

SB 447: Improving Child Care in Kansas

AREA OF CONCERN	HOW IS IT ADDRESSED IN SB 447?	WHY DO WE NEED THIS SOLUTION?
<p>CHILD CARE INSPECTIONS In Kansas, 1 in 3 child care facilities is never inspected until it's too late – when a child has died in their care or a complaint has been filed.</p>	<p>SB 447 would establish inspections for every child care facility in Kansas utilizing a “risk-based” system similar to how we inspect every restaurant. All new child care providers would receive an initial inspection. Existing providers would receive inspections with frequency based on their rate of compliance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial inspections for all new providers will create a much-needed level of consumer protection that we already provide in other areas, such as inspections of every restaurant, gas pump and hair salon. In Kansas, anyone can pay \$5 and submit a form to become a “registered” child care provider. Inspections will ensure a minimum set of checks-and-balances for families seeking child care. A risk-based inspection system — one where we inspect child care facilities that prove to be the riskiest more often than we inspect facilities that consistently follow the rules — is a sensible way to improve child care in Kansas while still respecting the experience and good judgment that many child care providers bring to the business.
<p>SUPERVISION STANDARDS Kansas has some of the weakest supervision standards in the country. SB 447 would implement minimum standards to address the two greatest risks in Kansas child care: (1) supervision of children under the age 5, and (2) proper precautions during sleeping/napping time.</p>	<p><u>Supervision of children under age 5</u> SB 447 would establish that providers should follow these basic supervision standards when caring for children under the age of 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch and direct activities of children under the age of 5, and respond immediately to emergencies and the needs of children. Provide direct visual supervision of children under age 5 except when attending to the needs of other children, attending to personal needs, or taking care of other provider-related duties. Check on the safety of children prior to attending to personal needs or other duties in the home, and be able to respond to any child in distress. <p><u>Supervision of sleeping/napping children</u> SB 447 would call for child care providers with children under the age of 5 in their care to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be within visual <u>or</u> hearing distance of children that are napping in the home. Visually check on sleeping children every 15 minutes to ensure their safety. 	<p><u>Supervision of children under age 5</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children under the age of 5 are the most vulnerable in child care. At this age, children are usually not old enough to talk with their parents and tell them about their day in child care, and they are not equipped to verbalize to their child care provider when they are in trouble. The majority of child care deaths in Kansas, particularly the preventable deaths, have occurred among children under age 5 and as a result of inadequate supervision. <p><u>Supervision of sleeping/napping children</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sleep-related issues are the most preventable cause of death in Kansas child care. Regularly checking on sleeping infants and toddlers is a standard practice among parents and child care providers. Ensuring that more providers adopt these practices will minimize sleep-related deaths in Kansas child care.
<p>ACCESS FOR PARENTS Our system in Kansas makes it difficult for parents to access information about the quality and safety of child care facilities.</p>	<p>SB 447 would establish an online “open records” database for parents to access public information regarding safety and inspection violations in child care facilities, and would simplify the existing paperwork process for providers.</p>	<p>In addition to the level of consumer protection that’s needed in our child care system, parents have an obligation to research and remain informed about the safety of the child care facilities they choose. Right now, that information is difficult to come by in Kansas, making it difficult for parents to adequately assess their current child care facility or prospective child care facilities that they may be considering for their child.</p>