



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



Annual Report

➤ 2021

Kim Moore, Chair
Melissa Rooker, Executive Director

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**Improving the health
and well-being of Kansas
children and families.**

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Introduction

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Letter from the Director

After an enormously challenging 2020 for children and families across the state, 2021 has brought a stronger sense of possibility, hope, and resilience. This year's annual report from the Kansas Children's Cabinet is evidence of our collective ability to transition out of hardship and work toward sustainable system improvements.

The **Blueprint for Early Childhood** and the **All In For Kansas Kids Strategic Plan** focused our 2021 efforts on strategies central to ensuring children thrive. As circumstances continued to rapidly change, we reminded ourselves of key priorities shared by stakeholders in the early childhood care and education system:

- **Empowering communities:** How can state agencies encourage and support communities who are "all in for Kansas kids?" In what ways can agencies, coalitions, and statewide organizations enact system improvements that make sense and are responsive to local needs given the existing momentum in communities?
- **Collaborating around relief and recovery:** How are we learning what the specific needs and barriers are for families and providers? How can we offer thoughtful solutions and a swift response along with building better long-range pathways and opportunities?
- **Elevating the workforce:** How are we understanding the specific ways that our already-stressed child care system and workforce is collapsing and has historically been undervalued? How are we working to recruit, retain, and value early childhood care and education providers?

Our 2021 Annual Report reflects the collaborative nature of this important work and highlights connections among efforts. You'll learn about activities funded by the Preschool Development Grant, Children's Initiatives Fund, Early Childhood Block Grant, and Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention program in the "Our Progress" section. We also spotlight some exciting new initiatives, including the statewide expansion of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, the Kansas Future Fellows program, and the Thriving Families, Safer Children national movement.

In the "Data for Impact" section, you'll read about multiple ways the Kansas Children's Cabinet supports evaluation and innovation around data collection and use. We are particularly proud to be the Trustee of the new Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust and excited to present early results of our first Authorized Project. These results confirm that kids participating in early childhood services are significantly less likely to be removed from the home and referred to foster care.

Finally, we present special sections devoted to discussion of the child care crisis and pandemic relief/recovery efforts in the early childhood sector. We close with a synopsis of Kansas Children's Cabinet recommendations over the course of the year with updates on progress.

As a state, we are well positioned to make this coming year an even better one for the children and families we serve. We look forward to continuing efforts to imagine and implement a brighter future for all Kansans.



Our Commitment to Equity

The Kansas 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 Kansas 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

Our Work

Manager

Manages grantmaking, fund administration, and strategic planning processes.

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.

Evaluator

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



Our People

Kansas 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 has lived in Olathe since 1994 and is Councilwoman-elect on the Olathe City Council. LeEtta is also the longest serving current member of the Olathe Public Schools Board of Education. She is Vice President of AAG Investments and is pursuing a Doctorate of Education in Administration and Leadership (Ed.D) from Southern Nazarene University.

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 served as a political appointee in President George W. Bush's administration and held 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 namesake of the organization she founded in 2010, Braden's Hope for Childhood Cancer.

Monica Murnan 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 (Outgoing), 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.

Renee Erickson (Incoming), Senator, was appointed in 2021 and represents District 30. Her career experience includes working as a teacher, a data and assessment coordinator, a middle school principal, a financial planner, and the director of the USD 259 instructional technology center. She holds undergraduate degrees in both business and education with a master's degree in public school administration from Baker University, and a master's degree in family life education and consultation from Kansas State University.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Laura Howard, J.D. Secretary, Kansas Department for Children and Families (Tanya Keys, 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

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

Kansas Children's Cabinet Staff

Melissa Rooker was named Executive Director of the Kansas 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 Kansas 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 Adegbore joined the Kansas Children's Cabinet in 2004. Dyogga tracks financial activities on grants, contracts, interagency agreements and office funds, also coordinates meeting and travel arrangements. She has worked with agency heads in state government and private industry over 20 years. Most recently, Dyogga worked with the CEOs of the Kansas Board of Regents, Kansas State Fire Marshal, and Kansas State Bank Commissioner offices. She graduated with her Bachelor of General Studies (BGS) degree from Washburn University of Topeka and AAS degree, Platt College.

Debbie Deere joined the Kansas 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 Kansas 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.

2021 At-a-Glance

This past year, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet has been called to take its statutory role (K.S.A. 38-1901) to a new level. In response to the pandemic, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet was looked to by communities, the legislature, and government agencies alike to identify service barriers, anticipate challenges, and propose and implement interagency solutions. This report highlights our expanded roles as Manager, Connector, Strategist, Evaluator, and Champion across the early childhood care and education system. We note interpretations of federal and state legislation and how we worked to quickly propose effective pathways responsive to the needs of Kansans. Our **2020 Needs Assessment Update** confirmed that it matters where you live in Kansas and that state agencies must respond with solutions that minimize burden and reflect the unique circumstances of communities across Kansas.

2021 COVID-19 Relief Efforts
across the early childhood care
and education system

Our Tomorrows Action Labs

Sunflower Summer Program

Remote Learning Grants

Child Care Health Consultants

Sustainability Grants

Hero Relief Program

Links to Quality Response Phase

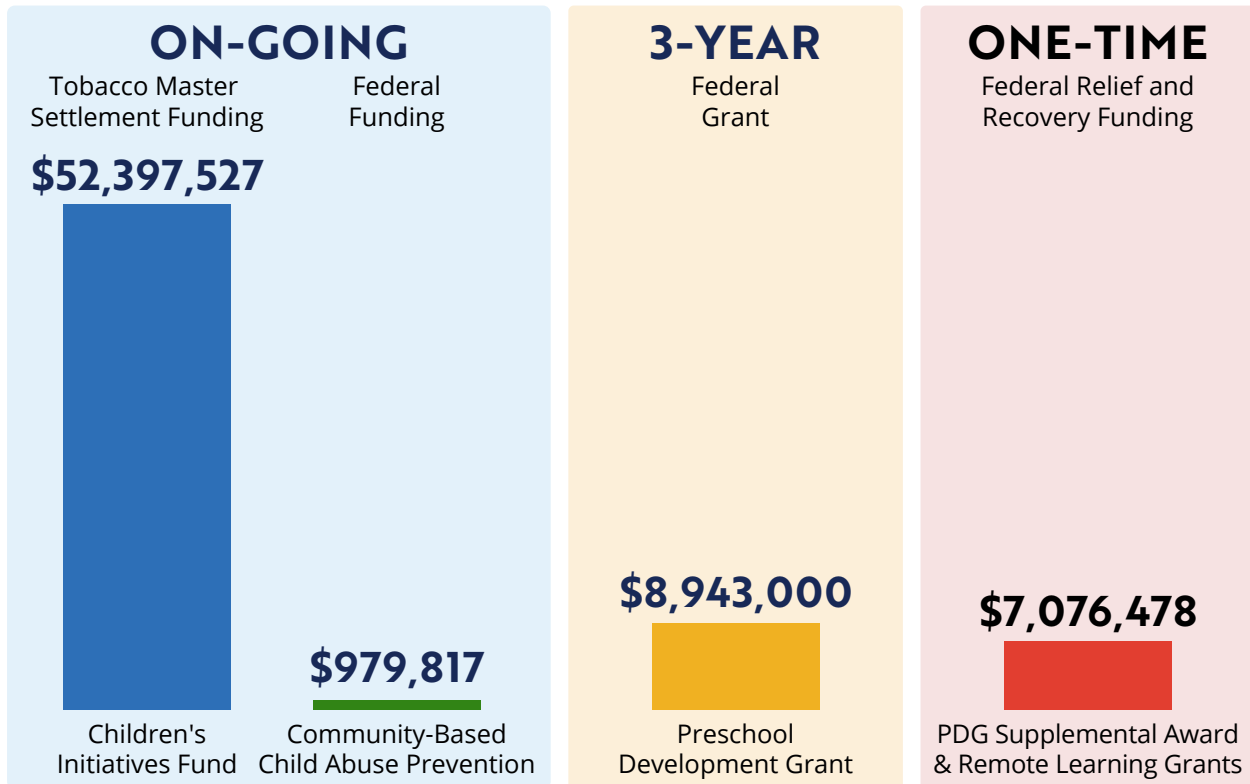
Under extraordinarily difficult pandemic and economic conditions, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet stepped into this elevated role with the nimbleness and dynamism necessary to enact meaningful change. Our work as a champion for innovation and as a convener and strategist for effective collaboration uniquely positions us to make a difference. We did so by paying particular attention to these three overarching concerns:

- **Empowering communities across Kansas**
- **Collaborating around pandemic relief and recovery**
- **Elevating and supporting the early childhood care and education workforce**

The Governor’s Council on Education recently recognized our adeptness in this elevated role by recommending that the state, “leverage the capacity of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet to blend and braid federal pandemic relief resources with other sources of state and local funding—both public and private—to provide immediate assistance to the child care sector.” Over the past year, we served as an experienced

grantmaker that catalyzed community-driven response to the COVID-19 pandemic by creating reporting standards and compliance protocols. And, as detailed in this year’s annual report, we repeatedly demonstrate that federal, state, and private dollars can effectively be blended, braided, and bundled to enable community adaption and innovation to meet local needs.

FY 2021 Kansas Children's Cabinet Budget



There were a few particularities of 2021 that made the Children's Cabinet the steward of a larger budget than normal. The Kansas Children's Cabinet received one-time pandemic relief funding for the Remote Learning Grant and Federal Preschool Development Grant Supplement.

The Kansas 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 and includes the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG). The Children's Cabinet is also 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. Details on CIF, ECBG, and CBCAP are found in the "Our Progress" section of this report.

In collaboration with other state agencies, the Kansas Children's Cabinet applied for and won a competitive Preschool Development Grant, a 3-year federal commitment. These dollars support the Kansas 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 in for Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan.

In no small part due to our leadership of these collaborative efforts, the Kansas Children's Cabinet has been well positioned to coordinate distribution of federal recovery and relief funding to meet the needs of families and communities hit hardest by the COVID-19 crisis.



Our Progress

- Overview
- Strategic Plan Updates
- Program Profiles
 - CIF
 - CBCAP
 - ECBG
- New Initiative Spotlights
 - Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Expansion
 - SENT Topeka
 - Preventative Legal Services
 - Thriving Families, Safer Children
 - CBCAP Demonstration Projects



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



Overview

The **Kansas Early Childhood Systems Building Needs Assessment** and **All In For Kansas Kids Strategic Plan** guide us as we develop and strengthen cross-agency collaborations that center families' needs and help ensure 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 day-to-day. Given the rapidly evolving environment of the pandemic, we are presented with both a daunting threat requiring immediate action – and an opportunity to rethink how we work and make progress. To aid these efforts, the Kansas Children's Cabinet prepared an update to the state's early childhood Needs Assessment in early 2021, covering the time period of January to December 2020 and beginning to explore the wide-reaching impact of the pandemic.

This section provides information on how our work has moved forward over the past year on key initiatives of the *All In For Kansas Kids Strategic Plan* and in response to new information gleaned from the 2020 Needs Assessment update. We present major milestones, profiles of funded programs, new initiatives, and bright spots across the early childhood care and education system.

View these documents online at kschildrenscabinet.org:

[Kansas Early Childhood Systems Building Needs Assessment](#)

[2020 Needs Assessment Update](#)

[All In For Kansas Kids Strategic Plan](#)

- Agencies and workgroups of the **new Kansas early childhood care and education governance structure** actively align to implement strategic plan tactics, with particular momentum among the following:
 - **The State Directors Team**, originally established to implement new federal funding through the Preschool Development Grant B-5 (PDG), is comprised of directors from the Kansas Children’s Cabinet, Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE), Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF), and Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). The team meets regularly to enact the vision for early childhood care and education in Kansas and to oversee activities of the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan.
 - **Early Childhood Recommendations Panel (Panel)** - The Panel is the designated working group for the Kansas Children’s Cabinet as the Kansas Early Childhood Advisory Council, and 2021 marked the Panel’s first full year in existence under the new governance structure. Panel members worked to prepare and distribute two new resources for enhancing collaboration among early childhood professionals: the Kindergarten Transitions Toolkit and the Stakeholder Resource Directory. The Panel provided feedback to various groups throughout the year, including those working to maximize federal relief dollars to support early childhood in Kansas.
 - **Child Care Systems Improvement Team (CC-SIT)** - The Child Care Systems Improvement Team, a 20+ member team meeting monthly, is comprised of child care providers and leaders from across the state. This team formed three active work groups: Starting and Maximizing Child Care Business, Regulatory Standards and Best Practices, and Awareness and Resource Sharing: Elevating Rural Child Care.
- Several state-level technical assistance organizations and initiatives, including **Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities (KCCTO)**, **Child Care Aware of Kansas**, **Integrated Referral and Intake System (IRIS)**, **Adaptive TA**, **Links to Quality**, and the **Child Care Health Consultants**, are coordinating and connecting on complementary services to broaden understanding of the full continuum of support available and to determine where to invest additional resources.
- The **Kansas CommonApp** streamlines the grantmaking process while reducing staffing constraints and spurring conversations around cross-agency alignment of grant support. Several grant opportunities were piloted since development of this online portal in Fall 2020, while efforts continue to identify possibilities for updates and enhancements. More work is needed to align state contracts and continue refining this grantmaking and collaboration tool.
- Representatives from the **Thriving Families Safer Children** and **Family First Prevention Services Act** initiatives are blending teams from child welfare and early childhood services to help prevent child maltreatment.
- The four lead state agencies for early childhood care and education (KSDE, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet, KDHE, and DCF) executed a **Data Trust Agreement** in April 2021 to oversee projects that help better to illustrate the effectiveness and impact of early childhood services. A thorough review of data, systems, and resources supporting this effort is underway and a slate of authorized projects will be considered by the Data Trust Governance Board. Additionally, data around the indicators and measures of the *All in for Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan are part of an extensive, **formal evaluation effort**.

- Significant outreach and new promotional materials from **1-800-CHILDREN** are ensuring this resource reaches families and communities across the state.
- Technical assistance to communities, known as **Adaptive TA**, supports local efforts to improve coordination and build connections among such initiatives as local Head Start programs, Child Care Aware, and tiny-k Part C services.
- **DCF's Resource Navigator program**, which places Resource Agents within the highest-volume, highest-need field offices (Kansas City, Topeka, Emporia and Wichita), works to triage families seeking services who are typically unaware of the broad range of supports available.
- **IRIS**, a community referral tool with 30 Local IRIS Leadership Teams covering 56 counties, is expanding across the state. IRIS recently launched a three-county network in Northwest Kansas with plans to expand to an additional 11 counties in 2022. Additional progress includes:
 - Engaging eight teams in an **IRIS Cultivation Cohort** offering peer learning and targeted technical assistance. Six of the participating teams received IRIS Community Champion capacity-building awards totaling \$15,000 aimed at addressing sustainability challenges.
 - Currently **overseeing mergers of neighboring networks** in two regions to increase capacity and better help families needing services across multiple communities. Also working toward a comprehensive resource and referral network by **establishing an API** to exchange referral information between IRIS and 1-800-CHILDREN.
- **Links to Quality** and the **Child Care Health Consultant Network** both work in communities to enhance peer support networks for child care providers.
- Community organizations statewide, as recipients of **PDG Quality Subgrants**, are developing or expanding custom solutions for enhanced coordination, such as child care provider cohorts, resource navigators, and local “no-wrong-door” approaches for families that ease navigation burdens. PDG Quality Subgrants also support several local family engagement efforts including community awareness events and leadership teams with family member representation.
- A significant bright spot was the creation of a **statewide enterprise system for the Ages & Stages Questionnaires®, Third Edition (ASQ-3) and Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ:SE-2)**. This allows community service providers to more easily access the ASQ screening tool, which is critical for connecting children early to the right support service. Emphasis is now on training local providers to administer and use the ASQ, identifying referral workflow, and providing support for communities to strengthen referral partnerships.
- Care Coordination is another bright spot with two new KDHE programs launched and starting to show impact. **Bridges**, which helps families transition smoothly from Part C to Part B programs, is partnering with Infant Toddler Services to promote awareness and participation. The **Pediatric Pilot** connects a care coordinator with pediatric offices to offer a two-generation approach to referrals, improving the well-being of both parents and children.
- Nearly 1,200 stories have been shared through **Our Tomorrows** this year, followed by several sense-making sessions. In these sessions, participants analyze and interpret story data using the SenseMaker framework and generate ideas for local change. A cohort of 47 grantees across Kansas are currently testing these ideas in “action labs.”

- The **Family Leadership Team**, comprised of family leaders and representatives from KDHE, KSDE, DCF and the Kansas Children's Cabinet, began work to implement a coordinated statewide family engagement strategy guide for early childhood, including a family partnership toolkit.
- The **Family Advisory Council** is forming new workgroups and expanding membership, and the newly-formed **Kansas Family First Family Council** began work Summer 2021. The Early Childhood Recommendations Panel also convened a **Family Partnership Workgroup**.
- Family engagement is an element of many **PDG Quality Subgrants**, including the development of online, interactive, early childhood modules and local events such as community baby showers and back-to-school nights. Family engagement is significant for implementing the **Kindergarten Readiness Quality Subgrants**.
- Community partners including the **Kansas Children's Service League** host family engagement opportunities, including parent cafes, support groups and the Parent Leadership Conference.
- **Supporting You**, a peer support program led by KDHE, is increasing outreach and considering expansion to target support for adoptive and kinship parents and parents of children with developmental disabilities. Through this program, families share information and gain ideas from others who have experienced similar situations. The Supporting You platform is undergoing significant updates to enhance user experience and host training opportunities.
- Several initiatives involve partnering with families who have experience navigating the early childhood care and education system, including: the **IRIS Cultivation Cohort**, **Early Childhood Recommendations Panel**, and **Thriving Families Safer Children**.
- Family members served on review committees for several grant proposals through the **Kansas CommonApp**.
- **Adaptive TA** enhances both family and provider knowledge by distributing resources such as developmental health tip sheets.
- To help ensure equitable access to programs and services, the **Kansas Quality Network (KQN) website** is frequently updated with resources and information, and is currently being re-imagined and re-worked as **Navigate EC**. KQN and the **Kansas Children's Cabinet websites** are continually being updated to use clear language and accessible design. Ongoing translation efforts include making **1-800-CHILDREN** available in 100 languages and providing **ASQ screenings** in families' preferred languages.
- The Kansas Children's Cabinet is partnering with the **Washburn Law Center** to produce a training series for legal professionals that is focused on supporting a family well-being system.
- **Sunflower Summer** was developed as a summer enrichment program for KSDE in a joint effort between the Kansas Children's Cabinet and the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research. Read more about this 6-week learning program that also buoyed local tourism in the final section of this report.

- COVID-19 and the economic impact on both the public and private sectors disrupted plans to launch a statewide public-private partnership. As state-level efforts smartly shifted to managing the COVID-19 crisis (read more about these efforts in the final section of this report), **local organizations and businesses organically and swiftly modeled public-private collaboration** and the tremendous benefits for children, families, and the early childhood sector in general.
- The Kansas Department of Commerce earmarked a significant portion of their **Community Service Tax Credit Program for early childhood development needs**. This tax credit program supports nonprofit organizations considering major capital campaigns through tax credits for donors.
- **Kansas Power of the Positive (KPoP)** a program of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas Children's Service League, and the Community Engagement Institute at Wichita State University, leads efforts to promote and support family-friendly workplaces across the public and private sector. More than 30 professionals from across the state were trained to facilitate discussions. They provided presentations to over 2,000 participants, including employers, Rotary Clubs, Society of Human Resource Manager (SHRM) groups, and a Restaurant Association. New private funding was also received for producing a Family Friendly Workplace video.
- The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted how **essential child care and early childhood programs** are to supporting working families and the overall economy. Read more in the final section of this report on the critical importance of educating the private sector on ways to support their employees and the families that live, work, and play in their communities.

➤ Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Expansion

NEW INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

The Kansas Children's Cabinet statewide expansion of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library was publicly announced September 13, 2021. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is dedicated to inspiring a love of reading by gifting books to children (birth to 5), free of charge through funding shared by local community partners. The Imagination Library enriches families with opportunities to connect around story time and nurtures early literacy in children, an important factor in a child's success in school and life.

The September 13th announcement was accompanied by a press release, a social media campaign, and a promotional video featuring American icon Dolly Parton, Governor Laura Kelly, and Representative Troy Waymaster. At the time of the announcement, 21 percent of eligible children in the state were receiving books through these existing programs. The goal of the statewide expansion is to establish an Imagination Library of Kansas, which will make books available to children in every Kansas zip code.

In this first year of expansion, PDG will provide start-up funding to enroll children into new programs. Along with the announcement, a handful of programs committed to becoming local champions, and two counties, Riley and Pottawatomie, were the first programs to launch with the Kansas Children's Cabinet as a statewide partner. The Kansas Children's Cabinet will work to continue securing funding to sustain the program in the years ahead.

- **Kansas Quality Network, Links to Quality, and Child Care Aware of Kansas** are providing business practices training and/or resources for child care providers.
- Through COVID-19 relief funding, DCF expanded eligibility so that **more families are now able to receive Child Care Assistance**. Relief funding is also providing more opportunities for licensed child care providers to receive **sustainability grants**.
- KDHE and DCF collaborated to **reduce barriers to entry for new child care providers**. Using COVID-19 relief funding, child care licensing administrators are able to waive application fees and background check/fingerprinting costs for new providers.
- **Adaptive TA** conducted environmental scans to better understand the availability of child care in Kansas communities.
- Through the **Kansas Connecting Communities (KCC)** grant, KDHE and several other state and local partners are increasing access to services for perinatal depression, anxiety, and substance use. Training, technical assistance, and a new psychiatric consultation line for providers (**Perinatal Provider Consultation Line for Behavioral Health**), are building capacity across the state for screening, referral, and treatment of perinatal behavioral health disorders.
- **CARES Act funding** was used to enhance remote service provision and telehealth, specifically for home visitors. Providers were able to purchase devices and connectivity services for their families to safely continue receiving vital prevention visits.
- The Kansas Children's Cabinet, through its Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention work, is **analyzing policies that reduce disparities and support basic needs** of families to help prevent child abuse.
- **Technical assistance** was provided for several CommonApp funding opportunities, including PDG Quality Subgrants and the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG), and will be available for funded PDG Quality Subgrants throughout the grant period. The Kansas Head Start Association is also hosting **quarterly community check-in meetings** and providing technical assistance for 12 communities who participated in the 2020 Kindergarten Readiness Summit.
- Federal Preschool Development Grant B-5 (PDG) funding supports the **statewide enterprise system for ASQ** to provide access to free screenings for families and increase coordination among early childhood professionals who administer the screening tool.
- State agencies worked closely with PDG partners to gather feedback on the **Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) state plan**, including identifying gaps and presenting ideas on how to improve access to Child Care Assistance. DCF held several **community feedback sessions** for the plan and presented drafts to the Early Childhood Recommendations Panel for review.
- A significant bright spot in a high-need community, the **SENT Prep Academy** in Topeka opened a center in a child care desert, catalyzed by a grant award from the Kansas Children's Cabinet in late 2020 (see **page 33** for more details).

- The **State Directors Team** is exploring ways to leverage PDG funding and/or other federal relief funding to recruit, retain, and elevate the early care and education workforce. Fundamental to a wage strategy is a career pathway that articulates a structure for incentivizing professional growth within early childhood. The **Professional Development Implementation Team (PDIT)** task force, in consultation with Bank Street, has drafted a career pathway document that values professional development, higher education, and work experience as avenues for improving quality care.
- Efforts to establish a professional development **workforce registry in Kansas** are also underway. Work began in the spring with a robust exploration of current registry systems across the country, peer learning calls with other state systems, and stakeholder expectations for what is needed in Kansas. This work helped drive alignment with other foundational elements, such as a career pathway, core competencies, and quality recognition. Currently, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet is leading work to map the current system landscape and build a future-state roadmap for what the Kansas workforce registry will have capacity to do. Next will come an assessment with key stakeholder feedback on business processes and workflows for current early childhood workforce data, followed by the creation and release of a formal RFP to secure a vendor for the workforce registry build.
- The **Workforce Development Advisory Group (WFDAG)** is researching and analyzing various national and regional core competencies to identify the right set for the Kansas early childhood workforce. Early efforts are focused on ensuring these competencies align with quality initiatives such as Links to Quality as well. WFDAG also has a subcommittee focused on expanding equity, inclusion, and diversity opportunities and shared learning experiences for the early childhood workforce. Even with strides made, the early childhood system recognizes that much more needs to be done to recruit, retain, and support a diverse early childhood care and education workforce. Read more about these concerns and opportunities in the final section of this report.
- The **Child Care Systems Improvement Team** is focused on improving the licensing process for new and continuing child care providers.
- The **Kansas Quality Network** is working to ensure child care providers can access startup, licensing, and quality improvement information, in one place. Likewise, enhancing quality and peer support networks for child care providers is a focus of both **Links to Quality** and the **Child Care Health Consultant Network**.
- The **Child Care Provider Experience Mapping initiative** provided data to help partners identify opportunities for increased coordination during the pre-licensing, licensing, and post-licensing processes. Nearly 400 providers from across the state were surveyed, and many participated in interviews and a co-creation session to further explore the bright spots and challenges of being a licensed child care provider in Kansas.
- Several organizations and providers who received **PDG Quality Subgrants** are using the funding to offer workforce retention and insurance stipends.
- Other efforts to strengthen professional development opportunities for child care providers and other early childhood professionals include: **PDG Quality Subgrants**, **ASQ trainings**, and the **Kindergarten Transitions Toolkit**.

- COVID-19 relief programs in Kansas offered funding and resources to support child care providers with infrastructure improvements (**Child Care Impact Grant program**, the Kansas **Hero Relief Program**, and **comfort kits**). Although many funding sources limit or prohibit use of funds for capital projects, **some PDG Quality Subgrants** supported facility upgrades such as new supplies and enhanced accessibility for children with special health care needs.
- **Remote Learning Grants** were first awarded in Fall 2020 and continued with a new round of awards in Spring 2021. These grants helped meet family needs by providing safe places for school age children to learn while their districts were in remote or hybrid learning modes as a result of pandemic conditions. Grantees provided internet access so students could attend their online classes with their respective teachers in safe, supervised settings while their parents/caregivers worked.
- The **Workforce Development Advisory Group** is identifying core competencies and aligning them with professional development opportunities to ensure high-quality service provision.
- **Links to Quality (L2Q)** provides support and consulting services to the pilot child care provider group and is expanding efforts to meet provider needs. The program developed an expansion timeline to facilitate its inclusion in the developing workforce registry, and is also strengthening technical assistance statewide to help child care providers recover and stabilize after COVID-19.
- The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the dire need for targeted outreach and support for child care providers to enhance quality and environments, and as a result of relief funding, Kansas is currently working to expand the **Child Care Health Consultant network**.



➤ Kansas Future Fellows

NEW INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

Champions for young children and families across our state.

The Future Fellows program is a new initiative that began in September 2021 with **11 fellows** representing different sectors (business, health, education, religious, social welfare, public), all six Kansas regions, and varied communities (rural, suburban, tribal, urban). These fellows are working on systems change with a focus on forecasting opportunities and challenges of the future. They seek to ensure that Kansas children, families, and communities thrive.

Often, systems-change work overlooks the importance of learning from people in diverse fields and from diverse backgrounds or geographic locations. Kansas Future Fellows is an effort not only to tap into this collective knowledge, but to combine it with new skills and leadership opportunities in **futures forecasting, systems planning, process development, and child and family advocacy.**

Through a structured 9-month program, Future Fellows are engaging community and state-level stakeholders to anticipate how circumstances may change over time and to make decisions today that are most likely to yield bright futures. This inaugural year of Kansas Future Fellows will culminate in a “Futures Forum” in mid-2022 involving public- and private-sector leaders who will be introduced to the Fellows’ work and invited to engage in critical next steps.

2021 Kansas Future Fellows

Craig Correll, Coffeyville School District, Superintendent

Tatiana Darby, UKMC, Public Health Researcher

Lona DuVall, Finney County Eco-Dev Corp, President & CEO

Jason Gant, United Methodist Church of the Resurrection, Head Ministry to Children and Families

Lynnette Keo, Kickapoo Tribe, Native Connections Program, Supervisor

Jennifer Keomany, KU-School of Medicine-Wichita, Dept. Obstetrics and Gynecology, Department Manager

Britany Lemon, Child Start in South-Central Kansas, Mental Health and Disabilities Specialist

Marci Penner, Kansas Sampler Foundation, Executive Director

Travis Rickford, LiveWell Northwest Kansas, Executive Director

Tabatha Rosproy, Olathe Public Schools, Early Childhood Early Childhood Center/2020 National Teacher of the Year

Johnathan Sublet, Fellowship Hi-Crest Church / SENT Topeka, Lead Pastor / Chairman



Children's Initiatives Fund (CIF)

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, and parent education.

The CIF is sustained through the Kansas share of the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement. The **University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research** conducts the annual **Accountability Process** for the CIF funded programs. The **Center for Applied Research and Evaluation at Wichita State University**

also provides support and analysis around the **Common Measures** Initiative for participating CIF grantees. The following pages provide an overview of each program, including the amount awarded from CIF, a brief description of services and their impacts over the past year, and the populations served.

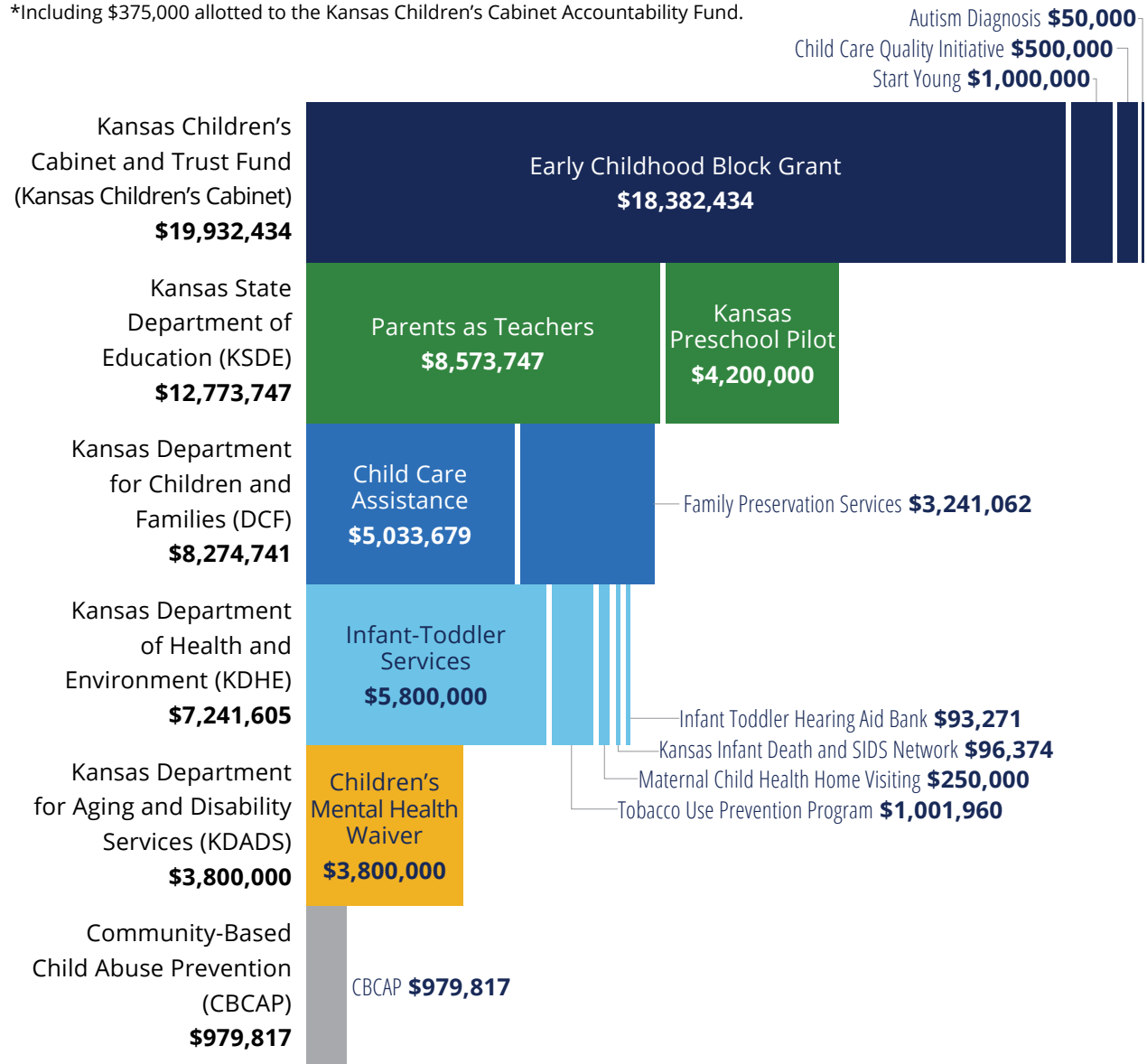
14 CIF Programs
were funded in FY 2021 to support
children and families in Kansas.

Kansas Children's Cabinet Funding

Total FY2021 Funding

CIF \$52,397,527* | CBCAP \$979,817

*Including \$375,000 allotted to the Kansas Children's Cabinet Accountability Fund.



➤ Autism Diagnosis

KANSAS CHILDREN'S CABINET AND TRUST FUND

FY2021
\$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 2021	Served
Total Children	33
Prenatal to Age 3	7
Ages 3-5	9
Ages 5-12	15
Ages 12-18	2
Ages 18+	0
Adults	0
Professional Development	77

Impact

- 33 families across 18 counties completed an autism evaluation via telehealth after being screened by community ADTs.
- 72% of children completing evaluations received a diagnosis of autism.
- Telemedicine clinics reduced the burden of travel to receive care for families by saving a total of 11,824 miles.
- 31 ADT technical assistance requests were fulfilled.

➤ Child Care Assistance (CCA)

KANSAS DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

FY2021
\$5,033,679

CCA supports families living at or below 250% of the federal poverty level (increased from 185% in response to COVID-19) or at or below 85% of the state median income at their annual review. The program 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 2021	Served
Total Children	17,291
Prenatal to Age 2	8,147
Ages 2-5	3,668
Ages 5-12	5,368
Ages 12-18	108
Ages 18+	0
Adults	0
Professional Development	0

Impact

- 55% of families receiving subsidies for a full year saw their household income increase.
- Families continued to report being able to receive care they would not have access to without subsidies.
- In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Hero Relief Program assisted families of essential workers with child care expenses, with no assigned family shares and allowing a higher income limit. Additional benefits were provided for many families experiencing changes in circumstances due to COVID-19.

Child Care Quality Initiative (CCQI)

KANSAS CHILDREN'S CABINET AND TRUST FUND

FY2021

\$500,000

CCQI includes a combination of supports for child care providers with a mission of providing quality early learning experiences for young children and their families. The project applies the Child Care Quality Improvement Framework which focuses on ensuring children establish strong connections and healthy development within the family unit, the early learning environment, the community, and society. CCQI Specialists enroll Family Child Care Providers in this year long quality initiative program. The common measures used are ASQ:SE-2, ASQ-3, and CLASS. CCQI Specialists support participants through: CLASS Observations, Professional Development, ASQ Screenings, Resources and Materials, Coaching, Go NAPSACC, Self-Assessments, Learning Sessions, Technical Assistance, Peer Learning Communities, and Parent Cafes.

Population FY 2021	Served	Impact
Total Children	522	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 100% of CCQI regions enrolled and maintained the target number of Family Child Care Provider participants. ➤ 100% of CCQI regions provided the target number of TA visits to new participants during the 2021-22 report year. ➤ 85% of regions created the target number of Parent Resource Hubs.
Prenatal to Age 3	201	
Ages 3-5	173	
Ages 5-12	148	
Ages 12-18	0	
Ages 18+	0	
Adults	400	
Professional Development	357	

Children's Mental Health Waiver

KANSAS DEPARTMENT FOR AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES

FY2021

\$3,800,000

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

Population FY 2021	Served	Impact
Total Children	4,651	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The program achieved a turnaround time of 3-5 days for KanCare forms allowing families quicker access to services. ➤ Wraparound case management was provided to 4,006 children. ➤ Twenty-six centers across the state have awareness campaigns to promote these services.
Prenatal to Age 2	0	
Ages 2-5	29	
Ages 5-12	1,488	
Ages 12-18	2,616	
Ages 18+	518	
Adults	3,109	
Professional Development	0	

➤ Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG)

KANSAS CHILDREN'S CABINET AND TRUST FUND

FY2021

\$18,382,434

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 2021 Served

Total Children	6,074
Prenatal to Age 3	2,477
Ages 3-5	3,597
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Adults	5,346
Professional Development	1,201

Impact

- 91% of ECBG investments supported families that experienced at least one risk factor, including poverty, developmental delays, and teen parents, and 44% of the families had 3 or more risk factors.
 - 73% of classrooms were observed to be high quality.
 - Parent education helped increase positive parenting to 86%.
- Outcomes improved in all service areas:
- Social emotional and mental health consultation increased the percentage of children developmentally on track to 85%.
 - Pre-K classrooms showed increased percentage of children on track in language comprehension, phonemic awareness, and numeracy.

➤ Family Preservation Services

KANSAS DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

FY2021

\$3,241,062

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 well-being. At Tier 1, Intensive In-Home Family Preservation Services are provided to mitigate immediate child safety concerns, stabilize family crisis, and assess the family's needs. At Tier 2, Short-Term Family Preservation Case Management Services are provided by a Case Manager and a Family Support Worker who assess for existing risk and emergent safety issues and, when identified, initiate services to stabilize and support the family.

Population FY 2021 Served

Total Children	4,551
Prenatal to Age 2	837
Ages 2-5	472
Ages 5-12	1,775
Ages 12-18	1,422
Ages 18+	45
Adults	3,063
Professional Development	109

Impact

- Families reported that program supports led to increased family stability helping keep children in the home.
- 93% (Tier 1) and 87% (Tier 2) of children were not placed in foster care during services.
- 99% (Tier 1) and 97% (Tier 2) of families did not experience substantiated abuse or neglect during services.

➤ Infant Toddler Hearing Aid Bank

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

FY2021
\$93,271

The Infant Toddler Hearing Aid Bank removes the financial barriers many families face when trying to obtain 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 the specific needs of their child. Once the child has received their appropriate device, the Infant Toddler Hearing Aid Bank connects the family to early intervention services and a network of other families who have children with hearing loss. Early detection and intervention for hearing loss are key to ensuring a child's development stays on track.

Population FY 2021	Served
Total Children	29
Prenatal to Age 3	26
Ages 3-5	3
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Adults	56
Professional Development	1

Impact

- 100% of toddlers fit for hearing aids also received early intervention services.
- 73% of children served had their hearing loss identified by the age of 3 months.
- 56% of children served were between the ages of 3-6 months when fit with hearing aid(s).
- 100% of parents reported their child's audiologist answered all their questions regarding their child's hearing aid(s).

➤ Infant-Toddler Services (ITS)

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

FY2021
\$5,800,000

ITS 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 home environments, and providers work alongside community partners to ensure families have the resources they need to support their child's development.

Population FY 2021	Served
Total Children	10,598
Prenatal to Age 3	10,598
Ages 3-5	0
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Adults	10,598
Professional Development	600

Impact

- 79% of children with Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) demonstrated improved positive social-emotional skills (an additional 20% maintained at age level).
- 84% of children with IFSPs demonstrated improved acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, including early language skills (an additional 15% maintained at age level).
- 93% of families participating in ITS reported that early intervention services have aided in their child's learning and development.

➤ Kansas Preschool Pilot (KPP)

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FY2021

\$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 2021 Served

Total Children	4,537
Prenatal to Age 3	0
Ages 3-5	4,537
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Adults	0
Professional Development	1,069

Impact

- 93% of preschoolers showed improvement in literacy from the beginning of the program year to the end.
- 93% of preschoolers showed improvement in mathematics from the beginning of the program year to the end.
- 94% of preschoolers showed improvement in social emotional development from the beginning of the program year to the end.

➤ Kansas Infant Death and SIDS (KIDS) Network

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

FY2021

\$96,374

The KIDS Network serves individuals touched by the tragedy of infant death or SIDS and is a central point of contact for those working to reduce the risk of infant deaths. The program provides supportive services, community education, professional training, and associated research. Events, such as the KIDS Network Safe Sleep Instructor Certification and Community Baby Showers promote a statewide infrastructure to educate current and expectant parents, relatives, community members, and health and child care providers.

Population FY 2021 Served

Total Children	4,427
Prenatal to Age 3	4,377
Ages 3-5	50
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Adults	5,543
Professional Development	4,097

Impact

- 85 Safe Sleep events were held across 18 Kansas counties.
- Safe Sleep Community Baby Shower participants showed significant increases in committing to both safe sleep and tobacco cessation best practices and increased their knowledge of breastfeeding resources.
- 206 Safe Sleep Trainings educated 1,926 Kansans in 20 Kansas counties.
- Clinical bereavement support, grief packets, and ongoing resources were provided to 100% of referrals.

➤ Maternal Child Health (MCH) Home Visiting

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

FY2021

\$250,000

MCH Home Visiting is a strengths-based model connecting any Kansas family with infants to the resources they need to create a safe, stable, and nurturing home environment. Families receive individualized services before, during, and after pregnancy, with the frequency of visits and duration of services based on each family's needs. Home visitors act as a bridge for families in setting and reaching their parenting goals by sharing information about child development, health and safety, positive parenting behaviors. The program also connects families to community-based resources, services, and supports as needed.

Population FY 2021 Served

Total Children	3,031
Prenatal to Age 3	3,031
Ages 3-5	0
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Adults	3,186
Professional Development	336

Impact

- Programs reported reductions in likelihood of child maltreatment and increases in positive parenting and child interactions.
- 75% of women initiated prenatal care in the first trimester.
- 66% of mothers reported breastfeeding.
- 91% of women reported not smoking during pregnancy.

➤ Parents as Teachers (PAT)

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FY2021

\$8,573,747

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 to foster healthy development and promote positive parent-child interactions. 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 2021 Served

Total Children	8,125
Prenatal to Age 3	5,312
Ages 3-5	2,813
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Adults	6,094
Professional Development	64

Impact

- Programs showed an 86% retention rate of local families.
- Over 50% of communities served were rural.
- 5,317 family-centered assessments were administered for goal setting.
- 57,274 personal visits were completed.
- 1,926 potential developmental delays/concerns were identified through developmental screenings.

Start Young is led by The Family Conservancy and funded through Kansas Communities Aligned in Early Development and Education (CAEDE). The program purpose is to improve access and quality of full-day, full-year child care in Wyandotte County. Start Young helps child care providers increase the number of children served by offering material and furnishings grants for new classrooms. Child care subsidy advocates assist families in completing applications for state child care subsidies and tuition assistance scholarships through Start Young. The program also brings systems support to providers through multiple quality initiatives in classrooms and educational incentives for child care staff.

Population FY 2021	Served
Total Children	511
0 to Age 3	246
Ages 3-5	265
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Adults	420
Professional Development	150

Impact

- \$375,629 in supplemental tuition scholarships supported 191 children to receive quality child care, allowing their caregivers to enter or remain in the workforce.
- 20 child care providers were supported in increasing their education or professional development.
- 115 educators received salary supplements with a 94% retention rate.
- Start Young assisted 2 new in-home providers in becoming licensed and participating in Child Care Assistance through DCF.

Tobacco Use Prevention Program (TUPP)

The Tobacco Use Prevention Program 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 2021	Served
Total Children	532,934
Prenatal to Age 3	82,055
Ages 3-5	86,734
Ages 5-12	179,639
Ages 12-18	184,506
Ages 18+	0
Adults	1,718,612
Professional Development	790

Impact

- 91.5% of children were born to smoke-free mothers.
- 51.1% of adult smokers tried to quit in the past year.
- In partnership with Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities, the program trained 66 child care providers across 20 counties on communicating to families the importance of tobacco-free environments.
- 26% of Kansas Tobacco Quitline phone coaching participants quit using commercial tobacco.

➤ SENT Topeka

NEW INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

In spring of 2020, a child care facility operating in southeast Topeka closed after nearly 30 years. The pandemic, and this sudden closure, left an already under-resourced community further in need and classified as a “child care desert.” The non-profit community development organization, Strengthening and Empowering Neighborhoods Together (SENT), stepped in with a public-private partnership opportunity for the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and other community partners and investors. In the spring of 2021, SENT, the Topeka Community Foundation, private donors, and a multitude of volunteers helped renovate and re-open the facility to bring quality care to the families of the Topeka Hi-Crest neighborhood.

The SENT Prep Academy aims to:

- enable parents to work and/or pursue educational opportunities
- strengthen the local child care workforce through apprenticeships, wage supplements, and partnerships with higher education
- function as family engagement hub for the community

The program serves the ages of 6 weeks to 6 years, plus school-age programs during times when school is not in session. The center has high-quality standards for professional teaching and developmentally appropriate curriculum.

Goal #4 of the **All In For Kansas Kids Strategic Plan**, Private Sector Collaboration, is intended to promote family-friendly workplaces and create a state-level public private partnership envisioned as a catalyst for innovation. COVID-19 significantly changed the dialogue surrounding child care and its link to overall economic stability, resulting in new approaches to what public-private partnerships may look like. With a commitment to equity and strong desire to increase the availability and affordability of quality child care, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet approved a onetime grant of \$250,000 to support SENT in late 2020.

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet is demonstrating its ability to be nimble and foster innovation through this endeavor. By honoring local decision-making and strong community engagement, this investment aligns the Kansas Children’s Cabinet’s vision with the dire needs of this particular neighborhood. **This version of a local-to-state, public-private partnership can serve as a model for so much of the work and the results we envision in the All In For Kansas Kids Strategic Plan.**





Early Childhood Block Grant

ECBG recipients provide services to at-risk children, ages 0-5, and their families. Grants from the Kansas 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 these programs.

18 ECBG Programs operate in Kansas serving children and families across 66 counties.

ECBG grantee services vary widely in intensity and duration, and programs operate under a broad range of funding situations. The following pages provide details on outcomes for each program and indicate the level of risk of families served.

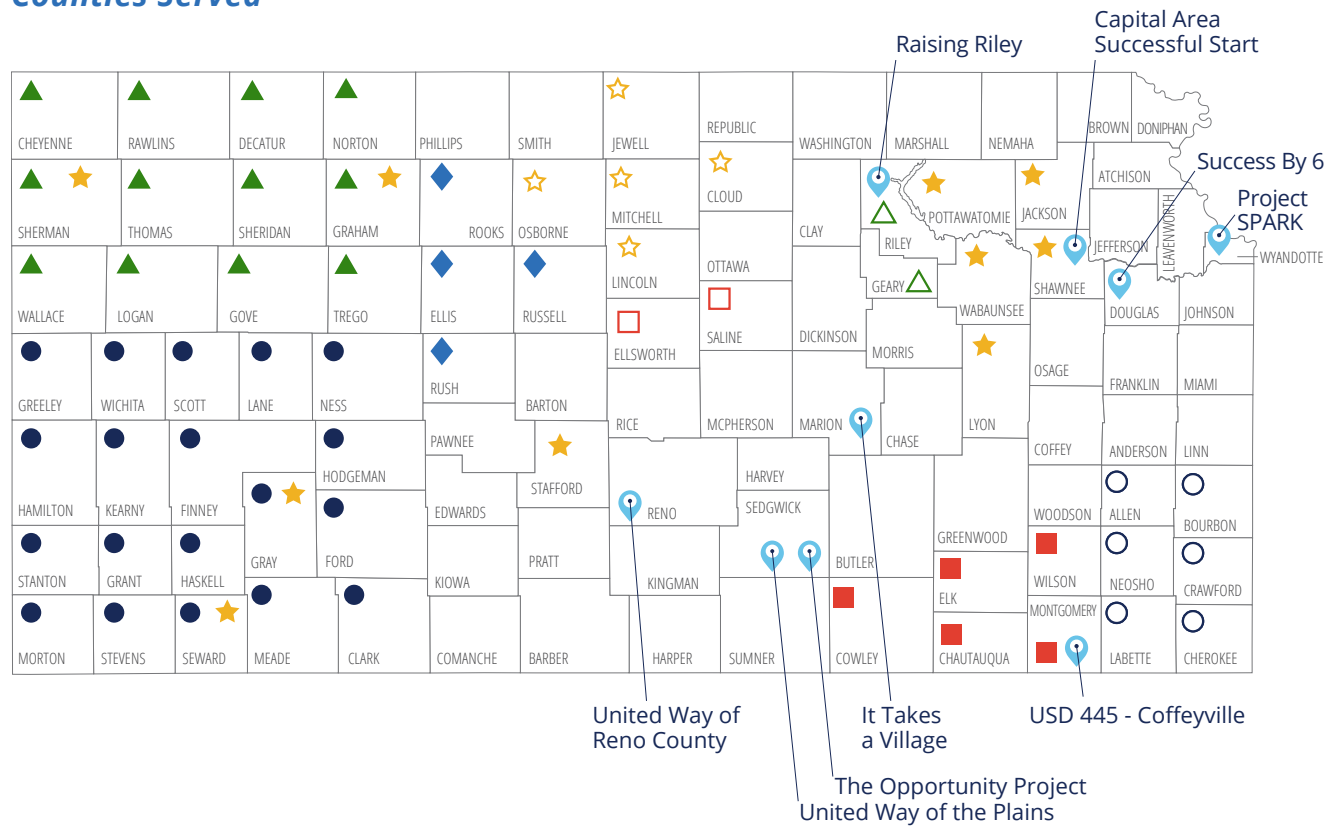
Impact of COVID-19

The impact of COVID-19 across ECBG recipients has been quite variable. Geographic location and other factors contributed to differences in impact among grantees. Across all programs, the following COVID-19 disruptions were documented:

- **1,749** children were impacted by COVID-19 related closures in child care or Pre-K settings, with some of those environments remaining permanently closed.
- **663** families who were previously engaged in ECBG-supported family services (home visiting programs, case management, or mental/behavioral health services) suspended services because of the pandemic.
- **140** parent education programs were suspended due to the pandemic.

ECBG Reach and Services

Counties Served



Service Types

Early Care and Education	17
Home Visiting	11
Parent Education	8
Social-Emotional Consultation	7
Case Management	4
Family Engagement & Referrals	3
Mental & Behavioral Health Services	2

- ▲ LiveWell Northwest Kansas
- △ Early Childhood Block Grant Geary County
- Russell Child Development Center
- Family Resource Center
- ★ Kansas Head Start Association
- ☆ Mitchell County Partnership for Children
- Four County Mental Health Center
- Child Advocacy & Parenting Services
- ◆ USD 489 - Early Childhood Connections
- 📍 Programs Serving a Single County

Capital Area Successful Start | \$461,249

375 Children Served 319 Caregivers Served

99% had one or more risk factors and 58% had three or more risk factors.

81% of children under age three grew in early communication skills.

100% of caregivers displayed positive parenting.

Early Childhood Block Grant Geary County | \$497,441

309 Children Served 270 Caregivers Served

89% of families had one or more risk factors.

91% of Pre-K children were on track in language comprehension.

82% of caregivers displayed positive parenting, which was a 48% increase.

Family Resource Center, Inc. | \$1,226,698

906 Children Served 788 Caregivers Served

95% of families had one or more risk factors.

94% of children were on track in social-emotional development.

87% of classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.

Four County Mental Health Center, Inc. | \$383,373

89 Children Served 68 Caregivers Served

88% of families served had one or more risk factors.

97% of children were on track in social-emotional development.

74% of caregivers displayed positive parenting.

It Takes a Village | \$172,395

212 Children Served 212 Caregivers Served

74% of families had one or more risk factors.

88% of children under age three grew in early communication skills.

89% of classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.

Kansas Head Start Association: Early Learning Communities | \$1,360,482

506 Children Served 483 Caregivers Served

90% of families had one or more risk factors.

74% of Pre-K children were on track in numeracy.

86% of classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.

LiveWell Northwest Kansas | \$357,304

173 Children Served 139 Caregivers Served

88% of families had one or more risk factors.

94% of Pre-K children were on track in language comprehension.

92% of classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.

Mitchell County Partnership for Children | \$422,510

231 Children Served 213 Caregivers Served

75% of families had one or more risk factors.

92% of children under age three grew in early communication skills.

89% of Pre-K children were on track in language comprehension.

Project SPARK | \$1,244,153

288 Children Served 270 Caregivers Served

100% had one or more risk factors and 71% had three or more risk factors.

92% of children were on track in social-emotional development.

59% of Pre-K children served in community child care were on track in language comprehension.

Raising Riley | \$758,262**170 Children Served 156 Caregivers Served**

99% of families had one or more risk factors.

71% of Pre-K children were on track in phonemic awareness, which was a 42% increase.

88% of classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.

Russell Child Development Center | \$2,200,000**969 Children Served 747 Caregivers Served**

85% of families had one or more risk factors.

72% of Pre-K children were on track in language comprehension.

88% of caregivers displayed positive parenting.

Saline-Ellsworth Counties School Readiness Project | \$461,249**151 Children Served 136 Caregivers Served**

95% of families had one or more risk factors.

74% of children under age three grew in early communication skills.

73% of Pre-K children were on track in numeracy.

Success By 6 Coalition of Douglas County | \$914,102**205 Children Served 180 Caregivers Served**

98% had one or more risk factors and 63% had three or more risk factors.

92% of Pre-K children were on track in language comprehension.

100% of toddler classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.

The Opportunity Project: Early Learning Centers | \$2,200,000**343 Children Served 312 Caregivers Served**

94% of families had one or more risk factors.

84% of children under age three grew in early communication skills.

88% of classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.

United Way of the Plains | \$743,930**289 Children Served 280 Caregivers Served**

92% had one or more risk factors and 53% had three or more risk factors.

83% of children under age three grew in early communication skills.

100% of classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.

United Way of Reno County | \$611,492**252 Children Served 228 Caregivers Served**

87% of families had one or more risk factors.

86% of Pre-K children were on track in numeracy.

55% of the families served showed a decrease in their total stress from pre to post assessment.

USD 445 Coffeyville | \$881,750**149 Children Served 139 Caregivers Served**

92% had one or more risk factors and 52% had three or more risk factors.

84% of children were on track in social-emotional development.

69% of Pre-K children were on track in numeracy.

USD 489 Early Childhood Connections | \$410,690**88 Children Served 83 Caregivers Served**

100% of families had one or more risk factors.

93% of Pre-K children were on track in numeracy.

100% of classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.

➤ Preventative Legal Services

NEW INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

Family Well-Being System Education Series

A pilot with the Washburn Law Clinic to train the legal community on Strengthening Families

Strengthening Families is a proven, prevention approach for child maltreatment. This research-informed method aims to enhance child development, build family skills and stability, and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. By focusing on five universal family strengths, service providers can better engage, support, and partner with parents to achieve the best outcomes for kids.

Legal professionals working in family law can benefit from training around the Strengthening Families approach. The Preventative Legal Services project involves **developing a webinar series** offering details on this approach and how to shift perspectives in family law settings toward our **shared responsibility for promoting child well-being and resilience, while preventing an overload of stress on families.**

The Kansas Children's Cabinet and the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research are partnering with the Washburn Law Clinic to produce this webinar training series for legal professionals. Working with eight law students and a supervising Washburn law professor, the project will culminate in six 55-minute professional education webinars with an accompanying one-page fact sheet on cultivating a family well-being system. The project delivers not only an educational resource for the family law community, but also promotes expert knowledge among upper level family law students at Washburn University.

These materials will be universally available at no cost, and disseminated through the Washburn Children and Family Law Center's website. They will also be distributed to local and national networks of family law professionals, and through future law conferences and university course curriculum. This pilot project is being evaluated using a quantitative survey approach to measure learning objectives, as well as qualitative interviews with both participating law students and webinar series viewers. **Evaluation findings will inform future partnerships with the legal community as we work to forge a child well-being system across sectors.**

Webinar Topics

Fundamentals of the Strengthening Families approach

- Family systems and protective factors
- Framing Adverse Childhood Experiences from a family well-being perspective

Using a Strengthening Families approach for families in crisis

- Distinguishing poverty from neglect
- Recognizing dynamics of domestic violence
- Supporting mental health challenges
- Applying a risk mitigation approach to substance use concerns

Concrete strategies for using a Strengthening Families approach in family law

- Using referral services (i.e., 1-800-CHILDREN) to promote care over consequences
- Assessing and addressing barriers to compliance
- Using tools for risk assessment

Legal strategies for strengthening families involved in court proceedings

- Framing legal ethics and best interest standards using a Strengthening Families approach



Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

The Kansas Children's Cabinet serves as the state lead agency for federally funded Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) grants. CBCAP focuses on strengthening and supporting families to prevent the likelihood of abuse or neglect. CBCAP programs are designed to recognize and respond to families experiencing a life disruption before it becomes a crisis and ensure families have equitable access to services and concrete supports. Through CBCAP funding, the Kansas Children's Cabinet aims to build a system that honors and strengthens families, while addressing social determinants of health and reducing disparities, promoting entire family well-being across the life course.

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

7 CBCAP Programs serve Kansas families, including one statewide grantee to support and strengthen overall infrastructure and six community-based grantees. Four additional grantees were funded in late 2021 and will be evaluated in 2022.

➤ Elizabeth Layton Center's Circle of Security

FY2021
\$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. The program addresses child maltreatment prevention through home visiting and education interventions, with a parenting curriculum which promotes protective factors such as healthy attachment and nurturing. Circle of Security receives referrals from Head Start, local primary care physicians, schools, domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters, and community mental health workers.

Population FY 2021	Served
Total Children	147
Ages 0-1	19
Ages 2-4	44
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	70
Ages 18+	14
Caregivers	119

Impact

- The program identified 8 opportunities for monitoring developmental milestones and engaging community-based early childhood supports, as well as 10 opportunities for referral.

Caregivers report the following positive protective factors:

- 71% Family Functioning.
- 57% Social Supports.
- 67% Caregiver Practitioner Relationship.

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

FY2021
\$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 2021	Served
Total Children	277
Ages 0-1	40
Ages 2-4	95
Ages 5-12	105
Ages 12-18	30
Ages 18+	7
Caregivers	188

Impact

- The program identified 21 opportunities for monitoring developmental milestones and engaging community-based early childhood supports, as well as 41 opportunities for referral.

Caregivers report the following positive protective factors:

- 74% Family Functioning.
- 59% Nurturing and Attachment.
- 59% Social Supports.

➤ Family Resource Center's Response Advocate

FY2021
\$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 2021	Served
Total Children	395
Ages 0-1	29
Ages 2-4	85
Ages 5-12	156
Ages 12-18	105
Ages 18+	20
Caregivers	240

Impact

➤ The program identified 73 opportunities for monitoring developmental milestones and engaging community-based early childhood supports, as well as 50 opportunities for referral.

Caregivers report the following positive protective factors:

- 68% Family Functioning.
- 71% Caregiver Practitioner Relationship.
- 59% Nurturing and Attachment.

➤ Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL)

FY2021
\$259,970

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

Population FY 2021	Served
Total Children	0
Ages 0-1	0
Ages 2-4	0
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Caregivers	203

Impact

- Circle of Parents support group participants experienced increases in nearly all protective factors and in social support pertaining to finances and budgeting, relationships, nutrition, stress and anxiety, and parenting.
- 79% reported Family Functioning as a protective factor as compared to 31% prior to participation
- Participants experienced a 20% increase in the protective factor Nurturing and Attachment
- Social supports as a protective factor increased from 37% prior to attending, to 75% after.

➤ Parent Child Assistance Program (PCAP)

FY2021
\$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, and referrals to community resources (local health care and mental health providers, child care providers, and providers of basic needs). The program uses Partners for a Healthy Baby Parenting Curriculum to promote nurturing, 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 2021	Served
Total Children	95
Ages 0-1	41
Ages 2-4	34
Ages 5-12	15
Ages 12-18	4
Ages 18+	1
Caregivers	77

Impact

➤ The program identified 30 opportunities for monitoring developmental milestones and engaging community-based early childhood supports, as well as 11 opportunities for referral.

Caregivers report the following positive protective factors:

- 60% Family Functioning.
- 82% Nurturing and Attachment.
- 79% Social Supports.

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

FY2021
\$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. The project uses the Parenting the Love and Logic Way curriculum, an evidence-informed model, to address client needs.

Population FY 2021	Served
Total Children	166
Ages 0-1	7
Ages 2-4	44
Ages 5-12	70
Ages 12-18	39
Ages 18+	6
Caregivers	102

Impact

➤ The program identified 14 opportunities for monitoring developmental milestones and engaging community-based early childhood supports, as well as 4 opportunities for referral.

➤ The program ensured that all children participating in services established medical insurance, demonstrating that CBCAP programs are vital for helping families meet basic needs.

The Wichita Crisis Nursery, a KCSL 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 2021	Served
Total Children	58
Ages 0-1	15
Ages 2-4	37
Ages 5-12	6
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Caregivers	41

Impact

The program identified 39 opportunities for monitoring developmental milestones and engaging community-based early childhood supports, as well as 29 opportunities for referral.

Caregivers report the following positive protective factors:

- 88% Family Functioning.
- 60% Nurturing and Attachment.
- 76% Caregiver-Practitioner Relationship.

Newly Funded Programs

Comenzando Bien | \$519,405

The Comenzando Bien program will provide care coordination, case management, prenatal education and parent support for uninsured women in Douglas County.

Comprehensive Early Childhood Center for Douglas County | \$582,000

The Community Children’s Center will increase accessibility, availability, and affordability of high-quality child care spots. It will recruit and retain high-quality, trauma-informed child care providers through a professional pipeline with support services, and increase access to concrete supports for families through the creation of a robust Family Resource Center.

Family Engagement in Public Libraries \$162,000

The Southeast Kansas Library System will establish a program, initially in Iola, including family engagement events to connect families to community services, librarian engagement to build early literacy and positive child-family interaction, and a play area to support child development.

Preventative Legal Services | \$450,000

As a robust primary prevention, and Strengthening Families strategy, Kansas Holistic Defenders aims to support universal access to high-quality, multi-disciplinary legal supports in Shawnee County. Legal services will focus on social determinants of health to help stabilize families and prevent a crisis.

➤ Thriving Families, Safer Children

NEW INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

Kansas has been selected for **Thriving Families, Safer Children: A National Commitment to Well-Being – Round Two**, which will contribute to the state’s ongoing work to transform the child welfare system into a system that takes a strengths-based approach to child and family well-being.

Thriving Families, Safer Children is a partnership between public, private, and philanthropic organizations that are working together, along with parents, youth, and communities, to create a more just and equitable child and family well-being system. The initiative concentrates on breaking harmful intergenerational cycles of trauma and poverty by rethinking how child welfare systems function. Efforts prioritize strengthening families and building resiliency, rather than separating families. Kansas is one of 18 states selected to participate and will focus on:

Well-Being - addressing systemic barriers to create a well-being system in Kansas

Targeted, local approaches - developing robust networks of primary prevention support

Listening and co-designing - integrating family expertise into the design of well-being systems

Legislative action - revising statutory definitions of neglect and mandatory reporting

Coordination and collaboration - aligning with public health initiatives that strengthen and support children and families

➤ CBCAP Demonstration Projects

NEW INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

The **CBCAP Demonstration Project** aims to better understand and address child neglect in Kansas. Importantly, all project phases will include **community providers and individuals with lived experience (parents and youth)** in the child welfare system. The initial phase began in 2021 and is focusing on discovery—investigating the state of neglect among Kansas children, and in particular, identifying racial disparities in the child welfare system.

The next few phases focus on developing a cohesive vision for change and designing strategies to test in communities. Implementing these tests will involve ongoing technical assistance and coaching to support local innovation. Based on the results of these tests, researchers will identify strategies to scale effective solutions.

The final phase will identify both policy and system-level changes needed to remove racial inequities contributing to neglect. In this phase, researchers will also complete a formal evaluation as part of the new Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust.



Data for Impact

- Overview
- CIF Accountability Process
- ECBG Evaluation
- CBCAP Evaluation
- Our Tomorrows
- Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust



Overview

The Kansas Children's Cabinet has been a state leader in innovative use of data in decision making for fifteen years. When the annual accountability process of the Children's Initiatives Fund started in 2006, it was the first state-level multi-program evaluation. Similar systemic and transparent uses of data to manage state programs are rare to this day (Alvarez & Marsal Kansas Statewide Efficiency Review, 2016). In 2015, the Kansas Children's Cabinet began the Common Measures Initiative and was an early adopter of the **DAISEY software system** to collect data using shared measurement tools. As the State Lead for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention programs, the Kansas Children's Cabinet has consistently supported evaluation of all funded programs, including the collection of appropriate validated measures.

While continuously improving these ongoing evaluations, the Kansas Children's Cabinet also supports the development of cutting-edge

approaches to collect and analyze data that helps us understand the needs of Kansas families, the impact of services, and return on investments. Launched in 2019, the **Our Tomorrows** project continually captures stories from Kansans to better understand personal experiences and their context. This data highlights emerging patterns and opportunities for action, which are used by the Kansas Children's Cabinet and other Kansas leaders for rapid-cycle analysis and decision making. Additionally, an early childhood data trust was established across state agencies this year. The first project under this new Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust is investigating the impact of participating in early childhood services on the reduction of child maltreatment.

This section offers information on how each of these data collection initiatives aids analysis to maximize the impact of services for Kansas children and families.

The needs of Kansas families are complex, diverse, and evolving. Meeting these needs requires a strategy to collect and analyze data that captures multiple facets of experience and identifies impact at various points in time.



<i>Initiative</i>	<i>What it is</i>	<i>What it does</i>
Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust	Data trust providing the legal, technical, and governance framework to ensure ethical data sharing among organizations and agencies	Integrated data enables systems-level analyses to understand short-, medium-, and long-term impact of services for children and families
<i>Our Tomorrows</i>	State-level, story-based collection of the experiences of Kansas families	Continuous data collection facilitates identification of trends and emerging opportunities for state and local action
Accountability Process	State-level multi-program evaluation	Annual evaluation of statewide programs funded by the Children's Initiatives Fund. Each multi-site program uses evaluation measures and methods appropriate to services and populations served.
Evaluations of Early Childhood Block Grant and Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention programs	Multi-site program evaluations	Shared measurement allows for site-level and program-level analyses.



CIF Accountability Process

All programs receiving funding from the Children's Initiatives Fund (CIF) participate in an **annual accountability process**. This process, which began in 2006, is responsive to Kansas statute requiring that the Kansas Children's Cabinet "review, assess, and evaluate all uses of the monies in the Children's Initiatives Fund (CIF)" as part of annual allocations.

The Kansas Children's Cabinet works with researchers at the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research to interview grantees, complete site visits, compile data, and analyze service delivery and outcomes for each program. Researchers provide ongoing technical assistance in interpreting and using results for program improvement. See **Children's Initiatives Fund (CIF) beginning on page 24** for program details and program-specific results.

Findings from this process are used to inform funding recommendations to the governor and the legislature. The process has also served as an opportunity to provide program staff with technical assistance on data and evaluation. Over the years, several programs have improved their data collection and reporting processes as a result of participating in the accountability process.

This past year's analysis of programmatic data was guided by research questions concerning four overarching topics: program service provision, data and evaluation, participation in the early childhood care and education system, and COVID-19 impacts.

Category

Evaluation Questions

Program Service Provision	What services does each program provide and who is receiving those services? Which programs have made changes to their services since the last Accountability Process? Do these services help meet the needs of children and families in Kansas? How do programs know they are meeting the needs of their communities?
Data and Evaluation	What is the data collection capacity for CIF-funded programs? At what level are programs collecting data (individual, aggregate)? What are the impacts of program services offered, and how are these measured? How do programs use their data to inform services/practice?
Early Childhood Care and Education System	How do CIF-funded programs fit into the early childhood care and education system in Kansas, and address the goals of the <i>All in for Kansas Kids</i> Strategic Plan?
COVID-19	How has the pandemic impacted program services? What impact are the programs seeing for families?

Due to the varied nature of service delivery, population served, and program implementation, researchers assess each program independently using three data sources:

- **Program reports** include evaluation reports submitted to federal funding agencies, program annual reports, and/or research reports used internally for programmatic decision making and were collected during the previous reporting year. This information informs both the grantee interviews and guides the analysis of *All in For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan alignment.
- **Online survey responses** provide key information relevant to funding, partnerships, and population served.
- **Program interviews** provide integral information to address each research question, offer additional context for findings, and allow the grantees an opportunity to highlight success from the past year along with areas needing further support.

CIF Program

Evaluation Practices

Autism Diagnosis	The program collects autism diagnostic outcomes for each child served and reports quarterly on service provision, key activities, and outcomes.
Child Care Assistance	Quality Control Reviewers review random samples of cases throughout the year to ensure payment and eligibility requirements, identify any training needs of staff, and align with new policies and regulations.
Child Care Quality Initiative	A centralized CCQI database provides internal tracking with reporting deadlines throughout the fiscal year. An annual evaluation report informs continuous quality improvement efforts.
Children's Mental Health Waiver	A Quality Review Process includes records reviews, consumer interviews, pulling quarterly statistically-significant random samplings of individuals receiving services, and verifying provider qualifications and training requirements.
Early Childhood Block Grant	An external evaluator, the Center for Applied Research and Evaluation at Wichita State University, conducts an annual standardized evaluation across all ECBG programs.
Family Prevention Services	The program conducts quarterly case reads to assess quality of standards, improve performance, and meet federal guidelines for in-home services. Data are gathered and reconciled monthly with providers.
Infant Toddler Hearing Aid Bank	The program collects Parents' Evaluation of Aural/Oral Performance of Children (PEACH) to evaluate hearing aid effectiveness and track individual progress over time. The program also collects a parent satisfaction survey.
Infant-Toddler Services	The annual Child Outcome Summary (COS) process measures progress for children with disabilities and developmental delays within early intervention programs. Data is entered into a KDHE data system.
Kansas Preschool Pilot	The program collects data on evidence-based programming offered through each preschool program site, and child level information is entered into the Kansas Individual Data on Students (KIDS) database.
KIDS Network	University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita conducts an annual evaluation to measure knowledge and behavioral changes, service delivery, and outcomes.
Maternal and Child Health Home Visiting	MCH Home Visiting uses a shared measurement system (DAISEY) for data entry and reporting. Evaluations focus on program service and continuous quality improvement to better connect families to existing resources.
Parents as Teachers	The program reports annually on national affiliate requirements for demographics, assessment data, referral outcomes, and retention statistics.
Start Young (CAEDE)	Start Young programs collect data on the Common Measures. The Center for Applied Research and Evaluation at Wichita State University conducts an annual evaluation.
Tobacco Use Prevention	The program's annual evaluation incorporates individual grantee performance measures and data from state-level surveillance systems. Findings are reported annually to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Parents as Teachers

86% family retention rate in local programming

Start Young's Salary Supplement Program

94% educator retention rate

Family Preservation Services

Tier 1 participating families saw 93% of children able to remain in the home and 99% did not experience substantiated abuse or neglect during services.

For families receiving child care subsidies over the course of the year, 55% saw their household income increase.



Measures of literacy, mathematics, and social-emotional development all saw increases in over 90% of students from the beginning of the Kansas Preschool Pilot year to the end.



93%
Literacy



93%
Mathematics



94%
Social-emotional
development



ECBG Evaluation

The Kansas Children's Cabinet is required by state statute to direct investments toward programs and services which are data-driven and outcomes-based. The Center for Applied Research at Wichita State University conducts an annual evaluation of Early Childhood Block Grant programs through collection and analysis of common measures.

The **Common Measures Initiative** is a system of shared measurement that fosters continuous quality improvement by monitoring performance, tracking progress toward goals, and learning what is and is not working. While each funded program offers unique expertise and services, the Kansas Children's Cabinet uses shared measurement to:

- create alignment among grantee goals
- build more collaborative problem solving
- encourage an informal, ongoing learning community that supports quality programming

In addition, programs collect demographic information on the children and families served to help demonstrate the need for services and the level of risk. See **ECBG Programs beginning on page 36** for details and results.

Grantees enter common measures data into DAISEY to demonstrate success of their early childhood programming. DAISEY is a secure, HIPAA-compliant, web-based reporting system developed by the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research. DAISEY is licensed to the Kansas Children's Cabinet to support collection and reporting of child and family outcomes.

Results from the ECBG evaluation inform the Accountability Process and the Kansas Children's Cabinet's recommendations to the governor and legislature. Evaluators also conduct site visits and provide ongoing assistance with interpreting and using results for program improvement.

Ages & Stages Questionnaires®, Third Edition (ASQ-3)

- developmental screening tool for ages 1 month to 6½ years
- snapshot of children's development in five areas: communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and personal-social
- parent- or caregiver-completed screener helps identify if further assessment is necessary

Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ:SE-2)

- social-emotional screening tool for ages 1 month to 6½ years
- snapshot of children's behavior and emotions in seven areas: self-regulation, compliance, social-communication, adaptive functioning, autonomy, affect, and interaction with people
- parent- or caregiver-completed screener identifies risk of social-emotional difficulties, behavioral concerns, and further assessment need

Devereux Early Childhood Assessments (DECA)

- behavior rating scales for screening or assessment for ages 4 weeks to 6 years of age
- parent- or caregiver-completed assessment that measures initiative, self-regulation, attachment, and behavior

Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs)

- monitors growth and development measures for ages 6 months to 3 ½ years
- uses child-friendly, play-based assessments to assess communication and problem solving

myIndividual Growth and Development Indicators (myIGDIs)

- progress monitoring measures designed for children 3 years and up
- specific measures concentrating on early literacy and early numeracy

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

- assessment of classroom quality for programs serving ages 15 months to 3 years
- evaluator-completed assessment that measures eight areas: positive climate, negative climate, teacher sensitivity, regard for child perspectives, behavior guidance, facilitation of learning and development, quality feedback, and language modeling

Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME)

- measurement in the quantity of stimulation and support at home for children ages 3 to 6 years
- evaluator-completed assessment that measures eight areas: learning materials, language stimulation, physical environment, parental responsiveness, academic stimulation, modeling of social maturity, variety in experience, and acceptance of child

Protective Factors Survey, 2nd Edition (PFS-2)

- pre-post evaluation tool for use with families receiving child maltreatment prevention services
- parent- or caregiver-completed evaluation that measures five areas: family functioning/resiliency, social support, concrete support, nurturing and attachment, and knowledge of parenting/child development

Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS)

- assessment of parenting skills for families with children ages 2 months to 5 years
- evaluator-completed assessment done in a familiar environment - measures twelve facets: sensitivity to responses, supports responses, physical interaction, involvement in activities, openness to child's agenda, engagement, reasonable expectations, adaptability, limits and consequences, supportive directions, encouragement, promotion of exploration and curiosity

Results



Children on track
in social-emotional
well-being

TIME 1

79%

TIME 2

85%



Parents displaying
positive parenting
interactions

TIME 1

68%

TIME 2

86%



Children on
track in language
comprehension

FALL

50%

SPRING

77%



Children on track
in numeracy

FALL

57%

SPRING

75%



Classrooms achieving high-quality
increased from **67%** to **74%** over
the course of the school year.



CBCAP Evaluation

Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) is a collection of prevention programs that exist in every state with federal funding support. The purpose of the CBCAP program is to support community-based efforts to develop, operate, and expand the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

CBCAP program activities aim to stop abuse before it occurs. One way this is done is through **primary prevention**, which uses a universal approach to raise awareness among the entire population about child abuse and neglect. Primary prevention strategies include public service announcements that encourage positive parenting and education programs that focus on child development and age-appropriate expectations. **Secondary prevention**, conversely, involves targeting strategies to benefit families

at greater risk for maltreatment. Risk factors for maltreatment may include lack of access to basic needs or parental substance abuse. Strategies for secondary prevention include family resource centers for access to basic needs and support groups to help parents deal with high stress levels.

In order to evaluate the efficacy of child abuse and neglect prevention programs, we look to mechanisms that strengthen and protect families. A robust body of research demonstrates that when we give families the resources they need to thrive, children and caregivers can flourish. Resources to promote optimal childhood development, social and community supports, and access to basic needs can reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect, and promote safe and healthy families.

CBCAP Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Tool Used

To what extent are CBCAP grantees maximizing opportunities to screen children for developmental milestones?

ASQ-3/ASQ:SE-2

To what extent are CBCAP grantees identifying opportunities for referring children to community resources or Part B/Part C services when needed?

ASQ-3/ASQ:SE-2

To what extent are CBCAP grantees identifying resource gaps for children and families?

PFS-2/PFS-2 Retrospective

To what extent are CBCAP grantees helping meet basic needs of children and families?

PFS-2/PFS-2 Retrospective

To what extent are CBCAP grantees identifying family protective factors?

PFS-2/PFS-2 Retrospective

To what extent are CBCAP programs and services increasing protective factors?

PFS-2/PFS-2 Retrospective



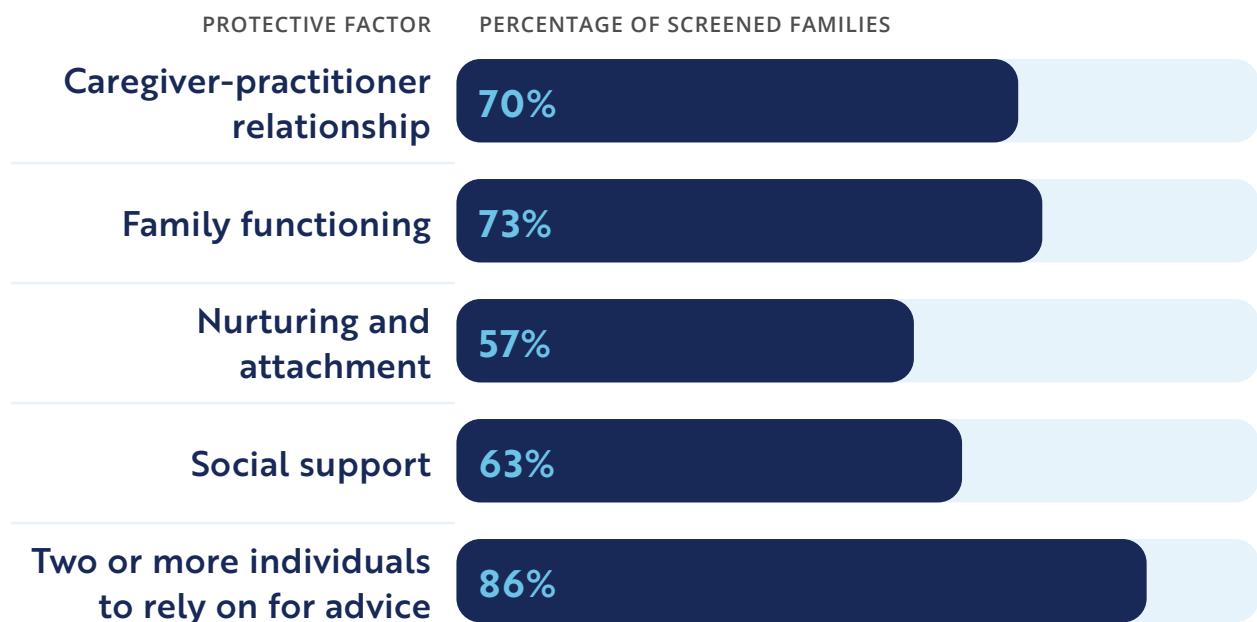
Results

These results offer a window into the strains experienced by families during the COVID-19 pandemic. Just 63% of caregivers reported having adequate social support during a period marked by social isolation. The nurturing and attachment subscale includes items like “I have frequent power struggles with my kids” and “I feel like I’m always telling my kids ‘no’ or ‘stop’” – these experiences may have been more frequent for families in quarantine. In this context, it is especially heartening that families reported positive relationships with the practitioners providing them services, and that their internal family dynamics remained strong.

CBCAP grantees are serving as a vital source of developmental screenings.



CBCAP grantees screened **over 300 families** for protective factors.





Our Tomorrows

Our Tomorrows is a data tool designed to capture narratives directly from Kansans to learn about how their needs are changing, how service providers are responding, and the general well-being of children and families. The Kansas Children's Cabinet uses data from the **Our Tomorrows StoryBank** to understand both the needs of families and the real-time impact of changes and system improvements.

Our Tomorrows engages community partners and families to share stories through rapid-cycle collection. The patterns and stories are used to identify needs and inform decision making. Through a continuous capture of stories, *Our Tomorrows* tracks trends and elevates emerging opportunities for state and local action. The stories of *Our Tomorrows* offer specifics that help us prioritize efforts, replicate more of what is already working, and try new approaches.

This story-based project powerfully lifts up Kansan voices through personal and insightful anecdotes. More than that, it provides a unique and innovative way to identify patterns across experiences and to anticipate future issues that may impact the early childhood system. The *Our Tomorrows* team works closely with state and local stakeholders to facilitate conversations around patterns and stories. These **sensemaking sessions** are forums for identifying action steps and potential solutions to complex problems. Participants in sensemaking sessions look for any surprises and insights that challenge the ways things are currently done. From the discussion, participants generate ideas that can be tested and potentially implemented to better meet the needs of children and families.

Data Analysis

The *Our Tomorrows* team at the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research supports early childhood stakeholders through data analysis, sensemaking sessions, live data dashboard explorations, and special topic scans. These collaborative opportunities to engage with the patterns emerging from these stories help communities and organizations answer the “so what?” of systems building while converting data into action and elevating the voices of all Kansans.

5,000+ stories collected since 2019 representing every county in the state.

20 sensemaking sessions provided opportunities for stakeholders to engage with *Our Tomorrows* data.

75 community action labs tested local solutions to issues identified through the sensemaking process.

Future Plans for Our Tomorrows

New, improved framework

The new story-collection framework incorporates more targeted questions for issue-specific exploration of today's most pressing needs. For example, more than 40 stakeholders at all levels of the child care system and from across the state informed the framework re-design to incorporate a focus on the child care crisis.

Rapid sensemaking cycles

Small batch, targeted, and issue-specific story collection efforts in three, six, and nine month sensemaking cycles (sensemaking speed rounds) allow more flexibility to pivot as developing needs arise around other issues.

Increased access to stories and patterns

Partners will have more opportunities to view and use stories and patterns to inform policy development and communication around issues and needs.

COVID-19 Recovery

When the COVID-19 crisis began in 2020, the *Our Tomorrows* team shifted gears quickly to add COVID-specific questions to the story collection framework. Since March 2020, an average of 169 stories a month were being shared, and in 2021, these stories continued to offer insight into how Kansans are holding up during the pandemic and while the state's recovery is underway.

After Kansans share their story with *Our Tomorrows*, they help make sense of and add meaning to their experience by answering a series of quantitative questions. The graph on the following page compares what self-identified disruptors (or barriers) *Our Tomorrows* respondents identified as the most significant in the experiences shared in 2020 and 2021. Compared to 2020, healthcare, jobs/money struggles, and internet/tech access were less frequently cited as disruptors; whereas, mental health and child care issues were more frequently identified as significant challenges in this second year of the pandemic. Over twice as many 2021 respondents indicated that no one was held back compared to 2020 responses. In other words, there were fewer disruptors or barriers in the stories shared in 2021.

Trends to Monitor

While the patterns and stories indicate that people are feeling more confident in their ability to move forward, help with behavioral health issues and concrete supports like child care will continue to be in demand. Unmet basic needs, including child care shortages and ongoing financial challenges, continue to compound other pandemic-related stressors on families.

A Kansan's Story



At the YMCA of Greater Kansas City, we are fortunate enough to serve diverse communities in the Kansas City Area. Last week our office received a call from a parent who is a classified employee in a local school district. The parent noted that while many in her district have been working remotely, she was recently notified that she was reporting back to work. She has 4 elementary-aged children, and had been supervising them through remote classroom learning at home. The parent had been struggling to balance her children's education and the families need for a steady income. Fast-forward to yesterday, as all 4 of her children were enrolled in a YMCA remote learning program, and she was back at work. The parent noted that the children were initially resistant to start back to in-person learning, but she had seen a dramatic improvement in the children's attitudes and eagerness to engage in school work. She is very grateful for the YMCA program.

What was the biggest thing that held you, your family, or someone you know back?

Percentages of most significant disruptors identified by *Our Tomorrows* participants,

2020 to 2021.

Family separation



Health or healthcare



Mental health issues



Jobs & money struggles



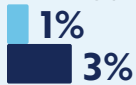
Child care issues



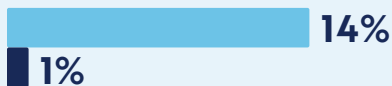
Lack of transportation



Housing problems



Internet & tech access



Something else



No one was held back



Prefer not to say



A Kansan's Story



I am grateful that I have been an aggressive saver after reading more about personal finance about 5 years ago. This has allowed me to feel less stress over the course of this pandemic relative to my neighbors and friends. I know that this is not the average story and it makes me both appreciative of my situation and very sympathetic to many of my fellow Americans that live paycheck to paycheck. I am glad that there were some (relatively) aggressive moves made by the government to help protect people from financial calamity. I know that safety net programs can have some negative connotations, but in this instance as a society we knowingly slowed down our economy in order to help others such as the elderly and medically vulnerable, and that deserves a distinction.

Child Care Concerns

Researchers identified patterns from Kansan stories that clearly indicate a need to increase access to child care. The collection of stories indicates that as families experience greater access to child care, they also report increases in social support systems, feelings of security, and the ability to thoughtfully plan. Conversely, as families faced shortages in child care availability, they reported experiencing more chaos, increased threatening situations in the home, and more feelings that things were beyond their control.

Stories, patterns, and sensemaking reveal that access to child care mitigates risk and acts as a protective factor for families. And child care is often an entry point for the holistic early childhood system—families with access to care are more likely to recognize and receive a variety of help from all avenues (family, friends, local organizations, and the government).

A Kansan's Story



My home-based childcare provider kept her doors open during the shut-down. As a courtesy to the families that had to stay home she did not charge a fee to keep our spot at her daycare. She did get a grant to help her with some of her expenses lost but I feel she could have had some more support. If she did not feel safe enough and needed to shut her doors, she was not able for unemployment since she is self-employed.

Child care plays a vital role in the well-being of children and families and has ripple effects on all aspects of family life. *Our Tomorrows* stories further indicate that:

- Child care affects all families regardless of the current jobs or incomes of parents and/or primary caregivers.
- Child care is not a one-time issue. Kansas families often need help accessing child care more than once and over an extended period of time.
- Child care is especially important for helping single parents thrive.
- There is a heavy burden on families to figure out the child care system themselves.
- Family, friend, and neighbor care is a trusted and viable option for many families

All of these patterns and data points demonstrate the critical need for a strong, accessible network of high-quality and affordable care; yet, there is a simultaneous urgent need for both increased pay for providers and cost relief for families. Read more about these needs in **The Child Care Crisis beginning on page 71** of this report.

*As access to child care increased,
Kansas families said they also experienced...*

Increases in social supports

Increases in thoughtful planning

The home life becoming more secure



**Access to
Child Care**

*As access to child care decreased,
Kansas families said they also experienced...*

The home life becoming more chaotic

The home life becoming more threatening

More things occurring beyond
the family's control



A Kansan's Story



I serve families who struggle financially. Just this past week a lady quit her job because now that she has had her baby, the child care costs for one more child tips the income she was making. We need more childcare slots, lots of them, so that the cost will lessen over all. She is not the only one who has had to make this decision. Especially during Covid when workers had less hours, more families have made this difficult decision.



Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust

Research tells us that investments in early childhood create a lifetime of positive impact for children and families. However, typical mechanisms for program evaluation can only show us the first couple of years of impact. These methods are dependent on collecting data during service delivery—that is, the one or two years a child or a family is receiving services.

Responsibly sharing data among the multiple systems that children and youth interact with over the course of their lives—such as education and health care—helps us better understand long-term impact. Reliable, high-quality data

that is thoughtfully connected across services, agencies, and systems helps tell us what's working for children and families in Kansas, sharpens our focus, and expands our perspective of what's possible.

With the new **Early Childhood Data Trust**, Kansas is innovating to meet evolving state and federal expectations that data be shared responsibly and efficiently for the betterment of children and families. Kansas is rich in early childhood data. Now we must use that wealth of data to generate new insights and action.

Collaboration

The Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust (Data Trust) is the mechanism by which early childhood stakeholders are collaborating to glean insights from multiple data sources.

The new **Data Trust Agreement** is the foundation for this work and establishes a data governance board to support collaboration among four state agencies: Kansas Children’s Cabinet (as Trustee of this new agreement), Kansas Department for Children and Families,

Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas State Department of Education.

Other state and local partners may be added to the agreement as needed. Collaboration across the entire mixed-delivery system will allow researchers to center the multi-faceted needs and experiences of families in their analyses, and identify the wide-ranging impact of early childhood services.

➤ Data Trust Agreement

Legal and Ethical Framework

- outlines Data Trust authority as guided by existing memorandums of understanding and statutory responsibilities
 - sets procedures for governance (member/trustee responsibilities, proprietary rights, liability issues, confidentiality, and ethical use)
 - streamlines interagency data sharing requests with a shared template and common language
 - spells out a rigorous process for enacting **Authorized Projects**, including the need to present the rationale, utility, and value of bringing data together, as well as the technical requirements of doing so
 - assures that the safety, security, and confidentiality of any data shared by members is at the forefront of all governing decisions
- explains the critical role of board members in upholding Data Trust values and ethical principles (equity, fairness, benefit, openness, reliability, empathy)
 - outlines procedures for meetings, agenda items, and decision making
 - creates a Trustee Affiliate (University of Kansas) to support Data Trust governance and steward the technical development and oversight of Authorized Projects

Technical Standards and Tools

Authorized Projects illuminate the pathway for how to address many of the technical challenges for integrating data across agencies. The data governance board meets regularly to:

- consider potential initiatives for inclusion as an Authorized Project and review plans and progress
- identify best practices and tools for improving data use and data literacy

Data Governance Process

- specifies governance structure and membership of the board

Data Trust in Action

The first **Authorized Project** of the Data Trust, Early Childhood as Prevention, is a collaboration between the Kansas Children's Cabinet and the Kansas Department for Children and Families. The project investigates whether participation in ECBG or CBCAP is associated with a reduction in removal into foster care.

Early Childhood as Prevention

Since 2015, ECBG and CBCAP served over 40,000 children under the age of six across the state. These efforts focus on high-need families, including those children that might be most at risk for developmental delays, social-emotional challenges, or even maltreatment had quality early childhood services not been in place for them.

Program evaluations of ECBG and CBCAP consistently demonstrate that children and families experience positive outcomes over the course of service provision. For example, the ECBG evaluation led by Wichita State University found improvements in outcomes such as positive parenting, communication skills, social-emotional development, and language comprehension. The immediate benefits to children receiving these services are well-documented.

The real question is what happened after those critical services:

- Do these immediate gains translate beyond the program itself?
- Do children who receive interventions have a lower risk of harm from child maltreatment or removal?
- What is the long-term impact of interventions?

The toll of child maltreatment over a lifetime includes tangible costs (health care, child welfare, criminal justice, special education) and intangible costs (quality of life, pain, suffering, grief) (Peterson, Florence, & Klevens, 2018, CDC). In Kansas, 38% of the children removed from their home for abuse or neglect were six years of age or under in September 2021 (DCF, *Children in Out of Home Placement by Age Groupings FY 2022*).

This authorized project aims to better understand the role that ECBG and CBCAP services might play in reducing both instances of maltreatment and the associated costs over the life course.

➤ Early Childhood as Prevention

AUTHORIZED PROJECT

Employs the Data Trust to help answer these specific questions:

- Does early childhood programming reduce the likelihood of removal into foster care?
- Which ECBG/CBCAP services have been the most effective prevention approaches? To whom? Where?
- How can we use this information to quantify the cost avoidance in one system (child welfare) and to forecast the return on investment in another system (early childhood) as an effective prevention strategy in Kansas?

Data Details

DATA SETS	SOURCE	RECORDS	NOTES
Early Childhood Data, 2015-2021	Kansas Children's Cabinet DAISEY system	35,613 children ages birth to 6, who received ECBG or CBCAP services	Dataset was cleaned, duplicates removed, record identifiers included, age range restricted, complete
Child Maltreatment Data, 2015-2021	FACTs DCF, Removal Episodes	14,807 children ages birth to 11, who were removed from the home	Dataset was age-range restricted, record identifiers were included, complete, primary reference for record truth

Matching Process

- performed a 15-step record matching process to deduplicate children within datasets and to identify and confidently match children across data sets
- identified the number of ECBG/CBCAP children who were matched in the DCF Removal Episode dataset
- counted children who were removed at any time (either prior to or after their ECBG/CBCAP services) in the "Any Removal" group

Methodology

- applied a Case-Control Design to determine whether or not exposure to ECBG/CBCAP intervention was associated with a reduction in the likelihood of a removal episode into foster care
- coded whether a removal outcome occurred *before* or *after* exposure to ECBG/CBCAP intervention (enrollment date, first removal episode date)
- compared children with a removal outcome *before* intervention exposure ("Control") to children with a removal outcome *after* intervention exposure ("Cases")



Early childhood services act as a protective factor against removal into foster care.



receiving ECBG/CBCAP services in Kansas were **not removed** into foster care, 2015-2021.

Children had a **significantly lower** likelihood of being removed after receiving ECBG/CBCAP services.

1,000

NUMBER OF ECBG CHILDREN REMOVED



Removal *before* intervention

Removal *after* intervention

Odds Ratio for Removal After Intervention Group=.77
[95% Confidence Interval .69-.86; z statistic=4.72, p< .0001]

\$10,172,743

Estimated cost avoidance for the **181 children** from 2015-2021 who likely would have been removed into foster care, but weren't due to ECBG/CBCAP services.

Cost avoidance estimate based on

- \$2,474,994 Child Welfare/Foster Care
- \$4,797,043 Healthcare
- \$1,573,433 Special Education
- \$1,327,273 Criminal Justice

Estimate based on \$2,279 average per month cost of foster care for 6 month length of stay (DCF), \$26,503 for healthcare due to maltreatment (CDC), \$8,963 for special education costs (CDC), and \$7,333 for criminal justice costs (CDC).



Supporting Kansans Now... and Into the Future

- Overview
- The Child Care Crisis
- Collaborating for Relief and Recovery
- Recommendations
- Conclusion



Overview

This past spring the Kansas Children’s Cabinet released an update to the 2019 Early Childhood Systems Building Needs Assessment. This **2020 Needs Assessment Update** examined ways in which gaps in accessibility and availability of services have grown wider and even more urgent since the beginning of the pandemic. The results presented in this update are concerning. And **these concerns demand both immediate relief and sustainable, long-term solutions.**

The brighter future we wish to build for our children depends, in part, upon critical analysis and a re-imagining of our nation’s child care system. A complex system like child care that relies so heavily on parent fees is simply not sustainable. The model is broken, and this reality has wide-reaching effects.

This final section of the 2021 Annual Report offers information on the child care crisis in Kansas and illustrates the devastating impact on children, families, providers, employers, and entire communities.

All In For Kansas Kids is working to collaboratively re-imagine our child care system, fill critical gaps in service, and respond to the unmet needs of families across our state.

We must act with the urgency and foresight that our children’s futures deserve.

The Child Care Crisis

High-quality, accessible, and affordable child care is essential to healthy, thriving communities.

- Child care is a necessary support for parents and caregivers entering and participating in the workforce and their local economy. The 2020 Needs Assessment Update documents that **67% of children ages birth to 5 in Kansas live in a household where all adults are working.**
- Accessing child care that is convenient to home, work, or school is an important consideration for community planning and sustainability efforts to ensure smart growth.
- The industry directly supports the economic livelihood of nearly 30,000 Kansans who operate, support, or work in child care.
- Child care offers critical stability, development, and learning opportunities for children during their most formative years, setting them up to thrive in school and beyond.

Unmet Demand

The story of child care in our nation today, simply told, is one of demand greatly outpacing supply. This economic problem is not a new development. The child care sector in Kansas was already stressed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, **with 44% of Kansans living in a child care desert** and only 8% of facilities offering availability during non-traditional hours for families working evenings and weekends. Nearly half of Kansas counties had less than 50% capacity to meet the potential demand for child care (2019 Kansas Early Childhood Systems Building Needs Assessment).

The 2020 Needs Assessment Update describes how the pandemic further exacerbated these existing stressors with more than 1,000 child care facilities temporarily shutting down in the early months (self-reported). Many of these facilities continued to experience periodic shutdowns and reduced capacity throughout 2020. Some shut down permanently.

This instability and uncertainty created an ever-present concern, sparking panic and forcing difficult choices for working families.

The challenges of 2020 for the child care industry exposed a fragile system that needs significant investment.

Communities continue to report child care closures, and facilities across Kansas describe significant staffing shortages resulting in the immediate closure of individual classrooms. Each disruption causes new adversity for exhausted families and stalls economic recovery efforts.

A Kansan's Story



I have been providing child care for 25+ years and have never seen this big of a need for child care in my area as I've seen since Covid hit. We have providers that are retiring, just like any other year, but on top of that other providers are calling it quits. Some of these are long term providers, others are not but we have had a large decrease in numbers causing a shortage in available quality care for children...especially infants. I've received seven calls this week alone from desperate parents looking for somewhere to place their children so they can get back to work.

The High Cost of Care

Kansas families have long struggled with the high cost of child care. The 2020 Needs Assessment Update indicates that costs of care for full-time infants and preschool children in both child care centers and family child care homes continue to increase. Notably, the average annual cost of full-time care for an infant in a center in 2020 was \$12,811, an increase over the 2018 average of \$10,955.10. **This cost represents 47% of the median income for a single parent in Kansas.** The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services considers 7% of a given family's income the maximum for "affordable" child care, a figure which the Treasury Department says more than 60% of families with young children exceed.

The road to recovery from the child care crisis in Kansas requires a comprehensive approach that considers both the supply and demand imbalance

and the exorbitant cost of care to families. To implement bold reform, we need strong system- and policy-level change that aims to support all Kansas communities in meeting their unique child care demands.

Undervaluing Our Workforce

For those who have made caring for our youngest Kansans their life's work, the child care crisis is compounded by the agonizing choice a provider must make between staying in a fulfilling career or leaving to earn a living wage in another field. Problems abound in our state and nationally with the ways in which we value and support providers:

- Kansas does not have parity or a public funding earmark for early childhood care and education professional salaries, in comparison with K-12 educators.

A Kansan's Story



I'm a childcare provider. Not only do I provide care, security and peace of mind for parents in my area, but I grow close friendships with these individuals. I get to know them inside and out and care for them deeply. I had a single mother who had been struggling to get ahead for her and her son. After months of working her butt off, budgeting, and giving it her all to finally get out on top, she lost her job due to COVID-19. This poor woman and her child were then left to try and file for unemployment benefits so they could continue to live and continue paying their bills, as well as their childcare fees. Without their fees being paid weekly, their spot is not guaranteed in daycare. After weeks of this family struggling to get their unemployment benefits, they had no money left, which now leaves them with no guaranteed spot in my in-home childcare center. So not only has this left this family struggling and scraping to get by, it also leaves me, as a provider, short on income \$600 month. The downwards slope of all of this pandemic affects everyone one way or another. Fortunately this family is now getting the benefits they deserve, but us childcare providers are not. We are losing kids left and right with no way to make up for that huge loss of income.

- Low wages, long hours, and a lack of benefits push many child care workers to leave for more lucrative opportunities.
- Navigating the added complexity of pandemic conditions has been trying, and tiring, for those devoted to quality care of our youngest, most vulnerable Kansans.

Wages are the linchpin in the supply side of child care recruitment and retention efforts.

Low wages make it difficult to recruit and retain a skilled workforce to provide quality care, particularly when many retail and restaurant jobs pay higher starting salaries. The U.S. median wage for child care workers in 2020 was \$12.24/hour and even lower **in Kansas at \$10.20/hour**. High turnover—30% prior to the pandemic (Caven, et al. 2021)—disrupts the relationship between young children and caregivers that is vital to healthy development and school readiness.

There needs to be permanent public investment at the state and federal level rather than one-time government support for future payroll purposes if we are going to address this crisis permanently. We must find additional ways to support existing licensed child care providers in retaining their staff and helping prospective providers both navigate the process and financially afford to open child care businesses.

Mapping of the Child Care Provider Experience

To better understand the specific challenges and barriers Kansas child care providers face, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and partners at the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnership and Research organized the **Child Care Provider Experience Mapping project** in spring 2021. Nearly 400 child care providers throughout the state participated in a survey, one-on-one and group interviews, and/or co-creation discussions. Providers identified challenges, connections, and bright spots they experienced before, during, and following the licensing process.

➤ **Barriers to Entry**

FROM THE CHILD CARE PROVIDER EXPERIENCE MAPPING INITIATIVE, SPRING 2021

Recruiting and Retention Challenges

Despite the crucial nature of their work, child care workers’ job quality does not seem to be valued in today’s economy. Burnout, low wages, lack of benefits, and insufficient support leads to high turnover and are also barriers to recruiting new providers into the field.

High Start-up Costs for Licensed Child Care Businesses

Significant costs include securing a space and making modifications for health, safety, and local/state regulation requirements, as well as purchasing supplies, equipment, and curriculum materials for learning and play.

Inconsistent and Hard-to-Find Licensing Information

Lack of alignment across communication tools, outlets, and supports, coupled with varied state and local requirements, can cause confusion, misinformation, and overwhelm.

An Overwhelming Orientation Process

The orientation process for new providers involves digesting a significant amount of information and can feel overwhelming. Prospective child care providers need more cohesive, accessible support during this critical phase of the process. Additionally, lack of consistency in interpretation of regulations by licensing surveyors during on-site inspections often create added confusion and stress.

The data collected led to a co-creation session to brainstorm solutions. Sessions included providers, licensing surveyors, and state agency staff. Two additional surveys were conducted during the summer with 513 child care provider and licensing surveyor respondents. Results of these surveys identified specific challenges around regulations, communication, and capacity.

These results are being shared widely across the early childhood care and education system, including with the Child Care Systems Improvement Team (CC-SIT). CC-SIT worked to finalize initial recommendations for child care system changes in July and continued developing additional recommendations in the fall.

Structural Reform is Critical

Child care needs a strong infrastructure in which government, business, and civic organizations work together to develop policy and to plan and fund service provision. Stakeholders must acknowledge that the current system is unworkable. While for many, the pandemic has brought this reality into stark relief, for others it has simply confirmed what has been known for years—quality care is out of reach for many Kansas families.

High-quality child care is not just a concern for parents. It affects everyone.

➤ A Broken Business Model

Child care is a labor-intensive business

- Child care can't be automated; workforce costs are naturally the greatest expense for child care businesses, accounting for 60% to 80% of total program expenses.
- The cost of labor per child depends in part on policies related to teacher-child ratios and class sizes, which vary by child age.
- Most providers must operate at full capacity with all staff positions filled to meet their financial obligations and continue operating.
- At the same time, child care business owners need to keep labor costs as low as possible to sustain their businesses while ensuring both safety and high-quality service delivery.
- Historically low wages and lack of benefits contribute to high turnover in this sector which further increases overall costs of care.

Child care expenses represent a disproportionate share of the family budget

- Parents/families are relied on to pay for

the bulk of the costs necessary to provide quality care; yet, **the true and complete costs of care far exceed what most parents can afford.**

- Parents of young children devote a sizable share of their income to child care. This share has risen sharply over the past decade, increasing faster than incomes: child care prices increased by 210% from 1990 to 2019, while the median family income rose by only 143% during the same period (U.S. Government, 2021).
- Most parents need child care at the exact moment when they can least afford it—at the beginning of their career when their income is lowest. Economists call this particular market failure, “a liquidity constraint.”

A “Total Market Failure”

- These and other aspects of today's child care system demonstrate why many experts and economists consider the child care sector a total market failure. The sector needs investments—ideally through a combination of private and philanthropic funds, tax policy changes and government investments, and public-private partnerships.

For Kansas employers, dependable child care allows employees to focus on work, be productive, and be reliable. High-quality care also provides a lasting foundation of early learning that contributes to the skill level of future employees. It prepares children for school success, and in turn, creates economic returns by increasing workforce participation.

Re-imagining child care into a model that works better for everyone contributes greatly to overall community vitality and the prosperity of Kansas.

“Having a well-functioning child care sector is good for working families. It’s good for children. I would also emphasize it’s good for the rest of us,” said Catherine Wolfram, U.S. Department of the Treasury’s acting assistant secretary for economic policy, in a September 2021 report. “It’s critical to a well-functioning economy.”

Individual families should not bear the sole responsibility of financing quality care that benefits the economy more broadly, Treasury argues in the report, adding that the system is failing to “adequately serve many families.”

This unsettling reality is true nationally, and it is hard-hitting for families and communities across Kansas.

A Kansan’s Story



I receive many requests for part time care. I work hard to help families merge their work hours together in an effort to share a spot when I can. Moms have a hard time affording full time daycare. For example, I have a restaurant worker that chooses to work twice a week during the breakfast, lunch and dinner prep shift resulting in a 12 hour days. I have a nurse that works the other three days a week resulting in one full time shared spot. Breaks my heart to turn away so many families in need of part time care.



Collaborating on Relief and Recovery Efforts

Vital to ensuring Kansas is the best place to live, work, and raise a family—in these tough times—is a **coordinated and collaborative approach to financial recovery and relief** from pandemic conditions and economic uncertainties. With a new state-level governance structure firmly in place, stakeholders in the early childhood care and education system are fervently working cross-agency and in communities to illuminate pathways toward full recovery.

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet took the lead on disbursing funds for a second round of Remote Learning Grants to support Spring 2021 semester K-12 education, and was actively involved in jumpstarting the Sunflower Summer project with KSDE and partners across the state.

Remote Learning Grants

Remote Learning CARES Act Grants were first initiated in September 2020 to provide much needed support for working parents of school-age children. A wide array of community organizations, ranging from independent home-based care providers to large community-based programs, stepped up to quickly establish high-quality remote learning spaces and services.

As the first semester of the 2020-2021 school term was ending, it became apparent that the COVID-19 pandemic continued to present an evolving set of challenges for Kansas families, and that continued supports would be necessary to maintain family and community health during times of remote and hybrid learning. The Kansas Children’s Cabinet awarded a second round of Remote Learning Grants during the Spring 2021 semester totaling \$6,765,704 for 31 applicants.

Grantees partnered directly with classroom teachers in their local school districts, serving as conduits to sustain essential relationships among

parents, students, and schools. Considerable agility was required of grantees as most worked with multiple school districts, and each district re-opening and operational plan was distinct. Grantee responses to these variable strategies have been child-centered and collaborative, providing impressive support for both children and working parents and caregivers. The Kansas Children’s Cabinet provided technical assistance to applicants and grantees throughout the grantmaking and implementation process. Remote Learning Grants offered the structure and means for communities to come together to ensure that children across the state were well cared for while focusing on their education.

Remote Learning Grants

SAFE LEARNING SPACES

Fall Semester Aug-Dec 2020

62 grantees awarded a total of \$8,505,121

Spring Semester Jan-May 2021

31 grantees awarded a total of \$6,765,704

Sunflower Summer

The Sunflower Summer Family Fun program was an idea spun from a KSDE advisory group of Kansas Teacher of the Year candidates as a way to spark learning opportunities during the summer months. Summer Sunflower involves a passport-type system for free admission to attractions across the state.

The Sunflower Summer program was developed using federal pandemic relief Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) dollars to help address the COVID-19 impact on elementary and secondary schools. Statewide

educational attractions (museums, parks, zoos, libraries) provided summer enrichment learning for families with students Pre-K to 12th grade. Students in public, private, parochial, and home school settings were eligible, and the program stimulated travel and tourism across Kansas.

The Sunflower Summer mobile app tracked participation, facilitated entry at ticketed venues, and captured user demographic data. Families commented in person and via social media that the program introduced them to activities and topics they hadn't previously tried, while venues noted that their summer visitors were coming from areas of the state they do not normally draw from. All venues expressed a desire to participate if the program is offered again, and there are several venues on a wait list.

Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA)

Through *All In For Kansas Kids*, the Kansas Children's Cabinet is actively involved with informing the use of CRRSA to best serve children and families.

In late December 2020, Congress passed the CRRSA Act which appropriated an additional \$89 million to Kansas in supplementary CCDF (Child Care and Development Fund) dollars. CCDF is a federal and state partnership program, administered in Kansas by the Department for Children and Families (DCF), that supports Kansans in accessing quality child care. Annual CCDF appropriations in Kansas support child care subsidies, regulation and licensing of facilities, and quality initiatives, including services that build the knowledge and skills of the workforce.

CCDF supplemental funds issued for coronavirus relief are being administered by DCF with input from, and attention toward, a wide variety of early childhood stakeholders.

Sunflower Summer

BY THE NUMBERS

Time Period	Children	Adults	Total
7/1-7/4	237	156	393
Week 2	3,409	2,404	5,813
Week 3	6,212	3,996	10,208
Week 4	7,386	4,790	12,176
Week 5	7,414	4,950	12,364
Week 6	9,135	5,781	14,916
Week 7	7,991	5,051	13,042
Total Digital	41,784	27,128	68,912
Paper Forms	1,336	980	2,316
Grand Total	43,120	28,108	71,228

Participants represented families residing in **all 105 Kansas counties**.

Total payments to venues	\$780,421
Children's tickets	\$424,491
Adult tickets	\$355,930

Use of CRRSA Funds

TYPES OF SUPPORTS

Direct to Families - increasing access to licensed, subsidized, and quality child care focused on supporting families in need

Direct to Providers - assisting providers in achieving or recovering financial and operational viability

Quality - promoting and recognizing quality

Workforce - recruiting, development (education, training, and technical assistance), and retaining a stable workforce

Infrastructure - improving flexibility to meet evolving child care needs



Recommendations

Over the course of the year, Kansas Children’s Cabinet members met bi-monthly to review progress on *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan efforts and to examine results of the Accountability Process. From multiple vantage points—as Manager, Evaluator, Connector, Strategist, and Champions—the Kansas Children’s Cabinet aims to move the work forward by adjusting every lever we have.

- Are we effectively and efficiently collaborating across sectors?
- Have we consulted relevant research and data?
- What new opportunities can we find to do things better?

In this spirit, we present a recap of Kansas Children’s Cabinet recommendations made in 2021 and include updates highlighting the path forward.

In accordance with statutory responsibilities and with input received through the Early Childhood Governance Structure, our recommendations in 2021, as detailed on the following pages, involved increasing the transfer from the Kansas Endowment for Youth (KEY) Fund to the Children’s Initiatives Fund (CIF), aligning funding and coordinating services, maximizing interagency cooperation for shared infrastructure, and emphasizing innovation to best serve children and families.

June 2021

Recommendations resulting from the CIF Accountability Process

- Increase the transfer from the KEY Fund to the CIF, in an amount equal to 102.5% of the amount transferred during the immediately preceding fiscal year in accordance with K.S.A. 38-2102(d)(4).
- Consolidate and streamline funding within the CIF to maximize services to children and families, support early childhood infrastructure, and foster innovation.
- Shift funding for CAEDE/Start Young into the Early Childhood Block Grant to facilitate better program alignment and streamline the grantmaking process.
- Allocate at least 1% of the total CIF budget for dedicated funding that anticipates and adapts to the changing needs of children and families. These funds should be used to support action labs, short-term pilots, demonstration projects, and seed funding.
- Set aside funds for Early Childhood System Supports to advance the long-term vision of the *All in for Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - 1-800-CHILDREN
 - Kansas CommonApp
 - Ages & Stages Questionnaires®
 - Integrated Referral and Intake System (IRIS)
 - Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust
 - Workforce Registry

➤ Update

The Kansas Children's Cabinet voted to approve these recommendations and the following budget in June 2021. At press time for this annual report, the FY 2023 state budget process is mid-cycle and still pending legislative approval.

October 2021

Integrate the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) and Kansas Preschool Pilot (KPP) grant applications into the Kansas CommonApp online portal to streamline applications and reduce grant-writing and reporting burdens for applicants.

➤ Update

In February 2021, KSDE and the Kansas Children's Cabinet piloted use of the Kansas CommonApp to solicit grant applications for FY 2022 ECBG and KPP projects. Success of this process led administrative staff at both agencies to propose continued use of the Kansas CommonApp and to recommend integration of the previously separate application processes. This fall, the two agencies collaborated to align the ECBG and KPP Request for Proposals (RFP) into a single combined RFP, application, and review process which launched November 1, 2021.

December 2021

The Cabinet recommends the Governor and the Kansas Legislature increase access to work and family support programs that help children and families meet their basic needs. Research clearly shows that children thrive when their basic needs are met, and that parents and caregivers are better able to support children when their own basic needs are met. The Cabinet believes current restrictions to child care assistance, cash assistance, nutrition assistance and health insurance programs undercut the investments made through the CIF and blunt the efficacy of early childhood care and education programs. The 2019 comprehensive, statewide Needs Assessment and 2020 Needs Assessment update document these concerns.

CIF Program Budget Proposal for FY 2023

CIF PROGRAM	PROPOSED FUNDING	NOTES
Child Care Assistance	\$5,033,679	
ECBG	\$20,729,848	Incorporates CAEDE/Start Young and includes a consolidation of funds from former line items (Child Care Quality Initiative, Infant Toddler Hearing Aid Bank, and Children's Mental Health Waiver)
Family Preservation Services	\$3,241,062	
Infant Toddler Services	\$5,800,000	
Kansas Preschool Pilot	\$4,200,000	
KIDS Network	\$96,374	
Maternal Child Health Home Visiting	\$1,650,000	Increased amount by \$1,400,000
Parents as Teachers	\$8,437,635	
Tobacco Use Prevention Program	\$1,001,960	
Early Childhood System Supports	\$1,400,773	New budget line
Total	\$51,591,331	



Conclusion

2021 was the first full implementation year for the *All in for Kansas Kids* blueprint and plan to strengthen cross-agency collaboration and ensure all children thrive. Sometimes we think of detailed goals and plans as restrictive, keeping us from pivoting and responding to changing realities. On the contrary, the past couple of years have proven that our strategic plan is an effective springboard for action. Our collaborative partnerships have been strengthened under the new governance structure for the early childhood care and education system, and the *All in for Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan reflects our shared vision and goals. This foundation of purpose enables us to meet new challenges arising in the moment from the COVID-19 crisis, while also engaging in the systemic work needed to address persistent challenges such as child care access, child poverty, siloed systems, and limited information.

In the coming year, we will continue to identify and implement new ways to center family needs across systems and sectors, make innovative use of data and analysis to understand and accelerate our impact, and advance the work of Kansas communities to support thriving children everywhere. We are particularly focused on our responsibility to families who need real structural change to child care.

In these uncertain times, it is particularly gratifying to be able to meet the needs of families and the people and organizations who care for them. As we continue to engage in this work, we are mindful of both today's most pressing needs and ways in which we can support children and families long into the future.

Ad astra per aspera.

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