



Written Testimony in Support of HB2294

February 27, 2025

Chair Tarwater, Vice Chair Turk, Ranking Minority Member Sawyer Clayton, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB2294, which will establish the Kansas Office of Early Childhood within the Executive Branch. The Kansas Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics represents more than 400 primary care pediatricians, pediatric subspecialists, pediatric surgery subspecialists, and pediatric residents. As pediatricians, we prioritize ensuring Kansas children grow up safe, healthy, and strong. HB2294 presents a commonsense solution that streamlines government functions, eliminates bureaucratic inefficiencies, and strengthens support for working families. This legislation transfers most childcare programs to the Kansas Office of Early Childhood, ensuring that families can navigate essential services more efficiently and that taxpayer dollars are used wisely.

A strong start in life lays the groundwork for future success. The early years of a child's life are a time of extraordinary development—physically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially. These formative experiences shape a lifetime of learning, health, and well-being. From a pediatrician's standpoint, high-quality early childhood education is vital to long-term health and success. These programs create an enriching environment that introduces children to new sensory experiences, fosters language development and expands vocabulary. They also support emotional regulation, nurture empathy, and promote healthy social interactions. Additionally, they strengthen cognitive abilities such as memory, attention, and problem-solving. Research consistently demonstrates that children who engage in structured early education programs achieve better academic results, experience lower rates of chronic illness, and develop greater emotional resilience.

By investing in a well-structured early childhood system, Kansas will:

- Reduce long-term dependency on government assistance by equipping children with the skills necessary for success in school and beyond.
- Strengthen Kansas families by ensuring parents can find and afford high-quality childcare, allowing them to work and contribute to the economy.
- Build a stronger workforce by preparing children to be productive, responsible members of society.



Why is HB2294 needed? Kansas families currently navigate a confusing system where early childhood programs are housed across multiple agencies (KDHE, DCF, and the Children's Cabinet). This inefficiency creates unnecessary red tape, making it harder for parents to access services and for providers to deliver high-quality care. HB2294 consolidates these programs and reduces redundancies. Having one agency providing a single point of contact for parents and providers increases accessibility. Additionally, it increases accountability with one office overseeing all early childhood programs.

HB2294 does not create new programs or expand government oversight. This bill represents a fiscally responsible approach that benefits Kansas families and strengthens the economy by streamlining services while maintaining safeguards that ensure quality care and parental choice. Supporting HB2294 is supporting Kansas children by giving them what they need for a strong start.

We urge Committee members to support HB2294 to build a stronger Kansas for future generations. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions, and KAAP remains your resource.

Respectfully submitted,
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Chair, Public Policy Committee
Kansas Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics