



AT Home Play School

AT Home Play School
10169 Switzer St
Overland Park, KS
66212
913-439-0118
AHomeplayschoolks@gmail.com

March 5th, 2023

RE: SB 282

Dear Senator Erickson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss SB 282. My name is Tiffany Mannes and I have been a Family Childcare provider for 20 years. I have held a Group Childcare license for most of that time. I have spent over a decade advocating for Family Childcare. I serve as the treasurer on the Childcare Provider Coalition of Kansas; and, I was elected as the Kansas state representative for the National Association of Family Childcare. I also served as a representative for Family Childcare providers on the BEST Team when Lexie's law was passed and implemented. It is clear that we are currently in a crisis situation with the shortage of Childcare Spots in nearly every county across the state. While something needs to be done to address this situation, children and families cannot take the risk of passing SB 282. By changing two factors at once (infant age changing from 18 months to 12 months and increasing the ratio from 3 infants to 4 infants) it will be impossible to know which, if any, factor is successful. To be frank there are children's lives on the line. This is just too big a risk. These factors are far too important to be changed using statute. The requirements to change statute are prohibitive and lengthy. These changes would cause lower quality care in a best case scenario and possibly injury or even death in a worst case scenario. The simultaneous change in ratio and age range will pose a real threat to children in Kansas. Because infant care is so desperately needed, this population will be at the highest risk with these changes. As a provider with twenty years of experience and over 600 hours of professional development, I would never accept four infants in care by myself. While childcare providers are trained professionals and can decide how many infants to enroll in care, I fear a new, inexperienced provider may see the new guidelines as a limit of what is safe and best practice for children, of which they are neither. As I look further down the ratio chart on SB 282, I become frustrated with the Group Childcare Ratios. Group Childcare with two adult providers is higher quality care. The infant ratio for Group care is half what the ratio is for a single provider. I am unsure why Group Licensees would be penalized for having two adult providers. It does not make sense that adding a second trained adult provider will not greatly increase, if not double, the number of children who could be in care compared to a single provider. The numbers do not add up. If a single provider can safely care for 6, two providers

should be able to care for 12. Currently a single provider can care for six while a Group licensed childcare with two or more providers can only care for 9. Over the last couple weeks I have been asked several times what the solution is to the childcare shortage. I feel like part of a solution is staring us right in the face. We could change the ratio for Group Childcare and that would open spots for children. We could have an option to add additional providers using a Group license to increase spots as well. As a business owner I am forced to take a pay cut to offer higher quality care. Before Lexies Law passed, Childcare in Kansas was ranked 46th in Quality in the nation. Since Lexie's Law passed Childcare in Kansas is now ranked 28th in the nation. I fear if SB 282 is passed Childcare in Kansas will return to the bottom of the list. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Respectfully,
Tiffany Mannes Group Childcare owner/provider
AT Home Play School