



**MISSION:  
READINESS**  
COUNCIL FOR A STRONG AMERICA

CALIFORNIA

Mission: Readiness is comprised of retired admirals, generals, and other top military leaders interested in strengthening national security by ensuring youth are healthy, fit, and academically prepared to serve their nation in any way they choose.

## 2021-2022 Mission: Readiness Budget and Legislative Policy Agenda

### Children's Health & Nutrition

Mission: Readiness members are committed to bolstering child health and nutrition through expansion of food assistance programs and increased allocations meant to strengthen school-meal programs. The significant increases of food insecurity propelled by the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with increased rates of obesity among children and young adults in California in recent years, also impel our Mission: Readiness members to ensure that our next generation has the tools and resources they need to lead healthy and productive lives.

#### Budget Investments:

Support a one-time, \$1 million investment for the California Department of Social Services to design and integrate a user-centered, simplified CalFresh application to facilitate CalFresh enrollment among Californians most vulnerable to hunger.

#### State Legislation:

##### **SB 20 (Dodd) - CalFresh Nutrition Access**

- *What the bill does:* This bill would expand access to CalFresh benefits for community college students by requiring the Student Aid Commission to provide written notice to community college students who may be eligible. CalFresh, known federally as SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, establishes student eligibility based on exemptions permitted by federal regulations. SB 20 also aims to improve access to CalFresh benefits for a subset of community college students who are fee waiver recipients and whose household income is below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

##### **SB 364 (Skinner) - School Meals for All Act**

- *What the bill does:* This bill, known as the Free School Meals for All Act of 2021, would increase food security for children by requiring all eligible public schools to participate in a specified federal free and reduced-price meal program. It would also require the State Department of Education to assist local educational agencies in this effort. SB 364 would make California the first state in the nation to extend the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program indefinitely, ensuring that children have access to food during holiday breaks or emergencies.

## Children's Health & Nutrition (continued)

### **SB 107 (Wiener) - SNAP Elderly Access & Telephonic Signature Access**

- ***What the bill does:*** This bill would simplify the CalFresh application for older adults and people with disabilities and would also simplify the enrollment process for all CalFresh recipients by allowing telephone approval, known as a telephonic signature, in place of a written signature.
  - ***Why these bills matter (SB 20, SB 364, and SB 107):*** Food insecurity and lack of access to nutritious foods has caused an urgent threat in a growing malnutrition and obesity crisis. In addition, children and youth who experience ongoing food insecurity have a harder time learning and more issues with social and emotional interactions due to developmental impacts and lower energy. Today, a third of young adults, ages 17-24, could not qualify for military services due to excess weight, caused by a lack of access to ample education, nutrition, or physical activity. Ensuring students and their families have access to ample nutrition grants them the tools and resources they need to lead healthy, fulfilling, and productive lives.
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## Children's Mental Health

Mental health consultations and programs for children are critical at addressing existing behavior problems, preventing further difficulties, and building a child's social-emotional skills. These consultations and programs can provide benefits to both children and early education staff by reducing problems with behavior, fewer expulsions, an improved learning environment for classes, as well as reduced stress, increased teaching skills, and increased involvement with parents.

### **State Legislation:**

#### **AB 563 (Berman) - School-Based Health Programs**

- ***What the bill does:*** This bill would establish an Office of School-Based Health Programs within the California Department of Education to ensure a coordinated approach to assist schools in meeting the increased demand for student health and mental health services while drawing down federal reimbursement.

#### **AB 586 (O'Donnell) - School Health Demonstration Project**

- ***What the bill does:*** This bill would establish the School Health Demonstration Project, within the State Department of Health Care Services, to expand comprehensive health and mental health services to public school pupils by providing training and support services to selected local educational agencies.
- ***Why these bills matter (AB 563 and AB 586):*** A lack of routine health care can cause adverse effects such as missed diagnosis of cognitive or developmental issues and the worsening of existing mental health issues over time, and even vaccine-preventable disease. These can transcend into the classroom, and make it harder for a child to focus or stay in good academic standing, which, in turn, may affect school performance, graduation rates, and future success.

## **Early Childhood Care & Education**

Access to high-quality early care and education can help underserved children succeed in school, become healthy and fit adults, and open the doors to college, careers, and military service, if they

### **Budget Investments:**

Mission Readiness supports the California ECE Coalition's state budget requests that include increasing provider reimbursement rates, increased investments in subsidized child care, waiving copayments or fees for low-income families in childcare, and investing in technology.

### **State Legislation:**

#### **AB 92 (Reyes) - Preschool & Development Services: Family Fees**

- **What the bill does:** This bill would create an equitable sliding scale for child care family fees that will alleviate the burden on working families struggling to pay for child care and early childhood education services.
- **Why it matters:** A [2019 study by ReadyNation](#) revealed that the lack of reliable child care for working parents of young children, up to age 3, could come to \$6.8 to \$9.1 billion in annual costs in lost earnings, productivity, and revenue for California.

#### **AB 865 (Quirk-Silva) - Child Care Services Alternative Payment Programs**

- **What the bill does:** This bill would allow for family child care providers and centers to be reimbursed based on a family's maximum certified hours of need and not based on attendance. It would also require the State to make direct deposits to contractors, and greater use of electronic communications to best support the needs of families.
- **Why it matters:** The child care industry is a vital backbone to California's future economy. Since the pandemic, an estimated 5,500 family child care homes and 9,200 childcare centers have closed in California. This bill would lessen the financial hardships imposed on California's family child care providers by allowing them to more accurately plan and budget to stay open for business.

#### **SB 50 (Limón) - Strengthening the 0-5 ECE System**

- **What the bill does:** This bill would strengthen and streamline the early learning and care system by, among other things, opening the State Preschool Program (CSPP) to serve children 0-5, expand eligibility for subsidized child care & preschool to more families, and allow unhoused families and families with variable work schedules to better access child care.
- **Why it matters:** Quality early learning experiences during the earliest years help set children on a path to thrive in school and life while supporting working parents.

#### **SB 246 (Leyva) - Early Childhood Education: Reimbursement Rates**

- **What the bill does:** This bill would establish a single regionalized state reimbursement rate system—The Child Care Stabilization Formula—for child care, preschool, and early learning services.
- **Why it matters:** California's current bifurcated rate system and low reimbursement rates make it harder to fund and deliver high-quality child care. A single state reimbursement rate system would increase teacher compensation, move toward adequately funding early child care programs, and contribute to increasing high-quality care.