

# KANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD RECOMMENDATIONS PANEL

Monthly Meeting Minutes  
Friday, November 18, 2022



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Visit the [Children's Cabinet website](#) for meeting materials and the [YouTube recording](#).

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## Members Present

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Nichelle Adams, DCF  
Jennifer Adhima, Kansas Head Start Association  
Marites Altuna, Kansas State Schools for the Deaf & Blind  
Mallory Arellano, Newman University School of Education  
Brenda Bandy, Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition  
Emily Barnes, Family Child Care owner/operator  
Tanya Bullcuk, Child Start  
Eldonna Chesnut,  
Jarvis Doleman,  
Tabitha Ewing,  
Jennifer Forker,  
Jennifer Francois, Kansas Institute of Early Childhood Education  
Amy Gottschamer, Googols of Learning  
Julia Gruss,  
Crystal Henry, Family Conservancy  
Callie Hoffman, Kansas Parents as Teachers Association  
David Lindeman, University of Kansas Life Span Institute at Parsons  
Amy Meek, KCCTF  
Natalie McClane,  
Pam Noble, KCSL  
Stephanie Parks, KU Special Education  
Patty Peschel, KCCTO  
Dannah Schatz, Russell Child Development Center  
Lisa Schmidt, Women's Community Y  
Logan Stenseng, Zero to Thrive Kansas Coalition  
Cornelia Stevens, TOP Early Learning Center  
Tara Taylor, Head Start and Local Education Agency  
Tricia Waggoner, KDHE  
Jennifer Whiteford Houk, PAT Educator  
Reva Wywadis, Child Care Aware of Eastern Kansas

## Minutes

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### Welcome

Cornelia Stevens called the meeting to order with a quorum present, described processes for a remote meeting, and directed participants to the [Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund website](#) for meeting materials.

### Meeting Agenda

Panel Chair notified members of an amendment to the agenda to include a presentation from Sara Gardner about the recent Preschool Development Grant opportunity. Marites Altuna moved to approve the agenda and Amy Meek seconded, with a unanimous vote to approve the agenda as presented..

### October 16, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Pam Noble moved to approve the October minutes and Tara Taylor seconded, with a unanimous vote to approve the minutes as presented.

### Kansans' Open Forum - Written and Verbal Comments:

No comments submitted.

### PDG Update

Cornelia introduces Melissa Schoenberger with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to give an update on the child care systems improvement team.

Melissa explained that the systems improvement team is an advisory group comprised of stakeholders from across the state, that supports the work of the child care licensing program. In 2021, the group put forth 14 recommendations to improve clarity of regulations, increase resources and supports for prospective and current child care providers, increase public awareness of what is the importance of child care licensing. Several recommendations will be launched later this year. Including toolkits that will be available on KDHE website to help home based applicants navigate the licensing process.

An awareness campaign will be launched in the coming weeks. Which will focus on the importance of quality child care, benefits of becoming a provider, resources and supports available for child care providers.

They will be adding 3 additional workgroups that are driven by the systems improvement team. KDHE provides the backbone support but the actual work is conducted by the committee and the advisory group. The workgroups will include Systems Engagement and Communication, Regulations and Best Practices, Provider Supports. The groups will meet monthly to develop recommendation or inform tools, resources, and initiatives related to child care licensing.

**Please reach out to Melissa Schoenberger, Field Services Supervisor – Child Care Licensing at [melissa.schoenberger@ks.gov](mailto:melissa.schoenberger@ks.gov)**

### Child Care & Development Fund

Cornelia introduces Michelle Allen with the Department for Children and Families to give an update on CCDF Pandemic Relief Response. Michelle gives a background on the child care development funds. The Kansas Department of Children and Families is the state's recipient of federal child care development funds.

The presenters explain that when the pandemic first started, they knew they had to act quick to do their best to help with the financial burden childcare providers were facing. The first action was to release the HERO Relief grants and that provided funding to 8,093 child care programs totaling over \$11 million dollars. Last year they released the first round of sustainability grants to 3,171 child care programs which totaled over \$43 million dollars. The 2nd round was provided to 3,522 child care programs that total over \$47 million dollars.

Sustainability Grants – Round 3 application closed on November 30, 2022. This will be the last sustainability grant round. Over 3,839 child care programs have applied since March 2022. The Child Care Appreciation Bonus application will close on December 10, 2022. Over 10,497 individuals have applied since July 18, 2022. Some of the other investments include background checks and licensing fees being covered until September 2024, and grants for community partnerships and coalitions through Child Care Aware of Kansas.

The presenter explains some of the general subsidy changes that include raised income limit from 185% to 250% of the Federal Poverty Level. Child care benefits determined using blocks of time based on the calculated hours of care needed per month. Removed the family share deduction for all families with income at or below 100% and reduced it for all the other families. Increased the maximum rates to the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile for all age groupings.

**Stay updated and connected, [www.childcareinkansas.com](http://www.childcareinkansas.com)**

### PDG B-5 Planning Grant (2023)

Cornelia introduces Sara Gardner, who gives an overview of the current Preschool Development Grant which is a one year planning grant. If Kansas is selected, goals for this planning grant include conducting another needs assessment and updating the Strategic Plan.

Applications were due November 7, 2022 and states who are selected will be notified before the end of the year. Eligible participants include states who are already PDG recipients although states who have never received funding will be prioritized.

If Kansas is selected major activities will include leveraging existing resources to update the Comprehensive Needs Assessment. That information will be used to update the new Strategic Plan. Another proposed activity if funded is to conduct an ECCE Agency Alignment Gap Analysis to understand the current limitations in collaboration or coordination of the current state-level coordination model.

The other primary focus of the planning grant would be mapping family experiences to understand the process of accessing child care. Compensation reform will also be investigated as well as an ongoing emphasis on developmental health.

**Please reach out to Sara Gardner, KU Center for Public Partnership and Research at [sara.gardner@ku.edu](mailto:sara.gardner@ku.edu)**

### Work Groups went into their breakout sessions

- Child Care Recruitment & Retention
- Family Navigation
- Quality & Environments

### Work Group Reports

#### **Child Care Recruitment & Retention –**

The group continued to have difficulty selecting work to go forward without knowing what else is taking place in the system. The workgroup acknowledges there are many recruitment and retention efforts ongoing in the state and they don't want to duplicate efforts. The group suggests creating a repository of information to know what other initiatives are taking place.

#### **Family Navigation –**

The Family Navigation workgroup continued to discuss shared language and how important that is to family voice and choice. They also talked about how eligibility for services and programs are sometimes difficult to understand, so much so that families might not think they are eligible when they are. There continues to be an emphasis on helping families navigate the system and access human support if that's what is needed.

#### **Quality & Environments –**

The workgroup continued to discuss future work including developing a mentorship model using child care providers as well as the ongoing conversations regarding zoning. Mentorship will be an element of the child care career pathway and that may be a better fit in order to align related efforts. Overall the zoning issue is very complex since we know there is a lot of variance across counties and cities regardless of regulation.

## Bright Spots

- Emily Barnes wants to share how amazing and engaged her child care kiddos are.
- Marites Altuna wants anyone who knows anyone who could benefit from services provided at her agency to reach out to receive a music therapy kit that is accessible.
- Jennifer Adhima gives a shout out to Pam Noble and staff for hosting the Parent Leadership Conference.
- Logan Stenseng shares that a friend of his who is in child care was able to save her bonus and use on a much-needed vacation. He hopes to hear of more stories like this.
- Tanya Bulluck shares that she was named Executive Director and is very excited to start her new role.

## Upcoming Meetings: (all via Zoom)

- Early Childhood Recommendations Panel meeting – Friday, December 16, 9:00 a.m. -11:30 a.m.
- Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund Meeting – Friday, December 2, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Early Childhood Stakeholders Group Meeting – Friday, December 2, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.

## Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:54am