

# **INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON FAMILIES AND CHILDREN**

## **Minutes of the Fifth Meeting of the 2024 Interim**

**October 23, 2024**

### **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The fifth meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Families and Children was held on October 23, 2024, at 1:00 PM in Room 149 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Danny Carroll, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

### **Present were:**

Members: Representative Samara Heavrin, Co-Chair; Senator Danny Carroll, Co-Chair; Senators Julie Raque Adams, Cassie Chambers Armstrong, Amanda Mays Bledsoe, Stephen Meredith, Lindsey Tichenor, Robin L. Webb, Whitney Westerfield, and Max Wise; Representatives Shane Baker, Mike Clines, Jennifer Decker, Stephanie Dietz, Daniel Elliott, Ken Fleming, Jim Gooch Jr., Josie Raymond, Steve Riley, Rachel Roarx, Sarah Stalker, Lisa Willner, and Nick Wilson.

Guests: Allison Ball, Auditor of Public Accounts, Office of the Auditor of Public Accounts; Alexander Magera, General Counsel, Office of the Auditor of Public Accounts; Norma Hatfield, Advocate; Lesa Dennis, Commissioner, Department for Community Based Services, Cabinet for Health and Family Services; Andrea Day, Director, Division of Child Care, Department for Community Based Services, Cabinet for Health and Family Services; Sarah Vanover Ed.D, Policy & Research Director, Kentucky Youth Advocates; Kristin Collins, Chief Executive Officer, Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky; Charles Aull, Ph.D, Executive Director, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce; Ashley Novak Butler, Executive Director, Lift a Life Novak Family Foundation; and Mariah Levison, Chief Executive Officer and President, Convergence.

LRC Staff: Samir Nasir, Ben Payne, Logan Bush, and DJ Burns.

### **Approval of Minutes**

A motion to approve the September 25, 2024, minutes was made by Representative Heavrin, seconded by Representative Clines, and approved by a voice vote.

## **Kinship Care**

Allison Ball, Auditor of Public Accounts, Office of the Auditor of Public Accounts, formally announced an inquiry into the implementation of 2024 Regular Session Senate Bill 151. Norma Hatfield, Advocate, discussed the need for the inquiry.

In response to Senator Raque Adams, Auditor Ball stated she welcomes all input from the Legislative Branch pertaining to the inquiry.

In response to Representative Stalker, Auditor Ball said it is too early to state if the budget needs to be amended to fund the bill.

## **Overview and Updates on Child Care**

Lesa Dennis, Commissioner, Department for Community Based Services, Cabinet for Health and Family Services, discussed the functions of the Division of Child Care within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. Andrea Day, Director, Division of Child Care, Department for Community Based Services, Cabinet for Health and Family Services, discussed the current state of child care in Kentucky, including Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) participation and Employee Child Care Assistance Partnership (ECCAP) participation.

In response to Senator Carroll, Ms. Day stated the number of families on ECCAP are a combination of existing families from the year before and new families. The breakdown of employers participating in the ECCAP program will be provided to members later. An unintended loophole was created with CCAP's child care employee income exclusion, where an employee could work part-time after hours with no direct contact with the children and qualify for the program, that loophole has been closed. Some applicants applied for ECCAP but qualified for CCAP through the child care employee income exclusion and those applicants were denied for ECCAP but approved for CCAP instead.

In response to Representative Heavrin, Ms. Day stated that in year one of the ECCAP program, paper applications were accepted and in year two, the application was moved to digital to ensure the security of the process. The cabinet has the capacity to handle the ECCAP program but that could change in the future if the program expands.

In response to Representative Decker, Ms. Day stated deadlines are established but since the ECCAP program is not at capacity, families can still apply. The original paper application was mistakenly left up after the application process was moved to the portal. The numbers for year one of ECCAP are for a full fiscal state year and year two are just for the past four months with eight months left in this fiscal year.

In response to Senator Chambers Armstrong, Ms. Day stated 35 percent of all licensed child care providers are three star rated programs or higher. The cabinet will follow up with the number of providers open during non-traditional hours.

In response to Senator Raque Adams, Ms. Day stated the Commonwealth is not where it needs to be when it comes to child care.

In response to Representative Elliott, Ms. Day said 20 percent of child care slots go to CCAP participants and when changing funding for child care, you must be mindful of the 80 percent that are private pay.

### **Child Care Programs and Initiatives**

Sarah Vanover Ed.D, Policy & Research Director, Kentucky Youth Advocates, discussed the state of child care in Kentucky including survey results from providers and families. Kristin Collins, Chief Executive Officer, Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky, discussed the Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky and provided an overview of child care in the eastern rural part of Kentucky.

In response to Senator Chambers Armstrong, Dr. Vanover stated the ratios of children to adult in child care facilities are set by each state but recommendations are made by higher accredited organizations.

In response to Representative Baker, Ms. Collins stated every county's reimbursement rate is set by the market for that county. Dr. Vanover stated the reimbursement rate is federally mandated to be assessed every three years and some states are moving from the market rate to an alternative rate statewide. Child care is an economic policy, having access to child care allows families to work and contribute to income taxes and provide for themselves.

In response to Senator Mays Bledsoe, Dr. Vanover stated child care facilities do not have the resources to provide for children with disabilities. Georgia is paying the full amount for CCAP children with disabilities since centers who can accommodate special needs children cost more.

### **Kentucky Collaborative on Child Care**

Charles Aull, Ph.D, Executive Director, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, discussed Kentucky's progress, including the Employee Child Care Assistance Partnership, Supporting the Child Care Workforce, Building a Strong Subsidy Program for Low-income Working Families, and Innovations in Early Childhood Delivery Program. Ashley Novak Butler, Executive Director, Lift a Life Novak Family Foundation, discussed

providing funding to Kentucky nonprofits. Mariah Levison, Chief Executive Officer and President, Convergence, provided an overview of the organization's mission and vision.

In response to Senator Meredith, Dr. Aull said part of the child care challenge is conversations happening in silos and involving stakeholders from across the Commonwealth will provide better solutions moving forward.

### **Consideration of Referred Administrative Regulations**

The following referred administrative regulations were on the agenda for consideration.

#### **922 KAR 001:350 Emergency**

Requirements for public child welfare agency foster parents, adoptive parents, and respite care providers.

The administrative regulation above has been reviewed by the committee.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.