



March 16, 2020

Testimony of Callie Peace
Kansas Parents as Teachers Association
Proponent.

Chairperson Senator Carolyn McGinn and members of Senate Ways and Means,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in favor of Senate Bill 485. Kansas Parents as Teachers Association provides a statewide commitment to giving each Kansas child the best possible start in life. We are in favor of allowing parents to use parent education classes as part of their work requirement for TANF. Parent education classes fit into the secondary category as an option for a portion of the work requirement to receive TANF benefits. We are asking for consideration to be made for an extension to the age group. We propose that the age range be extended and include education from the prenatal period to age five.

Early childhood education for parents that includes a focus on family well-being, parent-child interaction and development centered parenting supports the success of parents in the workplace. Early childhood home visitation has also been shown to improve physical and mental health, including impacts on obesity, smoking, markers for diabetes, heart disease, and oral health. Parent education has shown a multitude of benefits in the professional world for adults, as well as in the classroom for children. By allowing parents to count parent education as their work requirement it will incentivize families to participate in Parents as Teachers, an evidence-based model with over 30 years of proven outcomes that support families in Kansas.

Parents often feel undue stress outside of the workplace when they do not have the appropriate tools to provide adequate child care that supports the development of their children. Today's workforce is parenting the future workforce, so how things are handled in the workforce now matter to ensure that our future workforce grows up to be healthy employees and citizens. Providing parents with the tools to handle parenting issues can help to reduce stress and worry, as well as allow parents to be more productive members of the Kansas economy.

In partnership with DCF and the Family First Prevention Services Act, Kansas Parents as Teachers Association is working with families who have children at risk for entering foster care. We look forward to continuing to work with DCF to engage with and support families in reaching their optimal outcomes. Adding the ability for parents to utilize Parents as Teachers as part of their work requirement for TANF will help support our partnership with DCF with our shared goal of keeping families together and supported.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Callie Peace'.

Callie Peace, Executive Director
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