

January 20, 2015

Review Panel
Emerging Leader in Early Care and Education
Child Care Exchange

Dear Colleagues:

It is my distinct pleasure to offer this letter of support and affirmation on behalf of **Ms. Kasey Kile**, an Emerging Leader in Early Care and Education. Kasey and I have collaborated over ten years on issues in early childhood education in the State of Kansas. She is an impressive individual, not only providing leadership for early educators through multiple venues but also engaging community leaders to act on behalf of children and families.

Kasey graduated with bachelor's and master's degrees in early childhood education from Kansas State University, one of two land-grant institutions in the state and well known for its developmental emphasis in early childhood and its outreach and engagement in the State and nationally. It is within this culture that she quickly became involved in campus activities leading her peers in professional development, particularly within the Early Childhood Student Association as chapter president.

After graduation, she served as the Preschool and Program Director for the Center for Child Development, Kansas State University's campus child care program, but was quickly hired away as the executive director for Manhattan Day Care, a non-profit community child care program. She took the reins during a challenging time in the life of the program when few wanted to risk the time and effort in saving a community-based child care for low income families. However, Kasey not only revitalized the staff, she organized a group of well-respected community leaders to lead the fundraising effort for a new facility. She met repeatedly with city and county commissioners, the Chamber of Commerce, United Way, individual business leaders, University personnel and private citizens. Regretfully, the center closed but this is not the end of the story. Kasey had established herself among community leaders as the resource person on issues related to children and their care and education. She clearly and accurately translated evidence based knowledge into practice and practice into well-being for low-income children and parents, often among those who had little understanding of these relationships. The work toward a new community center continues.

Kasey quickly moved to providing training and support for early childhood educators providing care for children of off-post Army, guard and reserve families through a program known as Army Child Care in Your Neighborhood, a Department of Defense (DOD) funded community-based education program. Manhattan, Kansas was one of 10 program sites nation-wide, the most funded and longest running partnership primarily due to the success of outreach and engagement provided under Kasey and her team's leadership. However, DOD determined the program should be administered from Fort Riley so gradually all services were assumed by Youth Services on post in 2012.

Having gained a reputation as an exceptional trainer of theory and research to practice, Kasey was tapped by researchers at Kansas State University to develop curriculum for a program called HOP'N Home Child Care funded by the United Methodist Health Ministries Association. The 12 week program engaged children, family home child care professionals and the families they served in understanding the research-based "stoplight" diet, distinguishing "go" foods from "slow" foods, engaging in physical activity and analyzing food presented on television during children's programs (often "slow" food). Children developed problem-solving and critical thinking skills with their parents evaluating the foods in their homes as part of a daily routine of healthy food and activity. Kasey developed the training modules to train all educators on this curriculum online. To date, over 70 professionals have been trained.

As you will note on her CV, Kasey concurrently managed a private business promoting gymnastics and physical activity for children. Kasey utilized her professional expertise in child development and education to not only improve the curriculum guiding children daily but organized and implemented community-wide events in public venues during the weekends to get families out in nature and active. These were intense and highly successful.

Kasey's expertise in online training is well-recognized across the State. As one of three primary trainers at Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities, Kasey and her team provided over 6000 hours of high quality, synchronous and asynchronous, state-approved inservice training in 2014 alone and were recognized by Kansas Department of Children and Families as the leading training organization in the State. Supported by grant-funded initiatives, state-wide trainings are often collaborative, working with ChildCareAware, Kansas Children's Service League, Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition and others.

Kasey is a long time member of NAEYC, KAEYC and the local affiliate, Heartland AEYC. She is currently president of Heartland and president-elect of KAEYC. She is the state-wide conference planning chair but has directed the State conference behind the scenes during the previous five years. She has presented at NAEYC and KAEYC (refer to CV). As a life-long learner, she continually trains on the latest research and practice as evidenced in her vita. Kasey is an instructor in the early childhood education unit in the School of Family Studies and Human Services at Kansas State, the pre-professional teacher education program. "Demanding" and "rigorous" she has earned high ratings from students. Consequently, she educates across the professional life-span including those entering the field as well as those currently practicing.

In conclusion, Kasey Kile exemplifies the characteristics of an **Emerging Leader** in early childhood education and care. Her **spirit**, personal initiative, and persistence are clearly evident as she engages with individuals across the spectrum from pre-professionals to professional educators and administrators as well as a wide range of community members and decision-makers, children and their families. She is engaged in **leadership roles among diverse groups** focused on early childhood at the local (e.g., director, instructor, and president), state (e.g., trainer, KAEYC president-elect, curriculum developer) and national (presenter, trainee) levels. She is well respected for her ideas and willingness to engage directly to **advocate** on behalf of all children and their educators. She possesses the **knowledge-base** (from theory and research to practice) and engages in continuing education in programs based upon cutting edge research. Kasey has many achievements to date but is headed into an even greater future. She is in change-agent positions where she will positively affect policy for children and educators. She has established her credibility.

I welcome your call to further discuss Ms. Kile's outstanding qualifications.

Respectfully,

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