

627 SW Topeka Blvd | Topeka, KS 66603



**Proponent Testimony on HB 2320
House K-12 Education Budget Committee
February 13, 2025**

Chair Goetz, Vice Chair Hill, Ranking Member Winn, and Members of the Committee, my name is Kristalle Hedrick, CEO of the Children's Alliance of Kansas. The Alliance is an association of 18 private, non-profit child welfare agencies that collectively provide a full array of services for children and families in child abuse and neglect prevention, family preservation, foster care, adoption, independent living, and parent, youth, and child skill-building, mental health, and substance use treatment. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2320.

HB 2320 would grant youth experiencing foster care the opportunity to be enrolled in any school district, regardless of their placement status or physical location. The bill will also require timely transfer of records between school districts when enrollment changes are occurring.

In SFY 2024:

- The average number of children experiencing foster care on the last day of the month was 5,931.¹
- The average length of stay (time spent in foster care) for these children and youth was 24.2 months.²
- Federal performance standards indicate 4.4 placements moves or fewer per 1,000 days in foster care is ideal. 63% of our kids meet this standard; the remaining 37% of youth experience anywhere from 4.5 – 8.6+ moves per 1,000 days in foster care, or just under 3 years.³
- 2,698 school aged children (ages 6+) required a change in school enrollment when entering foster care.⁴

Beginning in December 2016 these youth were no longer eligible under the revised definitions in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. As a result, foster care providers in Kansas were required to provide proof of address to enroll youth in school (i.e., placement agreement). For youth who do not have a long-term placement provider, this causes significant disruption to their educational services and sometimes prevents them from having access to any educational services for long periods of time.

HB 2320 would offer children and youth in foster care an opportunity to remain in their school of origin or enroll in a district that is well-suited to support their academic needs regardless of their placement location or status. The bill would ensure the timely transfer of records between sending and receiving districts, preventing unnecessary delays to enrollment and initiation of specialized services.

Children experiencing foster care are some of the most vulnerable in our state. This fiscal year 244 young adults have exited foster care; only 95 of them left foster care having completed the 12th grade.⁵ To break the generational cycle of abuse and neglect, we must invest in their futures through timely and consistent access to education. HB 2320 is a critical step toward ensuring educational stability and

connections to positive adults in their lives. We ask that you support HB 2320 to improve care and services for children and youth in Kansas.

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1. https://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Documents/FY2024DataReports/FCAD_Summary/FACTSRemovalsExitsOOHSFY24.pdf
2. https://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Documents/FY2024DataReports/FCAD_Summary/LengthofstayFY2024.pdf
3. https://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Documents/FY2024DataReports/FCAD_ContractOutcomes/PlacementStabilityRateFY24.pdf
4. https://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Documents/FY2024DataReports/FCAD_ContractOutcomes/Same%20School_Success%20Indicator_FY2024.pdf
5. https://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Documents/FY2025%20DataReports/FCAD_ContractOutcomes/Completed_grd12FY2025.pdf

Members of the Children's Alliance of Kansas:

CALM, Emporia
Cornerstones of Care, Kansas City
DCCCA, Lawrence
Eckerd Connects, Wichita
EmberHope, Wichita
Florence Crittenton, Topeka
FosterAdopt Connect, Kansas City
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