

Calif. lawmaker wants free public preschool

By Sharon Bernstein, Reuters

SACRAMENTO – A top California lawmaker on Tuesday is expected to unveil a proposal to fund free public preschool for all children in the most populous state.

The plan by Senate Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento, to offer a pre-kindergarten program to 4-year-olds comes as he and other Democratic legislators try to push Gov. Jerry Brown to increase spending on social services, including education, in next year's budget.

The proposal is expected to involve expanding an existing program aimed at children who turn 5 years old too late in the year to attend regular kindergarten. Details such as the cost of the plan would be released today.

A spokesman for Brown on Monday said the governor, who is set to release his budget on Friday, has no comment on the preschool plan.

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