

January 22, 2026

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHILD CARE BULLETIN (CCB) NO. 26-02

The purpose of this Child Care Bulletin (CCB) is to provide guidance to counties and child care and development contractors regarding changes enacted in Senate Bill (SB) 792 (Chapter 234, Statutes of 2025) regarding new excused absence categories, state median income thresholds, and family fee exemptions.



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GOVERNOR

January 22, 2026

CHILD CARE BULLETIN (CCB) NO. 26-02

GUIDANCE TYPE: DIRECTIVE

TO: ALL CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT CONTRACTORS

SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTATION OF SENATE BILL (SB) 792

APPLICABLE PROGRAMS: CALIFORNIA ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT PROGRAMS (CAPP); MIGRANT ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT PROGRAMS (CMAP); GENERAL CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS; (CCTR); FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME EDUCATION NETWORKS (CFCC); MIGRANT CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS (CMIG); CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (CHAN); CALIFORNIA WORK OPPORTUNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO KIDS (CALWORKS) TWO (C2AP), AND THREE (C3AP)

REFERENCE: [SENATE BILL \(SB\) 792 \(CHAPTER 234, STATUTES OF 2025\), WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE \(WIC\) SECTION 10213.5, WIC SECTION 10272, WIC SECTION 10291, TITLE 5 OF THE CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS \(5CCR\) SECTION 18066.5, 5 CCR SECTION 18092, 5 CCR SECTION 18119, 5 CCR SECTION 18121, 5 CCR SECTION 18122](#)

Purpose

The purpose of this Child Care Bulletin (CCB) is to provide guidance to counties and child care and development contractors regarding changes enacted in [Senate Bill \(SB\) 792 \(Chapter 234, Statutes of 2025\)](#), including a new definition of “Attendance” to expand the categories of excused absences, technical revision to policies related to

state median income (SMI), and extension of the family fee exemptions for vulnerable populations.

Background

On October 1, 2025, the Governor signed [SB 792](#), which included amendments to three separate sections in Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) effective January 1, 2026. The first amendment updated the definition of “attendance” for purposes of reimbursement, found in [WIC Section 10213.5](#), to include medical and education appointments as an excused absence category. It also ensured that, for the purposes of reimbursement, a child care and development contractor can claim attendance for days that the contractor or provider is required to hold a space for a child during the period that a family is assumed to have “abandoned care” or is engaging in the appeal process based on disenrollment for abandoning care.

[SB 792](#) also revised income eligibility threshold for CalWORKs Stage 3 child care services in [WIC 10272](#) from 70% to 85% of the state median income (SMI), adjusted for family size. Under current law [WIC 10272](#) states a threshold of 70% and the statute was not amended to reflect the change in the SMI threshold from 70% to 85%, enacted by [AB 2626](#) (Chapter 945, Statutes of 2018). This policy change is technical revision to update WIC 10272 to align with all other child care and development programs income eligibility thresholds.

Finally, [SB 792](#) amended [WIC section 10291](#) to extend the exemption period for family fees up to 24 months for neglected or abused children who are recipients of child protective services, or children who have been identified as being abused, neglected, or exploited, or are at risk of being neglected, abused, or exploited upon written referral from a legal, medical, or social services agency. Current law only allows this exemption for 12 months, which has caused a burden to families when they need to secure a referral mid eligibility period or begin to pay their family fee.

Guidance

Policy #1 – Related to Attendance

Beginning January 1, 2026, when tracking attendance, medical and educational appointments shall now be counted as an excused absence. Examples of medical and educational appointments include: a well-child visit, medical follow-up appointments, dental appointments, an Individualized Education Program (IEP), an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting, educational screenings or assessments, or student study/success team (SST) meetings. According to Title 5 of the [California Code of Regulations \(5 CCR\) Section 18066](#), direct services contractors must update their policies and inform families of these changes. Additionally, beginning January 1, 2026, if a family has abandoned care, the days in which a child is absent are to be considered

excused absences, as well as the days in which the family is engaging in the appeal process pursuant to 5 CCR Sections [18119](#), [18121](#), and [18122\(b\)](#).

Note: Abandonment of Care policies can be referenced at [5 CCR Section 18066.5](#)

Policy #2 – Related to State Median Income

Beginning January 1, 2026, [WIC 10272](#) was updated to change the maximum income threshold for CalWORKs Stage 3 child care from 70% to 85%. This change will align Stage 3 with all other child care and development programs.

Policy #3 – Related to Family Fee Exemptions

Beginning January 1, 2026, contractors may exempt family fees for children who are recipients of child protective services, or children who are at risk of being neglected or abused, upon written referral from a legal, medical, or social services agency for up to 24 months.

Note: In accordance with [5 CCR 18092](#), the referral must be dated with six (6) months of the date the application for services is signed.

This policy change applies to the following child care and development contractors:

- General Child Care and Development (CCTR)
- Migrant Child Care and Development (CMIG)
- Family Child Care Home Education Networks (CFCC)
- California Alternative Payment Program (CAPP)
- Migrant Alternative Payment Program (CMAP)
- California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Stage 2 (C2AP)
- California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids Stage 3 (C3AP)

If you are a contractor and have any questions regarding the information in this letter, contact your assigned [Program Quality and Improvement Branch Consultant](#).

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By

LUPE JAIME-MILEHAM, EdD
Deputy Director
Child Care and Development Division