



SB 944: Preschool and Child Development Data Reporting

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SUMMARY

SB 944 requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to collect, aggregate, and annually report to the legislature data regarding all state-subsidized child development programs, including State Preschool, beginning in January 2010. The bill would allow policymakers to establish a baseline for evaluating the capacity and effectiveness of the current preschool system, including supply and demand, teacher qualifications, and the demographics of current students, in order to guide future improvements and investments in the system.

BACKGROUND

The Legislature, Governor, and public have expressed great interest in expanding and improving the effectiveness of preschool in California, particularly for low-income children. However, before the state can expand or improve upon its current preschool programs, especially with any sizable allocations of public funds, it is essential that policymakers understand the current state of preschool in California.

Unfortunately, existing data are extremely limited. Preschool providers are currently required to collect considerable information about their programs, teachers, and students. However, little of this information is reported to CDE, or is reported in a manner that facilitates compilation and analysis. For example, we do not know how many preschool students have exceptional needs or are Limited English Proficient; the qualifications of the teachers instructing these children; or in which communities families face the longest wait to enroll their children in preschool programs.

SB 944

This bill will provide policymakers with the essential information they need to evaluate, expand, and improve the state's early education delivery system. Specifically the bill requires CDE to collect, aggregate, and report to the legislature information such as:

- The number of children enrolled in state-subsidized programs in each zip code and demographic information about those children
- The number of children enrolled in state-subsidized programs who are Limited English Proficient, have exceptional needs, or are severely disabled
- The qualifications of preschool teachers such as their educational backgrounds and years of experience teaching
- The number of families waiting for preschool services on the Centralized Eligibility List and the length of time they remain on that list
- The number of families needing full-day care in addition to preschool.

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