



SUMMARY

AB 51 would support the effective and equitable funding of community childcare providers and create a just transition for community-based providers as universal transitional kindergarten (TK) is implemented.

BACKGROUND

Achievement gaps for low-income children of color exist at kindergarten entry and widen over time. Improving access to early childhood education can reduce gaps in school readiness. California’s mixed-delivery system offers a variety of different early learning and care settings with the intention of allowing parents and guardians to choose the setting, which will best meet the needs of their families. Some of these settings include TK programs, contracted state preschool programs offered by school districts and community-based organizations, contracted general childcare programs, Head Start, private center-based preschool providers, and licensed family childcare providers, just to name a few.

EXISTING LAW

AB 131 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 116, Statutes of 2021) enacted 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 including a full range of supervision, health, and support services through full- and part-time programs.

AB 131 also established the “Early Education Act,” to provide an inclusive and cost-effective preschool program that provides high-quality learning experiences, coordinated services, and referrals for families to access health and social-emotional support services through full- and part-day programs and that all families have equitable access to a high-quality preschool program, regardless of race or ethnic status, cultural, religious, or linguistic background, family composition, or children with exceptional needs.

Lastly, AB 131 expanded access to early education for four-year-olds by requiring that all LEAs offer a free TK program to all eligible children by the 2025-26 school year.

PROBLEM

California has begun to phase in the implementation of universal TK. The expansion of a free option for early learning and care via TK represents an increase in access to early education. However, within the context of our fragmented and underfunded early childhood education system, preschool and child care providers have expressed concern that expanding TK to more four-year-olds, and removing them from the traditional child care system, will undermine the fragile child care sector that has been impacted by years of underfunding and further impacted the COVID-19 pandemic.

SOLUTION

AB 51 will support the effective, equitable functioning of our childcare system and create a just transition for community-based providers as universal transitional kindergarten is being rolled out in the following ways:

- Expand existing resource and referral services to include navigation, referral, and enrollment services for universal pre-kindergarten;
- Ensure that transitional kindergarten pupils have access to developmentally appropriate expanded learning opportunities;
- Require the Department of Social Services to come up with a new rate schedule taking into consideration the loss of four-year-olds.
- Change income eligibility for subsidized childcare services from 100% of state median income to 120% of area median income or state median income, whichever is higher, adjusted for family size, to provide eligibility for families in higher cost areas
- Allow CSPP classrooms to be commingled
- Provide a set aside for providers who have not had contracts lately and can show harm from TK expansion

SUPPORT

- California Legislative Women's Caucus
- Low Income Investment Fund

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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