
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Carol Liu, Chair
2015 - 2016 Regular

Bill No: SB 1042
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Urgency: No
Consultant: Olgalilia Ramirez
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Fiscal: Yes

Subject: Child care: state preschool programs: age of eligibility

SUMMARY

This bill expands eligibility for the California State Preschool Program (CSPP) by adjusting the date of eligibility by three months to include younger three-year-olds.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the CSPP for purposes of providing part-day and full-day educational development programs to three- and four-year-old children. (Education Code § 8235)
- 2) Specifies that children are eligible for a CSPP if the family currently receives aid, meets specified income eligibility requirements, is homeless, or if the child is the recipient of protective services, or has been identified as neglected, abused or exploited (or at risk of such). (EC § 8263)
- 3) Requires that a child enrolled in a CSPP be three- or four-years-old on or before September 1st, of that fiscal year. (EC § 8208)
- 4) Further, requires a CSPP to prioritize service in the following order:
 - a) Three- and four-year-olds who are neglected or abused.
 - b) Eligible four-year-old children who are not enrolled in a Transitional Kindergarten program.
 - c) Eligible three-year-olds. (EC § 8236)

ANALYSIS

- 1) This bill expands eligibility for the California State Preschool Program (CSPP) by adjusting the date of eligibility by three months to include younger three-year-olds. Specifically it:
 - a) Revises the definition in statute for “Three-year-old children,” to mean children who will have their third birthday on or before December 1st, of the

fiscal year in which they are enrolled in a CSPP, rather than on or before September 1st.

- b) Deletes obsolete provisions that phase-in enrollment-age requirements for California state preschool program (CSPP).
- c) Makes non-substantive technical amendments.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) **Need for the bill.** Prior to the implementation of Transitional Kindergarten (TK), three-year-old children were eligible to enroll in CSPP if their third birthday fell on or before December 2nd of that fiscal year. To align with the TK enrollment dates, the CSPP cutoff dates shifted to September 1st. According to the author, with more families enrolling four-year old children in TK, some state preschool providers struggle to fill their programs with eligible four-year-olds. This bill aims to provide eligible children who turn three on or before December 1st the opportunity to attend a CSPP while giving providers the ability to fill slots that otherwise would remain vacant.
- 2) **Slots and priority.** This bill does not increase the number of slots for CSPP but rather seeks to give providers the ability to fill existing slots with younger three-year olds. Children considered to be at-risk and eligible four-year-olds would continue to have priority in the program. Recent data shows that four-year-old children represent the majority of children in state preschool programs at 56% full-day, and 64% part-day, followed by three-year olds at 29% full-day and 19% part-day, with the remaining population being five-year olds at 15% full-day and 17% part-day.

In the absence of this bill, this funding would be forfeited and returned to the state for possible reallocation to other general fund purposes. While preserving these funds for child care purposes is reasonable, the committee may wish to consider whether policy should focus on expansion of eligibility to include younger children, or reallocation of slots (i.e. redistribution of funds) to providers who are unable to serve all eligible four-year olds.

- 3) **Related budget activity.** The Governor's Budget proposes to create an Early Education Block Grant by consolidating Prop 98 funding for State Preschool, Transitional Kindergarten, and the Preschool Quality Rating and Improvement System. The Block Grant concept is very similar to the Local Control Funding Formula in that distribution of funds would be based on population and need. However, the Block Grant proposal is still a work in progress and the administration plans to unveil the remaining details of the program in the coming months. Separate from the Governor's proposal, this bill would adjust eligibility requirements for CSPP while maintaining the existing priority requirements.

SUPPORT

Alameda County Early Care and Education Planning Council
Bay Area Hispano Institute for Advancement

Berkeley Unified School District
California Community College Early Childhood Educators
California Head Start Association
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organization
Kidango, Inc.
Rio Hondo College Child Development Center
Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tom Torlakson
The Salvation Army

OPPOSITION

None received.

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