



ASSEMBLYMEMBER LORI D. WILSON

AB 244

Inclusion Training FACT SHEET

ISSUE

According to the most recent data from the National Survey on Children's Health, 1 in 5 children have a mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral disorder.ⁱ Existing law requires the State Department of Social Services to ensure that eligible children with exceptional needs are given equal access to child care and development programs. A child with a disability must never be turned away from a child care center based on assumptions about the severity of the disability or how much assistance they may needⁱⁱ. Despite legal obligations, parents of children with disabilities are more likely to have difficulty with child care arrangementsⁱⁱⁱ, and child care providers are often hesitant to include children with disabilities because they are afraid and feel inadequate to meet the child's needs.^{iv}

Disability knowledge, awareness, and skills should be components of ongoing professional development provided within child care and development programs. The reality is that adults working with children are often not given the information or tools to implement inclusion effectively.^v The pandemic has added to the struggle, with staffing shortages placing additional stress on an already overwhelmed system.^{vi}

BACKGROUND

Decades of research have established that inclusive child care programs that serve children with and without disabilities are higher quality and have better outcomes for all children.^{vii} The quality of practices in inclusive classrooms is highly dependent on professional development.^{viii}

Training on inclusion has a large impact on the overall program and has shown several positive outcomes. Staff with training are more comfortable and confident providing accommodations^{ix} and have more positive thoughts about inclusion.⁶

When staff are trained to include children with and without disabilities, organizations are more likely to openly welcome children with varying abilities. Disability-specific education is the biggest factor in predicting whether programs are inclusive. If the director, provider, or teacher has some disability or inclusion related training, the program is more likely to have children with disabilities enrolled.^x

SOLUTION

This bill would establish the Specialized Inclusivity Training for Child Care Staff Grant Program to fund staff training on including children with disabilities and improve access to childcare for children with disabilities in California.

Sponsor: Kids Included Together

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ⁱ Ghandour RM, Sherman LJ, Vladutiu CJ, Ali MM, Lynch SE, Bitsko RH, Blumberg SJ. (2019). Prevalence and Treatment of Depression, Anxiety, and Conduct Problems in US Children. *J Pediatr.* 2019 Mar;206:256-267.

ⁱⁱ ADA.gov. (Retrieved 18 January 2023) Equal Access to Childcare.

ⁱⁱⁱ Abdi, F.M., Seok, D. & Murphey, D. (2020).

<https://www.childtrends.org/publications/children-with-special-health-care-needs-face-challenges-accessing-information-support-and-services>

^{iv} Jinnah-Ghelani, H.A., Stoneman, Z. (2009). Elements of successful inclusion for school-age children with disabilities in childcare settings. *Child Care in Practice*, 15, 3, 175-191.

^v Anaby, DR, Campbell, WN, Missiuna, C, et al. (2019). Recommended practices to organize and deliver school-based services for children with disabilities: A scoping review. *Child Care Health Dev.* 2019; 45: 15– 27. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.12621>

^{vi} Marchi, J., Johansson, N., Sarkadi, A., & Warner, G. (2021). The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Societal Infection Control Measures on

Children and Adolescents' Mental Health: A Scoping Review. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 12, 711791.

^{vii} Lundqvist, J. (2021). Ways to implement preschool inclusion: A multiple-case study. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 2, 100097.

^{viii} Lawrence, S., Smith, S., Banerjee, R., National Center for Children in Poverty, & University of Michigan, I-U. C. for P. and S. R. (ICPSR). (2016). *Preschool Inclusion: Key Findings from Research and Implications for Policy. Child Care and Early Education Research Connections.*

^{ix} Leyser, Y., Zeiger, T., & Romi, S. (2011). Changes in self-efficacy of prospective special and general education teachers:

^x Essa, E.L., Bennett, P.R., Burnham, M.M., Martin, S.S., Bingham, A., & Allred, K. (2008). Do variables associated with child care programs predict the inclusion of children with disabilities? *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 28, 3, 171-180.