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DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
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February 16, 1987

Law and Legislative Committee
Sacramento, California

Honorable Members in Session:

SUBJECT: Support of SB 1779 - Child Care

SUMMARY

State Senate Bill 1779 is designed to assist local governments in providing child care facilities for infants by reducing the amount of outside square footage required for each infant in a child care center, from the currently required 75 square feet to the proposed 50 square feet per infant.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Senator Morgan has introduced SB 1779 (Exhibit A), designed to assist local governments in providing child care facilities. It would do the following:

1. Require that 50 square feet of outside play area be available for each infant in the child care center (an infant is a child below the age of 2 years); and
2. Require that this 50 square feet shall include play areas only, and non-play areas shall be excluded.

Currently, there is a high unmet demand for infant care in Sacramento. Approximately 47% of the child care requests which are received by Child Action, Inc., a resource and referral agency serving the Sacramento region, are requests for infant care. This is especially true in areas of high employment density, for often parents want their infants in facilities close to them. Areas of high employment density often have adequate inside space for a child care center, but limited space for outside play areas. This is especially true in our downtown area.

In addition to the above unmet needs, current regulations require more square footage for infants and toddlers (children under 2) than they require for pre-school children (ages 2-5). This does not seem reasonable. Child care facilities for infants and toddlers are required to have a total of 125 sq. ft. per child (50 sq. ft. inside and 75 sq. ft. outside per child), in contrast to facilities for pre-school children which are required to have a total of 110 sq. ft. (35 sq. ft. inside and 75 sq. ft. outside). It seems reasonable to require more square footage for pre-schoolers who are much more physically active and less for infants and toddlers.

Finally, because the teacher/child ratio is one adult for every four infants, infant care is much more expensive than pre-school care where the ratio is 1:12. If such a large outside play area is also required for infants and toddlers, the cost of infant care will be less affordable.

Senator Morgan's office has requested a resolution of support from City Council.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Law and Legislative Committee support Senate Bill 1779 and refer this report to full City Council for action.

Respectfully submitted,



ROBERT P. THOMAS, Director
Parks and Community Services

RPT:js

February 25, 1988
All Districts

SENATE BILL**No. 1779****Introduced by Senator Morgan****January 15, 1988**

An act to add Section 1597.01 to the Health and Safety Code, relating to minors.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1779, as introduced, Morgan. Day care centers.

Existing law requires the State Department of Social Services to license day care centers, in accordance with regulations adopted by the department.

Existing regulations require that a day care center have at least 75 square feet of outdoor activity space per child, based upon the licensed capacity of the day care center. Certain outdoor areas are not included for purposes of making this determination.

This bill would, with respect to infants, as defined, reduce the amount of required outdoor activity space to 50 square feet per infant. It would specify that the bill would not apply to outdoor areas designated by the department to be excluded in determining whether an applicant or licensee has sufficient outdoor activity space.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 1597.01 is added to the Health
- 2 and Safety Code, to read:
- 3 1597.01. (a) Except as provided in subdivision (b), a
- 4 day care center shall have at least 50 square feet per
- 5 infant of outdoor activity space, based on the total
- 6 licensed capacity for the day care center. "Infant," as
- 7 used in this section, means a child under two years of age.

- 1 (b) This section shall not apply to any areas designated
- 2 by the department to be excluded in determining
- 3 whether an applicant or licensee has sufficient outdoor
- 4 activity space.

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