So because California’s information and technology infrastructure to support these services is fragmented and incomplete, this results in confusion for parents and caregivers, duplication of efforts, systemic inefficiencies and providers closing due to an inability to connect with eligible families.”

This bill seeks to streamline and centralized information regarding the state’s early childcare and development services by requiring the Superintendent to create an online portal for that purpose.

- 2) ***State subsidize child care delivery system is complex.*** Families may be eligible for state-subsidized child care through participation in CalWORKs, or based on income and if they can show need for child care services. Income eligibility for families that are not current recipients of CalWORKs (general child care) is established, initially, at 70 percent of state median income. Families remain income eligible until their adjusted monthly income exceeds 85 percent of the most recent state median income, adjusted for family size. The state’s child care and development services are delivered to eligible families through two categories of providers, providers with a direct service contract with the California Department of Education (CDE) and voucher-based— licensed and licensed-exempt . This mixed delivery system allows families to choose from center-based care, family child care homes and in-home care.
- 3) ***Resource and Referral agencies.*** Resource and referral agencies can be public or private non-profit entities that support parents, providers, and local communities in finding, planning for, and providing affordable, quality child care. Every county in California is served by at least one resource and referral program. The California Department of Education administers the resource and referral programs’ state contracts. The roles, responsibilities, and requirements that resource and referral programs are required to meet, are contained in statute and state regulations.
- 4) ***Related report by the Learning Policy Institute (LPI).*** The LPI 2018 report, “California’s early learning system,” notes that California’s current ECE system is composed of a patchwork of programs with distinct but overlapping purposes and designs. These programs are administered by multiple state agencies, and often are funded by and accountable to multiple agencies at the county, state, and federal levels. The complexity at the state level is passed down to county administrators, who do not have the capacity or authority to untangle the web.

District-run and special education preschool programs are often isolated. The report asserts that navigating this system is daunting for parents and providers. The report makes the following recommendations relative simplifying the state's early learning system to make it easy for providers and parents to navigate:

- a) Identify and invest in a state-level governing body with the authority and expertise to coordinate all early childhood education programs.
- b) Fully fund and grant decision-making authority to a single coordinating body at the county or regional level.
- c) Develop a one-stop shop for parents and providers through an online portal and through existing brick-and-mortar resource and referral agencies where parents and providers meet with experts.
- d) Fully fund Local Child Care and Development Planning Councils.
- e) Reinstate funding for centralized eligibility lists.
- f) Create a uniform intake process across agencies that streamline eligibility paperwork.

The bill's provisions, direct a workgroup of early childhood education stakeholders to evaluate and make recommendations to the Superintendent for inclusion of a statewide waiting list for child care and development services programs as well as development of a single, uniform application for use in applying for subsidies.

- 5) ***Author plans to amend.*** Staff notes that the author plans to amend this bill in Senate Human Services Committee that will modify reporting requirements, change the composition of the workgroup and to direct the workgroup to consider and make recommendations for inclusion in the online portal the following:
 - a) Link parents to local child care resource and referral and alternative payment agencies for additional assistance in selecting and assessing care and to be placed on local waiting lists (rather than statewide wait list) for subsidized child care programs where subsidized slots are not readily available.
 - b) Developing an online eligibility screening tool (rather than a single uniform application) in order to assess eligibility for services.

SUPPORT

American Academy of Pediatrics
 CAPP
 Child Care Alliance Los Angeles
 Child Care Law Center
 Child Care Resource Center
 Children Now

Common Sense Kids Action
Early Edge California
First 5 LA
UDW AFSCME Local 3930

OPPOSITION

None received

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