



Funding for Vulnerable Children in Jeopardy

California's Emergency Child Care (Bridge Program) faces budget cuts

When a parent is no longer able to care for their child, a family member may step in to provide temporary foster care. This unexpected and sudden responsibility can be difficult for people who do not have the means or ability to secure child care for the foster child. California's Emergency Child Care BRIDGE program has provided funding for child care placement for these families, securing care for thousands of foster children. That funding is now in jeopardy due to a proposed 40% funding cut in the state budget.

FAST FACTS

- About 40% of caregivers surveyed said they likely would not have accepted the child without access to the BRIDGE program.
- State data from July 2023 showed 1,905 families were receiving child care vouchers for 2,605 children through BRIDGE.
- About 96% of recipients reported reduced stress levels thanks to BRIDGE child care support.
- More than 76% reported reduced economic stress and 70% reported reduced emotional stress.
- Child care navigators supported 829 families in July 2023. Trauma Informed Care training for 546 providers in July 2023.

A San Bernardino woman who is fostering her four nieces and nephews credited the BRIDGE program for keeping the children with family.

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“Our lives changed dramatically. Taking on four kids was a big life changer. One child is autistic, so I’m still learning every day on how to work with him,” said Jacqueline Lopez. “Without child care, it would be really hard to pay for daycare and to work and have peace of mind. I can’t quit my job, so this helps tremendously. The BRIDGE program is the one that helped me through it all.”

Child Care Navigator Zoe Zelaya said the BRIDGE program is a critical service for children and caregivers.



“Many of these children have been taken away from their parents due to neglect, abuse, drug use, or abandonment. The caregiver is a family member who really wants the children to stay with relatives. But they need child care right now, they can’t wait or they will either lose their jobs or have to give up the kids,” said Zelaya. “We can help them secure child care within 24 hours. They are so relieved, you can hear the emotion in their voice, they are just so happy we helped them.”

The BRIDGE program supports children in the foster care system birth through age 12, and youth with exceptional needs up to age 21. It provides participants with child care vouchers, Trauma Informed Coaching to address the trauma experienced by the child, and support from a child care navigator.

California’s most vulnerable children depend on this program for stability and their overall well-being.



Protect critical services for foster children!

For more information, visit ccrcca.org

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