

Testimony to the Joint Committee on Health Policy Oversight Lexie's Law

12/18/2012

Dear Chairwoman Landwehr and Members of the Committee:

My name is Terica Gatewood. I am a Pharmacist that lives in Topeka and I have a three year old daughter. She is the reason I am writing this testimony today. I send her to daycare so that I can provide basic healthcare access to my community and earn a living. Each day I have to know that I can count on my daycare provider, and know that they are taking the best possible care of her. Lexie's Law helps me have that piece of mind. As a healthcare professional I know how important it is to have basic first aid and CPR training, but in this circumstance it is even more important and even more specialized. Caretakers of young children should be trained in finding and reporting abuse, avoiding abuse, safe sleeping, as well as the aforementioned CPR/First Aid. They also should be regulated and trained on proper monitoring of children.

Their facility should be inspected to insure that there are no fire hazards and that all equipment is safe. All of these things are difficult if not impossible for a parent to examine. A parent does not have the time to inspect every toy in a daycare facility to insure that it is not broken on a regular basis, and this can create a dangerous situation for children.

These things are almost impossible for a working parent to monitor themselves. If a parent is working they cannot just drop in anytime to check the daycare out. Many parents are unaware of the things that they should look for in a daycare. Because of my job, I work very different hours and being able to check the website to see if a prospective daycare is in good standing provides easy access and knowledge that may have previously been impossible to obtain.

I believe strongly that, any scaling back of this law is a step backwards for Kansas. Over the last few years Kansas has shown dramatic improvement in childcare safety. We are now leading the country in safely taking care of our children and I think that is how it should be. I know that the most important thing is a proactive parent, but many parents do not have the resources at hand, nor the ability in most cases to warn other parents of their findings. That is to say, if a parent finds hazards at a facility they may take their kid out and find another facility. They may post something on Facebook, but they do not have the central website nor the news media that a government inspection may carry to warn other parents. This tool and the public implications of negative status has made daycare a much safer place to be for children.

I would be happy to answer any questions by members of the committee in the future. Feel free to contact me, and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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