

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



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California Chapter 2 - Kern | Los Angeles | Riverside | San Bernardino
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The Honorable Anthony J. Portantino
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Re: SB 1016 (Portantino) Special Education: Eligibility: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder – SUPPORT

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) California Chapter 2, which represents over 1,000 pediatricians, is in full support of SB 1016 (Portantino), which would require that Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) be included under the “other health impairment” definition for Individual Education Plans to expand eligibility for pupils to receive special education and related services.

FASD is an overarching phrase for a neurodevelopmental disability caused by prenatal alcohol exposure. Prenatal alcohol exposure can result in a spectrum of lifelong manifestations, varying from mild to severe and encompassing a variety of cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and adaptive functioning defects. According to the CDC, FASD is more common than Autism, affecting 2-5% of every first-grade child in the US. Of the 6 million children in California schools, as many as 300,000 may have FASD. Despite the prevalence and life-long impacts of FASD, it is not a recognizable category for special education and is not named as a disorder under the “other health impaired” category by the California Department of Education. As such, students with the most prevalent developmental disability in the US are being underserved, with missed opportunities to intervene and promote life-long changes.

SB 1016 is an imperative step to ensure that California children with FASD receive needed special education and related services.

Sincerely,

Karinne Van Groningen, MD, MPH
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