

State bill would require nutrition class for childcare providers

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New childcare providers in California would have to take a nutrition class to better serve their clients under a bill introduced today in the Assembly.

AB 290 would require the providers to take one hour of early childhood nutrition as a part of the licensing process.

"With nearly 25 percent of preschool-aged children overweight or obese, thousands of California's youngest residents face a lifetime of health challenges," said Assemblyman Luis Alejo, D-Salinas, author of the bill, in a news release.

"California's licensing laws should prioritize nutrition training for child care providers as a reasonable and necessary means of supporting good nutrition habits. This bill will require licensed child care providers to learn about the importance of healthy meals and snacks, cost-effective strategies, and age-appropriate meal patterns and serving sizes."

Alejo said AB 290 was introduced to address the lack of provider nutrition training requirements. Unlike many other states, California has not yet adjusted childcare licensing laws to reflect the urgent need for healthy nutrition in childcare settings, he said. A growing body of research shows that training for childcare providers can improve the quality of early childhood programs.

"California Food Policy Advocates is excited to continue working with Assemblymember Alejo on the important issues of early childhood obesity and nutrition," says Elyse Homel Vitale, of California Food Policy Advocates, sponsors of the bill.

"We know through research that early childhood is when taste preferences and eating habits are formed. Through increased nutrition education for early childhood educators, AB 290 supports opportunities for providers to serve healthy foods at a lower cost," Vitale said.

This bill is eligible to be heard after March 11 in committee.