



ASSEMBLYMEMBER TIM GRAYSON

AB 479

FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES – SECONDARY LICENSEES

Summary:

AB 479 authorizes a person to apply to be a family child care secondary licensee for a primary licensee and requires that a secondary licensee to meet all licensure requirements applicable to a licensee except the requirement to reside in the home in which the family child care home is operated.

Background:

Family Child Care Homes (FCCH) are a critical and vital service for families. Unlike child care centers that operate in commercial buildings, a family child care home is a licensed child care service that is operated in an individual's residential home, which makes them more readily accessible to the community. Family child care is home-based, and as a result, children tend to be cared for in a family-like environment and provide a consistent caregiver for children.

In order to obtain a family child care home license, individuals must attend an orientation and meet licensee qualifications and home safety regulations that are overseen and enforced by the Child Care Licensing Program under the Department of Social Services (DSS). Among the various qualifications that a family child care provider must have include obtaining a criminal record clearance, meeting health and safety training, having previous child care experience, and the provider must also reside in the home in which the FCCH is operated.

Problem:

California's licensed family child care home supply has been on a steady decline since 2008. While the state has increased investments into the child care system, it has disproportionately funded center-based programs since 2013. FCCHs are important because they are more likely to offer flexible hours of care and are more affordable than center-based care, assisting working families struggling to make ends meet. In the past decade, the reduction in the number of FCCHs resulted in a 26% decrease in spaces, meaning over 98,000 children do not have access to early learning programs.¹

This decline has only become exacerbated by the devastating impact of COVID-19. Since March of 2020, financial losses and health and safety concerns have forced more than 2,000 family child care homes and 390 child care centers to close permanently², further increasing the gap in the need for child care and the availability of child care slots.

It is therefore, more imperative than ever to rebuild the early learning and care system weakened by COVID-19, provide relief to families, quality care for children, and stability to child care providers.

Solution:

AB 479 seeks to address the declining family child care home supply and the burgeoning gap of available and affordable child care slots. Specifically, this bill will create an opportunity for an individual to apply to become a secondary licensee for a FCCH. The secondary licensee would be required to meet all licensure requirements, except for the requirement to reside in the home where the FCCH is operated. All the rules and regulations related to the maintenance and operation of a family child care home that is applicable to the primary licensee would transfer over to the secondary licensee.

By creating a secondary licensee, this will allow qualified child care providers to be paired with other licensees who are able to provide the necessary space. This will create greater flexibility and opportunity for displaced child care providers who meet the licensure and background requirements, but do not have the home space to operate the family child care home.

Ultimately, AB 479 will improve access to quality child care and early childhood education by filling the gap in child care providers within communities, and aims to rebuild California's weakened child care system.

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¹ <https://rrnetwork.org/publications/decline-of-licensed-family-child-care-supply-2008-2016>

² <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/12/01/governor-newsom-releases-the-master-plan-for-early-learning-and-care-california-for-all-kids/>