



August 10, 2015

Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2206
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 982 (Eggman) State Childcare Eligibility
AAP-CA Position: Support

Dear Senate Appropriations Committee:

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California, representing 5,000 board-certified pediatricians statewide, respectfully supports proposed legislation AB 982 (Eggman). This bill expands the list of entities that can formally identify a child as being eligible for subsidized childcare services to include a local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youths, a Head Start program, or a transitional shelter. The bill also expands the list of conditions that make a family eligible for childcare to include a homeless child.

Homeless children are at higher risk of health issues, food insecurity, emotional trauma, and reduced academic performance. Early experience in childcare can help to identify and address all of these areas, thus supporting a homeless child in achieving higher quality of life and maximizing his or her potential. The following is from the AAP Policy Statement on Providing Care for Children and Adolescents Facing Homelessness and Housing Insecurity (2013), “Homelessness and housing insecurity negatively impact child health and development in many ways. Homeless children have shown higher rates of acute and chronic health problems than low-income children with homes... Children without a stable home are more likely to skip meals, worry about the availability of food, and consume foods with low nutritional quality and high fat content. As a result, they suffer from high rates of malnutrition, stunting, and obesity... Emotional distress, developmental delays, and decreased academic achievement are all more common in this population... In a study in elementary school students, homeless children scored lower on math and reading achievement tests than low-income students living in homes.”

Numerous benefits of quality early education/childcare are identified in this policy statement by the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Early Childhood, Adoption, and Dependent Care (2005), “Research of high-quality, intensive early childhood education programs for low-income children confirm lasting positive effects such as greater school success, higher graduation rates, lower juvenile crime, decreased need for special education services later, and lower adolescent pregnancy rates. Children who attend high-quality early childhood programs demonstrate better math and language skills, better cognition and social skills, better interpersonal relationships, and better behavioral self-regulation than do children in lower-quality care.”

By supporting AB 982 (Eggman), the state would be able to save time and resources by allowing professionals who work with homeless families to identify those families as meeting eligibility requirements for state or federally

subsidized childcare. Moreover, a homeless child's conditions and needs identified while in childcare can lead to preventive interventions, which are almost always far less costly to the state than the cost of poor outcomes associated with long- standing behavioral, health and other issues.

California pediatricians urge your AYE vote on AB 982 (Eggman). Thank you for your leadership and public service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kris E. Calvin" followed by a horizontal flourish and a vertical line.

Kris Calvin
Chief Executive Officer
American Academy of Pediatrics, California