



SENATOR TIM GRAYSON

SB 902

CHILDCARE: ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES

Summary:

SB 902 specifies that a signature required by the Child Care and Development Services Act may be satisfied by an electronic signature in compliance with the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act (UETA). Additionally, the bill authorizes the Department of Social Services to adopt regulations to implement these provisions.

Background:

Families accessing subsidized child care vouchers must submit multiple forms throughout the year, including eligibility applications, updates to work or school schedules, changes to providers, and corrections to attendance records. Paper-based processes require printing, mailing, or hand-delivering documents, which can be burdensome for parents juggling multiple jobs, caring for young children, or facing transportation or housing challenges. Missing or delayed signatures can slow access to care or stall reimbursement to providers for families using vouchers.

This reliance on paper not only creates administrative inefficiencies but also treats voucher families as second-class participants in the childcare market, limiting their access to high-quality care and the same convenience and flexibility available to families paying privately.

Problem:

While current law generally recognizes digital and electronic signatures, the Child Care and Development Services Act (WIC Part 1.8) does not explicitly authorize current electronic options for signage or storage. This gap forces contractors serving families to rely on paper forms and in-person signatures, creating hurdles for families with inconsistent schedules or limited access to technology.

It is imperative to support families where they are. A lack of clarity in this area forces families to sign in person with a wet signature. This is particularly burdensome for families living in rural areas, who may

need to travel hundreds of miles to their nearest agency, and for families with inconsistent schedules or limited access to printers and scanners.

Without clear statutory authority, contractors cannot confidently accept common electronic signatures, such as those used for medical forms or rental agreements, adding unnecessary administrative burden for families.

Solution:

SB 902 updates subsidized childcare paperwork practices by:

- 1) Recognizing current technology that best supports the needs of families where they are at.
- 2) Ensuring electronic signatures have the same legal effect as handwritten signatures.
- 3) Explicitly authorizing creation, conversion from paper, and electronic storage of documents.
- 4) Preserving the option for families, providers, and contractors to continue using paper documents if preferred.

By aligning subsidized childcare paperwork with common practices already used in housing and health care, the bill supports timely access to care and strengthens family economic stability and workforce participation.

Support:

Thriving Families CA Foundation (Sponsor)

Staff Contact:

Samantha Yturalde
Samantha.Yturalde@sen.ca.gov
(916) 651-4009