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## WDAF

### Parents in Kansas Pushing 'Lexie's Law' for Tougher Daycare Standards

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TOPEKA, KAN

Parents and childrens advocates gathered in Topeka on Monday to push the Kansas Senate to act on a law that would set up stricter regulations for day care providers.

Kansas Senate bill 447, or "Lexie's Law," is named for 13-month-old Lexie Engelman, who died in 2004 at a Kansas home daycare. It would require daycare providers to not only be able to hear but see a child at all times while the child is in their care, among other new regulations.

"This has dramatically changed our lives," said Bryan Engelman, Lexie's father.

"We trust if Senate Bill 447 was in place before our daughters death, she would still be alive today," said Alecia Patrick, whose daughter Ava died in a Kansas home daycare in April of 2009.

The parents are getting support from Kansas State Senator Julia Lynn, R-Olathe. Lynn says that she doesn't want rules that are so harsh that they would frighten away potential child care providers, but she says that when Kansas ranks 47th in the nation for child care oversite and regulation there needs to be some changes to the law.


"I realized some signifigant problems with child care oversite," said Sen. Lynn. "What we want to do is raise the standard and quality of care."


Currently, Kansas home daycare providers are under the regulation of the Kansas Department of Health, which agrees that more oversight is needed.

"To increase the quality of care in Kansas there needs to be more training some more supervision, specifically regarding supervision and what the expectations are for safe child care practices," said Christine Ross Baze of the Department of Health's Childcare Licensing division.

Baze says that the department is working on new, tougher regulations, but that can't come soon enough for a distraught parent like Patrick, who say they also want's Lexie's Law to require at least an

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initial home daycare inspection. Parents are also pushing for tougher sanctions, saying that a slap on the wrist is unacceptable for providers whose lack of care causes serious harm.

"Our daughter's death was completely unnecessary and preventable," said Patrick.

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