

Introduced by Senator Liu

February 19, 2014

An act to relating to child care and development.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1123, as introduced, Liu. Child care and development: California Strong Start program.

The Child Care and Development Services Act requires the State Department of Education to be the single state agency responsible for the promotion, development, and provision of care of children in the absence of their parents during the workday or while engaged in activities that require assistance of a third party. The act requires the department to develop prekindergarten learning development guidelines. The act requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop standards for the implementation of quality programs.

This bill would state that it is the Legislature's intent to enact legislation that would establish the California Strong Start program by redesigning the General Child Care Program for infants and toddlers into a comprehensive, evidence-based, locally controlled program, in order to improve the healthy development and school readiness of California's most vulnerable children.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
- 2 following:

1 (a) The first three years of life are a period of dynamic and
2 unparalleled brain development in which children acquire the
3 ability to think, speak, learn, and reason. During these first 36
4 months, children need good health, strong families, and positive
5 early learning experiences to lay the foundation for later school
6 success. Low-income infants and toddlers are at a greater risk for
7 a variety of poorer outcomes and vulnerabilities, such as later
8 school failure, learning disabilities, behavior problems,
9 developmental delay, and health impairments.

10 (b) Existing law requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction
11 to administer child care and development programs, including the
12 General Child Care and Development Program that provides
13 services to eligible low-income children from birth to 13 years of
14 age. For children birth to three years of age, the General Child
15 Care Program funds centers and family child care home networks
16 to provide full-day, full year child care and development services
17 that meet the State Department of Education’s Infant/Toddler
18 Learning and Development Foundations.

19 (c) The federal Early Head Start program serves low-income
20 infants and toddlers with a flexible program model intended to
21 meet the varied needs of families, including child care and
22 development services, family engagement and support, home
23 visitation services, and health services. Research shows that
24 children who participated in Early Head Start had significantly
25 larger vocabularies and scored higher on standardized measures
26 of cognitive development, and that children and parents had more
27 positive interactions, and parents provided more support for
28 learning. Many different home visiting programs have been shown
29 to significantly reduce the occurrence of child maltreatment and
30 abuse, and improve children’s health and school success.

31 SEC. 2. It is the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation
32 that would establish the California Strong Start program by
33 redesigning the General Child Care Program for infants and
34 toddlers into a comprehensive, evidence-based, locally controlled
35 program, in order to improve the healthy development and school
36 readiness of California’s most vulnerable children.

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