



6<sup>th</sup> Assembly District, Sacramento County

## AB 1245 Free Community College for Childcare Professionals

### **SUMMARY**

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Current law waives the fee for qualifying students pursuing educational goals in California Community Colleges based on income. Existing law also allows childcare providers to take courses related to professional development using grants. However, some childcare providers do not qualify for a tuition waiver and want to further their education beyond a few classes. AB 1245 expands the community college tuition waiver to apply to all active childcare professionals at enrollment, regardless of income.

### **BACKGROUND**

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Passed in 2000, AB 212 (Aroner) assisted childcare professionals by granting funds to Local Planning Councils to raise qualifications and retention rates in the childcare industry. Since AB 212's implementation, a workgroup was formed to assess its success and published a report with recommendations to adjust the program in March 2019. One suggestion was to provide the opportunity for early childhood educators to earn a degree at no cost within the California higher education system.

Research shows that higher education leads to higher pay and lower provider vacancy and turnover rates. Conversely, research indicates that childcare professionals with lower educational attainment often work in programs with high turnover and low wages. For example, the Institute of Education Sciences in 2017 stated that more than 50% of early childcare education (ECE) professionals without a college degree were employed at low-wage programs, and 33% were employed at high-turnover centers, compared to college-educated childcare providers with rates of 9% and 25%. This data suggests that higher turnover and vacancy rates are associated with lower educational attainment for California childcare providers.

### **SOLUTION**

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Although opportunities for professional development exist thanks to AB 212, pathways beyond a few courses would require funds beyond AB 212 grants.

Additionally, a portion of the childcare provider population's income is above the threshold necessary to waive community college tuition, yet insufficient to pay for tuition out-of-pocket.

AB 1245 allows all childcare providers, including those with a childcare license, employees of licensed childcare givers, childcare program employees of a school district, and other eligible professions, to enroll in career development, including associate degrees, at community colleges tuition-free. However, the childcare provider must be enrolled in child development-related courses and curriculum, pursue a childcare-related degree, or pursue coursework related to child development in teacher credentialing to obtain the tuition waiver outlined in AB 1245.

This measure furthers the goals of AB 212 to raise retention rates and grow the ECE workforce so that parents, especially working mothers, can return to work. Simultaneously, AB 1245 will increase wages and improve the quality of care to support child development best.

### **SUPPORT**

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Student Senate for California Community Colleges (SSCCC)  
San Jose-Evergreen Community College District  
The Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF)  
American Association of University Women  
California (AAUW CA)  
California Catholic Conference

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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