

# AB 842 (Limón)

## Hunger-Free Preschool and Child Care



“**Help us help our children build a strong foundation.**

Diana Quiroga  
Diana's Daycare

### The Opportunity

Wherever a child attends school, they need access to the basic resources that support their success, including nutritious meals. Recognizing this, California passed a law in 1975 to protect children from hunger by guaranteeing that all eligible, low-income K-12th grade public school students would have access to at least one free or low-cost meal each school day. That same year, the legislature also established state supplemental meal funding to help school districts meet this requirement. Today, most preschool and child care providers are excluded from the funding and low-income children in public preschool and subsidized child care remain the only public school students not guaranteed access to a nutritious, affordable meal.

### The Ask

- 1.) Adequately compensate child care providers for serving healthy meals to low-income children:**  
Authorize all of child care to participate in California's state meal program, a program currently only available to public schools which supplements the federal reimbursement for every breakfast and lunch served to eligible, low-income children.
- 2.) Guarantee access to a nutritious, free or low-cost meal each day for our youngest public school students:**  
Provide all low-income children attending preschool or child care at a school district, charter school, county office of education, or state preschool the same protection against hunger as K-12th grade students.

### Why Now

Young children need food to grow, to develop, and to be healthy. But nearly one quarter of California's families can't afford to meet their basic needs. As the state expands access to preschool and child care, we need to make sure the basic needs of low-income families are front and center: whether in preschool or child care, low-income children need access to healthy meals. The state can help build the capacity of our early care and education system to prevent hunger, break the cycle of poverty, and help close the achievement gap by supporting policies and investments that increase access to healthy meals for our youngest learners.