

February 20, 2019

Assembly Member Sydney Kamlager-Dove
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0054

**RE: AB-189 (Kamlager-Dover) Child abuse or neglect: mandated reporters
AAP-CA Position: Support**

Dear Assembly Member Kamlager-Dover:


The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 5,000 California pediatricians strongly supports your bill AB 189 (Kamlager-Dove) to add qualified autism service providers, professionals, and paraprofessionals to the list of mandated reporters of child abuse in California.

Behavioral therapists who implement therapy such as Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) often have direct insight into a child's life in multiple settings, including the school and home, offering the opportunity to witness child neglect and abuse. Children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), particularly those with severe receptive and expressive communication disorders and intellectual disability, are frequently unable to advocate for themselves. If these children are being physically and/or verbally abused and neglected, they need a trusted, responsible individual who has the capacity to advocate for their safety. By adding autism service providers and paraprofessionals to the list of mandated reporters, more children will potentially be recognized and subsequently protected from continued maltreatment.

Children with ASD are more than twice as likely to be physically abused in comparison to typically developing children. According to one study that included caregiver reports, 18% of children with ASD had been physically abused. We must promote awareness and enhance reporting non-accidental trauma. AB 189 (Kamlager-Dove) would appropriately add qualified autism service providers, professionals, and paraprofessionals to the list of mandated reporters of child abuse in California and help protect these children who are two times more likely to suffer abuse.

Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and well-being of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,



Kris Calvin
Chief Executive Officer
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP-CA Leadership; Lobbyist Lydia Bourne; Chloe Kupelian, MD Senior Policy Analyst