



## Testimony for Early Childhood Recommendations Panel

Members of the panel:

As the Kansas Legislature prepares to convene in January, we hope these decision-makers have spent time in their districts listening to the needs of families struggling to find and pay for child care, and the child care providers struggling to make ends meet during the COVID-19 pandemic. We encourage the Panel to recommend the Children's Cabinet support three specific items.

First, Kansas Action for Children encourages the state to expand the existing employer tax credit for child care. Currently, only C-corporations can use this credit to offset the cost of supporting employees with children – either by providing child care onsite, paying an outside provider, or helping workers find it. As a result, of the \$3 million allocated for this credit, only about \$100,000 is claimed. The Legislature should make this credit available to other types of businesses that recognize the necessity of child care for their employees.

Second, the legislature should designate the full amount of required state matching funds to draw down all available federal dollars through the Child Care and Development Block Grant, a pool of discretionary dollars Congress sends to states to strengthen the child care field. In Fiscal Year 2020, Kansas failed to claim \$3.3 million in federal dollars because we didn't appropriate an additional \$2.3 million in state funds. Lawmakers should bring these federal dollars to Kansas to further support struggling families and providers.

Finally, we encourage officials to implement and fund programs that support child care provider retention and workforce development, and incentivize high-quality care in the child care field. Too many providers change careers because of the low wages, and recruiting new child care providers is difficult. To keep stable, affordable, high-quality child care in Kansas, we need to invest in our child care workforce and make it a financially viable career.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach me by email at [mitch@kac.org](mailto:mitch@kac.org).