

Date of Hearing: April 24, 2019

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Patrick O'Donnell, Chair
AB 123 (McCarty) – As Amended April 22, 2019

[Note: This bill was double referred to the Assembly Human Services Committee and was heard by that Committee as it relates to issues under its jurisdiction.]

SUBJECT: Early childhood education: state preschool program: access: standards

SUMMARY: Establishes the Pre-K for All Act; expands the eligibility for California State Preschool Programs (CSPP); increases the reimbursement rate for the CSPP and requires a portion of the increase to be used to increase teacher pay; requires CSPP lead teachers to hold a bachelor's degree by a specified date; and establishes a program to provide financial support to childcare workers pursuing a bachelor's degree. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Establishes the Pre-K for All Act of 2019.
- 2) Expresses findings and declarations of the importance of quality early learning opportunities for children; that a targeted universal system of offering preschool to all children in high-poverty schools would help address the detrimental impact that concentrated poverty has on pupil achievement; and that in the annual Budget Act of the 2014-15 fiscal year, the Legislature and the Governor committed to providing all low-income children with at least one year of early care and education.
- 3) Authorizes a provider operating a CSPP within the attendance boundary of a public school (except a charter or magnet school) where at least 70 percent of enrolled pupils are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, to enroll four-year-old children based upon the following priorities:
 - a) First priority is given to three or four-year-old neglected or abused children who are recipients of child protective services, or who are at risk of being neglected, abused, or exploited, upon written referral from a legal, medical, or social service agency.
 - b) Second priority is given to eligible four-year-old children who are not enrolled in a state-funded transitional kindergarten (TK) program.
 - c) Any remaining slots may be open to enrollment of any families not otherwise eligible, as specified, subject to the following:
 - i. Enrollment of eligible four-year-old children is limited to families that establish residency with the attendance boundary of the qualifying public school; and requires proof of residency as a condition of enrollment.
 - ii. Requires CSPP providers, to the best of their ability, to give first priority in enrollment to families with the lowest income.
- 4) Defines "magnet school" as an entire school with a focus on a special area of study, such as science, the performing arts, or career education, designed to attract pupils from across the

school district who may choose to attend the magnet school instead of their local public school.

- 5) Requires that the number of children served in a CSPP program classroom not exceed 24.
- 6) Requires that the current full-day CSPP reimbursement rate of \$12,070, in effect as of July 1, 2018, remain in effect until June 30, 2020, and that commencing July 1, 2020, the rate be increased to \$14,062.50 and be increased annually by the cost-of-living adjustment, as specified.
- 7) Expresses the intent of the Legislature that the increase to the CSPP reimbursement rate provided in 2020 be used to advance toward parity of pay between CSPP teachers and public school kindergarten teachers; and requires CSPP contracting agencies use no less than 65 percent of the increase in the reimbursement rate to increase the wages of lead teachers who have obtained a bachelor's degree.
- 8) Expresses the intent of the Legislature that all four-year-old children, and all eligible three-year-old children, within the attendance boundary of a public school (other than a charter or magnet school) where at least 70 percent of enrolled pupils are eligible for free or reduced-price meals have access to a CSPP or other child development program.
- 9) Requires the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) by July 1, 2020, to update the permit requirements authorizing service in the care, development, and instruction of children in childcare and development programs, to meet the following:
 - a) Requires that as of July 1, 2028, head teachers in a CSPP with a teacher permit or higher must have earned a bachelor's degree with an emphasis or major in early childhood studies or child development, obtained at least 24 units in one of these fields, and obtained any other practicum and alternative certificates as determined by the CTC.
 - b) Requires that as of July 1, 2028, in each CSPP classroom, there is at least one teacher present who provides instruction who meets the educational requirements, as specified.
 - c) Specifies that a person who was issued an early childhood teaching permit from the CTC and who served as a head teacher in a CSPP as of December 31, 2019, is deemed to have met the educational requirements, as specified; and is eligible to participate in the California Preschool Teacher Qualification Program to obtain a bachelor's degree in early childhood studies or child development pursuant to an approved application of a licensed child development provider.
 - d) Requires the CTC to create and revise permits for other job roles in a CSPP in alignment with these requirements.
- 10) Establishes the California Preschool Teacher Qualifications Program for the purpose of supporting staff of licensed preschool and child development programs in acquiring the qualifications, as specified, to improve the quality of preschool programs in California, increase the compensation of preschool teachers, and maintain the diversity of the existing preschool workforce; and defines the following terms for the purposes of this section:

- a) “Applicant” means a licensed child development provider applying for funds under this program.
 - b) “Department” means the California Department of Education (CDE).
 - c) “Institutions of higher education” means the California Community Colleges, the California State University, the University of California, and private not-for-profit postsecondary educational institutions that offer child development and early childhood education courses.
 - d) “Paraprofessional” means a person who assists classroom head teachers in a child development program, including a teaching assistant.
 - e) “Participant” means a licensed child development program employee who elects to participate in the program.
 - f) “Program” means the California Preschool Teacher Qualifications Program.
- 11) Specifies that a person serving as a head teacher or a paraprofessional in an early childhood setting is eligible to apply for a scholarship provided through this program upon approval of an application covering the child development provider employing the head teacher or paraprofessional.
- 12) Requires the CDE, upon an appropriation for this purpose, to provide funding to a licensed child development provider that participates in the program upon meeting specified criteria adopted by the CDE.
- 13) Specifies that a consortium of licensed child development providers or a county office of education applying on behalf of a licensed child development provider is also eligible for funding and technical assistance under this program.
- 14) Requires that the criteria to be adopted by the CDE for the selection of participants include the extent to which the applicant has met all of the following:
- a) Has identified a potential partnership with one or more local campuses or online programs of participating higher education institutions.
 - b) Plans to enter into a written matriculation agreement with the participating higher education campuses and develops a process of directly paying tuition and fees of participants to the campus(es).
 - c) The applicant’s plan for recruitment attempts to meet its own specific teacher needs.
- 15) Requires the CDE to establish a plan to pursue equity in the selection of applicants from a variety of settings and areas of the state, including providing technical assistance to licensed child development providers with limited infrastructure to submit the application.
- 16) Requires an applicant that is selected to participate to provide information about the program to all eligible staff in the child development program and to assist each employee it recruits regarding admission to an institution of higher education.

- 17) Requires each applicant to certify that it has received a commitment from each participant that they will accomplish all of the following:
- a) Earn a bachelor's degree with an emphasis or major in early childhood studies or child development by July 1, 2028, including at least 24 units in these fields, and obtain any other practicum and alternative certificates as determined by the CTC.
 - b) Complete all of the requirements established by the CTC to obtain a teacher permit for employment in a licensed preschool program.
 - c) Complete one year of classroom instruction in the licensed preschool or child development program for each year that they receive assistance for books, fees, tuition, and other eligible expenses while attending an institution of higher education under this program.
- 18) Requires the CDE to determine the level of state assistance for participants based upon an analysis of the cost of tuition, books, and fees for obtaining the qualifications, as specified.
- 19) Requires a local planning council (LPC) to submit to the CDE a plan for expanding CSPP based on the enrollment priorities, as specified, by May 30, 2020. Requires that the plan be developed in consultation with stakeholders within the county, including, but not limited to, local First 5 agencies, alternative payment programs, resource and referral agencies, Head Start grantees, and preschool and childcare providers. Requires that the plan include the following components:
- a) A phase-in period of four years for serving additional children who are eligible, as specified, including the additional slots needed each year and identifying the distribution of additional slots between existing and new LEAs and community-based providers.
 - b) A special emphasis on the steps required to serve all four-year-old children within the attendance boundary of a public school where at least 70 percent of enrolled pupils are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, as well as all three-year-old children in poverty, as defined by the California Poverty Measure.
 - c) An analysis of the need for additional facilities and associated costs.
- 20) Requires the SPI to consider the plans submitted by the LPC in determining the disbursement of additional funds to the base allocation for the expansion of childcare and development programs.
- 21) Requires the CDE to allocate funding within each county in accordance with the priorities identified by the LPC of that county and submitted to the CDE, unless the priorities do not meet the requirements of state or federal law.
- 22) Expresses the intent of the Legislature to provide sufficient funding to LPCs to undertake the additional planning required by this section.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes eligibility for child care services and child development programs administered by the CDE and requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to adopt rules and regulations on eligibility, enrollment and priority of services needed for implementation. (EC Section 8263)
- 2) Specifies that in order to be eligible for federal and state subsidized child development services, families must meet at least one requirement in each of the following two areas:
 - a) A family is a current aid recipient; income eligible; homeless; or one whose children are recipients of protective services, or whose children have been identified as being abused, neglected, or exploited, or at risk of being abused, neglected, or exploited.
 - b) A family needs the child care services:
 - i. Because the child is identified by a legal, medical, social services agency, a local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youth, a Head Start program, or an emergency or transitional shelter as a recipient of protective services, or being neglected, abused, or exploited, or at risk of neglect, abuse or exploitation, or is homeless.
 - ii. Because the parents are engaged in vocational training leading directly to a recognized trade, paraprofession or profession; engaged in an educational program for English language learners or to attain a high school diploma or general educational development certificate; employed or seeking employment; seeking permanent housing for family stability, or incapacitated. (EC Section 8263)
- 3) Establishes the CSPP and provides that the programs shall include, but not be limited to, part-day age and developmentally appropriate programs designed to facilitate the transition to kindergarten for three- and four-year-old children in educational development, health services, social services, nutritional services, parent education and parent participation, evaluation, and staff development. (EC Section 8235)
- 4) Specifies that three-year-old and four-year-old children are eligible for part-day CSPP if the family meets at least one of the criteria specified in (2) above. (EC 8235)
- 5) Defines "income eligible" as a family whose adjusted monthly income is at or below 70 percent of the state median income (SMI) until July 1, 2019 and thereafter is at or below 85 percent of the SMI, adjusted for family size, and adjusted annually. For purposes of establishing ongoing eligibility, a family's adjusted monthly income must be at or below 85 percent of the SMI, adjusted for family size. Specifies that the Department of Finance (DOF) will calculate the applicable SMI by family size annually and provide the updated data to the CDE by March 1 of each year. (EC Section 8263.1)
- 6) Requires that no more than 10 percent of children enrolled in a CSPP program may be filled by children in families above the income eligibility threshold, and only after all eligible three- and four-year old children have been enrolled, and provided the family income is no more than 15 percent above the income eligibility threshold. (EC 8235)

- 7) Specifies that after all otherwise eligible children have been enrolled, a part-day CSPP may provide services to three-year-old and four-year-old children in families whose income is above the income eligibility threshold if those children have been identified as children with exceptional needs, and specifies that these children do not count toward the 10 percent limit on children from families above the income threshold. (EC 8235)
- 8) Establishes staffing ratios for subsidized center-based childcare programs serving children from three- to six-year-olds at a 1:8 adult-child ratio and a 1:24 teacher-child ratio. (EC 8264.8)
- 9) Requires the SPI to implement a plan that establishes reasonable standards and assigned reimbursement rates for childcare and development services, to vary by length of program year and hours of service, and establishes amounts for, and provides for an annual cost-of-living adjustment to, the Standard Reimbursement Rate (SRR) for contracted providers, and provides for adjustments to the SRR based upon specified reimbursement factors. (EC 8265 and 8266.1)
- 10) Requires the SRR for full-day CSPP, beginning July 1, 2018, to be \$12,070 and beginning with the 2019-20 fiscal year, to be increased by the cost-of-living adjustment granted by the Legislature annually, as specified. (EC 8265)
- 11) Defines “transitional kindergarten” as the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate. (EC 48000)
- 12) Establishes the national Head Start program to promote the school readiness of low-income children by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development in a learning environment that supports children’s growth in language, literacy, mathematics, science, social and emotional functioning, creative arts, physical skills, and approaches to learning; and through the provision to low-income children and their families of health, educational, nutritional, social, and other services that are determined, based on family needs assessments, to be necessary. (Public Law 110–134—Dec. 12, 2007, 121 Stat. 1363)
- 13) States Legislative intent that local child care and development planning councils (also known as local planning councils or LPCs) provide a forum for the identification of local priorities for child care and the development of policies to meet the needs identified within those priorities. (EC 8499.3)
- 14) Requires an LPC to, upon approval by the county board of supervisors and the county superintendent of schools, submit the local priorities it has identified that reflect all child care needs in the county to the CDE by May 30 of each year. (EC 8499.5)
- 15) Requires an LPC to, in order to meet its obligation of annually submitting local priorities to the CDE, carry out a number of activities including, among others: conducting an assessment of child care needs in the county at least once every five years; encouraging public input in the development of the priorities, including through at least one public hearing; and, preparing a comprehensive countywide child care plan designed to mobilize public and private resources to address identified needs, as specified. (EC 8499.5)

FISCAL EFFECT: The Office of Legislative Counsel has keyed this as a possible state-mandated local program.

COMMENTS:

Need for the bill. According to the author, “overwhelming research shows that early brain development in young children is pivotal, not only to their success in school, but to their overall well-being and prospects in life. Unfortunately, too many California children enter kindergarten unprepared for school and never catch up. The benefits of high-quality preschool are especially powerful for disadvantaged children. Preschool is a proven difference maker – breaking cycles of intergenerational poverty, addressing our education achievement gap and keeping kids out of our juvenile justice system.

The policies in AB 123 have been a long time in the making. California has lead the way on other issues, but preschool is not one of them. After visiting programs on the East Coast, I realized that California could do much more to serve our three- and four-year-olds. By expanding access through a targeted universal approach, adding educational requirements, and increasing pay for those with BA’s, AB 123 improves the quality of our state-funded preschool programs and sets up our youngest learners for lifelong success.”

Research confirms the value of high-quality pre-kindergarten experiences. According to “Current State of Scientific Knowledge on Pre-Kindergarten Effects” (Phillips et al, 2017):

“Educators in K-12 school systems are faced with wide disparities in skill levels of entering kindergarteners, which means that all too many children are already far behind many of their peers. Findings in developmental science point toward the importance of early-life experiences in shaping brain development and suggest that if we knew how to provide these experiences in our early education programs, we could have a lifelong impact on children’s success.” Findings include:

- Convincing evidence shows that children attending a diverse array of state and school district pre-k programs are more ready for school at the end of their Pre-K year than children who do not attend Pre-K. Improvements in academic areas such as literacy and numeracy are most common; the smaller number of studies of social-emotional and self-regulatory development generally show more modest improvements in those areas.
- Studies of different groups of preschoolers often find greater improvement in learning at the end of the Pre-K year for economically disadvantaged children and dual language learners than for more advantaged and English-proficient children.
- Pre-K programs are not all equally effective. Several effectiveness factors may be at work in the most successful programs. One such factor supporting early learning is a well implemented, evidence-based curriculum. Coaching for teachers, as well as efforts to promote orderly but active classrooms, may also be helpful.
- Children’s early learning trajectories depend on the quality of their learning experiences not only before and during their Pre-K year, but also following the pre-k

year. Classroom experiences early in elementary school can serve as charging stations for sustaining and amplifying Pre-K learning gains.

A 2019 brief by the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) “Untangling the Evidence on Preschool Effectiveness: Insights for Policymakers” finds:

“The weight of a sizable body of evidence indicates that preschool programs make a substantial difference in preparing children for school. The evidence about continued effects beyond school entry is also positive, but less consistent. In order to generate meaningful impacts, early learning experiences need to be rich and engaging. Implementing a high-quality preschool program well—offering compensation and support that attract and retain a highly qualified workforce; a program day that provides adequate, productive learning time and activities; and child assessments used to individualize learning—is complex and often expensive. Finally, although preschool quality is important, even the highest quality preschool cannot inoculate children from the detrimental effects of poverty or poor elementary and secondary schools. Sustained benefits likely require investments in children and their families that are also sustained from preschool through grade school and beyond.”

California currently offers a number of options for four-year-olds. Depending upon a child’s birthdate and the income level of the family, a four-year old may be eligible to enroll in a CSPP, TK, a Head Start program, or another early care and education program.

- 1) California State Preschool Program (CSPP) provides both part-day (at least 3 hours per day) and full-day (at least 6.5 hours per day) services to eligible three- and four-year-olds, including: developmentally appropriate curriculum, parent education, meals and snacks, and referral to social and health services for families. CSPP can be offered in various settings, including childcare centers, family childcare network homes, school districts, or county offices of education. Approximately two-thirds of children in CSPP are served by local education agencies (LEAs), and the remaining one-third is served by community-based organizations. In the 2018-19 fiscal year, approximately 170,000 three and four-year-old children attend CSPP. Of these, 61 percent attend part-day programs and 39 percent attend full-day programs.
- 2) Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate. TK currently serves older four-year-olds and young five-year-olds who have their fifth birthday after the cut-off date for kindergarten (between September 2 and December 2). The program is intended to serve children who would previously have been eligible to attend kindergarten. Schools are also authorized, under certain conditions, to admit children who have their fifth birthday after December 5th to TK programs, but may not claim ADA funding until the child turns five. The LAO estimates that approximately 90,000 children were enrolled in TK in 2018-19.
- 3) Head Start is a national program providing comprehensive developmental services for low-income children from birth to entry into elementary school. Federal grants are provided directly to local grantees as the CDE does not administer, and the state does not provide any funding for Head Start programs. California's Head Start program is the largest in the nation.

Estimates suggest that approximately 82,000 three and four-year old children were served in Head Start programs, as of 2017.

- 4) Other programs offer early education and care to specific populations of three- and four-year olds, including programs serving children with exceptional needs or migrant children. Some four-year-old children are currently served in general child care programs, offered through childcare centers or family childcare home networks administered by the CDE. Finally, LEAs may use a portion of their federal Title I funding or their general Local Control Funding Formula allocations to offer early childhood programs, including preschool.

Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) on Early Childhood Education included recommendations on preschool access. The BRC was established with the intent to “plan an early learning system that works for and meets the needs of children, families, and providers.” The BRC, consisting of members appointed from the Assembly and stakeholders, began its work in early 2017, holding quarterly hearings and establishing subcommittees. On March 11, 2019, draft recommendations were released, including the following, relevant to this bill:

“Expand access to early childhood education programs including preschool for all three- and four-year-old children. Expansion should begin with those in low-income families, ensuring full-day care with wraparound services available.”

An estimated 69 percent of eligible four-year olds are currently being served in pre-K programs. A 2017 report by the LPI, “Understanding California’s Early Care and Education System”, estimates that 69 percent of eligible four-year-olds, and 38 percent of 3-year-olds statewide are enrolled in an early care and education program in California. These figures vary significantly from one county to another.

It is difficult to gain an accurate count of the number of children served for a number of reasons. Children enter and leave programs throughout the year and due to a lack of a unique child identifier, these children may be counted multiple times. Many children receive service from multiple programs simultaneously for different parts of the day and thus may again be counted more than once. In addition, due to a lack of a statewide eligibility database, it is difficult to identify the total number of children and families eligible for care or the number of children and families currently waiting for care.

In a 2016 report, the American Institute for Research (AIR) notes that not all families offered the option of subsidized preschool will choose to enroll. For example, in two states with universal access to preschool programs, regardless of family income, participation rates are 70 percent (Oklahoma) and approximately 80 percent (Florida).

Moving toward targeted universal access to preschool. Currently families establish eligibility for a child’s enrollment in CSPP if the child is, or is at risk of being, neglected, abused, or exploited, or is homeless, or if the child is from a low-income family, including one that receives current aid. Four-year-old children receive priority enrollment over three-year-old children.

This bill retains the current initial priority for neglected or abused children, and specifies that the second priority for enrollment in a CSPP program is eligible four-year old children not enrolled in a state-funded TK program. Finally, the bill specifies that any remaining slots are open to any four-year child living within a high poverty area, defined as one within the attendance

boundaries of a school where 70 percent or more of the enrolled pupils are eligible for free- or reduced-price meals, is eligible, without regard to the individual family's status. It also expresses Legislative intent that all four-year-old children and all eligible three-year-old children within these specified school boundaries have access to the CSPP or other child development program.

Currently, CSPP programs may only enroll up to 10 percent of pupils who are not income-eligible or otherwise eligible, if space permits. This bill would allow CSPP providers to exceed this cap, which could provide a wider diversity of enrolled children. Research suggests that children in kindergarten and elementary school who are clustered in high-poverty, high-minority classrooms show fewer educational gains, compared to children in more diverse classrooms. A smaller body of work extends these findings to preschool-aged children. Studies on peer effects suggest that in integrated classrooms, higher-skilled children may promote the learning of their lower-skilled peers.

Increasing preschool teacher qualification requirements. The Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) issues the Child Development Teacher Permit, which authorizes the holder to provide service in the care, development and instruction of children in a childcare and development program, and supervise an associate teacher, assistant, and an aide. The permit is valid for five years and is renewable for successive five-year periods upon completion of 105 hours of professional growth. Currently, the requirements to earn such a permit are:

- 24 units of college-level early childhood education (ECE) including specified core courses + 16 general education units +175 days of experience in classroom for 3 or more hours/day within last 4 years; OR
- Associate level degree in ECE or child development +3 semester units of supervised field experience in ECE setting.

This bill would require that as of July 1, 2028, a head teacher in a CSPP would hold a bachelor's degree in ECE or child development with a minimum of 24 units in specified subjects, as well as any other requirements specified by the CTC. The bill also requires that as of that date, at least one teacher in each CSPP classroom must meet these requirements. Finally, the bill specifies that existing head teachers in a CSPP, as of December 31, 2019, would be grandfathered in, and would not be required to attain a Bachelor's degree.

This bill does not propose changes to any other child development permits issued by the CTC, which include assistant, associate teacher, master teacher, site supervisor, and program director permits.

Status of the existing ECE workforce. A recent report on California's ECE workforce (Whitebrook et al) notes that the last survey of the ECE workforce was conducted in 2006. The absence of an updated statewide survey or workforce registry creates numerous challenges to implementation of evidence-based decision making. A new California Early Care and Education Workforce Study will be carried out in 2019.

Some data is available from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2012 National Survey of Early Care and Education, although the authors urge caution in use of this data:

- There are an estimated 205,000 members in California's ECE workforce:

- 49 percent are listed as family, friend, and neighbor providers – typically unlicensed
- 46 percent were teaching staff in center-based programs
- 5 percent were home-based licensed providers
- Data also outlines characteristics of the center-based workforce in California:
 - 97 percent of the teachers were women
 - 50 percent of workforce is between the ages of 30-49
 - Nearly ½ of workforce identified as white (while less than 25 percent of the child population under age 5 in CA is white)
 - 30 percent held an associate’s degree and 34 percent had a bachelor’s degree (the report does not specify if degrees are in ECE or education-related field)
 - Among the ECE teachers, 30 percent had an associate’s degree and 47 percent a bachelor’s degree

Research supports highly qualified preschool teachers. A 2018 LPI policy brief suggests:

“California should take steps to build a well-qualified ECE workforce, including increasing expectations and support for educators’ higher education and training, starting with preschool. California should ensure that children of similar age and need in state-subsidized programs have access to educators with comparable education. Research has found that pre-k programs with the strongest sustained impact on child outcomes—including transitional kindergarten—require educators to have a bachelor’s degree and specialized training in ECE. Currently, California’s preschool programs have varying, often low, expectations for staff teaching the same age group. TK, for example, requires a B.A. and a teaching credential, while there is no degree requirement for California’s state preschool program or private preschool programs receiving vouchers.”

The National Institute of Medicine (IOM)’s 2015 report “Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth through Age 8”, recommends that preschool programs:

“Develop and implement comprehensive pathways and multiyear timelines at the individual, institutional, and policy levels for transitioning to a minimum bachelor’s degree qualification requirement, with specialized knowledge and competencies, for all lead educators working with children from birth through age 8. Currently, most lead educators in care and education settings prior to elementary school are not expected to have the same level of education – a bachelor’s degree – as those leading elementary school classrooms. This difference in education requirements lags behind the science of child development and early learning, which clearly indicates that the work of lead educators for young children of all ages is based on the same high level of sophisticated knowledge and competencies. For this recommendation to be fully realized and effective, it must be implemented carefully in a phased approach, with supportive local, state, and federal policies and with informed, supportive leadership.”

In an analysis of high-quality early childhood education programs across the county, LPI notes that:

“Strong programs ensure that staff know how to support children’s learning and development. Nearly all programs with a track record of success, including the public preschool programs in Tulsa, Boston, New Jersey, and Michigan, require their lead teachers, who not only instruct children but manage the classroom, to have a bachelor’s degree with a specialization in early childhood education. Studies have found that teachers’ specialized knowledge about child development and instruction for young children is particularly important. Both the IOM and National Research Council recommend that states align qualifications for educators of children from birth to age eight, with all lead teachers having a bachelor’s degree and specialization in early childhood. Well-prepared teachers have the knowledge and skills to provide engaging interactions and classroom environments to support children’s learning.”

A 2018 report by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) finds that nearly one-half of all states require a bachelor’s degree for teachers in state-funded prekindergarten classrooms. In addition, the federally funded Head Start program requires that at least 50 percent of classrooms serving children from three to five years old are required to have a lead teacher with a bachelor’s degree or higher. Research suggests that 73 percent of Head Start teachers have a bachelor’s degree or higher.

Some question the need for a Bachelor’s degree for preschool teachers. There is some dispute about the qualifications necessary for preschool teachers. The NCSL report notes:

“While almost all experts agree that more needs to be done to prepare ECE workers and support their ongoing professional development, there is debate among academics, policymakers and practitioners about the optimal level of ECE worker preparation to ensure positive outcomes for children. A recent consensus study report argues the standards for early childhood educators should be elevated to those of educators working with older children by increasing minimum education requirements for lead early childhood educators to a bachelor’s degree. Other researchers have found that on-the-job training or coaching have greater impacts on positive child outcomes. There is also debate about the ages when children most benefit from teachers having advanced training or degrees.”

Some ECE advocates question whether a bachelor’s degree is the correct standard to use for California’s CSPP programs. Concerns expressed include the following:

- Equity issues and the need to maintain the diversity of the existing ECE workforce.
- The need for financial supports – ECE staff will need upfront funding as they may not be able to wait for loan forgiveness or have the ability to repay student loans.
- The current workforce may need remedial education and/or English learner supports in accessing higher education courses necessary to earn a bachelor’s degree.
- ECE staff may only able to take one course at a time due to having to work full-time, therefore they are likely to take many years to get to degree.

- Four year college ECE programs need improvement, as many lack practical applications, including effective practicum experiences.
- Placing too many hurdles in place will exacerbate the existing teacher shortage.

Assembly BRC workforce recommendations. The Assembly BRC included recommendations on strengthening the ECE workforce, including the following:

- Develop a strategic plan for recruitment and retention, and to ensure career advancement pathways for all providers in all settings, reviewing the career lattice and pathways and ramps.
- Identify ways to increase capacity of higher education systems, exploring the possibility of community colleges offering early childhood BA degrees, and increase partnerships with community-based apprenticeship programs. Ensure support systems such as counseling, financial aid, tutoring, and mentoring are in place.
- Streamline and simplify current educator and caregiver competencies to focus on essential adult practices that improve child outcomes.
- Make competencies easily measurable and based upon what current research says are the most effective educator and caregiver practices.
- Create, over no more than a two-year period, a competency-based assessment that allows both new applicants and the incumbent workforce to demonstrate that they possess competencies. This should be piloted and refined for the year prior to scaling statewide.

CTC is exploring competency-based approaches. According to the CTC, the current Child Development Permit structure is based largely on seat time, course units, course titles and sequences. The CTC has been working with early education stakeholders in recent years to develop Performance Expectations and Program Guidelines. If adopted by the Commission, the Performance Expectations would represent a major shift in the field of early childhood educator preparation and permitting in moving towards a competency-based system for the licensed early childhood education workforce.

The Performance Expectations (TPEs) describe the set of professional knowledge and skills that would be expected of a beginning level Child Development practitioner in order to effectively support the growth, development, and learning of all young children and to work collaboratively in partnership with families to support children's learning. They require beginning California practitioners to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide safe, healthy, developmentally appropriate, inclusive and supportive learning environments to meet the needs of every young child in his/her ECE setting, and to understand and apply child development as well as pedagogical theories, principles, and practices for the comprehensive education of children who are English learners, dual language learners, and Standard English learners.

TPEs are intended for use by educator preparation programs to inform their program development so that permit candidates may meet the Commission's minimum qualifications for individuals interested in obtaining a Commission-issued license. Transitioning the current ECE

preparation and permitting system to full implementation of these ECE TPEs and Program Guidelines will require time and significant support for preparation programs and the development of some form of accountability system for program quality oversight. As such, the CTC reports that the TPEs and Program Guidelines are both “aspirational” and sufficiently developed to begin building the other aspects of the system that are necessary to fully achieve their potential to improve quality in the preparation of the ECE workforce.

Teacher compensation. The issue of teacher compensation is critical in addressing the expectations for achievement of higher education qualifications in ECE. Nationally, a bachelor’s degree in ECE has the lowest lifetime earnings projection of all college majors. This is illustrated in California by the Getting Down to Facts II report on ECE, published in 2018, which reported the following median hourly wages in California in 2017:

- Preschool teacher \$16.19 (3 percent increase since 2015)
- Kindergarten teacher \$38.33
- Elementary school teacher \$45.17

The report further noted that ECE workers seldom receive benefits, such as paid sick days, vacation days, or subsidized health insurance; and 58 percent of childcare workers earn so little they qualify for public assistance. These conditions make it difficult to recruit and retain teachers, which in turn undermines the relationships that are vital to children’s healthy development.

The Assembly BRC included recommendations regarding compensation and support of the ECE workforce, including the following:

- Achieve salary parity with TK-3 for those with comparable education and experience, with competitive benefit packages including health, paid time off, retirement, and other compensation.
- Increases in compensation are required at all levels of qualification among the incumbent workforce. Standards for the ECE workforce cannot be increased until compensation levels are significantly raised.

This bill expresses the intent of the Legislature that, the increase to the full-day CSPP reimbursement rate in 2020 proposed by this bill, be used to advance toward parity of pay between CSPP teachers and public school kindergarten teachers. It requires that in order to reach this goal, that contracting agencies must use no less than 65 percent of the increase in the reimbursement rate to increase the wages of lead teachers who have obtained a bachelor’s degree.

Providing support for further education of CSPP teachers. As mentioned previously, financial support for ECE workers is essential in order to increase the qualifications of the workforce. The 2018 NCSL report on building a qualified workforce notes:

“ECE workers pursuing additional education face significant barriers, perhaps the greatest being the cost of higher education. Because ECE workers typically earn poverty-level wages, they likely must work while attending classes. This may pose scheduling challenges and impede their ability to take out student loans. Also, some current ECE workers are

“nontraditional students” and require remedial education and other supports, including English language support and academic and career counseling from a counselor familiar with the ECE field. In addition, variations in standards and training requirements among providers, programs and states pose challenges for ECE workers moving or changing employers.”

The Assembly BRC report includes the following recommendations in this regard:

- As new qualifications are enacted, ensure that resources to support any education, training, and certification that may be required is available and accessible.
- Invest in strategies that compensate providers as they increase their professional development, such as student loan forgiveness, paid professional development time, and graduated wage increases above the base.

The 2016 LPI brief on lessons from other states, included the following recommendations based upon a review of successful ECE programs:

- Make training programs accessible to providers. This can be done by offering courses regionally in community colleges, county offices of education, and districts or through online platforms. In West Virginia’s apprenticeship program, childcare workers and pre-k assistant teachers remain employed and receive mentoring while taking classes at West Virginia’s community and technical colleges. West Virginia and Washington offer online courses to make opportunities accessible in rural areas.
- Encourage teacher advancement and retention through scholarships and salary supplements. All four states offer scholarships and salary supplements to teachers who have returned to school for additional training. West Virginia, North Carolina, and Michigan have adopted a nationally known program, Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.), which awards scholarships for additional teacher education. North Carolina also has adopted WAGE\$, another nationally known program that subsidizes preschool teachers’ salaries based on their levels of education.

This bill establishes the “California Preschool Teacher Qualification Program” which upon appropriation would provide financial support to CSPP teachers to meet the requirements of a bachelor’s degree by July 1, 2028. The program is to be administered by the CDE and would require licensed childcare providers to apply to the CDE for funding, on behalf of their staff who are interested in participating in the program, including head teachers or paraprofessionals. A COE may also apply to the CDE, on behalf of childcare providers in the county. Successful applicants will be requiring to make arrangements with higher education institutions offering ECE programs to pay tuition, fees, and other expenses for their staff members attending the program. Staff receiving funding through this program would be requiring to commit to earning their bachelor’s degree by July 1, 2028, and to commit to teach in a CSPP or other childcare program for one year for each year of financial assistance received. The bill authorizes the CDE to determine the appropriate levels of funding.

Addressing quality of CSPP programs. In addition to increasing teacher qualifications for head teachers, this bill requires that no more than 24 children be in a CSPP classroom. Current law

specifies an adult: child staffing ratio of 1:8 and a teacher: child ratio of 1:24 for children from three to six years old in subsidized programs.

Increasing reimbursement rates. Providers of contracted care – childcare and development programs and CSPPs that contract directly with CDE, as opposed to voucher-based care – are reimbursed according to a uniform statewide rate system based on the Standard Reimbursement Rate (SRR). The SRR for full-day CSPP beginning July 1, 2018 is \$12,070 per child per year and, beginning with the 2019-20 fiscal year, is to be increased by the cost-of-living adjustment granted by the Legislature annually.

This bill requires that the current rate of \$12,070 be in effect from July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2020, and that effective July 1, 2020, the rate be increased by 16.5 percent to \$14,062.50 per child per year with the added requirement that the rate be increased by the cost-of-living adjustment granted by the Legislature annually.

As noted previously, this bill also includes intent language that this increase in the reimbursement rate be used to increase salaries of preschool teachers in an effort to advance towards parity with public school kindergarten teachers. It also requires that contractors use no less than 65 percent of the increase in the rate to increase the wages of lead teachers who have obtained a bachelor's degree.

Planning for targeted universal preschool. This bill requires each county's LPC to submit to the CDE by May 30, 2020, a plan to expand CSPP to meet the goals of enrolling all four-year-old children and eligible three-year-old children in high poverty neighborhoods in a CSPP. In order to fulfill this requirement, LPCs are required to consult with stakeholders, identify a plan to phase-in the slots needed to serve children identified, and to identify the need for new facilities. The bill requires the SPI to consider these plans in disbursing additional funds available for expansion of ECE programs throughout the state. The bill expresses the intent of the Legislature to provide sufficient funds to LPCs to undertake these additional duties.

This approach is supported by a recommendation in a 2018 LPI brief on building an early learning system: "Fully fund LPCs which are currently only partially funded and often lack capacity to complete their legislatively mandated needs assessments. Increased funding would allow LPCs to assess and plan for child care needs."

Arguments in support. Early Edge California expresses support of this bill:

"AB 123 importantly ensures that three-year-olds living in poverty have access to a quality preschool experience for at least two years before entering kindergarten. We know that these early learning experiences are particularly beneficial to low-income children and their families and can put them on a success academic and life trajectory. Additionally, AB 123 recognizes that California is becoming increasingly unaffordable for many lower middle-class families by expanding state subsidized preschool eligibility for any four-year-old who lives within the boundaries of an elementary school that enrolls at least 70% of low-income students. This "community eligibility" option acknowledges the compelling research illustrating how the concentrated poverty adversely affects children in those communities.

Finally, AB 123 takes a bold step towards further professionalizing the preschool workforce by requiring lead teachers to obtain—or demonstrate the equivalency of—a Bachelors of Arts

(BA) degree within the next eight years. The bill recognizes the need to support the workforce by providing scholarships for BA attainment and then increases the provider reimbursement so that employers can appropriately increase compensation. AB 123 makes important improvements to preschool programs in California.”

Recommended amendments. Staff recommends the bill be amended as follows:

- 1) Require that any appropriation made to the “California Preschool Teacher Qualification Program” providing financial supports to teachers pursuing a bachelor’s degree be non-Proposition 98 General Fund.
- 2) Require that the CTC requirements for a Child Development Teacher Permit as of July 1, 2028, include a requirement for coursework and/or a demonstration of competencies in serving the needs of children who are dual language learners, and the provision of a fully-inclusive environment for children with special needs.

Prior and related legislation. AB 125 (McCarty) of this Session revises the state’s system and rates for reimbursing subsidized child care and development programs to create a more uniform reimbursement system reflecting regional costs of care, and establishes the “Quality Counts California Pilot Reimbursement Program” as a pilot program to provide higher reimbursement rates to alternative payment program providers (APP) for meeting certain quality standards. This bill is pending before this Committee.

AB 124 (McCarty) of this Session requires LPCs to provide information to cities and counties regarding the need for early childhood education facilities. This bill is pending before this Committee.

AB 1001 (Ting) of this Session updates the composition and duties of LPCs, renames them strategic planning councils, and defines requirements of these councils to collect local input and facilitate local decision-making regarding ECE services and to guide local and statewide ECE investments, through the more effective collection and sharing of data between local and statewide agencies. This bill is pending before this Committee.

AB 1754 (McCarty) of the 2017-18 Session would have required the state to provide all eligible low-income four-year old children with access to early care and education programs. This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

SB 837 (Dodd) of the 2017-18 Session would have expanded eligibility for transitional kindergarten to all four-year olds, phased in over a two-year period beginning in the 2020-21 school year. This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

AB 47 (McCarty) of the 2015-16 Session would have established the Preschool for All Act of 2015 and required, on or before June 30, 2018, all eligible children who are not enrolled in transitional kindergarten to have access to the CSPP the year before they enter kindergarten, if their parents wish to enroll them and contingent upon the appropriation in the annual Budget Act for this purpose. This bill was vetoed by Governor Brown, who stated:

“Last year's education omnibus trailer bill already codified the intent to make preschool and other full-day, full year early education and care opportunities available to all low-income

children. The discussion on expanding state preschool - which takes into account rates paid to providers as well as access and availability for families - should be considered in the budget process, as it is every year. A bill that sets an arbitrary deadline, contingent on a sufficient appropriation, is unnecessary.”

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

American Academy Of Pediatrics, California
California Federation Of Teachers
California State PTA
Children's Paradise, Inc.
Congregation Beth Am
Early Childhood Action League
Early Edge California
Kidango
Marinkids
North Bay Leadership Council
Oakland Unified School District
Office of The Riverside County Superintendent of Schools
Riverside County Board of Education
Sacramento County Office of Education
San Francisco Child Care Planning and Advisory Council
Tandem, Partners In Early Learning
Numerous individuals

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Debbie Look / ED. / (916) 319-2087