

Testimony: SB 77, ASLP Interstate Compact (Written only)
House Health and Human Services Committee
By Kelly Frantz-Langford, M.S. Ed., tiny-k Alliance President
March 11, 2021

Chair Landwehr and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kelly Frantz-Langford, and I am submitting written testimony on behalf of the tiny-k Alliance, to encourage the passage of SB 77 Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact. The tiny-k Alliance is an advocacy organization representing the 31 tiny-k programs in Kansas. Across the state, tiny-k programs provide special education services for children, birth – 3 years of age – and their parents and primary caregivers.

Our speech-language pathologists are critical members of our team as they provide services in homes, childcare centers, and other community centers, teaching caregivers developmental intervention strategies that can be delivered throughout each day. In fact, most children receiving early intervention services receive some level of support from speech-language pathologists because language is one of the most intricate and challenging pieces of development.

SB 77 will support tiny-k special education programs in the following ways:

- Increase the ability of tiny-k programs to recruit and retain speech-language pathologists. These professionals are in a high-demand field and it is challenging for tiny-k programs to compete with the compensation and benefits of hospitals and clinics. The Interstate Compact will increase the hiring pool;
- Allow for telehealth services to continue, which decreases drive time and allows more children access to language services. In some parts of the state, drive time between visits can easily be over an hour. Telehealth services is a crucial component of equitable education services in tiny-k programs;
- Allow military families the opportunity for continuity of care for their early intervention program; and
- Help tiny-k programs and families access providers with specialized expertise such as autism, feeding, and apraxia of speech.

I appreciate your consideration of this bill and the positive impact it will have for vulnerable children across the state.

Respectfully,

Kelly Frantz-Langford, MSE
tiny-k Alliance, President