

STATE OF KANSAS



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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB12
OLETHA FAUST GOUDEAU

February 3, 2021

Good morning Mr. Chairman Hilderbrand, Vice Chair Beverly Gossage, and Ranking Minority member Senator Pat Pettey.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of Senate Bill 12.

Over the years we have heard about the many problems within our child in need of care system. And, although I appreciate the fact that the current Secretary of the Department of Children and Families is actively working to make positive in-house policy changes. I believe, the passage of the Performance Based Contracting legislation will aide in solving some of the issues.

Senate Bill-12 is modeled after legislation that passed in Washington State, in which DCF enforces performance-based contracts for adoption and foster care services. And, since its passage, Washington kids have had exponentially better outcomes than before the state implemented performance-based contracts. Performance based contracts will ensure that child advocates are focused on providing satisfactory care for children and families in need, rather than increasing their intake loads. Senate Bill 12 provides an insurance mechanism for the State in two ways: Kansas kids in need are getting the care they need and deserve, and our State will be able to hold providers accountable for their work.

Our state can and must do better for our most vulnerable children: I urge you to support Senate Bill-12 to enforce performance-based contracting for our children in need of care.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this legislation.

Senator Faust Goudeau

For Immediate Release

Dec. 11, 2020

Mike Deines
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DCF Takes Immediate Action to Address Allegations of Document Falsification by St. Francis Ministries Employees

Secretary Laura Howard requests additional information on St. Francis internal investigation related to fiscal mismanagement

Topeka - Kansas Department for Children and Families Secretary Laura Howard took swift action to address allegations of document falsification by employees of St. Francis Ministries (SFM), one of the agency's foster care case management providers.

"In mid-November, my agency was made aware of instances where an SFM employee falsified documents to show they had visited with families when they had in fact not made those visits," Howard said. "Given the seriousness of these allegations I instructed my deputy secretary to immediately begin an investigation."

After engaging with SFM, DCF learned that SFM was already aware of the allegations and had begun an inquiry at its Salina office. SFM supervisors immediately began contacting foster care providers to confirm visits were being conducted. During the investigation, SFM discovered that one employee did not visit 28 children who were living with 11 different foster care providers. This worker had documented 165 contacts with those children between February and October of 2020 that did not occur. The worker was fired by SFM.

SFM also discovered during its inquiry another case of an employee failing to meet with foster care providers. The employee was fired from the agency in August.

SFM continues its work in Saline County to review each case file to reconcile information from providers with dates of contacts by SFM employees in the case file documentation. The inquiry has so far not turned up any additional instances of document falsification. The case review has shown:

- 69% of placements interviewed expressed seeing a member of the Saint Francis case team on a monthly basis.
- 78% of fathers interviewed expressed seeing a member of the Saint Francis case team on a monthly basis.
- 86% of mothers interviewed expressed seeing a member of the Saint Francis case team on a monthly basis.

DCF has taken additional steps including:

- Requesting information related to methods, sampling figures and findings of St. Francis' case reviews.
- DCF's Audit Services Child Welfare Compliance Team and Quality Assurance Team will serve as peer reviewers assisting in contacting providers as part of the case review process.

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Financial Mismanagement Investigation

Additionally, Secretary Howard has communicated with St. Francis Ministries interim president/CEO William Clark and Board President Dr. Greg Meissen insisting the agency provide full access to all SFM internal reports and investigation findings pertaining to the expenditure of any monies received by SFM pursuant to its grant with DCF and SFM's financial stability.

"My agency will not rest until we are assured that Kansas taxpayer funds have been properly spent by SFM," Howard said. "We know SFM to be good partners and we look forward to full transparency as it relates to both their fiscal affairs and documentation issues."

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ECEAP Impacts on Children and Families

Partnering to Increase Outcomes

Why DCYF ECEAP Uses Performance-Based Contracting

The legislation that created the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), which oversees ECEAP (the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program), requires contracts for direct services in communities to use performance-based contracting. This type of contracting is intended to support high-quality services and provide the ability to measure change.

What is Performance-Based Contracting?

The goal of performance-based contracting is that the services funded for children and families are measurably helping to meet DCYF goals in three main areas:

- **Resilience:** Parents and caregivers are supported to meet the needs of children
- **Education:** Kindergarten readiness
- **Health:** Child development

These are three types of contract **performance measures** that lead to DCYF child outcome goals:



Where is DCYF ECEAP Now with Performance-Based Contracting?

We know ECEAP works because for years we have gathered the data ECEAP providers share and we work with providers to learn together and make continuous quality improvements to ECEAP's comprehensive services. Partnership and shared use of data consistently result in outcome increases for children and families.

In the 2019-20 school year, ECEAP contracts include two quality-based performance measures to meet performance-based contracting requirements. These measures were picked using partner feedback and data analysis:

- **Recruitment and Enrollment:** Increase access to ECEAP for children and families furthest from opportunity.
- **Ensuring High-Quality Child Assessment:** Completion of Teaching Strategies GOLD® Interrater Reliability Certification.

What's Happening Next?

In the 2020-21 school year, ECEAP contracts will continue to support high-quality and accessible services that help us all reach our shared goals. For the first time, ECEAP contracts are required to include a performance measure that is a child and/or family outcome. "Outcomes" are the results of ECEAP services for children and families. Examples of outcomes are children learning new math skills, children

being up-to-date on well-child exams or families having increased knowledge about community resources.

How Do Performance Measures Affect Contract Funding?

ECEAP funding will not be withheld from providers that don't meet the contract's outcome performance target. Instead, DCYF ECEAP staff and ECEAP providers will continue to view data together related to outcomes, learn from it and look for new ways to keep increasing outcomes.

ECEAP Families' Perspectives and Input

DCYF ECEAP is requesting families' feedback to pick a child or family outcome measure for next year's contract. To do this, we'll focus on the following key factors for decision-making:

- **Equity:** Could it impact some families' or communities' access to responsive services more than others?
- **Achievability:** Is it reasonable to expect an improvement in the measure?
- **Available:** Can data be collected objectively and regularly?
- **Aligned:** Is this a shared priority of families, contractors and DCYF?

DCYF ECEAP is committed to racial equity and decision-making that gets us closer to equitable outcomes for all children. As we consider which outcome to use, we seek research and data analysis that shows a direct connection between the outcome and our shared goals such as learning, health, racial equity and family well-being.

Another important consideration is deciding the extent of ECEAP providers' influence or control over a child or family outcome. There are many factors that may impact outcomes for families and those factors may affect some communities more than others.

Potential Outcome Measures

We are seeking ECEAP families' input about which one of the three outcomes below is recommended to include in next year's ECEAP contracts. An outcome measure is included for each area of ECEAP services:

Child Health

- Percentage of children who are up-to-date on vision and hearing screenings.

Family Engagement

- Percentage of families that make gains in one Mobility Mentoring® area. Some examples of the types of gains in Mobility Mentoring® are:
 - Family knowledge of community services
 - Parents involved with schools and advocating for their child
 - Financial security

Child Development/Kindergarten Readiness

- Average growth in learning in areas such as social-emotional development, math or reading.

