



March 13, 2023

Chairperson Averkamp and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2179. Child Care Aware of Kansas is a network of child care resource and referral agencies working to ensure that all young children and their families have access to affordable, high-quality early care and education.

The measures outlined in House Bill 2179 would positively impact young children and their families by easing access to child care subsidies. 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 250% of the federal poverty level).

Requiring parents to cooperate with child support enforcement, while intended to offset costs to the State of Kansas, results in the unintended consequences of deterring families from participating in child care subsidy. Child care subsidy enables families to work and go to school while their young children are cared for in high-quality, licensed early care and education.

Child Care Aware of Kansas fully supports HB 2179 and the removal of requirements related to child support enforcement as a means of improving access to affordable, high-quality early care and education. This bill embodies best practices by adopting a multi-generational approach to advancing economic self-sufficiency and family well-being.

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 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.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly Davydov