

# Assembly Bill 1345

## Emergency services: licensed childcare providers

Assemblymember Buffy Wicks (AD-15)

### THIS BILL

AB 1345 will require the Department of Social Services (DSS) to work with the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) on establishing best practices on the use of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds by child care providers when the Governor declares a statewide or local emergency.

### THE ISSUE

The combined onset of the wildfires and COVID-19 in CA, child care providers face insurmountable obstacles to provide safe and essential child care to CA parents. The lack of funds and resources and new state guidelines created chaos in child care providers ability to give adequate and safe child care while also being financially stable.

At the height of the CA wildfires, the Office of Emergency Services was unable to provide air purifiers to child care providers because they are not included in the current list of approved emergency equipment. Current law specifies that child care is one of the allowable expenses for FEMA resources - but there are no guidelines in place to allow these funds to be administered to child care providers.

In a study by the American Thoracic Society, the 2018 Camp Fire was found to have caused increases in pediatric doctor visits among the children who were inhaling the contaminated air due to insufficient air-filtering equipment within child care facilities. Child care facilities and providers need high quality filtering air systems because N95 and other protective masks are fit for adult faces, not children. Therefore the only effective air filtration

system for children are the air systems in facilities and schools

As COVID-19 and shelter-in-place orders continued, many California child care providers buckled to financial pressure of the lack of clients combined with new social distancing and cleaning regulations. In a report done by Center for the Study of Child care Employment, 62% of open child care programs have said they will continue to need small grants for cleaning supplies and other PPE to uphold standards as outlined by CalOES & FEMA guidelines. And 56% of operating child care providers would like financial support from the state to compensate for losses due to the pandemic.

Under current FEMA law, child care businesses are included as part of the FEMA emergency response. But we lack the mechanism and state best practices to distribute these funds to child care providers. Other states like Arizona and Colorado, have distributed their COVID relief funds to their child care providers through loan forgiveness, state subsidy payments and reimbursements for open and operating child care providers.

With the continuing pandemic and the inevitable frequency and severity of natural disasters, child care providers need clear state guidance and resources. There are funds waiting for child care providers to use when children's lives are in danger. California must do more to support our child care providers in unsafe and dangerous situations.

### SOLUTION

AB 1345 will create streamlined coordination between DSS and CalOES to give clear best practices on use of FEMA and state emergency funds to child care providers.



This bill will also revise California’s disaster preparedness for the next natural disaster or state of emergency, to prioritize the safety and care of the states most vulnerable, children.

### **SUPPORT**

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Child Care Law Center  
Low Income Investment Fund

### **CONTACT**

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