

DCF LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



November 3, 2021

TESTIMONY OF

Tanya Keys, Deputy Secretary
Department for Children and Families

TESTIMONY ON

Data Transmission for Child Welfare Between Law Enforcement and DCF

Chair

Senator Hilderbrand

Vice Chair

Representative Concannon

Ranking Minority

Senator Faust-Goudeau

and

Members of the Committee

Introduction

Chair Hilderbrand, Vice Chair Concannon, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony regarding the data transmission for child welfare between law enforcement and DCF.

Updates Since October Committee Meeting

DCF was pleased to meet with Ed Klumpp and Todd Thompson, Leavenworth County District Attorney, to discuss the concerns raised in Mr. Klumpp's testimony on Oct. 5. The meeting was productive, and we are optimistic this collaboration will lead to workable solutions.

DCF agrees with Mr. Klumpp on his interpretation of KSA 38-2210. The intent of the statute is for the agency to 'freely exchange information' without redaction to expedite processes for both DCF and law enforcement. In January, DCF implemented a new statewide unredacted report made specifically for sharing information with law enforcement. This replaced previous reports utilized for several different information sharing processes that contained redacted information. It was noted by both parties that this new report had not been consistently used statewide, and that DCF would work expeditiously to ensure the new form is used across the state.

DCF and Mr. Klumpp have agreed to explore, along with law enforcement associations, the possibility of creating new statutory language directly addressing the free exchange of information between DCF and law enforcement. We believe this could solve the issue of competing interpretations while also explicitly calling out any information that should be withheld from either party. DCF agrees with Mr. Klumpp that any redacted information be limited in scope.

Both parties ask the committee for its help in connecting us with a revisor to assist in drafting statutory language.

DCF is doing additional work on this topic. In August of 2020, the agency announced a new pilot collaboration with the Wichita Police Department and Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office to fund three community support specialist case manager positions. The specialists visit a family's home when law enforcement identifies the home environment as in crisis or in need of support services. The specialists can make referrals to community-based services for parent skill building, home visiting, mental health services and substance use services. The workers also can connect families with education on safe sleep, parental peer support, public health and school district program support.

Additional, law enforcement supervisors at the Wichita Police Department and Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office now have **access** to DCF's child abuse and neglect information system known as KIPS. This arrangement provides important child welfare information to officers when responding to calls involving children and families.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a summary on our 'free exchange of information' with law enforcement efforts. DCF looks forward to continued collaboration with Mr. Klumpp and the organizations he represents to improve our processes.