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AB-982 Child care and development: eligibility: homeless children. (2015-2016)

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Assembly Bill No. 982

CHAPTER 567

An act to amend Section 8263 of the Education Code, relating to child care.

[Approved by Governor October 07, 2015. Filed with Secretary of State October 07, 2015.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 982, Eggman. Child care and development: eligibility: homeless children.

Existing law requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to adopt rules and regulations on eligibility, enrollment, and priority of services needed to implement laws relating to child care and development services. Existing law requires families to meet certain requirements in order to be eligible for subsidized child development services, including that the family needs child care services because the child is identified by a legal, medical, or social services agency, or emergency shelter as being a recipient of a protective service or being neglected, abused, or exploited, as provided.

This bill would expand the list of entities that can identify a child in need to include a local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youths, a Head Start program, or a transitional shelter. The bill would expand the list of children to be identified to include a homeless child.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: no

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 8263 of the Education Code is amended to read:

8263. (a) The Superintendent shall adopt rules and regulations on eligibility, enrollment, and priority of services needed to implement this chapter. In order to be eligible for federal and state subsidized child development services, families shall meet at least one requirement in each of the following areas:

(1) A family is (A) a current aid recipient, (B) income eligible, (C) homeless, or (D) 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.

(2) A family needs the child care services (A) because the child is identified by a legal, medical, or social services agency, a local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youths designated pursuant to Section 11432(g)(1)(J)(ii) of Title 42 of the United States Code, a Head Start program, or an emergency or transitional shelter as (i) a recipient of protective services, (ii) being neglected, abused, or exploited, or at risk of neglect, abuse, or exploitation, or (iii) being homeless or (B) because the parents are (i) engaged in vocational training leading directly to a recognized trade, paraprofession, or profession, (ii) employed or seeking employment, (iii) seeking permanent housing for family stability, or (iv) incapacitated.

(b) Except as provided in Article 15.5 (commencing with Section 8350), priority for federal and state subsidized child development services is as follows:

(1) (A) First priority shall be given to neglected or abused children who are recipients of child protective services, or children who are at risk of being neglected or abused, upon written referral from a legal, medical, or social services agency. If an agency is unable to enroll a child in the first priority category, the agency shall refer the family to local resource and referral services to locate services for the child.

(B) A family who is receiving child care on the basis of being a child at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, as defined in subdivision (k) of Section 8208, is eligible to receive services pursuant to subparagraph (A) for up to three months, unless the family becomes eligible pursuant to subparagraph (C).

(C) A family may receive child care services for up to 12 months on the basis of a certification by the county child welfare agency that child care services continue to be necessary or, if the child is receiving child protective services during that period of time, and the family requires child care and remains otherwise eligible. This time limit does not apply if the family's child care referral is recertified by the county child welfare agency.

(2) Second priority shall be given equally to eligible families, regardless of the number of parents in the home, who are income eligible. Within this priority, families with the lowest gross monthly income in relation to family size, as determined by a schedule adopted by the Superintendent, shall be admitted first. If two or more families are in the same priority in relation to income, the family that has a child with exceptional needs shall be admitted first. If there is no family of the same priority with a child with exceptional needs, the same priority family that has been on the waiting list for the longest time shall be admitted first. For purposes of determining order of admission, the grants of public assistance recipients shall be counted as income.

(3) The Superintendent shall set criteria for, and may grant specific waivers of, the priorities established in this subdivision for agencies that wish to serve specific populations, including children with exceptional needs or children of prisoners. These new waivers shall not include proposals to avoid appropriate fee schedules or admit ineligible families, but may include proposals to accept members of special populations in other than strict income order, as long as appropriate fees are paid.

(c) Notwithstanding any other law, in order to promote continuity of services, a family enrolled in a state or federally funded child care and development program whose services would otherwise be terminated because the family no longer meets the program income, eligibility, or need criteria may continue to receive child development services in another state or federally funded child care and development program if the contractor is able to transfer the family's enrollment to another program for which the family is eligible before the date of termination of services or to exchange the family's existing enrollment with the enrollment of a family in another program, provided that both families satisfy the eligibility requirements for the program in which they are being enrolled. The transfer of enrollment may be to another program within the same administrative agency or to another agency that administers state or federally funded child care and development programs.

(d) In order to promote continuity of services, the Superintendent may extend the 60-working-day period specified in subdivision (a) of Section 18086.5 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations for an additional 60 working days if he or she determines that opportunities for employment have diminished to the degree that one or both parents cannot reasonably be expected to find employment within 60 working days and granting the extension is in the public interest. The scope of extensions granted pursuant to this subdivision shall be limited to the necessary geographic areas and affected persons, which shall be described in the Superintendent's order granting the extension. It is the intent of the Legislature that extensions granted pursuant to this subdivision improve services in areas with high unemployment rates and areas with disproportionately high numbers of seasonal agricultural jobs.

(e) A physical examination and evaluation, including age-appropriate immunization, shall be required before, or within six weeks of, enrollment. A standard, rule, or regulation shall not require medical examination or immunization for admission to a child care and development program of a child whose parent or guardian files a letter with the governing board of the child care and development program stating that the medical examination or immunization is contrary to his or her religious beliefs, or provide for the exclusion of a child from the program because of a parent or guardian having filed the letter. However, if there is good cause to believe that a child is suffering from a recognized contagious or infectious disease, the child shall be temporarily excluded from the program until the governing board of the child care and development program is satisfied that the child is not suffering from that contagious or infectious disease.

(f) Regulations formulated and promulgated pursuant to this section shall include the recommendations of the State Department of Health Care Services relative to health care screening and the provision of health care services. The Superintendent shall seek the advice and assistance of these health authorities in situations where service under this chapter includes or requires care of children who are ill or children with exceptional needs.

(g) The Superintendent shall establish guidelines for the collection of employer-sponsored child care benefit payments from a parent whose child receives subsidized child care and development services. These guidelines shall provide for the collection of the full amount of the benefit payment, but not to exceed the actual cost of child care and development services provided, notwithstanding the applicable fee based on the fee schedule.

(h) The Superintendent shall establish guidelines according to which the director or a duly authorized representative of the child care and development program will certify children as eligible for state reimbursement pursuant to this section.

(i) Public funds shall not be paid directly or indirectly to an agency that does not pay at least the minimum wage to each of its employees.