



Testimony to the Committee on Children and Seniors
February 22, 2021

Chairwoman Concannon and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2371. My name is Kelly Davydov, and I serve as Executive Director for Child Care Aware of Kansas, a network of child care resource and referral agencies working to ensure that all young children and their families have access to high quality early care and education.

The measures outlined in HB 2371 would positively impact young children and their families by easing access to child care subsidies and alleviating child and family food insecurity. According to the All In For Kansas Kids Needs Assessment completed in January, 2020, one in five Kansas children lives in a family experiencing poverty (at or below 100% of the federal poverty level). Yet only an estimated 12% of those children are being reached by the Kansas child care subsidy program. That number is even lower when we consider all the families that are eligible for child care subsidy (those at or below 185% of the federal poverty level).

HB 2371 removes some of the barriers young children and their families face when trying to access child care subsidies by 1) eliminating requirements related to child support recovery, and 2) supporting parents seeking educational advancement by removing burdensome work requirements. Further, this bill wisely supports access to food assistance (SNAP) for young children and families by removing child support recovery requirements, demonstrating a multi-generational approach to advancing economic self-sufficiency.

Recent research confirms the critical role that parents play in their children's healthy development - that a child's success is intimately tied to his or her parents' capacity to overcome obstacles (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013). Human service systems across the country are using this knowledge to inform the development of multi-generational approaches - supporting parents to improve family stability and self-sufficiency, while providing their children high quality early care and education.

We continuously hear from families and child care providers about their daily struggles to make ends meet while ensuring young children have what they need to grow up safe, healthy, and ready to succeed in school. While we have much work to do to reduce barriers to critical supports like food assistance and child care subsidies for Kansas' youngest citizens and their families, this bill is a solid step in the right direction, and has our whole-hearted support.

Thank you,

Kelly Davydov