

Recommendation

TO: Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund

FROM: Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel

SUBJECT: SICC-LICC Collaboration Strategies

DATE: April 1, 2022

Recommendation Statement: *The Kansas Children's Cabinet, in its role as the Early Childhood Advisory Council, recommends the State Interagency Coordinating Council and Local Interagency Coordinating Councils collaborate to implement the following strategies:*

- Broaden local ICC participation and membership through strategies such as: holding meetings outside the normal 9-5 hours, provide stipends for time and/or travel, provide/support childcare for council members.
- Research funding opportunities to provide stipends to early childhood care and education professionals/family members for their time spent serving on the State and Local ICCs.
- Promote communication of LICC members, to create awareness of community resources and share them throughout their communities to address the needs of children/families with developmental delays, disabilities, and/or special health care needs.
- Sponsor community engagement events, provide informational materials, and identify how can these events and resources can be networking opportunities, while informing their community partners about the challenges of families and professionals in working with, and addressing the needs of, children with developmental delays, disabilities, and/or special health care needs.
- Propose monies be included in the State ICC budget to fund community projects proposed by LICCs in support of the *All In for Kansas Kids Strategic Plan, Goal 2*.

In order to:

- Promote membership and participation of family members/early childhood care and education professionals (in accordance with K.A.R. 28-4-565).
- Equitably engage with local early childhood care and education professionals/family members, to elevate their voices, needs, interests, and contributions within the governance system of their local community.
- Promote the *All In for Kansas Kids Strategic Plan, Goal 2.1.1*, to "Create the opportunity for providers and families to access information about the available resources in their community" and statewide.

Background Information:

- Engagement strategies recommended in recently published resource, [Shaping Equitable Early Childhood Policy: Incorporating Inclusive Community Engagement Frameworks into Expanded Data Strategies by the Center for Law and Social Policy \(CLASP-2021\)](#) should be part of the action plan.
- Parents and early childhood care and education providers identified gaps in knowledge of and access to Part C/Part B Section 619 services, due to limited access for providers and parents to meetings about available resources.
- In 2019 over 6,100 Kansans contributed input into the [All In for Kansas Kids Needs Assessment](#). A key finding from this assessment is that families must adopt a “connect the dots” approach to navigate services across sectors; disruptors are frequent and common.

Description of the councils, committees, or workgroups with expertise, experience, or jurisdiction related to the issue

- The State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC), is created in both state and federal law (K.S.A. 74-801 and Public Law 105-117), the Council's role is to advise and assist in the delivery of services to preschool children (birth through age 5) with developmental delays or disabilities. The mission of the Council is to ensure that a comprehensive service delivery system of integrated services is available in Kansas to all children with, or at risk for, developmental delays from birth through age 5 and their families. No single agency is capable of meeting all of the needs of these young children. Interagency collaboration is essential. Services should be collaboratively provided by professionals from disciplines necessary to meet the needs of children and families and delivered in settings which are typical for young children.
- Kansas Local Interagency Coordinating Councils (LICCs) are established with responsibilities identified in K.A.R. 28-4-564. Responsibilities include:
 - Identifying local service providers who can deliver Part C services to infant and toddlers with disabilities and their families;
 - Advising and assisting local service providers;
 - Communicating, combining, cooperating, and collaborating with other local councils on issues of concern;
 - Developing a plan describing the system for coordinating early intervention services;
 - Identify community needs and resources; and
 - Utilizing multiple funding sources for early intervention services for children with disabilities from birth through age five and their families.

Description of why this recommendation is important for the Kansas' early childhood care and education system

- Kansas children will benefit from measures outlined in the action plan because services are to occur in the typical environment. Early childhood settings often provide the natural/least restrictive environment for early intervention/early childhood special education services and collaboration between members of a child's IFSP/IEP team. Increased knowledge and collaboration strengthen the services offered to the child and their family. Evidence shows that quality early intervention/early childhood special education services may decrease costs of support necessary for a child as they continue to grow.

Description of who is impacted by this issue

- Kansas children benefit from IDEA Part C/Part B 619 programming that includes tiny-k/Infant Toddler Services and early childhood special education services. State and federal funds support these services to provide families with supports and resources to address developmental needs in their children. Services are required to be provided in the natural/least restrictive environment. SICC members and subsequently LICC partners work to ensure that there is a comprehensive service delivery system of integrated services.
- Long term, coordinated collaboration benefit the child and their family, early childhood care and education professionals, K-12 educators and professionals (indirectly).
- Communities throughout Kansas will benefit from this action plan. The enhancement of these efforts will promote awareness of available resources, foster collaboration between families, providers, early childhood care and education professionals, and community service providers and members. This collaboration will support the utilization of early intervention/early childhood special education services for children with developmental delays and/or disabilities from birth through age five and their families.

Description of any additional connections within Kansas' early childhood care and education system, as well as additional considerations for review and potential implementation

- Family Advisory Council
- Family Leadership Team
- Child Care Providers Coalition
- SICC: LICC Annual Retreat Planning Sub-Committee
- Early Childhood Recommendations Panel: Quality & Environments Work Group

- Kansas Division for Early Childhood
- Kansas Association for the Education of Young Children

Does the recommendation address a specific goal, strategy, or tactic of the [All in for Kansas Kids strategic plan](#)?

- **Goal 2: Community-level Collaboration**
 - **2.1.1:** "Create the opportunity for providers and families to access information about the available resources in their community".
 - **Strategy 2.2:** "Build meaningful and inclusive family engagement into community decision-making about programs and services."
- **Goal 3: Family Knowledge and Choice**
 - **Outcome Statement:** "Families have what they need to make informed decisions and can get services where they live and work."
 - **Strategy 3.2:** "Build a culture throughout the early childhood care and education system that respects and strengthens family voice."
 - **3.2.1:** "Respond to the cultural, ethnic, racial, language, and socioeconomic characteristics and preferences of families to create equitable family engagement opportunities at the state level."
 - **3.2.4:** "Identify and replicate effective family engagement strategies from across Kansas, including compensation for families, engaging family representatives as members of statewide task forces and advisory boards, and as participants in the planning, development, delivery, and evaluation of programs."

Implementation Guidance

- If this recommendation is approved, it would be formally presented to the State Interagency Coordinating Council for consideration and approval by Debbie Deere representing the Kansas Children's Cabinet in its role as the Kansas Early Childhood Advisory Council. A plan to implement these strategies would be developed between the State Interagency Coordinating Council and the Local Interagency Coordinating Councils throughout Kansas.

The Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel advises the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund, as outlined in [Kansas Executive Order 20-02](#). Visit <https://kschildrenscabinet.org/> and click "About" for additional information. Debbie Deere (ddeere@ksde.org) supports the Panel's work

Recommendation

TO: Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund / Early Childhood Advisory Council

FROM: Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel

SUBJECT: Child Care Retention Bonus

DATE: April 1, 2022

Recommendation: *The Kansas Children's Cabinet, in its role as the Early Childhood Advisory Council, recommends state agencies and contracted partners utilize federal relief funding to design and implement a plan to issue one-time bonus payments to help retain individual child care professionals in licensed child care settings.*

Background Information

- *This recommendation was developed in response to All in for Kansas Kids strategic plan tactics 6.1 – “Expand the number of professionals entering and remaining in the workforce.” Issuing one-time retention bonus payments is a strategy to recognize and financially support the individuals who are showing-up, holding strong, and stabilizing the field. While a longer-term solution to increase wages and compensation is needed, a one-time financial support can make a big difference in the lives of many working in low wages jobs.*
- *This recommendation has been informed by national resources (ex: Child Trends¹), by findings in the 2019 and 2020 Kansas Needs Assessment, and by voices of child care professionals and leaders from various work groups.*

Description of the councils, committees, or workgroups with expertise, experience, or jurisdiction related to the issue

- *In addition to leading implementation of the All in for Kansas Kids Strategic Plan, state agencies play a specific role in designing and implementing this recommendation. DCF is the lead agency for federal child care relief funding accountability through the CCDF, the Children's Cabinet is charged in statute to*

¹ <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/strategies-to-guide-the-equitable-allocation-of-covid-19-relief-funding-for-early-care-and-education>

lead early childhood efforts, and KDHE has child care professional level data via its CLARIS child care licensing system.

- *Child Care Aware of Kansas is a key partner in delivering child care assistance and supports and should be included in both design and implementation efforts.*
- *Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities, Inc. is a key partner in directly interacting with the workforce and collecting workforce data, and should be included in both design and implementation efforts.*
- *There are multiple initiatives happening across the early childhood care and education system related to child care retention. Efforts should be shared with the Child Care Systems Improvement Team, the Workforce Development Advisory Group, the Child Care Provider Coalition of Kansas, and the Kansas Chapter of National Association for the Education of Young Children as partners in awareness and implementation.*

Description of why this recommendation is important for the Kansas' early childhood care and education system

- *Bonus payments are strongly recommended by a recent memo from the Office of Child Care. In a "Dear Colleague Letter" from HHS' Administration for Children and Families (ACF) dated October 13, 2021, federal funding partners strongly encouraged states, Head Start programs, and other ECE programs to invest in recruiting, supporting and retaining staff. Specifically, this letter encouraged these entities to use American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds to increase payments and compensation and benefits for the ECE workforce, including:*
 - *Increase staff wages or provide one-time incentives, such as hiring or retention bonuses.*
- *These activities are strongly recommended by a recent paper from the National Association for the Education of Young Children dated June 2021 and titled ["Compensation Matters Most Why and How States Should Use Child Care Relief Funding to Increase Compensation for the Early Childhood Education Workforce."](#)*
- *Workforce retention efforts specifically for child care are being implemented using federal PDG and/or relief funding in several states² including Illinois, New Mexico, Wisconsin, Louisiana, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Virginia.*

² <https://buildinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Compensation-Backgrounder-12-13-21.pdf>

Minnesota and Virginia's programs have been specifically evaluated to show promise in reducing turnover.

- In Minnesota's Retaining Early Educators Through Attaining Incentives Now (R.E.E.T.A.I.N.) program which has awarded retention bonuses to over 2,000 professionals over the last decade, over half of survey respondents cited that the stipend strongly or very strongly influenced their decision to remain in the field.³
- As part of Virginia's Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) initiative, some early educators were selected through a lottery to be offered a \$1,500 Recognition Program payment. After 8 months, these educators selected to receive the payment were 11 % less likely to have left their sites, compared to those not selected to receive the payment. These results suggest that investments in early educators can improve employment stability for those working with children at a critical developmental period.⁴
- It is important to note that any kind of bonus payments should NOT replace larger-scale compensation efforts which are needed to sustainably address child care workforce challenges.

Description of who is impacted by this issue

- Those impacted by the issue of child care turnover and issuing retention bonus payments include Kansas children and families, communities, economic development leaders, and businesses and employers. Any measures we can take to retain child care providers will be critical to ensure Kansas's current and future ability to thrive.
- Investing in early childhood more broadly contributes a significant return on investment (every dollar invested in quality ECE programs can yield a \$4 to \$9 return in individual and community outcomes⁵) and retaining early childhood staff is a key upstream strategy to ensure the effectiveness of these broader investments.

³ <https://www.childcareawaremn.org/r-e-e-t-a-i-n-bonuses-are-helping-child-care-professionals-stay-in-the-field/>

⁴ http://www.see-partnerships.com/uploads/1/3/2/8/132824390/pdg_teacher_turnover_study_summary.pdf

⁵ Heckman, J. (2008). Schools, skills, and synapses. *Economic Inquiry*. 46(3): 289-324)

- *Employers are impacted by this issue, as without reliable child care, their employees who are parents are not able to consistently remain at work or in the workforce altogether.*

Description of any additional connections within Kansas' early childhood care and education system, as well as additional considerations for review and potential implementation

- *Sustainability Grants have been issued to child care providers, and a third round is planned in March per CCDF Relief Fund planning documents. However, those grants are aimed at the facility level and not at the individual professional level. Sustainability grants and individual bonus/stipend payments are complementary tactics aimed at sustaining the child care sector in Kansas.*
- *Bonus payments are short-term, stop-gap fixes. They do not and should not replace larger-scale compensation efforts which are needed to sustainably address child care workforce challenges.*
- *Use this as an opportunity to gather optional information on professionals in the field while we continue to work towards a workforce registry.*
- *Appendix A outlines additional implementation considerations, including how to ensure equitable distribution, amount and prioritization recommendations, reporting reminders, and evaluation recommendations.*

Does the recommendation address a specific goal, strategy, or tactic of the [All in for Kansas Kids strategic plan](#)?

- **Goal 6: Workforce**

- **Strategy 6.1:** Expand the number of professionals entering and remaining in the workforce.

- **Goal 5: Capacity and Access**

- **Strategy 5.3:** Build community capacity for providing high-quality early childhood care and education programs and services.

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Appendix A for the following Recommendation:

Recommendation: *The Kansas Children’s Cabinet, in its role as the Early Childhood Advisory Council, recommends state agencies and contracted partners utilize federal relief funding to design and implement a plan to issue one-time bonus payments to help retain individual child care professionals in licensed child care settings.*

The following are a list of considerations for implementing a bonus payment program to retain *individual child care professionals in licensed child care settings*.

- Prioritize the following equity recommendations:
 - o Ensure bonus payment mechanism is equally accessible to both home-based and center-based staff.
 - o Offer additional guidance to ensure child care owners/operators and directors are making their staff aware of the bonus payment programs and any steps they need to take to access the bonuses.
 - o Remove “higher education level” as a factor for bonus payment amount to ensure a lack of access to higher education does not preclude professionals from receiving a bonus payment.
 - o Offer between 10-30% higher bonus payments for professionals who work in child care settings with a higher proportion of underserved communities, those who work non-traditional hours and in frontier communities, and/or those who serve infants and toddlers.
 - o Provide clear guidance on how bonus payments will or will not impact eligibility for other state or federal public assistance programs. [Here is a potential resource from the Build Initiative to share with professionals.](#)
 - o Explore a disregard or waiver of bonus payments (either all or upwards of \$5,000-\$10,000) towards income as it relates to eligibility for state or federal public assistance programs. Options include legislation, regulation, or an executive order.
 - o Offer free translation services for all guidance and instruction for accessing the bonus stipends.
 - o If an opt-in approach to bonus payments, provide free outreach and support to help all professional navigate the process.
- Build in an evaluation process to track retention effectiveness at 3-months, 6-months, and 9-months.
- Incorporate any reporting requirements related to the funding source.
- Bonus payment amounts should be:

- Issued only to child care professionals actively working in licensed child care settings
 - Higher than signing bonuses (research existing programs in Kansas)
 - In a range meaningful to professionals in the field that would impact retention
- If needed, consider issuing bonus payments in waves or stages to quickly get funds out to high-need areas and populations. In this case, prioritize:
 - Employees who've been in the field 6 months or longer
 - Employees working full-time (if this is known)
 - Employees working in child care deserts
 - Employees serving infants and toddlers
 - Employees working directly with children or in child care administration roles
- Collect additional demographic information when asking professionals to accept the payments to help better understand the child care workforce and lay the foundation for workforce registry functionality.
- Whenever possible, bonus payments should be issued directly to the child care professional, versus through their child care employers.
- Review other retention bonus programs and if time allows, connect with these program leaders to absorb, and incorporate lessons learned. In addition to the states listed in the formal Recommendation, these include:
 - [The Family Conservancy Start Young Program](#) (Kansas)
 - [Alabama](#)
 - [Colorado](#)
 - [Iowa](#)
 - [General List of State Compensation Strategies](#)