

Improving Child Care in Kansas

WHY DO WE NEED TO IMPROVE CHILD CARE IN KANSAS?

Kansas is lagging behind when it comes to providing adequate consumer protections in our child care system. Just as we provide consumer protections that ensure the safety of our restaurants, gas pumps and hair salons, we need to ensure the safety of child care facilities. Right now, 1 in 3 child care facilities in Kansas are never inspected and we have some of the weakest child care supervision standards in the country. As a result:

- **30 Kansas children have died** in child care settings over the past three years
- **72 Kansas children sustained serious injuries** in child care last year alone
- **Our state ranks 47th in the nation** in terms of child care oversight

HOW WILL SB 447 IMPROVE CHILD CARE?

SB 447 is a critical step toward improving the quality and safety of child care in Kansas. Here's what the bill will do:

- **Inspections.** Ensure that all child care facilities in Kansas are inspected on an ongoing basis.
- **Risk-based system.** Create a "risk-based" inspection system that bases the frequency of child care inspections on risk. This system, much like the system we use in Kansas to inspect restaurants, will ensure that resources are most focused on the riskiest facilities. Therefore, providers with a history of strong compliance will be inspected less frequently, freeing up resources to be spent on child care facilities where risks are evident.
- **Supervision standards.** Establish minimum standards, based on standards used in other states, for the supervision of infants and toddlers and the supervision of napping children. Research shows that children who are napping and children under age 5 are the most likely to be injured or die in child care.
- **Open records database.** Establish an online database of open records related to child care inspections. This system will enable parents to be more informed consumers, and simplify the paperwork process for child care providers. The database will be developed utilizing federal stimulus dollars and does not require any state dollars.

WHAT MISINFORMATION IS OUT THERE ABOUT SB 447?

There is quite a bit of incorrect information being discussed about this bill. Here's what it will not do:

- **Families caring for their own children.** SB 447 has no impact on families who care for their own children, regardless of the number of children they have.
- **Informal child care.** SB 447 does not change existing rules regarding informal child care arrangements, such as parents who have arrangements with a friend, neighbor or family member who is not registered/licensed with the state to care for children.
- **Number of children in care.** SB 447 does not change existing rules on the number or age ratios of children that child care providers are permitted to care for and, therefore, would not impact availability of child care in the state.
- **Sight and sound.** SB 447 does not require that providers be within sight and sound of children at all times. It does call for providers to adequately supervise children under the age of 5, who are the most vulnerable to injury or death, by (1) providing direct visual supervision of children's activities when not tending to other children or other duties; and (2) be able to hear or see small children while they are napping in the home.
- **Provider-parent relationship.** SB 447 does not limit or address in any way the amount of time that providers can spend talking with parents.