



Media Contact:

Greg Bortkiewicz
Communications & Advocacy Manager
510-753-0768
gbortkiewicz@kidango.org
www.kidango.org

California Bill Combatting Preschool Expulsions Signed Into Law

Law expands access to early mental health consultation services for young children in child care and preschool

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (Oct. 1, 2018) – California Gov. Jerry Brown, in a ground-breaking step to reduce preschool expulsions, today signed into state law a measure increasing access to early childhood mental health consultation services for young children in preschool and child care.

[Assembly Bill 2698](#) was authored by [Assemblywoman Blanca Rubio](#) (D-Baldwin Park) and sponsored by [Kidango](#), a Bay Area nonprofit that provides early learning and behavioral health services to children. It aims to reduce preschool expulsions by allowing preschool and child care programs to use their state contract funds for mental health consultation services. By working with expert childhood consultants, preschool and child care workers can gain the tools and training to better address difficult childhood behaviors and develop positive learning environments.

“As a former teacher, I believe that improving the services and tools to support early childhood education should be a top priority,” Assemblywoman Rubio said.

The new law builds on a [California statute enacted in 2017](#) that bars state-subsidized preschool programs from expelling children unless an exhaustive process aimed at supporting the child and family is followed first.

“California is claiming its place as the national leader for young children,” said Walter Gilliam, professor of child psychiatry and psychology at the Yale University Child Study Center and one of the nation’s leading experts in early childhood education. “This law is a model for mobilizing the resources needed to create a responsive system for supporting early educators as they in turn support young children and their families.”

“After we successfully fought for strict guidelines to reduce preschool expulsions we knew we had to do more. We don’t want to just prevent preschool expulsions; we want to remove the need for them,” said Scott Moore, CEO of Kidango. “This law goes beyond reducing expulsions by helping child caregivers address the underlying behavior challenges that lead to expulsions.”

Preschool and child care programs with state funding in California receive a set amount of funds per child per day. AB 2698 increases the reimbursement for children in centers that receive early childhood mental health consultation services by 5 percent, a percentage similar to that of other programs that work with children facing challenging circumstances. The reimbursement factor applies to early childhood mental health consultation services provided to children in the California State Preschool Program; children up to 3-years-old in general child care programs, and children up to 5-years-old served in a home child care setting funded by a general child care program.

Nationally, children in preschool are expelled at more than [three times](#) the rate of students in grades K-12.

“Expulsion works against everything that is best practice for children, families and child care programs,” Sarah Neville-Morgan, director of the Early Education and Support Division at the California Department of Education, said. “This law creates the support system necessary to keep young children in preschool and child care facilities.”

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About Kidango

Kidango is a Bay Area nonprofit committed to helping children reach their full potential by providing high quality early learning services to the children who need it most. At each of our 50+ child care centers, our dedicated staff ensure all children are given the love, nutrition, and learning opportunities needed to develop the early language, math, and social-emotional skills that build the foundation for later success in school and in life. We are proud to support Bay Area families, and passionately committed to closing the school readiness gap before it becomes the school achievement gap. For more information, visit www.kidango.org.