

# AB 1925 (Rendon) – General Child Care and Development Eligibility Criteria

## **SUMMARY**

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AB 1925 would extend eligibility for state childcare and development programs to families whose child is eligible for services under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

## **BACKGROUND**

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In recent years, there have been significant calls for streamlining the General Child Care and Development program and Early Head Start (EHS) requirements, starting with the 2019 Blue Ribbon Commission final report by the Legislature. Recommendations include prioritizing increased investment and removing barriers to increase access to Early Childhood Education (ECE) for infants and toddlers. Furthermore the first focus should be on low-income families or those who are facing other qualification hurdles.

California provides childcare and developmental services to families who meet certain eligibility requirements, such as receiving public aid or meeting certain income thresholds. Children with disabilities are also eligible for childcare and developmental services under IDEA.

Five other states guarantee subsidies for children with special needs. Additionally, last summer the Biden-Harris Administration proposed a rule improving child care access, affordability, and stability in the Child Care and Development Fund. Governor Newsom’s 2020 Master Plan for Early Learning and Care similarly aims to “create a simplified and aligned system of care for infants, toddlers, and other young children” to “streamline family eligibility and enrollment across programs.”

## **PROBLEM**

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The Center for American Progress found that 68% of parents of children with disabilities reported that they either did not find or experienced at least some difficulty in accessing child care.

California’s eligibility requirements are significantly different from federal requirements, making it harder

for families of children with disabilities to gain access to these programs. For example, California requires that both parents be employed, engaged in job training, or attending post-secondary schooling in order to qualify for the General Child Care Development program. This poses a challenge to families with a child with disabilities as it is often the case that one parent must stay home full time to care for their disabled child. A non-working parent disqualifies the family from obtaining state-subsidized care through the General Child Care Development program.

## **SOLUTION**

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AB 1925 adds a child’s disability as a criterion of eligibility for participation in the General Child Care and Development program and requires the Department of Social Services to simplify the need requirements in California to allow more families to participate. Adding a child’s disability, as a criterion of eligibility for the General Child Care and Development program will support the educational development of children with disabilities as well as their families.

## **STAFF CONTACT**

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## **SUPPORT**

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