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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
 AND ENVIRONMENT

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Division of Health



### Kansas Child Care in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Listening Tour

**Location:** Hutchinson, Kansas  
**Date:** October 25, 2007  
**Participants:** Approximately 60 persons participated

#### Participant Process

The Department of Health and Environment is in the process of redesigning the child care licensing system to meet the needs of children and families in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The process began in October 2007 with a state-wide listening tour to solicit comments on day care homes, child care centers and private preschools registered or licensed by the Department. The comments will be considered in the development of policies, procedures and standards of care that provide safety for children, encourage early learning, and balance best practices and the business realities that face child care providers every day. The participants were asked to respond to the question identified below. All the comments were recorded. The participants were then asked to vote on their most pressing concerns. Each person had a maximum of six votes. The question asked in the tour, the comments and the number of votes are listed below.

#### Listening Tour Question

If Kansas is to have a quality 21<sup>st</sup> Century Child Care system, what improvements or changes are needed in regulations and in the licensing process? (Please think both about content as well as process. Include the inspection process, sanction process, licensing policies and regulations.)

#### Number of Votes and Comments Received

Votes	 <b>Comments</b> 
18	We need clear and consistent and concise regulations out of our surveyors so we know what to expect when they come in our homes.
13	KBI register – Heard someone was on their list but was never told. We don’t even know if KDHE gets the list. We were going on-line to get the KBI information immediately and then was written up because this was not on the KBI form. We do need immediate feedback on the KBI form. I have never heard back. On-line would be excellent.
12	Across the state – pay. Need increases due to quality not based on where you live. Increases in pay will lead to increases in quality when pay is tied to qualifications. This will provide incentives.
11	Regulations need to have a reality to them. There are times when things are going on (life happens) and it wasn’t our intent not to follow the regulations. i.e. infant brought in a car seat and fell asleep. Regs need to recognize that life happens.
10	Just hired a new teacher...they have to do 5 observations (at 2.5 hours each) at other centers to watch how they do it. Others don’t do what we do. Process also does not allow for past experience.

Votes	 <b>Comments</b> 
10	As a parent - I find it unclear about pre-mature babies that are 2.5 months pre-mature. They are going to be developmentally delayed. They are 18 months but they are acting more like 12 month olds. What room should they be in? From what I understand it is their birth date rather than if they are ready for that room. Do they look at that? If they do, I don't know that. I have a couple like that – what happens when they turn 4 but lack the ability to move into the 4 year old room - they lack the emotional and developmental ability to be at that level. Do we have to move them? If we do, that puts more stress on the teacher and on the children. There has to be something by the state that we can utilize that let's them stay in that 4 year old room. Do we turn them away when they are 6 and can't be in kindergarten? (When I licensed my rooms, I license them for a range like 2.5 to 5 years.) Recommend to KDHE to help new centers be aware of licensing different rooms for a wider span of age. Clarify how this works if you have a range of ages in a room.
9	Amazed at discrepancy between child care homes, I have to have one person that has 3 infants. In home day care, you can have the 3 infants plus some other children. (Speaker clarified that she felt home day care numbers were too many.) In Reno County, it is difficult to find infant care. If there are inconsistent regulations with infant care, something needs to be done.
9	Changes with the backyards-swing sets and the footage, depth of padding you have to have, changed from 6 inches to 9 inches deep, some people are told the pea gravel is too big. Many of us are trying to be above KDHE requirements. Again, we need to know about the changes that have been made. Does the average person that has a home day care have a big yard to accommodate these changes? Don't want to take the swings down because the kids really like them. This has been a nightmare for a lot of us.
8	If we could have more consistency with the approval of in-service training. For example, had training for school-based providers but the training was not necessarily approved for licensed providers. An approved training by KSDE may not be approved by KDHE. The early childhood CEUs have a different approval process, too.
8	I like the Head Start book that gives you the guideline and then has a side panel that explains it. Sometimes when I read the regulations, I can't understand what it means. The Head Start book provides explanation and that helps.
8	When a child turns 18 months he is 18 months but this is not the case with 5 year olds. This needs to be addressed. Causes problems with ratios.
8	I'm curious why as a single provider you can have 6 children but when you add a person, you can just have 3 more children.
8	Pre-service training: We should increase the amount of training required. I'm not sure what the hours should be. Looked at KACCRRRA training. A CDA of 120 hours was their conclusion.
7	We are all here for the children. Regulations need to make the children safer or at least not detract from this.
7	Would like the option of re-licensing on-line.
7	In general a lot of the expectations of us are far beyond what we as parents have to follow. i.e. depth of padding in swing set area. Feel like sometimes the regulations are not realistic.
7	We recently lost our R & R here so we have to go to Wichita. I think people should be able to get on-line to find a provider without having to travel 60 miles. This should be accessible to parents on-line.
6	Would like to be notified of upcoming changes from year to year. It seems like inconsistency when something was OK last year but not this year. Would like advance notice...please be ready for these new changes when your surveyor comes out.
6	Problems with SRS, there are just not a lot of help with SRS working with the mothers on things. Have problem with the caseworker...don't return calls to the mothers. I have very responsible mothers...don't always get the letters about what is happening i.e. when benefits are being terminated. Then we as providers don't get paid. Why do we want to take SRS when it is so difficult?
6	Would like providers to be involved in the training with the new regulations. Would help improve our relationship as well. The relationship does not need to be hostile – we are all on the same team. It would be helpful for us to have a say in the training.
6	We obsess so much about what inspectors will say about our facilities rather than on what we are doing in our classroom. Focus is more technical rather than educational.
6	There are hundreds of providers that would do the training if there was funding for example to hire substitute care.
5	Star rating system. Compare this to a restaurant. Just because they have an “A” it does not mean the food tastes good. Could have one rating for Health and Safety and one for Quality.

Votes	 <b>Comments</b> 
5	Sometimes we have eliminated the common sense. We were told that parents have to sign a long-term medical agreement everyday to put on bug spray and sunscreen. Another provider was told they could just have parents sign one form for the summer.
5	Communication does not exist between the agencies. Why can't there be one department that everyone has to apply to? That way everyone knows what is going on. These for agencies are not talking together.
5	As a parent, in Reno County, I heard there is only one person that goes out to child care providers. Seems there should be more than that.
4	We are part of the KQRS rating system. KDHE system is different on some items. Would like consistency between these two.
4	With the preschools in schools and the kindergarten programs, what does that mean for providers in 20 years? Nobody is going to be able to make it with the ratios of 1:3 for infants for example.
4	We have to make available to all providers, especially rural providers, opportunities for training with money behind it and time for them to go to it. (TEACH)
3	We need some ideas of better ways to deal with upset parents, ex-employees...how do we communicate with our surveyor when this is the case. Need to be able to say to surveyor, "hey, this is what happened."
3	Complaints – we need to understand who called on us so we can provide some background information.
2	Clarification on the appropriate avenues we as child care providers have when we need clarification.
2	I wonder how often you have taken care of children, taught them and tried to follow the regulations.
1	SRS issues: Having problems with being able to write my own contract and set my terms. SRS is more and more telling me what I can do as a self-employed person i.e. amount of time parents are required to give me.
1	Would like clarification on...if you have a potential employee that worked for Head Start as a teacher, I can't hire them as a teacher because they don't have a license. This puts a crunch on the teachers that may move around to be hired by an independent child care center. Their two years of experience with Head Start doesn't count.
0	With regard to KBI, why don't surveyors have to have a KBI done?
0	When I run into something when I feel like there is a common sense solution, I have been able to call Topeka and talk to my licensing person. We talk it through and oftentimes we can come to a compromise. I do feel like we can talk about it.
0	If parents are going to get on-line, they need to see the defaults as well. I disagree – sometimes you get written up for a staff members not having a TB shot and next month a different staff doesn't have one. Would prefer a rating system rather than having everything you were written up for. As a parent, I would like to know about the major problems that are occurring. (I would agree if it was a major issue like molestation, for example.) Where do you draw the line? Neglect, abuse, molestation need to be posted...but what else?
0	Pre-k programs. As a center director at one of our pre-k centers, we had a problem with the number of toilets you had to have per so many children. This prevented us from filling 8 slots that we were funded for because this facility didn't have 3 toilets (only had 2 toilets). Sometimes there has to be wriggle room.
0	Have a problem when it comes to hiring employees. When checking references, that other day care cannot tell us anything about why they were let go. They can tell you "would you hire them again?" They can answer that question. (This is a state law.)
0	This fall I couldn't get anyone to even apply. We have to get to the point where we will take someone with good references with the hopes that she can then enroll to get training. I'm all for trained teacher but I have been in a crunch many times between finding staff or turning away families.
0	KDOT sends people without training to receive that and pay for it and reimburse the expenses. If we have so many people willing to get this training, we should be getting a little something from it.