

March 1, 2018

Amanda Gress, Director of Government Relations
Kansas Action for Children
Verbal Neutral Testimony Regarding Senate Bill 428
Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

Chair Schmidt and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide neutral testimony regarding this proposal to change licensure requirements for child care facilities operating in public recreation centers or schools. Kansas Action for Children's vision is to make Kansas the best state to raise a child and to be a child, and our organization shapes health, education, and economic policies that improve the lives of Kansas children and families. We support Kansas' strong legacy of establishing health and safety standards that increase the safety and quality of care for all Kansas children.

Child care licensing standards ensure children are cared for in safe settings. Kansas has a long-standing commitment to safe child care, including the passage of Lexie's Law legislation in 2010. Last year Kansas strengthened child care background checks to further improve the safety of children in child care. Standards that ensure children are in safe physical spaces free from hazards are an essential component of our health and safety standards.

We appreciate that the provisions of Senate Bill 428 are narrowly tailored. **We encourage lawmakers to ensure that every proposed change to child care standards is similarly crafted to maximize the health and safety protections for Kansas children.** As lawmakers consider the costs associated with meeting appropriate child care standards, we would encourage consideration of opportunities for investments in the child care system. For example, the state could leverage funding from the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant to support child care providers seeking to improve the quality of their programs, or it could expand access to child care assistance so that Kansas families can afford higher-quality child care.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and we look forward to serving as a resource in this area. Please do not hesitate to contact me (amanda@kac.org) if we can answer any questions.

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