



## AB 791 – Trauma-Informed Child Care Training

### **SUMMARY**

AB 791 establishes the Trauma-Informed Childcare Training Grants Program, which will expand access to trauma-informed care trainings across the state. In light of the COVID-19 outbreak, this training will be especially important to providers as they care for children who may have experienced additional stress and family difficulties while at home as a result of the crisis.

### **BACKGROUND**

Trauma Informed Care (TIC) is a treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma, which can result from physical and emotional abuse, neglect and deprivation, toxic stress, poverty, violence, accidents, and disasters.

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network identifies the COVID-19 pandemic as a public-health disaster. Children may experience trauma during the coronavirus outbreak as a result of toxic stress due to economic hardship, food insecurity, and family dysfunction, separation from family members who are being treated for COVID-19, and grief for loved ones who have died from the disease.

Childcare providers with TIC training are able to identify signs of childhood trauma and support the child's needs. This includes helping children regulate their emotions, creating predictable routines, and using effective behavior management strategies.

TIC trainings are currently offered through County Child Care Resource and Referral Network agencies. However, these trainings are only available in 46 out of 58 counties, and are specifically designed for providers serving foster children. The demand for TIC trainings was high before COVID-19 and will likely only increase as a result of the crisis.

Quality Counts California (QCC) is a statewide effort to strengthen California's early learning and care system. The program, created by the California Department of Education, is implemented at the local level and offers funding to childcare agencies through the QCC QRIS block grant.

### **PROBLEM**

Currently, trauma-informed care trainings are not accessible to all providers and centers do not have the

capacity to expand trainings across the state. This means that many providers lack the knowledge and preparation necessary to respond to the needs of children who have experienced trauma in their past or during the COVID-19 crisis.

Left unaddressed, trauma in childhood can negatively affect children over the course of their lives. The National Center for Biotechnology Information and the Centers for Disease Control found that exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), like abuse and neglect, is linked to an increased risk for smoking and substance abuse, cancer and diabetes, and even early death. Individuals who have experienced ACEs have also demonstrated lower high school graduation rates and more lost time from work.

According to the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, California's annual direct healthcare expenditures due to ACEs is \$10.5 billion, and the cost in disability and years of productive life lost to ACEs equals \$102 billion. This totals \$112.5 billion per year.

### **THIS BILL**

AB 791 expands access to TIC trainings by creating the Trauma-Informed Childcare Training Grants Program, which will be offered as a part of the QCC QRIS block grant. To apply, local agencies can submit an addendum to their QCC QRIS applications describing how they will use the funds to increase the supply and quality of TIC training in their area. This program will prepare providers to respond to the unique needs of children who have experienced trauma in their pasts or as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

AB 791 prioritizes an early investment in childcare that will save lives and prepare providers to support the emotional well-being of children as the state emerges from the COVID-19 disaster. Through this program, California childcare providers will not only be equipped to help children cope with the effects of trauma, but early intervention will also mitigate the long-term effects on children's lives and the system.

This bill will eliminate billions of dollars in annual education and healthcare expenditures for the treatment of ACEs-linked conditions later in life. These savings are especially important in light of the economic recession California is currently facing.