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AB-2832 Whole Child Community Equity. (2021-2022)

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Assembly Bill No. 2832

CHAPTER 699

An act to add Chapter 34 (commencing with Section 10492) to Part 1.8 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to childcare.

[Approved by Governor September 28, 2022. Filed with Secretary of State September 28, 2022.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2832, Robert Rivas. Whole Child Community Equity.

Existing law, the Child Care and Development Services Act, administered by the State Department of Social Services, establishes a system of childcare and development services for children up to 13 years of age. Under existing law, the State Department of Education identifies, develops, validates, and disseminates effective educational programs and practices operated by state and local educational entities, in order to improve the educational services provided through public elementary and secondary schools.

This bill would require the State Department of Social Services, in consultation with the State Department of Education, and with input from early childhood stakeholders, to develop the Whole Child Equity Framework (the Framework) and Whole Child Community Equity Screening Tool (the Equity Tool) to provide the data needed to support the equitable distribution of resources and monitor progress on addressing racial and economic inequities. The bill would require the State Department of Social Services, in consultation with the State Department of Education, to convene a workgroup to provide recommendations to the State Department of Social Services for the development of the Framework, the Equity Tool, and recommended uses of the Equity Tool for early childhood investments and whole child resources. The bill would require the workgroup to include parents and families from historically underserved communities and other stakeholders that bring insight to support the whole child. The bill would require the State Department of Social Services, on or before January 1, 2025, to finalize and present the Framework, the Equity Tool, and recommended uses of the Equity Tool to the Legislature. The bill would also require the State Department of Social Services to publish the tool for public use, including the data and methodology, on the department's internet website.

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

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

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares the following:

(a) The state will place racial equity and economic justice at the forefront as California strengthens and expands the early childhood system by developing a process to look beyond poverty and take a more nuanced look at community need.

(b) This equity approach will enable the state to identify communities that have multiple, compounding factors impacting children by establishing and using a whole child community equity screening tool that tracks whole child data in areas, including, but not

limited to, access to childcare, health and mental health services, education, childhood adversity and community safety, economic well-being, and built environments. The whole child equity approach will enable leaders to make informed decisions about investments and policies that uplift underserved communities to build the support and infrastructure they need for their families with young children to thrive, starting with programs housed at the State Department of Social Services and the State Department of Education.

(c) The whole child equity approach recognizes that a child's well-being is rooted in the healthy functioning of their family and community. This approach emphasizes the full scope of a child's growth, learning, and development needs, such as emotional well-being, safety, health, and more. The whole child approach examines whether children enter school healthy, learn in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe, have access to adequate nutrition, stable housing, and reliable transportation, are actively engaged in learning and connected to their school community, have access to personalized learning and supports, and are challenged academically to prepare for higher education or a career. This whole child approach is critical to advancing educational equity, as well as racial and economic justice for California's youngest children.

(d) This act identifies the need to holistically support children as they grow throughout the full span of birth through eight years of age. It is in these first years of life that children engage in a continuum of rapid developments across many areas, including physical, cognitive, social and emotional, and linguistic, such as bilingual or multilingual, development. It is a time when young children need supportive, consistent, caring, and playful learning environments that are culturally and linguistically responsive and rooted in child development. It is a critical period that profoundly impacts children's long-term trajectories and is not confined by the boundaries of the early childhood and K–12 systems. Rather, it calls on the state to support children through this continuum across systems.

SEC. 2. Chapter 34 (commencing with Section 10492) is added to Part 1.8 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

CHAPTER 34. Whole Child Community Equity

10492. This chapter shall be known, and may be cited, as the End Racial and Economic Inequities in Childcare in California Initiative.

10492.1. (a) The State Department of Social Services, in consultation with the State Department of Education, and with input from early childhood stakeholders, shall develop the Whole Child Equity Framework (the Framework) and Whole Child Community Equity Screening Tool (the Equity Tool). The Framework shall outline categories that are essential to supporting children 0 to 13 years of age, inclusive, through a whole child approach, including, but not limited to, access to childcare, physical and mental health services, education, childhood adversity and community safety, economic well-being, and built environments. "Built environments" means all of the physical parts of where families live and work such as homes, buildings, streets, open spaces, and infrastructure. The Framework shall guide the development of the Equity Tool that will consist of indicators aligned with each of the Framework's categories. The Equity Tool will examine community-level data for the indicators and classify communities based on higher or lower values for these indicators. This approach will identify highest-need communities across the state with significant disparities across indicators that are essential to supporting the whole child. It will provide the data needed to support the equitable distribution of resources and monitor progress on addressing racial and economic inequities.

(b) With input from early childhood stakeholders, and in consultation with the State Department of Education, the State Department of Social Services shall develop the Equity Tool building on an existing index or set of indicators from existing indices such as the Child Opportunity Index, the California Healthy Places Index, the Human Development Index, the California Strong Start Index, the COVID-19 Statewide Vulnerability and Recovery Index, and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry Social Vulnerability Index. Data available in Brilliant Beginnings, the California Cradle-to-Career Data System, and other relevant data can be utilized as needed. The State Department of Social Services shall also consider indicators that address disparities that impact young children related to state priorities such as racial inequities reflected in learning loss and learning recovery due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

10492.2 (a) (1) The State Department of Social Services, in consultation with the State Department of Education, shall convene a public workgroup to provide recommendations to the State Department of Social Services for the development of the Framework, the Equity Tool, and recommended uses of the Equity Tool for early childhood investments and whole child resources to address racial and economic inequities for California's youngest children.

(2) The workgroup shall include parents and families from historically underserved communities and shall include, but not be limited to, other stakeholders that bring insight to support the whole child, which may include practitioners, experts, researchers, or advocates in childcare and development, physical and mental health, childhood adversity, family support and engagement, community safety, economic well-being, and built environments, representatives from First 5 California and local First 5 commissions, representatives of duly designated collective bargaining agents of family childcare home providers, and representatives from resource and referral agencies, local planning councils, and county offices of education. Workgroup

members shall reflect the racial, ethnic, linguistic, and economic diversities of the State of California and represent the interests of individuals who are Black, Latinx, and Indigenous, people of color, multilingual communities, LGBTQIA+ families, children with disabilities, and families from socioeconomically disadvantaged communities that have been disproportionately marginalized. The workgroup shall provide updates to the Early Childhood Policy Council to ensure that the council is informed on the workgroup's recommendations.

(3) The workgroup is subject to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act (Article 9 (commencing with Section 11120) of Chapter 1 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code).

(b) On or before January 1, 2025, with input from the workgroup, the State Department of Social Services shall finalize and present the Framework, the Equity Tool, and recommended uses of the Equity Tool to the Legislature. The Framework and the Equity Tool shall be used to build on the existing strengths of communities and support them to address their critical needs of young children.

(c) The State Department of Social Services shall publish the tool for public use, including the data and methodology, on the department's internet website.