

AB XXX (Aguiar-Curry)

Subsidized Child Care Eligibility Criteria

SUMMARY

In order to be eligible for state subsidized child care, families are required to meet eligibility requirements for income and need.

AB XXX clarifies English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and classes to attain a high school diploma or general educational development (GED) certificate as acceptable types of training courses for families to qualify for child care eligibility under Title V funded programs.

BACKGROUND

California's Educational Code states that families who meet certain requirements are eligible for federal and state subsidized child development services, such as child care and preschool. The requirements to qualify are based on criteria including income and status of the family.

Under existing law, parents that meet income criteria and are engaged in vocational training courses leading directly to a trade or profession are eligible for state supported child care services. However, courses in English as a Second Language (ESL) and/or general educational development (GED) do not qualify as a type of vocational training.

Parents that are still taking classes to perfect their English speaking abilities or earn high school equivalency are not yet prepared to enter into vocational training, but also cannot qualify for subsidized child care for their children.

Many families require state supported child care services in order to continue with their education and work towards a profession. Costly child care services may prove burdensome for lower income families, disproportionately impacting single mothers and women of color.

According to the California Budget & Policy Center, in 2015, the average single-mother could expect to spend over two-thirds of her income to cover the cost of child care.

As well, it has been studied and reported that a lack of access to quality early learning experiences widens the

achievement gap for children of color, as well as contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline.

Additionally, the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) reports that 29% of immigrants in California live in households where no one older than age 13 speaks English "very well." Among immigrants with less than high school diplomas, 67% speak English "not at all" or "not well."

It is well documented that individuals who are proficient in English have higher occupational mobility, with better job prospects and the opportunity to earn higher wages.

Allowing greater access to state child care services for those enrolled in ESL and GED courses promises increased socioeconomic mobility for both parents and their children.

THIS BILL

AB XXX would add educational programs in English as a Second Language and classes to attain a high school diploma or general educational development certificate to the list of eligibility criteria for state subsidized child development services under the California Educational Code.

This bill does not propose to add any additional slots into the child care system. It simply expands the criteria by which a family can qualify to apply.

This change will empower parents to increase their level of education by providing families with greater access to subsidized child care services. It is often challenging for families who are non-native English speakers to access medical services, educational support within school systems, and social services, despite laws that require interpretation. Investing in families as a whole helps reduce poverty and the associated effects on childhood development.

AB XXX would give families greater access to subsidized childcare services by adding enrollment in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses to the existing eligibility requirements.