



AD ASTRA PER ASPERA
Kansas
Children's Cabinet
and Trust Fund



Annual Report

➤ 2020

Kim Moore, Chair
Melissa Rooker, Executive Director

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**Improving the health
and wellbeing of Kansas
children and families.**

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Introduction

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- Our Work
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- 2020 At-a-Glance

Letter from the Director

All In For Kansas Kids

I reflect on these five words under much different circumstances now than when we rang in the new decade last January. While no less true and heartfelt for all of us working to ensure that every child thrives, these words have come to epitomize our collective resolve to do *all things necessary*. As the seasons changed in Kansas over the course of 2020 so too did the next necessary thing. Not unlike the wildly unpredictable and erratic Kansas weather, the work necessary to protect and support Kansas kids and families has changed rapidly and with tremendous force.

Being “All In” and doing “all things necessary” this year has sometimes meant a departure from the original plan. Other times it was more about doubling-down and devoting additional resources to work already in progress. The pandemic continues to challenge us, and the economic outlook remains unclear, creating enormous pressure on children, families, and providers. For these reasons, we face each day with Kansas kids top-of-mind and at the center of our work.

During a time like no other, we are proud to share this report of our work on behalf of Kansas children and families. With tremendous appreciation and gratitude for every stakeholder and friend of the Children’s Cabinet, we detail

in the pages ahead what “*All In For Kansas Kids*” looks like and how our Blueprint for Early Childhood frames what we do. We offer details on progress across the early childhood care and education system for each of the seven goals in our new five-year *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan, and we present program evaluation results. We close with a summary of Children’s Cabinet recommendations made over the past year with updates on progress and ideas for next steps.

In the face of incredible adversity, we renew our commitment to follow our Blueprint, make meaningful progress on our *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan, and continue striving to create a better world for Kansas kids.

Ad astra per aspera.



Our Work

The Children's Cabinet believes that the prosperity of our state depends on the wellbeing of our youngest Kansans. Our work plays a critical role in the lives of children and families across the state. We manage and evaluate impactful grant-making initiatives, and we ensure progress on the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan. Our work as a champion for innovation and as a convener and strategist for effective collaboration uniquely positions us to address the needs of Kansans today and into the future.



Connector

Convenes diverse stakeholders in children's issues from government, nonprofit, and the private sector.

Champion

Elevates the importance of investing in early childhood and contributes to innovative program approaches.

Strategist

Identifies opportunities for effective collaboration and overcomes barriers to optimal system performance.

Manager

Manages grant-making, fund administration, and strategic planning processes.

Evaluator

Evaluates use of the CIF, contributes to data-informed decision making, and offers practice and policy recommendations.



Our People

Children's Cabinet Members

FIVE VOTING MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR

Kim Moore, Chair

Kim Moore was appointed in 2018. He provides nonprofit consulting through his firm, Achieve Philanthropy, LLC. In 2018 he retired after three decades as President of United Methodist Health Ministry Fund, and prior to this work he practiced law in Wichita. He is a graduate of Southwestern College and Washburn Law School, and he currently serves on several nonprofit boards. Kim and his wife, Cindy, have three children and two grandchildren.

Tyler K. Smith-Howells, MD, MPH, FAAP, was appointed in 2019. She is a board-certified general pediatrician and Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine. She is also a fellowship director for the pediatrics training program at Children's Mercy Kansas City. She has a passion for advocacy and mentorship, is happily married to her husband, James, and is the proud stepmother to Anthony and Arianna.

LeEtta Felter was appointed in 2018. She and husband, Jib, own truck and equipment dealerships in several states, headquartered in Olathe, Kansas. She resides in Olathe and has lived there since 1994 where her family is very involved in the community. Two of her three children currently attend Olathe Public Schools, and her first-born graduated from Olathe East High School in 2013.

DiAnne Owen Graham was appointed in 2018. She is President of Graham Advisors, LLC, a full-service consulting firm specializing in advising and fundraising for political and issue advocacy organizations. She has served as a political appointee in President George W. Bush's administration holding various roles with the U.S. Department of State. DiAnne graduated from the University of Mississippi and lives in Wichita, Kansas, with her husband, Chris, and their sons, Owen and Parker.

Terri Rice was appointed in 2017. She is Senior Marketing Manager for Cox Business and holds both a Bachelor of Science in Business Management and Master of Business Administration. She serves on various committees and boards, and is heavily involved in nonprofit work, giving back to the community whenever possible. Terri lives in Wichita, Kansas with her husband and has one daughter and two step-children.

FOUR VOTING MEMBERS APPOINTED BY LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP

Deliece Hofen was appointed in 2020. She is a former elementary school teacher turned principal who took what was once the lowest-scoring school in the Blue Valley district and turned it into one of the highest-scoring, even earning the prestigious Blue Ribbon Award from the U.S. Department of Education. She is also mom to Braden, the name behind the organization she founded in 2010: Braden's Hope for Childhood Cancer.

Monica Murnan, Representative, was appointed in 2020. She is a licensed teacher and administrator who founded the Family Resource Center in Pittsburg, Kansas. She currently serves as Director of Student Support Services at Greenbush and has served on many nonprofit boards. She also served four years on the Pittsburg City Commission with one year as Mayor. Monica and her husband of 33 years, Rob, have three daughters and two grandchildren.

John Wilson was appointed in 2019. He joined Kansas Action for Children in September 2017 as President and CEO. He spent the previous 10 years working at the intersection of design, public health, and policymaking. John helped build the Alliance for a Healthier Generation into the nation's leading nonprofit organization focused on children's health. He is a 2006 graduate of the University of Kansas, where he studied visual communication.

Dinah Sykes, Senator, was elected in November 2016 to represent District 21 and was appointed in 2017. Her Senate committee assignments include Commerce, Education, Ethics, Elections, Local Government, and a Joint Committee on Information Technology. Prior to election, Dinah enjoyed being a full-time stay-at-home mom who also ran her own business as a personal chef. She is a graduate of Trevecca Nazarene University in Nashville, Tennessee.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Lee A. Norman, M.D. Secretary, Kansas Department of Health & Environment
(Rachel Sisson, Designee)

Laura Howard, J.D. Secretary, Kansas Department for Children and Families
(Rebekah Gaston, Designee)

Blake Flanders, Ph.D. President & CEO, Kansas Board of Regents (Karla Wiscombe, Designee)

Randy Watson, Ed.D. Commissioner of Education, Kansas State Department of Education
(Amanda Petersen, Designee)

Keynen J. Wall, J.D. Kansas Supreme Court Justice

Hope Cooper Deputy Secretary, Kansas Department of Corrections, Juvenile Justice Authority

Children's Cabinet Staff

Melissa Rooker, Executive Director

Melissa Rooker was named Executive Director of the Children's Cabinet in February 2019. Prior to this, Melissa served three terms in the Kansas House of Representatives, focusing on children's issues and public education. Before running for office, Melissa spent 15 years as a development executive. She holds a BFA from the University of Kansas and lives with her husband, Tom, in Fairway. They have two children and one grandson.

Amy Meek joined the Children's Cabinet in 2015. Prior to this, Amy spent six years at Community Action, Inc. in Topeka, first as the Early Childhood Education Coordinator and finally as the Director of Head Start and Early Head Start. She has experience in program management, grant writing, policy development, and compliance with local, state, and federal regulation. She holds a BA from the University of Kansas and an MBA from Baker University.

Dyogga Adegboire joined the Children's Cabinet in 2004. Dyogga tracks financial activities on grants, contracts, interagency agreements and office funds, and she coordinates meeting and travel arrangements. She holds degrees from Washburn University and Platt College, and is a member of the Society for Human Resource Management and the American Business Women's Association.

Debbie Deere joined the Children's Cabinet in August 2020. Prior to this, Debbie owned and operated a licensed child care center in Lansing for 27 years. She served in the Kansas House of Representatives from 2017-2019, focusing on children's issues, public education, and corrections. She is a graduate of Friends University and lives in Lawrence with her husband, Kyle. They have three grown children, four grandchildren, and a Yorkie named Gus.

Hannah McGahey joined the Children's Cabinet in August 2020. Prior to this, Hannah worked on the behavioral health team at the Shawnee County Department of Corrections and has worked as a police dispatcher. In these roles she contributed to policy conversations, worked in systems building, and developed her passion for curriculum development and adult learning. Hannah is a graduate of Allen Community College and Fort Hays State University.

Brea Cudney joined the Children's Cabinet in August 2020. Prior to this, Brea worked in the Office of Graduate Admissions at the University of Kansas. She holds a BA in Communication Studies from KU, and is currently pursuing a master's degree in Social and Cultural Studies in Education from KU.

Our Commitment to Equity

The Children's Cabinet recognizes that equitable life outcomes start with an early childhood system that acknowledges children and families experience disproportionate access and opportunity across race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical and developmental abilities, home language, and geography. Equity is an organizing principle of the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan.

The Children's Cabinet is committed to:

- meeting the diverse and unique needs of all Kansas families by integrating systems-wide approaches to ensure basic needs are available and accessible
- elevating family voice and choice
- utilizing data in ethical, timely, and responsive ways in partnership with communities and a broad array of experts
- equitably funding programs



2020 At-a-Glance

Major Milestones

- Disseminated results of the newly-published 2019 Needs Assessment to legislators, service providers, workgroups, and various other stakeholders across the state.
- Updated and disseminated the 2020 Blueprint for Early Childhood.
- Produced the five-year *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan collaboratively with stakeholders across the early childhood care and education system.
- Received a three-year, \$26 million dollar Preschool Development Renewal Grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services.
- Formed the Early Childhood Recommendations Panel as outlined by executive order designating the Children's Cabinet as the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care.
- Welcomed three new Children's Cabinet board members.

Challenges and Opportunities

The central messages of our 2019 Needs Assessment highlighted the vastly different experiences of families depending on geography and the gap in meeting basic needs for Kansas families. These two central messages have intensified with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Having that understanding going into the pandemic supported a targeted approach with our statewide COVID-19-specific responses. Additionally, having a new, collaborative governance structure in place with strong cross-agency relationships further facilitated our rapid response and pivots to meet the emerging needs of Kansas families and service providers.



**All In For
Kansas Kids**

The work of our state's mixed-delivery system for early childhood care and education is encompassed by the new *All In For Kansas Kids* logo and brand.

COVID-19 Relief Efforts
*across the early childhood care
and education system*

Action Lab Mini-Grants

Technology for Families Fund

Essential Worker Health Care
Fund for Child Care Providers

Child Care Health Consultants
and Facilities Grants

Remote Learning Grants

Hero Relief Program

Data-informed decision-making

- The new Early Childhood Integrated Data System data trust among agencies serving children and families will facilitate analysis of the effect of program participation on long-term wellbeing. The first planned study will identify the association between early childhood programming and reduced incident of child maltreatment.
- The *Our Tomorrows StoryBank* is an unprecedented statewide research project collecting hundreds of stories from everyday Kansans about their family lives, providing the opportunity to identify emerging trends and opportunities for state and local action.
- Programs supported by the Children's Initiatives Fund participate in an annual accountability process notable for its scope and high levels of transparency. The process continues to evolve to meet even higher standards of evidence, allowing Children's Cabinet members to make data-informed decisions based on program outcomes and changing family need.
- The Early Childhood Block Grant evaluation is in its fifth year of collecting shared measures of consistent, high-quality data on thousands of young children and their families participating in early childhood programming.

A Few Exemplar Programs and Services *of the All In For Kansas Kids system-building effort*

New Initiatives

All In For Kansas Kids
Quality Subgrants

Kindergarten Readiness
Snapshot and the Kindergarten
Readiness/Transition Summit

Child Care Health
Consultant Network

Bridges Pilot

Adaptive Community
Technical Assistance

Kansas Common App

Updated or Expanded

1-800-CHILDREN

Supporting You

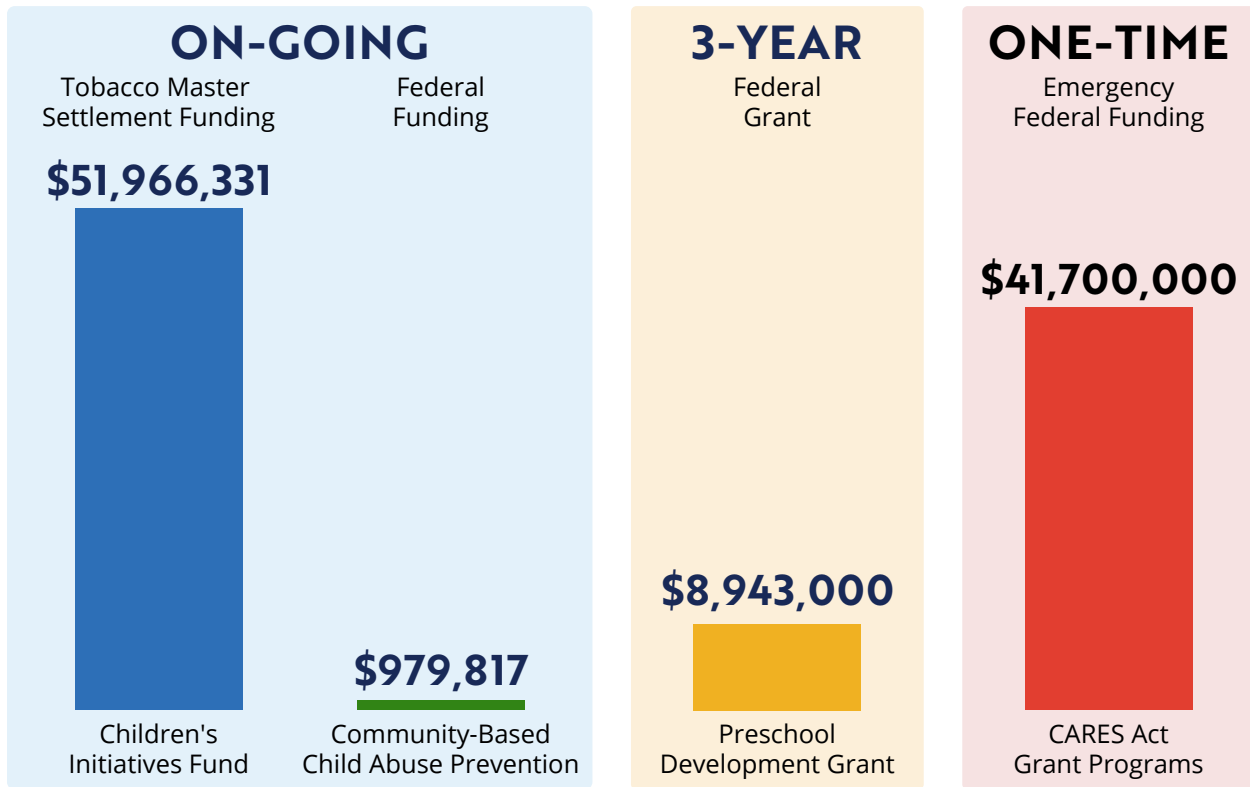
Our Tomorrows StoryBank

Child Care Systems
Improvement Team

Workforce Development
Advisory Group



FY 2020 Children's Cabinet Budget



There were a few particularities of 2020 that made the Children's Cabinet the steward of a much larger budget than normal.

The Children's Cabinet is charged by statute to manage and evaluate the use of the Children's Initiatives Fund (CIF), which is funded by Kansas's Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement dollars. CIF is one of the largest sources of funding for children and families programming in the state, funding 14 programs in 2020, including the Early Childhood Block Grant. Information on the uses of this fund can be found on pages 53-67. The Children's Cabinet is the State Lead for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) programs in Kansas. This is a federal primary prevention program which supports community-based work to prevent child maltreatment before it starts. Information on Kansas CBCAP programs can be found on pages 68-72.

In collaboration with other state agencies, the Children's Cabinet applied for and won a competitive Preschool Development Grant. These dollars have supported the Children's Cabinet in leading cross-sector collaborative work to strengthen Kansas's early childhood care and education system for all families, including the development and implementation of the *All for Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan. These efforts are detailed throughout the document, particularly 29-46.

In no small part due to our leadership of these collaborative efforts, the Children's Cabinet has been well positioned to coordinate distribution of CARES Act funding to meet the needs of families and communities hit hardest by the COVID-19 crisis. Details of this work can be found on pages 38-39.



All In For Kansas Kids

- Our Vision and Mission
- What Our Youngest Kansans Need
- Blueprint for Early Childhood
- Needs Assessment At-a-Glance
- Federal Funding



**Our vision for early
childhood in Kansas is
that *every child thrives.***



Our Vision and Mission

We value our youngest Kansans and their families. The first five years of life are critical to lifelong health and wellness and to our future prosperity as a state. Our mission is to build a solid foundation for Kansas children and families so that every child thrives. When children and families have a steady foundation of services and support, when all Kansas kids have their basic needs met, and when these children have equitable access to quality early childhood care and education, we prepare them for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Our tagline for this work, *"All In For Kansas Kids,"* is also our mantra and our way forward. We are proud of our state's tradition of supporting the best possible start for Kansas kids, but we know we can and will do better for all little ones and the families who love them.

The Kansas vision and mission for early childhood are detailed in the Children's Cabinet Blueprint for Early Childhood (Blueprint). The next section of this report presents the Blueprint in its entirety to describe how alignment and coordination of the early childhood system in Kansas results in a child's **healthy development** while building **strong families** and ensuring quality **early learning**.

Blueprint for Early Childhood

The Blueprint for Early Childhood is our state's strategic framework for ensuring that *every child thrives*.

Young children, birth to 5, and their families rely on a solid foundation in the Kansas early care and education system. The Blueprint guides decision making system-wide and locally so that every community, every provider, every stakeholder, and every parent can rely on a network of support that promotes:

HEALTHY
DEVELOPMENT

STRONG
FAMILIES

EARLY
LEARNING

These three “building blocks” are the foundation for collaboration across sectors, with multiple champions working toward **high quality, accessible, and affordable programs and services** for young children and families in Kansas.

While the paths to success may vary, our vision of *every child thriving* and this **Blueprint for Early Childhood** are intended to guide innovative program design, partnership development, sharing of best practices, and tracking toward long-term outcomes for children and families.

EVERY CHILD THRIVES

All children will have their basic needs met and have equitable access to quality early childhood care and education, so they are prepared to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

Impact

The prosperity of our state depends on the wellbeing of our youngest Kansans. Investing in early childhood programs yields significant returns through improved health, education, and economic outcomes. The Blueprint provides the common language, shared vision, and guidance necessary for cross-sector collaboration in the delivery of high-quality programs and services, and it provides a common frame for determining impact on children and families.

Implementation

The **Blueprint** and the **Strategic Plan for the Kansas Early Childhood Care and Education System** align the activities of agencies and providers in our state's mixed-delivery system around common goals. The Blueprint also aims to maximize parental choice and awareness of early care and education options, and guides the Children's Cabinet's investment portfolio.

Vision in Action

COMMUNITY AND PARENT FOCUS

Local communities are equipped and connected in ways that help parents easily navigate systems to choose services that support the healthy development of their children.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Kansas prioritizes and supports early childhood care and education professionals with clear standards and pathways to enact best practices.

QUALITY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Communities address their specific needs and challenges through coordinated strategies that improve access, availability, and quality.

SYSTEM ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

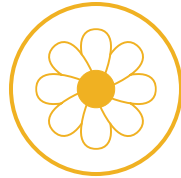
Kansas aligns the early childhood care and education system for equity and maximum impact, with state agencies integrating services so communities and families experience seamless, respectful, and responsive supports.

INNOVATION AND SCALING

Kansas innovates and creates opportunities to invest in the future of Kansas kids.

Building Blocks

for a solid foundation



Healthy Development

PRIMARY CARE
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
EARLY IDENTIFICATION

Kansas kids and families thrive when they have equitable access to comprehensive health and developmental services.

Kansas will...

- Promote early prenatal care and education, insurance coverage, and ongoing support for pregnant women
- Promote comprehensive care and insurance coverage for children and families
- Ensure equitable access to prevention and intervention services in early childhood for optimal health outcomes
- Screen universally for healthy development
- Overcome barriers and stigma around mental health care and services
- Promote inclusion of children with disabilities into natural environments
- Address workforce shortages/gaps in health and behavioral care services

Building Blocks

for a solid foundation



Strong Families

PARENT SUPPORT
SAFE, STABLE, NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Kansas kids and families are stronger when their basic needs are met.

Kansas will...

- Support parent involvement and leadership
- Promote safe, stable, and nurturing relationships to ensure children have strong, healthy starts
- Support opportunities for families to earn a living wage
- Promote cross-sector partnerships and coordination to address comprehensive needs of families, including food and housing security
- Promote, evaluate, and enhance evidence-based family support programs
- Promote the facilitation of peer-to-peer support opportunities
- Support family-friendly workplace policies to help employees reconcile their work and family responsibilities

Building Blocks

for a solid foundation



Early Learning

CHILD CARE
PRE-K
EARLY LITERACY

Kansas kids are prepared for success in kindergarten and beyond when their families have equitable access to quality care and early learning environments.

Kansas will...

- Ensure high-quality care to meet basic needs of all children by promoting adequate funding for core services and quality enhancements
- Promote a range of choices in early learning experiences (community-based, school-based, home-based, faith-based) and support economic development of businesses to maximize high-quality options
- Promote effective transitions over the life course, including transitions into kindergarten and across sectors, as children and families seek services and support
- Support inclusive and culturally sensitive training for early childhood professionals based on established core competencies
- Support the use of early learning standards to increase consistency and quality of services

WHY EARLY CHILDHOOD?

- A child's brain grows the fastest in early childhood.
- Investments in early childhood yield significant dividends.
- Supportive relationships and healthy environments are most critical in the early years.
- The best possible start in life requires that we all work together to build a solid foundation across the three building blocks during the critical early years.

What does a solid foundation look like?

- **Pregnant women** receive prenatal care and education.
- **Infants** are born at adequate birth weights, are safe and stable, and receive optimal nutrition and nurturing.
- **Children** receive physical and mental health screenings and interventions, are current with immunizations, and reach developmentally appropriate milestones.
- **Families** can afford early childhood care and education.
- **Early care and education professionals** are competent, credentialed, and effective.
- **Child care facilities and homes, early learning programs, and family support services** are high quality and able to meet the demand for services.
- **No children experience poverty, abuse, or neglect.**

OUR MIXED-DELIVERY SYSTEM

In the Kansas mixed-delivery system for early care and education, all families get the right services to match their level of need, taking into account their unique situations and experiences, to ensure every child thrives.

The role of public-private partnerships

Strategic collaboration across sectors and among both public and private investment partners ensures inclusive, broad-reaching, and sustainable implementation. Formalized agreements between the public sector (federal, state, local, and tribal officials or agencies) and the private sector (families, employers, philanthropies, media, civic groups, and service providers) are integral to a robust and responsive early care and education system.

Early Childhood Care and Education



Federal Funding

Alignment and coordination of our state's early childhood care and education system is paramount for thriving families and communities. In late 2018, Kansas was awarded the first of two substantial federal grants to help explore how closely reality aligns with our vision of *every child thriving*. Kansas received a Preschool Development Grant, Birth through Five, from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to support a needs assessment and development of a strategic plan in 2019.

After a year-long process of community engagement and planning, we were ready to put our plans into action. The Children's Cabinet worked collaboratively across state agencies to apply for a renewal Preschool Development Grant (PDG-R) from HHS in fall 2019 and received notice of award from this highly competitive grant process in April 2020.

The Kansas State Department of Education, the Kansas Department for Children and Families, and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment are leading this work alongside the Children's Cabinet. PDG-R is a three-year, \$26 million dollar effort dedicated to coordinating and aligning the early childhood care and education system. These renewal funds support implementation of the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan, provide subaward dollars for competitive grants to providers, and employ three new Children's Cabinet staff: an Early Childhood Systems Coordinator, an Early Childhood Workforce Coordinator, and an Early Childhood System Specialist.



What Our Youngest Kansans Need

In 2019 we set out to better understand the opportunities and gaps of our current system and what Kansans envision for their children and families. This effort, detailed in our robust Needs Assessment report published in January 2020, uncovered two stark realities:

Geography Matters

Families' experiences are profoundly shaped by where they live across the state and within communities. Geography impacts the availability and accessibility of early childhood services and supports, creating isolation and navigation barriers.

Basic Needs Are Not Being Met

Too many young Kansas children grow up in families where basic needs are not met. The struggle to meet basic needs such as food, housing, and health care challenges families' ability to give their child a strong start in life.

These realities do not match our collective vision of Kansas as a place where *every child thrives*. Kansas is home to 196,826 children under the age of 5, and far too many of these children and their families continue to face issues of accessibility, availability, and navigation in their efforts to seek high-quality care and education during a child's early years. At the same time, those committed to the care and education of our youngest Kansans face multiple obstacles that impact both the availability and quality of care and education. And alarmingly, as we are all acutely aware, the current realities of the global pandemic and our national unrest around equity only amplify these concerns and obstacles.

Needs Assessment Summary of Findings

The 2019 Needs Assessment represents a comprehensive view of our early childhood care and education system. We can describe our birth through age 5 population and the programs and services available across the state. We can point to promising and effective strategies for navigating a comprehensive early childhood system and for transitioning to the K-12 education system. We can identify resources to support our system infrastructure and a workforce comprising committed, dedicated professionals. We have a strong understanding of the importance of shared data and aligning around a collective vision. Importantly, we recognize the gaps that exist and the strides we need to take to strengthen our early childhood care and education system.

Needs Assessment At-a-Glance



Accessibility: Families with young children experience inequitable access to high-quality programs and services across the broader early childhood system.

Geography, awareness, eligibility, fear, and costs contribute to the inequities. Proximity to the location of services as well as geographic distribution of services impacts ease of access. Families with young children often remain unaware of the services that are available to them until a family emergency or crisis necessitates initial access. Limiting and conflicting eligibility criteria add an extra layer of challenge to understanding and identifying appropriate services.



Availability: Families with young children experience a gap between the services that are available and their actual needs, disproportionately affecting vulnerable and underserved populations.

Gaps exist across the early childhood system but are concentrated in a few key areas: parenting skills, basic and economic supports, child care, crisis services, and health care. Parents and caregivers lack sufficient support to gain the skills and resources they need to nurture the healthy development of their children, and meet their families' basic needs. Child care is a significant need, especially infant care, care during nontraditional hours, and care for children with special needs. More behavioral and mental health services are needed, including trauma-informed services. Families facing the disruptions caused by foster care, substance abuse, homelessness, and incarceration need additional support.



Navigation: Families must adopt a “connect the dots” approach to navigate services across sectors; disruptors are frequent and common.

Transition gaps occur at multiple levels across services and programs, requiring families to “connect the dots” within the early childhood care and education system, between sectors, and into kindergarten. Continuous engagement in early childhood care and education services requires significant problem-solving by families already in crisis, placing an additional burden on them. Common disruptors exist around transportation, cultural and linguistic barriers, health care, geography, cost, and crises.



Workforce: Early childhood workforce needs at both the leadership and direct service levels include preparation, compensation/financial relief, ongoing training and support, and recruitment and retention.

Specific challenges for those who care for Kansas children include diminishing numbers in the workforce, lack of credentials and opportunities to gain credentials, lack of respect and value, and professional development driven by regulations and availability. There is an urgent need for better compensation, benefits, and training for the early childhood workforce.



Facilities: Needs exist related to the physical conditions and environments of early childhood facilities across the state.

There is limited funding and funding flexibility for providers to make capital improvements, despite the importance of physical infrastructure to the safety of children and staff. Additional learning materials and enhancements to environments are also needed to ensure children of all abilities and cultural and linguistic backgrounds have high-quality and developmentally appropriate experiences in their early years.



Collaboration: Early childhood providers and stakeholders share a desire for collaboration and cooperation, but these efforts are often disconnected and uncoordinated.

Collaboration efforts exist across services, communities, and at the state level. Yet funding, awareness, and staffing limitations often hinder many efforts from taking a comprehensive approach. This can stifle good intentions and meaningful progress towards streamlining efforts and resources that support children and families.



Systems Alignment: Greater systems alignment is needed in order to fully realize an efficient and robust early childhood care and education infrastructure.

The current system remains siloed, fragmented, and difficult to navigate, without a model that defines the structures, partners, and best practices for early childhood care and education for all children. Regulations often have unintended consequences that affect accessibility and availability of services. Utilizing multiple funding streams is necessary to sustain services, yet there are often conflicting policy regulations, expectations, or requirements. Primary areas for future systems alignment include regulation and policy, data sharing, funding and resources, and shared governance/system integration.



Bright Spots: Efficient, innovative, responsive efforts are occurring among early care and education system partners in communities throughout the state.

Bright spots exist in all regions. Kansas is full of resilient families and communities that are striving to create the best possible circumstances for young children to thrive. Kansas has strong communities with passion, genuine care, and determination for improving the systems for children and families.



Strategic Plan

- Overview
- State-level Coordination
- Community-level Coordination
- Family Knowledge and Choice
- Private Sector Collaboration
- Capacity and Access
- Workforce
- Quality and Environments
- Our Tomorrows StoryBank



It takes collaboration on multiple fronts to meet the goals of this Strategic Plan



Overview

Overcoming challenges to effectively meet the needs of Kansas children and families requires a collective vision supported by attainable goals, concrete strategies, actionable tactics, and indicators of success. The *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan articulates that vision and charts the path forward.

The five-year plan was built to be both actionable and inspirational.

Extensive feedback from early childhood stakeholders, parents, and community leaders shaped and prioritized the work ahead. We recognize that a plan of this magnitude and covering the span of five years has to be amenable to changing times, new information, and innovative ideas. We were often reminded of this as we forged ahead with implementation during this most unpredictable and tumultuous year.

In 2020, Kansas early childhood stakeholders embarked on a process of regular and continual strategic planning, data gathering, feedback monitoring, and action.



State-level Coordination

Insights from the Needs Assessment

Kansans told us there are disconnects between state agencies and local providers that make it hard for both families and service providers to find information, access the right services, and navigate between systems.

Addressing needs and gaps

We recognize that we must build and grow partnerships among all state agencies that support families. Improved state-level coordination helps ensure that regulations and policy, data sharing, and funding lead to better outcomes for Kansas children. As a state, we achieve maximum impact through strategies that coordinate and streamline referrals, provide technical assistance, and increase parent knowledge and access to services.

Additionally, we know that to streamline state-level early childhood decision making, we must establish a strong governance structure for the Kansas early childhood care and education system. Read more in the Governance section of this report to learn how we are collaborating across state agencies and among workgroups to implement the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan.

Goal 1

The early childhood care and education system is structured and aligned for maximum impact.

- **1-800-CHILDREN** is administered through the Kansas Children’s Service League and serves as a centralized access point for information, support, and referrals 24/7. It has gone through **major improvements and enhancements this year**. This “warmline” is fully staffed and operational with new messaging developed by a marketing firm for promotion among families and service providers. A comprehensive resource directory (using a tool called Aunt Bertha) complements the warmline with robust, up-to-date information on services in Kansas.
- **Kansas CommonApp** is a new portal—developed by the Children’s Cabinet and piloted in October 2020 with the Quality Subgrants—for requesting and reporting on grant funding across state agencies. Designed for current and potential grantees to engage efficiently with multiple funding opportunities in the same system, the Kansas CommonApp **reduces staffing constraints and streamlines the grant-writing and grant-making process**.
- The **Kindergarten Readiness Snapshot** through the Kansas State Department of Education aims to complete a developmental screening of every Kansas child upon entering kindergarten using the parent/caregiver-driven Ages & Stages Questionnaires. **An infrastructure of online access, training, and technical assistance is in place, already resulting in easier completion and efficiency for both staff and families**.
- An **Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS)** is a proven model for analyzing, securely sharing, and efficiently utilizing data across multiple agencies and early childhood programs statewide. A successful system links data across sectors to study child and family outcomes longitudinally and help inform policy discussions. **Kansas is in the beginning stages of developing an ECIDS**, and the Children’s Cabinet has prepared a Data Trust Agreement outlining structure and governance. A data-sharing pilot project between the Department for Children and Families and the Children’s Cabinet’s Early Childhood Block Grant programs is also forming.

Our Plans

NEXT STEPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **Facilitate** continued collaboration with the Kansas Department of Commerce to promote resources, COVID-19 relief, and other funds and opportunities to expand access to quality child care.
- **Explore and support** more telehealth services, particularly in rural areas, and in response to the conditions and constraints of the pandemic.
- **Continue activating** the Child Care Systems Improvement Team, a 35+ member team meeting monthly, comprised of child care providers and leaders across the state. This team is developing a comprehensive public awareness campaign to share the benefits, importance, and economic impact of quality, licensed child care while also examining critical concerns of early childhood professionals.



Community-level Coordination

Insights from the Needs Assessment

Kansans told us it is difficult for families to find and access services when they need them. Often, families must “connect the dots” themselves, and they tell us that better collaboration among local providers would help.

Addressing needs and gaps

We recognize that Goal 1: State-level Coordination is critical to our work on Goal 2: Community-level Coordination. Improved coordination, infrastructure, and technical assistance will help Kansas providers build partnerships within their regions—and statewide—to generate community-specific solutions.

We envision communities will use shared tools and strategies to help families find information, access the right services, and navigate between systems. Communities will lift family voice, expand family choice, and engage a diverse representation of local champions to address their unique challenges.

Goal 2

Communities are empowered and equipped to create the best environments to raise a child.

- **Bridges** is a care coordination program within the Kansas Department of Health and Environment designed to facilitate a smooth transition out of Part C tiny-K services for families with children approaching age 3. While many families move directly into Part B services in local school districts, one out of three will not qualify and may need assistance while seeking other support. The Bridges Pilot currently underway focuses on care coordination for children with special health care needs (SHCN) and pediatric medical offices in high-need communities. **An Implementation Toolkit is under development, and the program is currently recruiting participants.**
- **Adaptive Community Technical Assistance (ACTA)** is designed for Kansas communities to facilitate collaboration among service providers and increase efficiencies. ACTA is provided by the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research with the aim of making it easier for families to navigate local systems and services. Over the past few months, ACTA has **finalized a strategy guide and implementation process and is currently administering support in a Four-tiered structure** based on the assessed needs of a community. ACTA has provided assistance with ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2 in the form of **training, supplies, and outreach in multiple languages to 25 Kansas counties.** The program is building collaboration and connections among Head Start, Child Care Aware, and tiny-k Part C services.

- **Continue** working with Brookes Publishing through the Kindergarten Readiness Snapshot program to increase the number and geographic reach of trainers for the *Ages & Stages Questionnaires*. The aim is to connect new trainers to local programs while providing education and support to area leaders so that universal developmental screening is prioritized and accessible in all Kansas communities.
- **Expand** IRIS communities to support 1-800-CHILDREN referrals. IRIS communities are those who have adopted the Integrated Referral and Information System to facilitate communication and follow-up among local service providers. The need for referrals continues to grow, and warmline calls are increasingly coming from families struggling with situations exacerbated by the pandemic. Expanding the number of communities using IRIS (or other types of localized comprehensive resource and referral networks to meet community-specific needs) will ensure that families know of services in their communities and help ease navigation.



Family Knowledge and Choice

Insights from the Needs Assessment

We learned there is inconsistent awareness of the importance of early childhood and the critical role parents and caregivers play in their child's development. Also, families don't always know what services and programs are available in their own communities, and access may be limited.

Addressing needs and gaps

We recognize that Kansas families must have the right information and tools to empower choice and ensure equitable access to services. We envision that families will be equal partners in the planning, development, delivery, and evaluation of services that affect them. Ensuring families are at the center of decision making will result in a "nothing about us, without us" system.

Goal 3

Families have what they need to make informed decisions and can get services where they live and work.

- **Supporting You** is a peer support network administered by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's Special Health Services Section (SHS). Through this program, families share information and gain ideas from others who have experienced similar situations. The program helps parents and caregivers connect with others for comfort. Participants benefit from the vitally important support of a caring peer willing to listen, encourage, and reflect on struggles in a non-judgmental space. The Family Advisory Council of the SHS provides oversight and monitoring of the network and partner organizations. **Initially piloted with the Kansas Special Health Care Needs program and the Kansas School for the Deaf, Supporting You is now available for anyone who needs to connect and feel supported.**
- **All In For Kansas Kids Quality Subgrants** involved parents and caregivers as reviewers for grant applications (See Goal 5 for full description of this new statewide grant-making program from the State Directors Team.) **This was an unprecedented effort to engage families in the very beginning stages of program and service ideation, design, and funding.** For family voice to be truly impactful, we are committed to including and valuing participation every step of the way as an essential perspective, rather than only serving as feedback after a program is underway. Through participation in the review process, parents not only contributed to ground-level development of initiatives in Kansas communities, but also gained beneficial personal experience. One reviewer offered, *"It was valuable to me because I realized that I do have what it takes to write grant applications. It helped me overcome a confidence block and that might open new career opportunities for me."*

Our Plans

NEXT STEPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **Continue** working toward a unified system of family involvement that considers parent voice as integral to program development and assessment. A key priority for future effort is incorporation of the Kansas Family Engagement and Partnership Standards for Early Childhood. These standards offer a framework for building family-friendly programs, policies, and practices.



Private Sector Collaboration

Insights from the Needs Assessment

Kansans told us there is a need for greater involvement and investment in the early childhood care and education system. Private sector collaboration and family-friendly workplace practices can have a profound impact on the lives of Kansas children.

Addressing needs and gaps

We recognize that our shared future prosperity is rooted in early childhood. We envision a state where businesses, philanthropies, and nonprofits alike understand the importance of investing early to build healthy, thriving communities.

As employers of parents and caregivers, private sector partners will maintain a competitive edge by committing to innovative, family-friendly practices.

Goal 4
Kansas is a champion of public-private collaboration and creates opportunities to invest in the future of Kansas kids and families.

- **Kansas Power of the Positive**, a program of the Kansas Children’s Service League, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and WSU-CIE, educates the public on favorable conditions for working parents to provide safe, stable, nurturing environments for their children. The coalition’s *Kids Are Good Business Workgroup* helps employers understand the needs of people who are not engaging effectively in the workplace because of family struggles. The workgroup is **helping employers in the private sector meet family needs through policies and practices for family-friendly workplaces**. They have beta-tested an employer survey that identifies high-priority workplace conditions that need improvement and offers concrete resources for creating those conditions.
- The **Kansas Department of Commerce** is **working to support the early childhood system** through several initiatives, including establishing the “Family-friendly Workplace” designation within the Governor’s Awards for Business Excellence and setting aside funds from the Community Service Tax Credit Program specifically for early childhood facilities and projects.
- The **Governor’s Council on Education** recommended the establishment of a statewide public-private partnership to equitably meet the needs of Kansas children and families. With the COVID-19 pandemic, however, **both public and private resources have been appropriately diverted to crisis-mitigation efforts and direct supports**. We have made the **pivot to nurturing community level public-private partnerships** as a result of the pandemic.

COVID-19 Relief Efforts

- **Action Lab mini-grants** were a rapid-response effort to help providers hard hit in the early days of the pandemic. The Children’s Cabinet and the Kansas State Department of Education worked to **repurpose non-CARES funds toward support for 317 licensed child care providers**.
- **Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) proposals** are resulting in distribution of public support for early childhood care providers across the state. Once the CARES Act was signed by Congress, the Children’s Cabinet began **collaborating with other state agency partners** and early childhood leaders across Kansas to support the following initiatives:
 - **Kansas Association of Counties presentation** - described urgent needs of the early childhood system exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and offered a range of impactful ideas to address those needs that could be implemented at the county level using CRF.
 - **Technology for Families Fund** - provides connectivity, equipment, and devices to support virtual access for families receiving home visiting services.
 - **Essential Worker Health Care Fund** - covers health care expenses for early childhood professionals and other essential workers who contract COVID-19.
 - **Child Care Health Consultants and Facilities Grants** - provides technical assistance and environmental assessments for any KDHE-licensed facility. Consultants advise on actions or modifications necessary to meet health and safety recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Facilities that complete the environmental assessment become eligible to apply for a health and safety grant to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.
 - **Remote Learning Grants** - ensures school-age children are in safe, secure settings and receive quality supervision to minimize the impact on families when schools shift to the hybrid/remote learning modes.



Capacity and Access

Insights from the Needs Assessment

Kansans told us that the experiences of children and families differ based on the community in which they reside: geography matters. Many children are growing up in families struggling to meet basic needs such as housing, food, transportation, health, and safety.

Addressing needs and gaps

We recognize these disparities and disruptions impact how families interact with the early childhood care and education system. We envision Kansas communities that strengthen the quality and reach of early childhood care and education services in ways that address the unique needs of their population and geographical location.

Goal 5

Kansas families have their basic needs met and have equitable access to quality early childhood care and education services.

- **All In For Kansas Kids Quality Subgrants** from the State Directors Team allotted \$2.1 million to help communities, service providers, and other early childhood stakeholders address needs and gaps through locally-driven approaches. Applicants prepared proposals responsive to the findings of the 2019 Needs Assessment and aligned with the Blueprint for Early Childhood and the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan. Using the new Kansas CommonApp (see Goal 1 “Progress”), applicants submitted proposals in five categories. After a highly competitive review process of **147 subgrant applications, 59 applications were selected** for funding. Recipients included licensed child care providers, school districts, nonprofits, and governmental entities across Kansas.

Awards by category

Child Care Access – 11 (\$585,878)

Rural Child Care – 12 (\$627,032)

Connect Families to Services – 12 (\$558,941)

Improve Quality of Care – 23 (\$336,714)

Kindergarten Readiness – 1 (\$25,000)

At the time of writing, the award notices and negotiations were not yet final. Numbers may change slightly.

- The **Kindergarten Readiness/Transitions Summit** was a first-time, virtual conference held on November 13, 2020. It was designed by the Kansas State Department of Education and the Kansas Head Start Association to ensure all Kansas children enter kindergarten socially, emotionally, and academically prepared. **Teams of community partners across the state learned, shared, advised, and planned for successful transitions to kindergarten in their districts.** Because transition processes may qualitatively vary depending on size, district, population, and geography, one approach does not fit all Kansas communities. This event provided opportunities for schools, care providers, and community partners to develop effective strategies unique to local needs.

Our Plans

NEXT STEPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Goal 5

- **Expand** availability of evidence-based home visiting programs across the state, focusing on underserved and high-need areas. The Home Visiting Leadership Team will lead this work.
- **Strengthen** connections among concrete-support programs and the early childhood sector. A review of eligibility requirements across state-funded programs, e.g. Medicaid, TANF, WIC, SNAP, and DCF Child Care Subsidies, will help more families access the concrete supports they need. State-level and community-level leaders will equip professionals working in direct service with tools to facilitate referrals to concrete-support programs.



Workforce

Insights from the Needs Assessment

Kansans told us there is an urgent need for better compensation, benefits, and training for the early childhood workforce. Kansas is one of only 10 states without a workforce registry, which would offer early childhood professionals a place to document their development and quality improvement accomplishments.

Addressing needs and gaps

We found unnecessary fragmentation across organizations, providers, and disciplines contributing to the early childhood workforce. We envision a cohesive system that recruits, retains, and advances a diverse workforce that is prepared and qualified to meet the changing needs of young children and families. Professionals will feel respected and valued, and they will have the resources they need to deliver high-quality services to children and families.

To support workforce improvement efforts across the system, the Children's Cabinet created and filled a new position for an Early Childhood Workforce Coordinator. The coordinator is working to develop an annual early childhood workforce plan and communicate with partner organizations across the state on professional development initiatives. The coordinator also serves as a member of the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan Core Team.

Goal 6

Kansas leads the way in developing, supporting, and valuing early childhood professionals.

- The **All In For Kansas Kids governance structure and established communications channels** facilitated two-way dialogue among early childhood stakeholders across the state. With COVID-19 disrupting lives and creating immense challenges for the workforce, we relied heavily on several channels (biweekly webinars, weekly email distribution, Children’s Cabinet website share forms and story collection, and grantee forums) to **listen and match provider assistance to evolving needs**. The Children’s Cabinet new governance structure further supported **responsiveness across state agencies** to the rapidly-changing conditions of the pandemic.
- The **Workforce Development Advisory Group (WFDAG)** is comprised of early childhood stakeholders across the state who meet monthly to explore solutions to issues facing the current and future professional workforce. A top focus is **development of a workforce registry**, a coordinated system employers can use for recruitment, professionals can use for career development, and the state can use for health and safety monitoring.

The WFDAG is studying other states’ successes and setbacks while researching the unique needs of Kansas to prepare workforce registry recommendations for the Early Childhood Recommendations Panel to move forward. The workforce registry aims to facilitate and support:

- access to key data about the Kansas early childhood workforce (e.g. demographics, credentials and training histories, and training needs),
- clear career pathways that acknowledge multiple entry points or on-ramps and include connections to the high school level and two- and four-year institutions of higher education; and
- quality indicators and standards that include culturally and linguistically appropriate information.

Our Plans

NEXT STEPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **Expand** connections among high school and higher education through articulation agreement support for transfer of early childhood courses. Such agreements will help promote degree and career advancement among professionals.
- **Ensure** a comprehensive professional development system including review and alignment of core competencies across all early childhood positions and incorporation of diversity, equity, and inclusion practices in all settings. Continue working with the Kansas Department of Commerce on re-establishing the Registered Apprenticeship Program for Child Care and Preschools.
- **Explore** ways of incorporating key features of interest into the workforce registry including postings of employment opportunities for early childhood professionals, self-assessment tools tied to career pathways, and training resources.
- **Expand** access to, and completion of, post-secondary programs focusing on high-need careers. The Governor’s Council on Education Competitive Edge Sub-Committee is drafting recommendations for linking business incentives to investments in the early childhood care and education workforce to attract economic growth.



Quality and Environments

Insights from the Needs Assessment

Kansans told us there are limited resources to support new facilities, capital improvements, and development of additional, high-quality learning materials. We also know that there is a need to identify and align core quality standards that reflect culturally responsive best practices for early learning across settings.

Addressing needs and gaps

We recognize that investments in physical infrastructure will ensure all children have access to safe, stable, and nurturing environments where high-quality services can be equitably delivered. We envision environments where every child can thrive.

Goal 7

Kansas early childhood care and education programs and environments are high-quality, safe, and nurturing.

- **Links to Quality** (our state’s quality recognition and improvement system [QRIS] operated through the Department for Children and Families) partnered with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to **establish a Child Care Health Consultant Network**. In response to COVID-19, consultants are available to help child care programs analyze the results of a self-assessment and identify ways to reduce the spread of illnesses. Health consultants advise on safety regulations and modifications, and programs responding to these consults can then apply for grant funding to assist with COVID-19 expenses.
- **All In For Kansas Kids Quality Subgrants** (See Goal 5, “Progress”) gave local programs an opportunity to **improve the quality and capacity of operations** and/or develop new initiatives to address unmet needs in their communities. In November 2020, 59 applicants across Kansas were offered Quality Subgrant funding across five categories. The proposed projects were diverse and speak to the unique needs of their communities and the families they serve. Activities include improvement and expansion of learning spaces, professional development, integration of culturally inclusive books and toys into programming, and improved referral systems for families and partners.

Our Plans

NEXT STEPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **Continue** expanding Links to Quality. Building upon the pilot launched in 2018 in 17 counties, this program will continue to work toward statewide expansion.
- **Support** continuation and expansion of the Child Care Health Consultant Network formed to address the conditions of the pandemic. Consulting positions will be enhanced to include in-service training, oral health, nutrition, physical activity, and mental health.

Our Tomorrows StoryBank

The *Our Tomorrows* research project captures stories from Kansans to better understand personal experiences and their context. These personal accounts are being collected and analyzed to inform work on the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan. The Children’s Cabinet uses the *Our Tomorrows StoryBank* to understand both the needs of families—this approach was also used to inform the *All In For Kansas Kids* Needs Assessment in 2019—and the real-time impact of changes and systems improvements.

The collection of stories for the *Our Tomorrows StoryBank* informs work across all Strategic Plan goals and strategies, and will be ongoing throughout the full five-year period of the plan. The *Our Tomorrows* tool is designed for rapid-cycle collection, analysis, reporting, and decision making. Through a continuous capture of stories, *Our Tomorrows* can track trends and identify emerging opportunities for state and local action.

The power of this story-based research project lies not only in elevating the voices of Kansans through heartfelt and insightful anecdotes, but also in its ability to identify patterns across stories and make meaning out of this qualitative data. Researchers can identify emerging needs, share results with key stakeholders to drive decision making, and create opportunities for “sensemaking” and idea generation. These sensemaking sessions, using *Our Tomorrows StoryBank* data, are forums for identifying action steps and potential solutions to complex problems.

When the COVID-19 crisis began, the *Our Tomorrows* team shifted gears quickly and added COVID-specific questions to the data collection process. Since March 2020, an average of 255 stories a month have been shared, many of which offer insight into how Kansans are holding up during the pandemic. The *Our Tomorrows* team has provided monthly scans to the Children’s Cabinet, which are distributed to early childhood stakeholder networks across Kansas. The scans highlight demographics of storytellers, emerging patterns, opportunities for action, and include representative stories from that month. Two counties in particular (Miami and Johnson) have relied heavily on the analysis from *Our Tomorrows* to make decisions around use of Coronavirus Relief Funds from the Strengthening People and Revitalizing Kansas (SPARK) committee. Additionally, the development and disbursement of COVID-19 relief described in this section under Goal 4 were largely informed by *Our Tomorrows* data. Read more about the analysis of the *Our Tomorrows StoryBank* in the Accountability and Evaluation section of this report.

Since March 2020, an average of 255 stories a month have been shared, many of which offer important insights into how Kansans are holding up during the pandemic.



Governance

- Early Childhood Advisory Council
- Governance Structure
- Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel
- Panel Recommendations

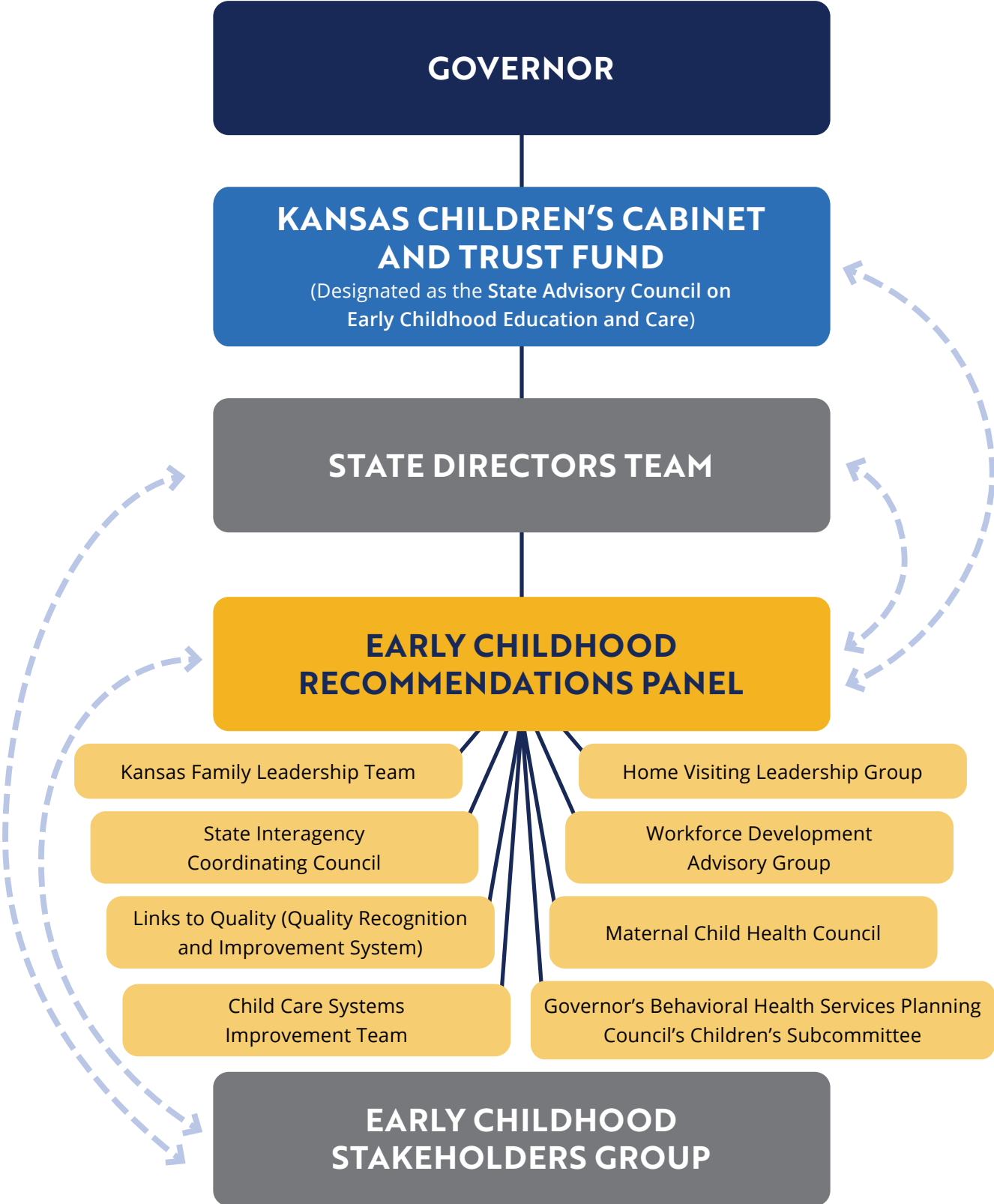


Early Childhood Advisory Council

Kansas Executive Order 20-02, signed by Governor Kelly in February 2020, designates the Children's Cabinet as the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care. Nationally, State advisory councils are formed to improve the quality, availability, and coordination of programs and services for children ages birth to age 5. The Children's Cabinet now officially serves this role in Kansas and is working to ensure statewide coordination and collaboration among the wide range of early childhood programs and services in the state, including child care, home visiting, Head Start, IDEA infant/toddler and preschool programs, and pre-kindergarten programs and services.

The 2019 *All In For Kansas Kids* Needs Assessment found that greater systems alignment is needed to fully realize an efficient and robust early childhood care and education infrastructure. The establishment of this early childhood advisory council facilitates coordination and alignment among state agencies for such activities as issuing requests for proposals; determining funding strategies and requirements; developing scopes of work; and determining programming priorities, eligibility, and reporting requirements. Enhanced collaboration among state agencies also streamlines expectations around monitoring, licensing, and providing technical assistance to providers in the early care and education system.

Governance Structure





Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel

In July 2020, the Children’s Cabinet convened a panel of volunteers—the Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel (the Panel)—to support the Children’s Cabinet in fulfilling the role of a state advisory council. Panel members demonstrate early childhood expertise and operate in an advisory role. The executive director of the Children’s Cabinet coordinates the activities of the Panel and establishes responsibilities, governance, and reporting structures.

Through their technical expertise and collaborative efforts, Panel members are a critical component of the governance structure supporting early childhood initiatives in Kansas. The Panel plays a key role in enabling our state to implement the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan, respond to challenges, elevate recommendations from communities and stakeholders, and make decisions to help us achieve the vision of every child thriving.

Additionally, the Panel serves as a nexus for collaboration and elevating the voices of all Kansans. The Panel interfaces with councils, committees, and workgroups with expertise, experience, or jurisdiction related to particular aspects of the early care and education system. See a list of sample groups in the graphic of the Kansas Early Childhood Governance Structure on the previous page.

Panel Members

The Children's Cabinet appoints a chair to coordinate the work of the Panel. Kansans interested in serving on the Panel may submit their interest at any point during the year.

| Name | Organization |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Amanda Petersen, Chair | Kansas State Department of Education |
| Nichelle Adams | Kansas Department for Children and Families |
| Jennifer Adhima | Project Eagle, University of Kansas Medical Center |
| Marites Altuna | Kansas Deaf-Blind Project |
| Rachel Anno | Kansas Department for Children and Families |
| Mallory Arellano | Newman University |
| Emily Barnes | Barnes Child Care |
| Deanna Berry | Russell Child Development Center |
| Tanya Bulluck | Child Start |
| Gail Cozadd | Kansas Children's Service League |
| Rachele FioRito | United Way of the Plains |
| Jenny Flinders | University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research |
| Jennifer Forker | Hutchinson Community College |
| Kelly Frantz-Langford | TARC, Inc. |
| Amy Gottschamer | Googols of Learning |
| Kim Hawkins | USD 233 - Olathe Public Schools |
| Sheila Hermocillo | USD 443 - Dodge City Public Schools |
| Eva Horn | University of Kansas Department of Special Education |
| Peggy Kelly | Kansas Head Start Association |
| Kim Kennedy | Kansas Department for Children and Families |
| Emily Killough | Children's Mercy Kansas City |
| Lori Kravitcz | Kansas Department of Health and Environment |
| David Lindeman | University of Kansas Life Span Institute at Parsons |
| Kelli Mark | Kansas Department of Health and Environment |
| Natalie McClane | Kansas State Department of Education |
| Amy Meek | Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund |
| Paula Neth | The Family Conservancy |
| Karen Pahls | USD 231 - Gardner Edgerton |
| Kristin Pedersen | University of Kansas Speech Language Hearing Clinic |
| Patty Peschel | Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities |
| Deidre Rankin | Child Start |
| Sarah Rivers | Via Christi Rehabilitation |
| Angie Saenger | Child Care Aware of Kansas |
| Jan Scheideman | Riley County Health Department |
| Chelsea Schulte | Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities |
| Cassandra Sines | Sines Virtual Assistant Service |
| Christi Smith | DCCCA |
| Heather Staab | Kansas Department of Health and Environment |
| Cornelia Stevens | TOP Early Learning Centers |
| Amber Tankersley | Pittsburg State University |
| Reva Wywadis | Child Care Aware of Eastern Kansas |

Panel Recommendations

Shortly after convening for the first time in July 2020, the Panel formed a Kindergarten Transitions Subgroup. The subgroup met to begin addressing transition gaps uncovered through the 2019 *All In For Kansas Kids* Needs Assessment. Transition gaps occur at multiple levels across services and programs, requiring families to “connect the dots” with little support and guidance, within the early childhood care and education system. No formal kindergarten transition processes or practices currently exist at the state level.

This subgroup focused specifically on cross-sector, intentional, active planning for kindergarten transitions and brought forth a draft recommendation to the Panel in October 2020. This recommendation suggested that community-led collaboration should engage wide representation of early childhood stakeholders, including families, early childhood care and education providers, schools, businesses, and other partners in the mixed-delivery system. They also recommended that the transition planning process should result in a formal agreement that defines goals, roles, responsibilities, and specific activities. The subgroup prepared an “MOU Toolkit” which included a Memorandum of Understanding template and a workplan template. At their December meeting, the Children’s Cabinet reviewed and approved the MOU Toolkit for distribution.



Accountability and Evaluation

- Overview
- Children's Initiative Fund
- Early Childhood Block Grant
- Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention
- Findings
- Our Tomorrows StoryBank Analysis



Overview

Over the course of a turbulent 2020, marked by countless unforeseen obstacles, Kansans increasingly relied on the state's strong network of services and support for families. As new opportunities for impact presented themselves, the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan served as an anchor and a guidepost for the Children's Cabinet. The voices and experiences of hundreds of Kansans, detailed in the *Our Tomorrows StoryBank*, illuminated the path forward.

While Kansas families and service providers alike navigated disrupted systems and experienced new ways of living and coping, the Children's Cabinet formal Accountability Process continued to offer important information for decision making.

History and Purpose

This annual Accountability Process, which began in 2006, is responsive to state statute requiring that the Children's Cabinet "review, assess, and evaluate all uses of the monies in the Children's Initiatives Fund" as part of annual allocations. The Children's Cabinet works with university researchers to interview grantees, compile data, and analyze service delivery and outcomes for each program. Findings from this process are used to inform funding recommendations to the governor and the legislature.

Timeline and Scope

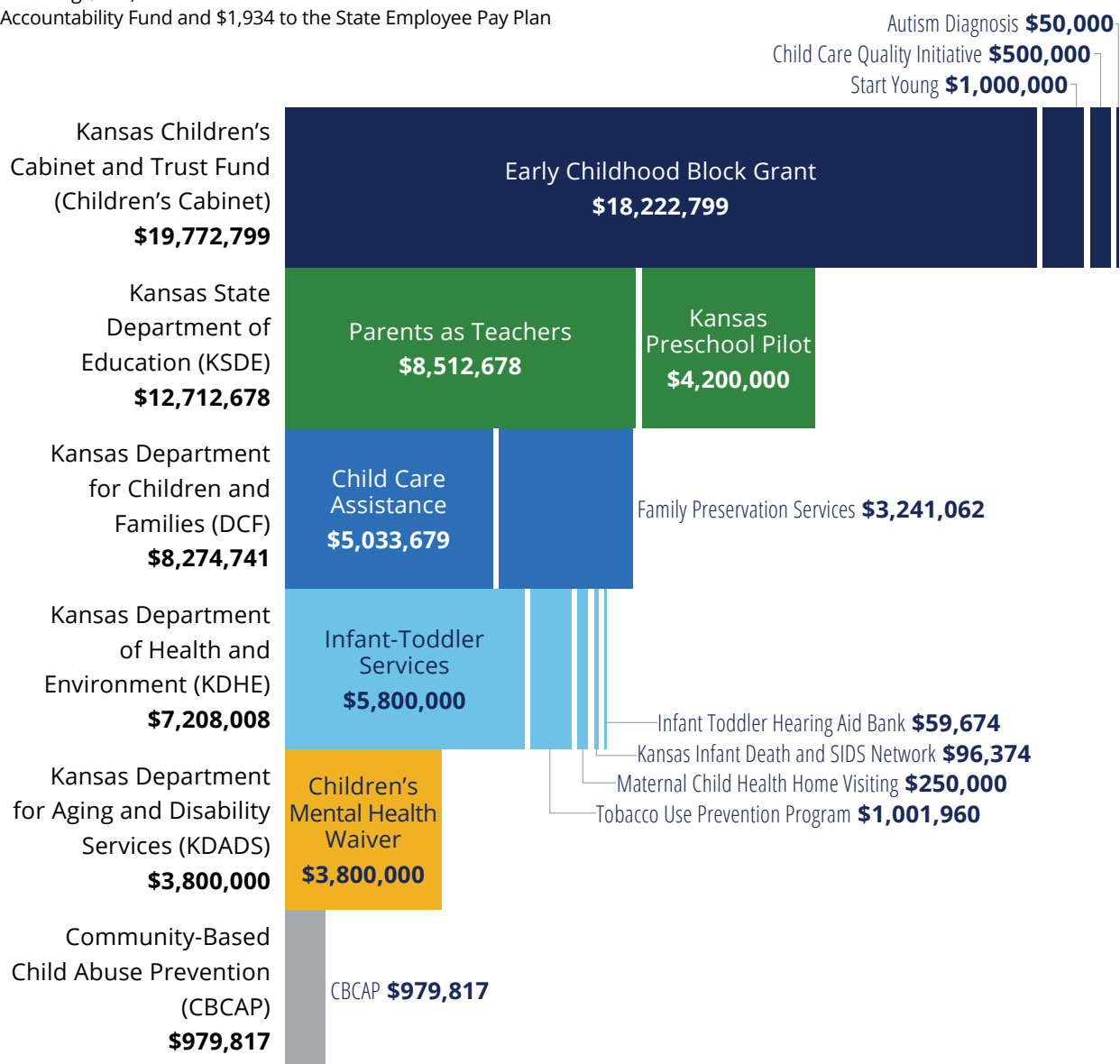
In previous years, the Children’s Cabinet met to review the results of the accountability process and make recommendations to the governor in the fall, based on the availability of data for the fiscal year. In 2020, the accountability process timing changed to late spring to better align with the legislative process. In future years the accountability process will also align closely with the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan to ensure regular and continual planning, data gathering, feedback monitoring, and action. This alignment and adjustment to timing provides the necessary context and prioritization to make responsive programmatic and funding recommendations to the governor.

Children’s Cabinet Funding

Total FY2020 Funding

CIF **\$52,145,165*** | CBCAP **\$979,817**

*Including \$375,000 allotted to the Children’s Cabinet Accountability Fund and \$1,934 to the State Employee Pay Plan





Children's Initiatives Fund

The 1999 Kansas Legislature created the CIF to support programs promoting the health and welfare of Kansas children. Historically, the CIF has funded programs and services with a focus on early childhood care and education, health screening, home visiting, parent education, and child welfare.

The CIF is sustained through the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement, and the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research conducts the Accountability Process

for CIF. The following pages provide an overview of each program, including the amount awarded from CIF, a brief description of services and accomplishments over the past five years, and the populations served.

14 CIF Programs
were funded in FY 2020 to support
children and families in Kansas.

Autism Diagnosis

KANSAS CHILDREN'S CABINET AND TRUST FUND

FY2020
\$50,000

The Autism Diagnosis program trains community-based teams to recognize early signs of autism and connect parents to diagnostic resources. The University of Kansas (KU) Center for Child Health and Development collaborates with the KU Center for Telemedicine and Telehealth and Autism Diagnostic Teams (ADTs) to increase early identification and intervention for children at risk for, or diagnosed with, Autism Spectrum Disorders. These partnerships decrease the wait time between a child's screening, diagnosis, and intervention, ensuring quick access to needed supports.

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Total Children | 64 |
| Prenatal to Age 2 | 2 |
| Ages 2-5 | 33 |
| Ages 5-12 | 26 |
| Ages 12-18 | 2 |
| Ages 18+ | 1 |
| Adults | 90 |
| Professional Development | 153 |

5-Year Synthesis

The Autism Diagnosis program has been funded through the CIF for over five years. In the previous five years, it served an average of 109 caregivers and 97 children per year. The Autism Diagnosis program has provided professional development for an average of 154 professionals per year. Notable accomplishments include increasing the timeliness of autism diagnosis to six months earlier than the national average, managing 30+ ADTs across the state, and implementing a telemedicine and outreach clinic program that saved 45,810 miles last year.

Child Care Assistance (CCA)

KANSAS DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

FY2020
\$5,033,679

CCA supports families initially living at or below 185% of the federal poverty level or at or below 85% of the state median income at their annual review. CCA provides families with a subsidy to finance child care while parents work, attend school, complete a GED, or fill a temporary emergency need. CCA promotes school readiness and financial stability by increasing families' access to high-quality child care environments.

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Total Children | 16,957 |
| Prenatal to Age 2 | 2,606 |
| Ages 2-5 | 6,344 |
| Ages 5-12 | 7,505 |
| Ages 12-18 | 502 |
| Ages 18+ | 0 |
| Adults | 0 |
| Professional Development | 0 |

5-Year Synthesis

Over the past five years, CCA served an average of 19,125 children per year. Child care subsidies have resulted in average increases in the monthly earnings of the families who receive them. Income increases have ranged from 7.5% to 15.6% of the families' income. Programs have used market rate analysis to ensure the subsidy provided to families participating in the program matches the rates charged by child care centers in service areas.

Child Care Quality Initiative (CCQI)

KANSAS CHILDREN'S CABINET AND TRUST FUND

FY2020
\$500,000

CCQI, a program of Child Care Aware of Kansas, provides professional development to child care professionals across the state to help increase the quality of their early learning environments. Services include professional development events, parent engagement events, peer learning collaboratives, and quality assessments. CCQI seeks to make safe, affordable care more accessible for all Kansas children. As part of the broader initiative, Child Care Aware also offers a year-long intensive coaching program engaging up to 40 home-based child care providers with targeted coaching interactions.

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Total Children | 372 |
| Prenatal to Age 2 | 76 |
| Ages 2-5 | 235 |
| Ages 5-12 | 61 |
| Ages 12-18 | 0 |
| Ages 18+ | 0 |
| Adults | 482 |
| Professional Development | 267 |

5-Year Synthesis

CIF funds have provided almost 100% of funding to the CCQI in the last five years. Over these years, the program has served an average of 835 children and 1,162 caregivers per year. Additionally, they have provided professional development to over 3,000 professionals. CCQI is an adaptable and relevant program as evidenced by their response to family and provider needs by expanding their Parent Cafés and Strengthening Families programs, development of a homelessness initiative, and creation and implementation of a texting campaign to help improve outcomes for children. Five years ago, CCQI piloted the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) which is now implemented in their classrooms.

Children's Mental Health Waiver

KANSAS DEPARTMENT FOR AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES

FY2020
\$3,800,000

The Children's Mental Health Waiver, also known as the Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) waiver, supports families by helping children with serious mental health conditions access the mental health services they need to remain in their homes. Eligible children, ages 4 to 18, have a diagnosed mental health condition substantially disrupting their ability to function socially, academically, and/or emotionally. Services are guided by a case plan positioning parents and children as active participants and includes case management, outpatient therapy, and respite care.

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Total Children | 5,120 |
| Prenatal to Age 2 | 0 |
| Ages 2-5 | 24 |
| Ages 5-12 | 1,619 |
| Ages 12-18 | 2,741 |
| Ages 18+ | 736 |
| Adults | 2,840 |
| Professional Development | 70 |

5-Year Synthesis

Notable accomplishments include increasing the number of community mental health centers in Kansas that provide waivers and the number of children receiving waivers. Twenty-five out of 26 community mental health centers in Kansas provided waiver services in 2019. A recent study indicated that this program saves the state of Kansas up to \$20,860 every year per child based on SED waivers costing 70 to 90% less than services in other institutions.

Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG)

KANSAS CHILDREN'S CABINET AND TRUST FUND

FY2020
\$18,222,799

Focusing on the critical years between birth and kindergarten, ECBG recipients provide services to at-risk children, ages 0-5, and their families. Services include: Pre-K and 0-3 care and education, social emotional consultation, home visiting, literacy activities, and parent education. Programs participate in the Common Measures Initiative, which uses shared measurement tools to collect data and better understand statewide risk and program outcomes. Public-private partnerships are encouraged to maximize resources, foster innovation, and avoid duplication of services.

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Total Children | 7,457 |
| Prenatal to Age 2 | 1,148 |
| Ages 2-5 | 6,309 |
| Ages 5-12 | 0 |
| Ages 12-18 | 0 |
| Ages 18+ | 0 |
| Adults | 6,484 |
| Professional Development | 202 |

5-Year Synthesis

ECBG programming has served an average of 8,628 children and 6,184 families per year over the past five years. Most children are developmentally on track. ECBG programs screen children to identify and track developmental concerns allowing early intervention, which increases the number of children who enter kindergarten school ready with age-appropriate skills. In FY 2019, ECBG evaluators were able to follow children who had been enrolled for two or more years to show significant gains in language comprehension and increases in the percent of children who were developmentally on-target in numeracy skills.

Family Preservation Services

KANSAS DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

FY2020
\$3,800,000

Family Preservation Services equips families with the tools and supports needed to keep children safe and prevent out-of-home placements. Evidence-based assessments and family input help develop a step-by-step plan to achieve family wellbeing. Intensive services are provided for 365 days or until all safety concerns are addressed. Typical family service plans include ongoing safety assessments, assistance obtaining community support services, behavior management coaching for parents, education on family living skills, and crisis intervention.

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Total Children | 8,867 |
| Prenatal to Age 2 | 1,190 |
| Ages 2-5 | 1,458 |
| Ages 5-12 | 3,517 |
| Ages 12-18 | 2,702 |
| Ages 18+ | 87 |
| Adults | 2,689 |
| Professional Development | 895 |

5-Year Synthesis

A recent study showed Family Preservation Services saves the state \$20,133 per family receiving services. Given that FPS serves a conservative estimate of about 2,750 families per year, this is a savings of more than \$55,000,000 per year. Consistently over the past five years, more than 80% of families referred to FPS did not have a child removed from their home. Additionally, in 2016 and 2018, 100% of women referred for substance use while pregnant delivered babies who were substance free.

➤ Infant Toddler Hearing Aid Bank

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

FY2020
\$59,674

The Infant Toddler Hearing Aid Bank removes the financial barriers families face obtaining hearing amplification devices. Families with children up to age 3 who have any type or degree of hearing loss can access a range of hearing aids to meet their specific need. Families are then connected to early intervention services and a network of other families who have children with hearing loss, providing key supports to ensure the child stays on track developmentally.

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Total Children | 22 |
| Prenatal to Age 2 | 18 |
| Ages 2-5 | 4 |
| Ages 5-12 | 0 |
| Ages 12-18 | 0 |
| Ages 18+ | 0 |
| Adults | 44 |
| Professional Development | 156 |

5-Year Synthesis

Infant Toddler Hearing Aid Bank provides services for an average of 27 children per year. In most cases, children are fit with hearing aids from the loan bank within six months of the program receiving the request. Results of the Parents' Evaluation of Aural/Oral Performance of Children (PEACH) assessment tool show that over the past three years, parents consistently reported an increase in their child's speech, language, and listening skills. Outreach efforts have resulted in more awareness and use of the program among audiologists, and the program has provided professional development for over 690 professionals.

➤ Infant-Toddler Services (ITS)

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

FY2020
\$5,800,000

ITS, also known as tiny-k, promotes early screening and detection of developmental delays and provides early intervention services for families with children (from birth to age 3) who have a developmental disability or delay. Services are delivered to families in their natural environments, and providers work alongside community partners to ensure families have the resources they need to support their child's development.

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Total Children | 10,772 |
| Prenatal to Age 2 | 4,740 |
| Ages 2-5 | 6,032 |
| Ages 5-12 | 0 |
| Ages 12-18 | 0 |
| Ages 18+ | 0 |
| Adults | 10,772 |
| Professional Development | 2,000 |

5-Year Synthesis

Over the past five years, ITS has been able to increase their service provision from 9,363 children and families in 2015 to 10,772 children and families in 2019. Families involved in the program have reported reduced feelings of isolation, stress, and frustration because of tiny-k support and that the programs provide support and resources to families to help their children learn and develop. The program has focused on expanding services, including a branding campaign to increase awareness and access across the state, as well as opening a satellite office to expand service provision within the foster care system.

► Kansas Preschool Pilot (KPP)

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FY2020
\$4,200,000

KPP funds school districts and community partners to support high-quality preschool programming for children ages 3-5. The program implements evidence-based curricula, instruction, and assessment practices shown to prevent later academic and behavioral challenges. Four key components guide the work of KPP: community collaboration, family engagement, high-quality early learning experiences, and successful children. Each of these elements are known to improve quality in early learning and promote success in school.

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Total Children | 2,996 |
| Prenatal to Age 2 | 0 |
| Ages 2-5 | 2,996 |
| Ages 5-12 | 0 |
| Ages 12-18 | 0 |
| Ages 18+ | 0 |
| Adults | 0 |
| Professional Development | N/A |

5-Year Synthesis

KPP has been funded through CIF funds for three of the past five years. Each year, children in the program have shown promising improvements in various areas including exhibiting literacy behaviors and all Individual Growth & Development Indicators (myIGDIs). In 2019, KPP funded 61 programs and has increased service provision from 1,074 children in 2015 to 2,996 children in 2019. Historically, KPP has focused on collaborations with other agencies to streamline service provision and decrease duplication of effort.

► Kansas Infant Death and SIDS (KIDS) Network

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

FY2020
\$96,374

The KIDS Network works to decrease the risk of infant death from Sudden Unexpected Infant Deaths (SUIDs), including Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), by offering training and education about safe sleep practices. Local programs and events, such as Community Baby Showers, promote a statewide infrastructure to educate current and expectant parents, relatives, community members, and health and child care providers about the importance of safe sleep.

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Total Children | 2,452 |
| Prenatal to Age 2 | 2,407 |
| Ages 2-5 | 45 |
| Ages 5-12 | 0 |
| Ages 12-18 | 0 |
| Ages 18+ | 0 |
| Adults | 4,815 |
| Professional Development | 7,350 |

5-Year Synthesis

The KIDS Network expanded the provision of Safe Sleep events across the state and served over 3,000 children and 5,605 caregivers on average per year. Every year, the majority of caregivers report knowledge of and plans to encourage safe sleep behaviors. For example, in 2019, 95% of participants reported they planned to place their child on their back to sleep. Notable accomplishments include developing a partnership with the Tobacco Use Prevention Program (TUPP) to streamline efforts to decrease the number of secondhand-smoke-related deaths and initiating the development of a safe sleep certification.

Parents as Teachers (PAT)

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FY2020
\$8,512,678

PAT is an evidence-based parent education and family engagement home visiting model designed to give parents and caregivers the tools they need to support their child's development. In coordination with the Kansas State Department of Education and local school districts, certified parent educators work with families. Developmental and health screenings are used to identify potential delays or areas of concern, implement interventions, and refer families to additional community resources when needed.

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Total Children | 8,792 |
| Prenatal to Age 2 | 3,605 |
| Ages 2-5 | 5,817 |
| Ages 5-12 | 0 |
| Ages 12-18 | 0 |
| Ages 18+ | 0 |
| Adults | 6,721 |
| Professional Development | 61 |

5-Year Synthesis

PAT received funds from CIF for four of the past five years. Notable accomplishments include increasing accountability and model fidelity, as well as increasing participation in developmental screening. In 2019, PAT connected 6,150 families to at least one community resource and identified 1,624 potential delays or concerns. Most families participating in PAT have shown growth in family functioning, concrete supports, and knowing what to do as a parent. It is common for parents to participate in services for more than one year.

Maternal Child Health (MCH) Home Visiting

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

FY2020
\$250,000

MCH Home Visiting is a strengths-based model connecting any Kansas family with infants to resources for creating a safe, stable, and nurturing home environment. Families receive individualized services before, during, and after pregnancy based on each family's needs. Home visitors act as a bridge for families, helping them set and reach parenting goals by sharing information about child development, health and safety, positive parenting behaviors; and by connecting to community-based resources, services, and supports as needed.

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Total Children | 4,468 |
| Prenatal to Age 2 | 4,468 |
| Ages 2-5 | 0 |
| Ages 5-12 | 0 |
| Ages 12-18 | 0 |
| Ages 18+ | 0 |
| Adults | 5,456 |
| Professional Development | 0 |

5-Year Synthesis

MCH Home Visiting has, to streamline effort, implemented a new data system for client management, developed new site visit procedures, and increased access to trainings through online resources. In the past three years, at least 68% of mothers per year reported initiating breastfeeding at birth. Most notably, in 2018, alongside free trainings provided on breastfeeding, 89% of mothers reported initiating breastfeeding at birth.

Tobacco Use Prevention Program

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

FY2020
\$1,001,960

TUPP uses evidence-based strategies and community partnerships to educate the public and increase awareness about the negative health effects of tobacco use. The program aims to prevent children from becoming smokers, reduce tobacco-related deaths and exposure to second-hand smoke, and promote policy change. To support the success of current tobacco users who are trying to quit, the program operates the Kansas Tobacco Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW).

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Total Children | 544,625 |
| Prenatal to Age 2 | 59,305 |
| Ages 2-5 | 89,469 |
| Ages 5-12 | 214,217 |
| Ages 12-18 | 181,634 |
| Adults | 1,685,915 |
| Professional Development | 1,019 |

5-Year Synthesis

TUPP has developed various initiatives based on population needs and outcomes. In 2017, they focused on women who are pregnant or breastfeeding and doubled the number of counseling call sessions with this group. They have also funded initiatives that have established smoke-free zones in and around parks, playgrounds, and pools. Professional development opportunities were made more accessible through creation of online training modules.

Start Young

KANSAS CHILDREN'S CABINET AND TRUST FUND

FY2020
\$1,000,000

Start Young, led by The Family Conservancy, assists child care providers in increasing the number of children served in Wyandotte County by offering material and furnishings grants for new classrooms. Child care subsidy advocates assist families in completing the state child care subsidy application and applying for supplemental tuition assistance scholarships through Start Young. The program also brings quality systems support to providers through multiple quality initiatives in classrooms and educational incentives for child care providers.

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Total Children | 755 |
| 0 to Age 3 | 349 |
| Ages 3-5 | 406 |
| Ages 5-12 | 0 |
| Ages 12-18 | 0 |
| Ages 18+ | 0 |
| Adults | 549 |
| Professional Development | 183 |

5-Year Synthesis

Start Young was a newly-funded program in 2019 supported by CAEDE funds (Communities Aligned in Early Development and Education). In 2019, Start Young served 410 children and 335 caregivers and provided professional development for 80 professionals. Findings from the 2019 CIF Accountability Process revealed that 96% of educators who were eligible for salary supplements were retained and children in Start Young classrooms increased their language and numeracy skills throughout the year.



Early Childhood Block Grant

ECBG recipients provide services to at-risk children, ages 0-5, and their families. Grants from the Children’s Cabinet are distributed across the state through a competitive process. ECBG programs include care and education for children birth to age 3, Pre-K services, social emotional consultation, home visiting, literacy activities, and parent education. The Center for Applied Research and Evaluation at Wichita State University conducts an annual evaluation of ECBG programs.

18 ECBG Programs
operate in Kansas serving children
and families across 63 counties.

Grant Process Changes

In 2019, we made the following changes to the ECBG Request for Proposals:

- Limit FY 2021 awards to a one-year cycle to accommodate alignment with the *All In For Kansas Kids* efforts
- Increase the maximum individual award from \$2 million to \$2.2 million
- Change the funding match requirements from 10% cash match to a 20% match, which includes a 5% cash match and 15% of any combination of cash and third party in-kind
- Expand the definition of “at-risk” to align with other funding at-risk criteria including the statutory language of Kansas Preschool Pilot and pre-school-aged at-risk criteria

Child Advocacy and Parenting Services, Inc. (CAPS)

\$428,619

Children Served 375
Caregivers Served 319

Families and Communities Together
New Program

Family Resource Center, Inc.

\$1,145,614

Children Served 869
Caregivers Served 744

Four County Mental Health Center, Inc.

\$278,429

Children Served 130
Caregivers Served 109

**Kansas Head Start Association:
Early Learning Communities**

\$1,360,482

Children Served 605
Caregivers Served 577

LiveWell Northwest Kansas

\$319,043

Children Served 187
Caregivers Served 152

Raising Riley

\$756,386

Children Served 146
Caregivers Served 132

Russell Child Development Center

\$2,225,971

Children Served 1,163
Caregivers Served 887

Success by 6 Coalition of Douglas County

\$857,959

Children Served 209
Caregivers Served 177

**The Opportunity Project (TOP):
Early Learning Centers**

\$2,298,949

Children Served 273
Caregivers Served 268

United Way of Greater Topeka

\$2,296,803

Children Served 869
Caregivers Served 767

United Way of Reno County

\$588,447

Children Served 278
Caregivers Served 259

United Way of the Plains Collaborative

\$744,384

Children Served 357
Caregivers Served 341

USD 273 - Beloit

\$422,510

Children Served 268
Caregivers Served 233

USD 445 - Coffeyville

\$1,000,487

Children Served 210
Caregivers Served 184

USD 475 - Geary

\$497,441

Children Served 450
Caregivers Served 408

USD 489 Early Childhood Connections

\$411,474

Children Served 107
Caregivers Served 103

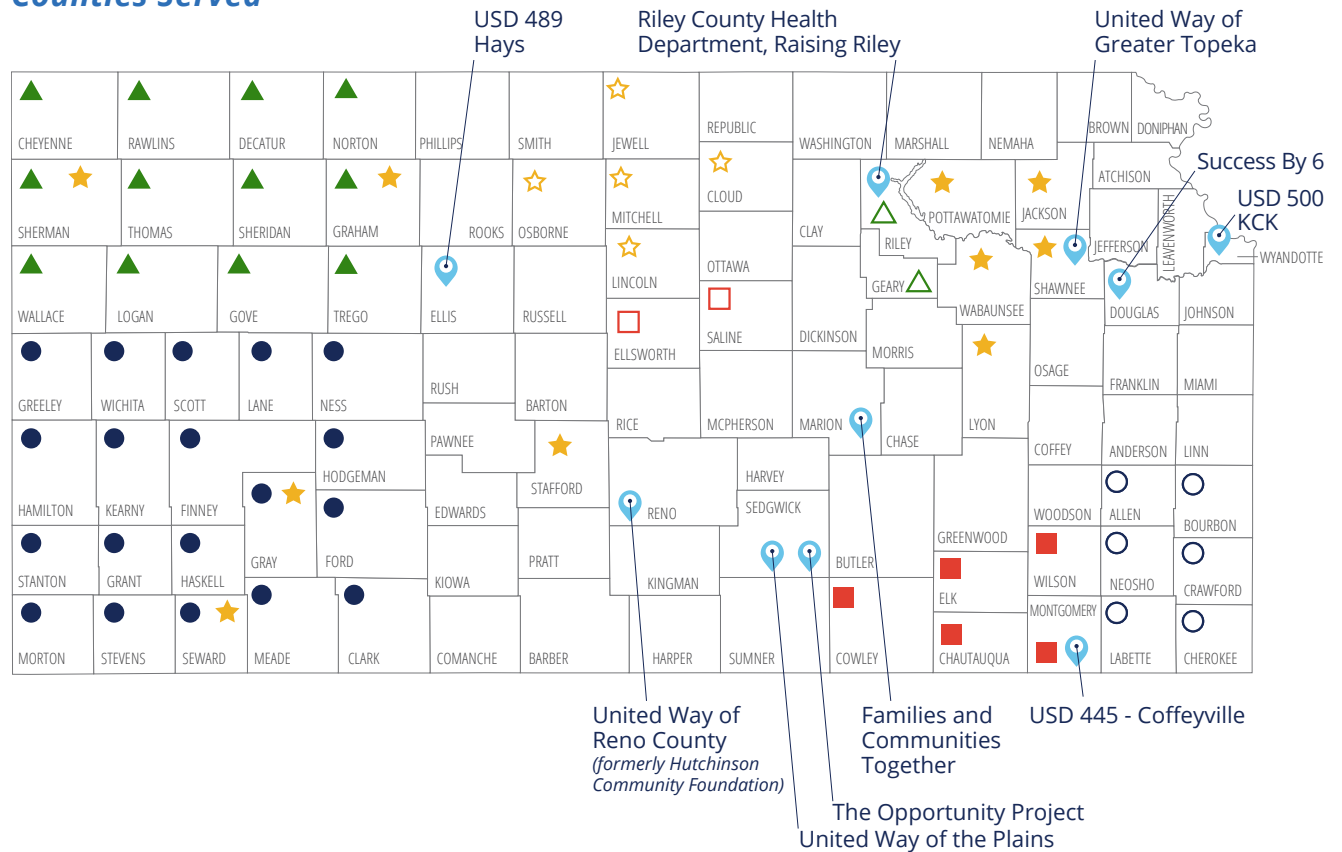
USD 500 - Kansas City, KS

\$1,244,153

Children Served 464
Caregivers Served 429

ECBG Reach and Services

Counties Served



Service Types

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Early Care and Education | 16 |
| Home Visiting | 10 |
| Parent Education | 9 |
| Social-Emotional Consultation | 7 |
| Case Management | 5 |
| Family Engagement & Referrals | 4 |
| Mental & Behavioral Health Services | 3 |

- ▲ LiveWell Northwest Kansas
- △ USD 475 - Geary
- Russell Child Development Center
- Family Resource Center
- ★ Kansas Head Start Association
- ☆ USD 273 - Beloit
- Four County Mental Health Center
- Child Advocacy & Parenting Services, Inc. (CAPS)
- 📍 Programs Serving a Single County

Evaluation

ECBG-supported programming was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. **ECBG child care and Pre-K programs saw 75% of their environments temporarily close due to the pandemic, and 65% of those were closed for over 10 weeks in the months of March through May.** However, nearly all (96%) reported that they remained in contact with their children and families during closure. These closures, along with additional pandemic-induced strains on systems, resources, and families led the Children's Cabinet to suspend data collection requirements on common measures for ECBG programs. Some adjustments to the ECBG evaluation process became necessary because a few measures missed the final observation point. However, comparisons of 2019-2020 data to that of previous evaluations showed improvement in program performance even for measures affected by the suspension of data collection.

Key Findings

Grantees serve high-need families and children.

91%

91% of ECBG families experienced at least one risk factor, including poverty, developmental delays, and teen parents

Families engaged in Home Visiting and Parent Education improved.

Supportive home environments increased to 94%

94%

Positive parenting increased to 83%

83%

Outcomes improved in all service areas.

Children who were on track in their social-emotional development increased to 70%

Children improved in **all three measures** of early literacy and mathematics skills despite only being measured at two intervals.



Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

The Children's Cabinet serves as the state lead agency for federally funded CBCAP grants. CBCAP is unique among child welfare programs in that it focuses on prevention by strengthening and supporting families before abuse has occurred, and it is the primary child maltreatment prevention funding source in the state. CBCAP programs are designed to reach a diverse group of families and provide services individualized for the communities they serve. Seven CBCAP-funded programs operate in Kansas.

The following pages provide an overview of each program, including the amount awarded from CBCAP, a brief description of services and COVID-19 response, and the populations served.

Over each of the past three years, families engaged in CBCAP services were assessed using the PFS-2* and showed:

- 80% increase in family functioning and resilience
- 60% increase in nurturing and attachment
- 55% increase in social supports, which is notable, given the social isolation impacts of COVID-19 in 2020
- 55% positive increase for the caregiver/practitioner relationship after having participated in CBCAP services

**The Protective Factors Survey, 2nd Edition (PFS-2) is a validated survey measuring multiple protective factors against child maltreatment.*

➤ Elizabeth Layton Center's Circle of Security

FY2020
\$45,415

Circle of Security, at the Elizabeth Layton Center, is a community-based collaboration with the Franklin and Miami county health and education departments. Circle of Security addresses child maltreatment prevention through home visiting and education interventions. The program receives referrals from Head Start, local primary care physicians, schools, domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters, and community mental health workers. Circle of Security parenting education curriculum is used to promote protective factors such as healthy attachment and nurturing.

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------|--------|
| Total Children | 112 |
| Prenatal to Age 2 | 20 |
| Ages 2-5 | 40 |
| Ages 5-12 | 47 |
| Ages 12-18 | 5 |
| Ages 18+ | 0 |
| Caregivers | 90 |

Response to COVID-19

Throughout COVID-19, ELC staff have worked diligently to connect clients with the array of community resources. They have also remained open and connecting virtually with clients, or via phone and text, and have continued to reach families through Circle of Security parenting support curriculum.

➤ The Family Conservancy's Healthy Parents, Healthy Kids Program

FY2020
\$90,685

Healthy Parents, Healthy Kids provides parent education, prenatal and infant care training, and promotes fatherhood engagement. The program uses three well-supported, evidence-based models: The Incredible Years, Child of Mine, and Conscious Fathering. These curricula work in concert to address the five protective factors outlined in the Strengthening Families™ research. In partnership with the Kansas City, Kansas Housing Authority, The Family Conservancy works with local housing complexes that have high numbers of refugee families.

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------|--------|
| Total Children | 236 |
| Prenatal to Age 2 | 45 |
| Ages 2-5 | 83 |
| Ages 5-12 | 79 |
| Ages 12-18 | 26 |
| Ages 18+ | 3 |
| Caregivers | 158 |

Response to COVID-19

The Family Conservancy has provided the families they serve with cleaning supplies to manage COVID-19, and other necessities such as food, baby formula, and diapers. They have adapted their services by holding outdoor sessions, collecting data virtually, and have created "family clusters" to help staff prioritize families with the highest need.

➤ Family Resource Center's Response Advocate

FY2020
\$104,121

Response Advocates from the Family Resource Center work alongside law enforcement to assist families at risk for child maltreatment. This program uses home visiting, parenting education, and comprehensive case management to strengthen family protective factors and prevent child abuse and neglect. Response Advocates also work extensively to educate law enforcement about prevention and to facilitate strong collaborations with Early Head Start, Crawford County Mental Health, and local domestic violence shelters. Response Advocates employ the Protective Factors Survey and the Strengthening Families™ approach.

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------|--------|
| Total Children | 357 |
| Prenatal to Age 2 | 32 |
| Ages 2-5 | 63 |
| Ages 5-12 | 140 |
| Ages 12-18 | 112 |
| Ages 18+ | 10 |
| Caregivers | 202 |

Response to COVID-19

The Response Advocate program has adapted to COVID-19 by meeting with families outdoors, providing families with a meal while they receive their services. They have collaborated with community resources to meet basic needs for families during this difficult time.

➤ Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL)

FY2020
\$259,970

KCSL, the statewide CBCAP grantee, works to prevent child abuse and neglect with a focus on strengthening family protective factors. Statewide initiatives also include awareness campaigns, identifying and reaching counties with limited resources, and providing training for professionals across sectors. KCSL has led collaborations to promote family-friendly work environments and advocate for prevention policy. KCSL uses multiple approaches, such as the Period of PURPLE Crying program, National Circle of Parents® Curriculum, and the Healthy Families America framework.

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------|--------|
| Total Children | 28 |
| Prenatal to Age 2 | 4 |
| Ages 2-5 | 15 |
| Ages 5-12 | 9 |
| Ages 12-18 | 0 |
| Ages 18+ | 0 |
| Caregivers | 196 |

Response to COVID-19

KCSL has stepped up to the plate in Kansas to fill much needed education gaps during COVID-19. They have created virtual trainings around self-care, trauma-informed practices, and adapted the Period of PURPLE Crying program to a virtual platform.

➤ Parent Child Assistance Program (PCAP)

FY2020
\$174,502

PCAP (formally known as The Drug Endangered Child), a KCSL program, supports mothers working to overcome substance abuse to make lasting changes to family functioning. PCAP offers intensive support through comprehensive case management, home visiting, substance abuse treatment support, and referrals to community resources (local health care and mental health providers, child care providers, and providers of basic needs). PCAP uses Partners for a Healthy Baby Parenting Curriculum to promote nurturing and attachment and healthy parent-child relationships. The program's name change reflects an alignment with the evidence-informed Parent-Child Assistance program model, designed specifically to support women with substance abuse disorders.

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------|--------|
| Total Children | 105 |
| Prenatal to Age 2 | 47 |
| Ages 2-5 | 34 |
| Ages 5-12 | 17 |
| Ages 12-18 | 6 |
| Ages 18+ | 1 |
| Caregivers | 67 |

Response to COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, families have been struggling with social isolation and financial insecurity. The Parent Child Assistance program has reached out to families they serve to supplement basic needs, address food insecurity, and provide parenting support with parenting and stress-management skills.

➤ Pony Express Partnership for Children's (PEPC) Family Support Project

FY2020
\$135,968

The Family Support Project of the Pony Express Partnership for Children addresses child abuse and neglect prevention by supporting homeless families and those at risk of homelessness. In addition to helping families access concrete supports, the program also provides families with intensive case management, referrals to community resources, parenting education, and home visiting services. The project uses the Parenting the Love and Logic Way curriculum, an evidence-informed model, to address client needs.

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------|--------|
| Total Children | 115 |
| Prenatal to Age 2 | 9 |
| Ages 2-5 | 31 |
| Ages 5-12 | 48 |
| Ages 12-18 | 26 |
| Ages 18+ | 1 |
| Caregivers | 78 |

Response to COVID-19

Pony Express has been meeting the needs of families during the pandemic by pointing out family strengths and encouraging resilience. They also created fun learning opportunities for the whole family, even in the midst of social distancing.

The Wichita Crisis Nursery, a Kansas Children’s Service League program, strengthens families by providing respite and emergency child care, case management, and parenting education. They partner with licensed child care providers to increase availability of care for families with non-traditional working hours, such as second-shift and weekends. The Crisis Nursery program accepts referrals from local mental health centers, substance abuse programs, domestic violence shelters, public health programs, and transitional housing facilities. Crisis Nursery case managers conduct intake assessments and promote family protective factors through the evidence-based Triple P Positive Parenting Program.

| Population FY 2020 | Served |
|--------------------|--------|
| Total Children | 49 |
| Prenatal to Age 2 | 9 |
| Ages 2-5 | 27 |
| Ages 5-12 | 13 |
| Ages 12-18 | 0 |
| Ages 18+ | 0 |
| Caregivers | 31 |

Response to COVID-19

The Wichita Crisis Nursery has continued to support families during the pandemic by providing cleaning supplies to ensure a healthy home environment. They have also provided encouragement and emotional support during this difficult time.





Findings

Successes and Gaps

A comparison of services provided by all of these Children’s Cabinet-funded programs—CIF, ECBG, and CBCAP—to the needs uncovered in the 2019 *All In For Kansas Kids* Needs Assessment confirms that programs are indeed addressing critical needs.

In fact, each of the two Central Messages and seven Key Findings detailed in the Needs Assessment are targeted through one or more program funded by the Children’s Cabinet (see the chart on the next page). With proven practices and high levels of accountability, all CIF, ECBG, and CBCAP programs work in earnest to address the needs of Kansas children and families.























However, a gap remains.

The mismatch between the needs of Kansas families and the support available is a matter of degree. **There simply are not enough resources devoted to these programs to account for the need.** Despite the quality and comprehensiveness of grantee efforts, profound challenges continue to hinder the ability of many Kansas families to access services and fulfill basic needs.

Children's Cabinet Programs and the Needs of Kansas Children and Families

| CIF Program | Accessibility | Availability | Navigation | Workforce | Facilities | Collaboration | Systems Alignment |
|---|---------------|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Autism Diagnosis | | | | | | | |
| Child Care Assistance | | | | | | | |
| Child Care Quality Initiative | | | | | | | |
| Children's Mental Health Waiver | | | | | | | |
| Early Childhood Block Grant | | | | | | | |
| Family Preservation Services | | | | | | | |
| Infant-Toddler Hearing Aid Bank | | | | | | | |
| Infant Toddler Services | | | | | | | |
| KIDS Network | | | | | | | |
| Kansas Preschool Pilot | | | | | | | |
| Parents as Teachers | | | | | | | |
| Maternal and Child Health Home Visiting | | | | | | | |
| Tobacco Use Prevention Program | | | | | | | |
| Start Young | | | | | | | |

Children's Cabinet Programs and the Needs of Kansas Children and Families

| CBCAP Program | Accessibility | Availability | Navigation | Workforce | Facilities | Collaboration | Systems Alignment |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---|--|------------|---|---|
| Response Advocates |  |  |  | | |  |  |
| Family Support Project |  |  | | | | | |
| Circle of Security |  |  | | | | | |
| Wichita Crisis Nursery |  |  |  | | | | |
| Parent Child Assistance Program |  |  | | | | | |
| Healthy Parents, Healthy Kids |  |  | | | |  | |
| KCSL Statewide |  | |  |  | |  |  |



Our Tomorrows StoryBank Analysis

How are families experiencing the COVID-19 crisis?

Adding to the complexity and urgency of an under-resourced network of support are the new dynamics and tragedies of the COVID-19 crisis. The *Our Tomorrows StoryBank* is a research tool that *All In For Kansas Kids* employs to learn **directly from Kansans about how needs are changing, how service providers are responding, and, in general, about how children and families are holding up**. The stories of *Our Tomorrows* offer specifics that help us both prioritize efforts to replicate more of what is already working and to try new approaches.

In March 2020 we adapted the *Our Tomorrows StoryBank* to capture how families were experiencing the COVID-19 crisis. Since that time, more than 250 stories a month have been shared through this platform. From these individual stories, and by examining patterns across stories, it's no surprise to learn that the **crisis has compounded stress and widened gaps**. This is particularly true as we analyze patterns around child care, unemployment and financial instability, social isolation, and the lack of technology and other resources to support learning in the home.

The good news is that despite difficult circumstances, Kansans are often **framing their experiences through a lens of resilience**. Over half of all stories shared include bright spots alongside depictions of challenges. Many are also sharing stories that elevate the struggles of their friends and neighbors. Kansans are acting as a community of support for each other, lifting up the needs of those hurting most during this crisis.

Through the *Our Tomorrows StoryBank* we also see that some families are thriving and making good use of increased family time together. These stories demonstrate the power of protective factors in times of crisis.

38% say that "My family stayed strong"

19% indicate that "Community members supported each other."



Our Tomorrows StoryBank Insights

How the Our Tomorrows StoryBank Informed CARES Act Distributions

“One of the families that I provide services for found out they had to quarantine for 2 weeks. They have 6 kids with 2 in grade school. This has been a difficult time for the family as they do not have internet and the older children are doing remote learning. The mom explained that the older kids have been going to the neighbors to use the internet when they need to do homework. It has been hard for them to quarantine.”

This story excerpt illustrates two key insights from analysis across stories:

1. Families do not have access, or enough access, to technology.

Fourteen percent of respondents experienced a lack of access to internet and/or technology as a major disruptor. Demographics information revealed that these families were more likely to have marginalized racial identities and have annual household incomes under \$30,000.

Technology disparities are apparent like never before with the switch to virtual services and learning. Providers report concerns with many clients who only have pre-paid phones, limited calling or texting capacity, or who have devices that cannot accommodate video calls.

2. Parents and children are struggling with remote learning.

Parents expressed difficulty juggling the demands of work with the needs of their children in remote/hybrid learning modes. Uncertainty regarding the school year and how to manage distance learning is causing disruption and anxiety, especially among families with fewer resources and for those parents required to work outside of the home.

In response to these key insights, *Our Tomorrows* data informed the development of CARES Act funding opportunities aimed at getting technology and internet access to families in need and helped several Kansas county governments identify ways to spend CARES Act distributions to address disparities. The Children’s Cabinet also shared the *Our Tomorrows StoryBank* analysis with the Kansas SPARK committee to help support targeted funding efforts where families need support the most.

Stories from the Technology for Families Grant Program

One specific example of *Our Tomorrows* stories in action is the Technology for Families (TFF) grant program, offered through CARES Act funding and managed by the Children’s Cabinet. Grantees awarded TFF funds were asked to contribute stories from families receiving technology support through the grant program, continuing the effort to leverage *Our Tomorrows* data to both inform and evaluate the success of family-focused programs and services in Kansas.

The story patterns collected by TFF grantees, when compared to the overall *Our Tomorrows StoryBank*, indicate that families served by this program:

- are significantly more likely to indicate that local organizations are meeting basic needs, and that services are working well.
- feel positive about their experiences shared.
- are less likely to suggest that they have no help in meeting their needs from any entity, local or statewide.

The stories collected through TFF programs support these findings and demonstrate how critical it is to develop services and supports in response to real-time, specific needs as heard through the *Our Tomorrows StoryBank*.

“We have been blessed with the opportunity to get an iPad with wifi and a data plan. We are so grateful for this. It has changed our lives and allowed us to continue home visits to support our child with a disability by using Zoom, and we don’t have to worry about exposure to COVID-19. And we can still get support! Totally awesome!”

“Our family did not own a tablet, iPad, or PC. We missed months of sessions with our therapist when restricted to only virtual home visits, and we didn’t have the equipment to participate...with our new tablet and wi-fi we are now able to participate in classroom instruction, meet virtually with our son’s therapists and teachers, and see our doctor virtually when necessary. It really has changed our lives for the better, and we’d like to thank you for helping us.”



Recommendations and Conclusion

➤ Recommendations

➤ Conclusion

➤ Child Care as a Public Good



Recommendations

The *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan guides us as we develop cross-agency collaborations that center families' needs and help all children thrive. The plan offers structure and direction, but even an excellent strategic plan has its limitations. We must be able to respond to changing circumstances, pivot when necessary, and direct the work on an ongoing basis. Recommendations are the way we adjust our sails. Our approach to making recommendations exemplifies the multiple roles we play in our work: Manager, Evaluator, Connector, Strategist, and Champion.

Our goal is to move the work forward for children and families by adjusting every lever we have – collaborating across sectors, consulting relevant research and data, and finding new opportunities to do things better. In that spirit, we provide an overview of Children's Cabinet recommendations made over the course of the last year, with updates highlighting the path forward – both what we have done since making the recommendation, and what is left to be done.

Manager

Manages grant-making, fund administration, and strategic planning processes.

Funding Recommendations

- Maintain the Children's Initiative Fund (CIF) at level funding.
- In future years, increase funding of CIF to meet exacerbated need in the state.
- Move programs that do not function as part of the mixed-delivery early childhood care and education system to the State General Fund.
- Direct funding increases towards the Early Childhood Block Grant.

➤ **Update**

The approved FY2021 budget maintained level funding to CIF at \$51,966,331.

Legal Services Recommendations

- Identify options for legal services dedicated to representing the interests of the Children's Cabinet itself and providing subject matter expertise.
- Explore taking legal action against companies engaged in the sale of e-cigarettes.

➤ **Update**

Children's Cabinet staff identified how to engage legal services and have had conversations with the governor and attorney general about the possibility of legal action against tobacco companies. Though not in a position to pursue such action, the Children's Cabinet has communicated that it is desirable.





Evaluator

Evaluates use of the CIF, contributes to data-informed decision making, and offers practice and policy recommendations.

Accountability Process Recommendations

- Refine the timeline and goals to ensure decisions are made with high-quality, current, and meaningful data.
- Align with *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan.

➤ Update

The timing of the Accountability Process has been changed to better align with the legislative process and additional sources of data on family need have been incorporated. The FY 2021 Accountability Process will also incorporate the goals of the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan.

Systems-level Data Recommendations

- Establish an Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS), and appoint an ECIDS team.
- Initiate a pilot study to link Early Childhood Block Grant data to Department of Children and Families data.

➤ Update

The first action under the ECIDS data trust will be a multi-phase study to identify the association between participation in early childhood programming and reduced incident of maltreatment. This pilot study aims to determine the most effective interventions and the cost avoidance associated with investment.

Connector

Convenes diverse stakeholders in children's issues from government, nonprofit, and the private sector.

Coordination and Alignment Recommendations

- Continue to act as the coordinating entity and governance hub for the Kansas early childhood system.
- Continue ongoing alignment and collaboration efforts across state agencies to effectively address emergent needs in the current public health crisis.

Strategist

Identifies opportunities for effective collaboration and overcomes barriers to optimal system performance.

Crisis Management Recommendations

- Dedicate funding to address technology disparities in rural Kansas through policy and infrastructure initiatives.
- Leverage the role of early childhood service providers to meet the needs of their local communities and the families they serve.
- Extend the current vital financial assistance programs for child care (Hero Relief Program) utilizing federal COVID-19 resources.
- Provide ongoing support to child care providers to ensure that they can remain open and able to provide safe care and healthy environments for children.

Support Program Recommendation

Increase access to work and family support programs that help children and families meet their basic needs.

➤ Update

The Children's Cabinet has been at the forefront of collaborative work on children's issues, identifying opportunities for systems-level approaches to effective collaboration and providing leadership to diverse stakeholders at the state and national level, while also advising international partners.

Champion

Elevates the importance of investing in early childhood and contributes to innovative program approaches.

Recommendation

Adopt a commitment to equity statement.

➤ **Update**

In June 2020, the Children's Cabinet adopted a statement affirming its commitment to ensuring equitable outcomes for all children and families using systems-wide approaches to meeting basic needs, elevating family voice and choice, using data ethically and responsively, and equitably funding programs.

Recommendation

Recognize the importance of child care as a public good and the need to elevate the profession.

➤ **Update**

The Children's Cabinet presents information on the following page about recognizing child care as a public good, including ideas for incorporating family-friendly policies and practices into the workplace and the benefits of such strategies for both families and employers.

Child Care as a Public Good

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic arrived, our child care system was deeply fragmented and severely under-resourced. There is a need now, more than ever before, for even greater involvement and investment in early childhood from both the public and private sectors. This shift in focus to a more shared responsibility for the care of young children offers a frame for government, businesses, philanthropies, and nonprofits alike to elevate today's dire need for intervention and make targeted investments.

The Children's Cabinet recognizes that our shared present and future prosperity is rooted in early childhood. Kansas children stand to benefit if we treat investments in child care as a public good.

Supporting and fostering family success through equitable and affordable child care is good for Kansas and is good for business. Flexible workplace policies help employees balance their work and personal responsibilities more effectively, while tax credits can help businesses support their employees' access to child care. Improving transit and broadband infrastructure for access to work and child care facilities helps limit absenteeism and provides families greater access to quality child care, particularly in our rural areas. These kinds of policies and practices promote strong, stable, and thriving families and the economic growth of our communities.

Targeted investments, policy changes, and infrastructure improvements offer proven benefits for both Kansas families and our businesses and communities.

BENEFITS FOR FAMILIES

- Earlier return to work
- Greater work-life balance
- Improved employee productivity and engagement
- Continued breastfeeding
- Livable wages and career development
- Financial stability
- Strong and thriving environments to raise a child

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS

- Overall economic stability
- Higher employee performance
- Reduced health care costs
- Reduced absenteeism and workplace accidents
- Reduced employee turnover and new-hire training costs
- Higher workforce productivity and sustainability
- Strong and thriving businesses



Conclusion

2020 presented incredible challenges for children, families, and the people and organizations that serve them. These challenges are still with us, and given what we know about the critical period of early childhood, we can presume we will be witnessing their effects for a generation...or more. But if there is a silver lining to this dark period, it is that it has put our most fundamental needs in stark relief. **This year underscores what we know is important, and forces us to recommit to it.**

We know that child care providers are essential. We recognize that child care is core to a healthy economy. We understand that collaboration across agencies and sectors is the only way to meet the pressing needs of families. And we commit to ensuring equity in all we do.

Our hardships are nowhere near over. Too many families were not getting the support they needed even before the pandemic. In the coming years, we will have to address not only our immediate needs, but also enduring challenges like child poverty, unequal access to services, and fragmented systems of care. This moment demands of us a steadfast commitment to care for our children now, and all the children of the future. We have been preparing for this moment, and we are all in.



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