



February 4, 2020

Adrienne Olejnik, Vice President  
Kansas Action for Children  
Written testimony in support of Senate Bill 312  
Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

Chairperson Suellentrop and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support for imposing a civil fine for operating a child care facility without a license. Kansas Action for Children is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization. Our vision is to make Kansas the best state to raise -- and be -- a child, and our organization shapes health, education, and economic policies that improve the lives of Kansas children and families.

Science tells us that stable, consistently nurturing experiences and relationships early in life shape the architecture of the developing brain. Because the bulk of future development is based on the strength of early foundations, we must ensure that every Kansas child has the opportunity for those positive experiences. Safe and nurturing child care spaces are essential to a healthy start in life.

Working parents want their children to be taken care of in a safe environment. About 145,000 children under age 6 in Kansas have working parents. This means that every week, these children could need some type of child care so that their parents can go to work. Broadening the authority of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) to assess a fine when individuals do not have a child care license will likely deter unlicensed care, increasing safety for children in out of home care. Unlicensed care cannot be monitored in the same ways as licensed care. KDHE licensure includes 1) background checks to ensure providers do not have prior behavior that could put children at risk; 2) basic health and safety training; and 3) annual health and safety inspections.

Child care regulation works to mitigate the risk of harm to children, helping parents go to work knowing that their children are in safe environments. While unlicensed care is already unlawful, with the exception of cases of "inconsequential care," this additional measure hopes to serve as another deterrent to such operators and perhaps an encouragement to acquire licensure. We urge you to consider passing SB 312. Thank you for the opportunity to voice our support to this bill, and please do not hesitate to contact me at [adrienne@kac.org](mailto:adrienne@kac.org) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adrienne Olejnik", written over a white background.

Adrienne Olejnik  
Vice President  
[adrienne@kac.org](mailto:adrienne@kac.org)  
785-232-0550