



# Annual Report

➤ 2022

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Kim Moore, Chair  
Melissa Rooker, Executive Director

This report was prepared by the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research (KU-CPPR) on behalf of the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund.

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

# Contents

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<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
Letter from the Director	6
Our Commitment to Equity	7
Our Work	7
Our People	8
Executive Summary	11
<b>Our Progress</b>	<b>13</b>
Overview	15
Workforce Elevation	16
Community Focus	18
Alignment	22
Children’s Initiatives Fund	24
Early Childhood Block Grant	34
Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention	39
<b>Data for Impact</b>	<b>45</b>
Overview	46
CIF Accountability Process	48
ECBG Evaluation	52
CBCAP Evaluation	56
Our Tomorrows	60
Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust	64
<b>Our Children’s Future</b>	<b>69</b>
Overview	70
Partnering with Commerce	72
Learning from Other States	74
Early Childhood and Literacy	76
Recommendations	78
Conclusion	85
<b>Works Cited</b>	<b>86</b>



# Introduction

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- Letter from the Director
- Our People
- Our Commitment to Equity
- Executive Summary
- Our Work

# Letter from the Director

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No one needs to tell the Kansas Children's Cabinet that studying an issue is important. From the Children's Initiatives Fund Accountability Process, to the Common Measures Initiative, to our participation in the Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust and the *All In For Kansas Kids* Needs Assessment, the Kansas Children's Cabinet has long been recognized as a state leader in our use of research and data. Data-informed decision-making is part of how we do business.

As much as we value deep understanding of an issue, there often comes a tipping point when one unintentionally stops studying a problem and begins to simply admire it. We know that creating conditions under which all children thrive is the right thing to do and is central to many of our state's goals. What we need now is to turn knowledge into action.

Of course, knowing what to do does not mean it will be easy to do it, or that we've got the finer details worked out. These are complex issues that require a range of solutions as diverse and rooted in communities as early childhood stakeholders ourselves. Being "all in" means going all the way to get kids what they need. It also means all of us benefit when families have access to early childhood services. When it comes to expanding and improving those services, we all have a role to play and a unique perspective to offer.

This report is packed with solutions to some of the most pervasive problems facing families with young children and with systems-level enhancements designed to support service providers devoting their lives to Kansas children and families. 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. Here, you'll also read about innovative solutions being enacted at both the state and community levels and at all stages of progress—some brand-new ideas along with initiatives gaining traction and those relatively-seasoned approaches that we look to as scalable models.

In the "Data for Impact" section, you'll read about the many ways the Kansas Children's Cabinet supports evaluation and innovation around data collection and use. This ongoing investigation—employing multiple methods and tools—offers us the information to know what works at the programmatic level, and increasingly at the systems level, through innovations like *Our Tomorrows*, Ripple Effects Mapping, and the Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust.

The final section, "Our Children's Future," presents some of the approaches that we are most excited about, including improving third grade literacy through targeted investments in early childhood and partnering with commerce to expand access to child care. We also look to other states to learn from a myriad of strategies aimed at providing relief to families and child care providers, supporting employers, and securing new sources of funding for early childhood systems.

Throughout this document, you'll see the fruits of years of collaboration to develop and implement new solutions that help every Kansas kid thrive. If you've been a part of these efforts, I hope you see yourself in these pages. If something sparks a new idea for how to make Kansas the best place to raise a family, I hope you get in touch—we want you to be *all in* too!



# Our Commitment to Equity

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet recognizes that equitable life outcomes start with an early childhood system that acknowledges the fact that 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 coordinating systems-wide approaches to ensure services 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

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## *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

**Renee Erickson**, 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.

**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, 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.

#### 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)

**Janet Stanek** Secretary, Kansas Department of Health & Environment (Drew Duncan, 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

**Jeff Zmuda** Secretary, Kansas Department of Corrections (Matthew Billinger, 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 at Warner Bros., Malpaso Productions. She holds a BFA from the University of Kansas and lives with her husband, Tom, in Fairway. They have two married 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 35 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.

**Megan Brohaugh** joined the Kansas Children's Cabinet in January 2022. Prior to joining the Cabinet, Megan worked with the Kansas Attorney Generals office for 6 years working with Concealed Carry licensing, Private Detective licensing, and Bail Enforcement licensing. Megan has worked with the state government over 8 years. She attended Washburn university to study business law. When she isn't running to practice or a tournament she enjoys spending time outside with her two boys, Kaden and Jaxon and her husband, Alex.

**Hannah White** 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 holds both a Bachelors and a Masters degree in Psychology from Allen Community College and Fort Hays State University.

# Executive Summary

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By late 2022, the immediate emergency of COVID-19 has largely receded. The erratic rhythm of pandemic life has steadied enough to allow moments of reflection and visioning among those in the Kansas early childhood care and education system. As we acknowledge the unprecedented cross-agency collaboration and responsive action that occurred over the past couple of years in response to pandemic conditions, we feel renewed optimism for improving and expanding early childhood programs in Kansas.

Building on our collaborative work across the system, this year’s annual report is solution-focused and responsive to these central tenets:

## Importance of Early Childhood

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High quality early childhood care and education is foundational to many state goals—yet too often overlooked. In this report, we present evidence of the importance of early childhood services for solutions that cross multiple concerns and challenges, including [avoidance of foster care \(p. 66\)](#), [economic growth \(p. 72-75\)](#), and [literacy in grade school \(p. 76-77\)](#).

## Workforce Elevation

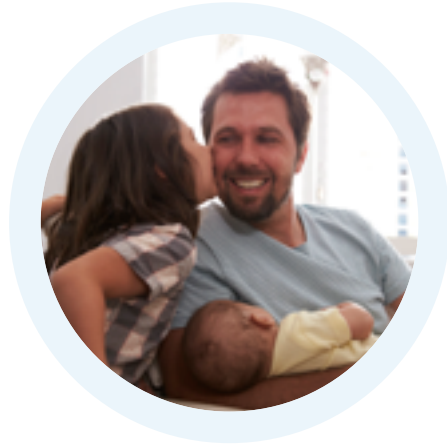
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Early childhood educators and other professionals in the field are on the front lines of nurturing and caring for our state’s youngest children. They are asked to do far too much for far too little. Better support for our [workforce \(p. 16-17\)](#) is happening on multiple fronts, and you’ll learn about some next steps and promising approaches in the final section of this report, [Our Children’s Future \(p. 69\)](#).

## Community Focus

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Some of the most exciting early childhood work in the state is happening at the local level where businesses, religious communities, and local non-profits are recognizing their shared stake in early childhood care and education. This report highlights [community-driven tactics \(p. 18-20\)](#) of the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan and describes efforts of local grantees for the [Early Childhood Block Grant \(p. 34-37\)](#) and [Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention \(p. 39-43\)](#) programs. Evaluation results for these programs are found in the [Data for Impact \(p. 45\)](#) section.

## Statewide Alignment

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Alignment across agencies and sectors is foundational to the strategies and tactics of the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan. To accomplish the plan's goals we need the ability to act quickly and holistically as a system, transcending funding sources to act in the best interests of children. We discuss [alignment across the system \(p. 22-23\)](#), and offer examples throughout this report of movement toward greater system alignment and efficiency.

## Support for Businesses

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The business community is too often underappreciated as an early childhood stakeholder. All businesses rely on child care for their employees to ensure a stable workforce today and rely on quality early childhood care and education to nurture and grow future workers. Plus, child care providers are businesses themselves. The Kansas Children's Cabinet is proud to partner with the [Kansas Department of Commerce \(p. 72\)](#) to help amplify business involvement in child care solutions. This report also offers inspiration and [ideas from other states \(p. 74\)](#) on how to support employers and child care businesses alike.



# Our Progress

## ➤ Overview

## ➤ Strategic Plan Updates

## ➤ Program Profiles

- CIF
- ECBG
- CBCAP

## ➤ Initiative Spotlights

- Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
- Sunflower Summer
- Kansas Futures Forum
- Prevention Projects
- Thriving Families, Safer Children Accountability Cohort



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



## Overview

As we near the end of the third year of implementation for the **All In For Kansas Kids Strategic Plan**, we continue to rely on the document as a dynamic guide responsive to evolving needs. Progress and trends across the early childhood landscape, as described in the 2021 Needs Assessment Update, help determine new solutions, and the six original guiding principles of the plan remain paramount to all efforts: child- and family-centered, data-driven, strengths-based, equitable, transparent, accountable, transformative, and dynamic.

Established workgroups, initiatives, and programs under each strategic plan goal continued to grow in 2022, building from lessons learned while navigating barriers both anticipated and unplanned. Forward momentum under each goal requires not only sustaining and improving already successful efforts, but also adapting services and objectives to ever-changing needs at the community, regional, and state levels. The 2021 Needs Assessment Update provided a comprehensive review of where we have traveled as a state since 2019, before and after the height of the pandemic, and highlighted issues in early childhood that consistently emerge as most critical: **Workforce Elevation**, **Community Focus**, and **Alignment**. Within these three categories, we present major milestones, new initiatives, and bright spots across the early childhood care and education system.

View these documents online at [kschildrenscabinet.org](https://kschildrenscabinet.org):

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

[2021 Needs Assessment Update](#)

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



## Workforce Elevation

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The Kansas early childhood workforce is full of skilled, dedicated, and hardworking professionals. As crafters of supportive environments that help Kansas children thrive, and as key drivers of our economic well-being, we must continue to develop these professionals through good wages, benefits, and clear pathways for growth and advancement. The Kansas Children's Cabinet is leading collaboration across agencies, workgroups, and communities to build pathways that strengthen and elevate the workforce for long-term sustainability. Simpler avenues for training and education, incentives to advance and develop professionally, and improved coordination across funding and credentialing are areas of current work that address tactics of the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan.

### Recruitment and Retention

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Recruiting and retaining professionals is a top priority for Kansas early childhood leaders. Sustaining a quality child care business begins with good wages and desirable working conditions. There is clear recognition of the impact low wages and minimal benefits have on the workforce, and state agency leaders are actively exploring ways to leverage available funding sources (e.g. federal Preschool Development Grant B-5 and federal pandemic relief/recovery) to support compensation reform. Leaders are also working to identify new funding sources. The *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan prioritizes expanding the number of professionals entering and remaining in the workforce by articulating a comprehensive career pathway and core competencies.

#### *Career Pathway for Early Childhood Care and Education*

Fundamental to a wage strategy is a Kansas career pathway for child care professionals that offers a simple, clear roadmap for how to advance and grow. A task force, known as the Professional



Development Implementation Team (PDIT), has been developing a pathway structure that is nearing completion and expected to be published in 2023 in conjunction with the Kansas Early Childhood Workforce Registry. Collaboration with secondary education, higher education, and credentialing agencies has been critical for developing the Career Pathway to ensure Kansans have clear options, support, and incentives to pursue early childhood professions.

### ***Core Competencies***

Alongside career pathway development, the Workforce Development Advisory Group (WFDAG) has been working to ensure all professional development opportunities offer workers the knowledge they need to provide high quality services. The adoption of a set of Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals supports this goal, and helps ensure a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workforce that is prepared to meet the unique and evolving needs of children and families. The WFDAG has been identifying core competencies according to the most recent research, standards, and evidence-based practices for high quality care and education. The efforts of this workgroup resulted in a formal recommendation for adoption to the Kansas Children's Cabinet in its role as the Kansas Early Childhood Advisory Council in December 2022.

### ***Child Care Professional Appreciation Bonuses***

In June, Governor Laura Kelly announced a new initiative to provide \$53 million in Child Care Workforce Appreciation Bonuses. This effort, funded by Supplemental Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Discretionary Funds appropriated in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (CCDF ARPA), represents a true bright spot for the child care system and speaks to the commitment and collaboration of many partners and state agencies. The initial idea was formalized by the Early Childhood Recommendations Panel and adopted by the Kansas Children's Cabinet in its role as the Kansas Early Childhood Advisory Council in April 2022. Planning began in earnest shortly thereafter by teams at DCF, KDHE, and Child Care Aware of Kansas. These workforce appreciation bonus payments range from \$750 - \$2,500 and aim to reach more than 20,000 child care workers in Kansas. While a significant investment, these appreciation bonuses are a single, short-term measure to recognize the hard work of a severely underpaid workforce. Long-term wage solutions are needed for truly effective and sustainable recruitment and retention strategies.

## **Professional Development**

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### ***Workforce Registry***

The Kansas Children's Cabinet is collaborating with state agencies and other partners (Child Care Aware of Kansas and Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities) to build a workforce registry that offers early childhood professionals a central location to document goals and accomplishments in professional development, education, and quality improvement. The registry is being designed to help spur professional growth while capturing data about the field to inform policy makers and partners. Kansas is one of only 10 states without a workforce registry for early childhood providers. The workforce registry will be a significant step forward in recognizing child care professionals for their skill and education, elevating their contributions to brain development for children across our state, and providing essential value to both the families and economy of Kansas. A formal RFP has been issued and a vendor selected to build the registry. Much work has been done to conceptualize and structure a registry that permanently elevates the Kansas child care workforce. The registry will be funded by federal relief support via the CCDF with coordination and alignment work shared across the early childhood care and education system.



## Community Focus

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The 2019 Needs Assessment illustrated that while many issues in early childhood services are universal, Kansas families and professionals experience them in unique ways depending on their region, population, economy, and culture. To achieve real qualitative progress at the state level, agencies cannot follow a one-size-fits-all approach and apply it from the top down. Successful change results from listening to families, local leaders, and the knowledgeable early childhood workforce. The Kansas Children's Cabinet's role as a connector must be to support what's already working in communities and help elevate and expand the reach.

### Kansas Communities in Action

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Led by Child Care Aware of Kansas, Kansas Communities in Action (KCIA) is a child care capacity-building approach to help communities identify and solve their unique child care needs. Communities advance through four phases: pre-planning, Communities in Action Workshops, securing funding, and maintaining ongoing support. This year, twenty-two counties participated in workshops, while four others have community coalitions formed and are beginning the process.

Concentrating on the needs and resources of specific counties helps bring stakeholders together who share common experiences and goals. This approach is resulting in quicker progress, more effective change, and avoidance of some of the typical delays and frustrations that can accompany child care problem-solving. While common barriers across counties remain, KCIA has already positively impacted many communities who are collaborating, expanding child care options, and moving forward with momentum and solutions.

## Child Care Accelerator

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The Child Care Accelerator (Accelerator) is a new framework being piloted that blends state and local assets to help speed up individualized, community-level solutions and approaches. The aim is to support and amplify communities' own creative problem-solving efforts. Two core components are currently being shaped and tested: 1) a rapid response team for solving bureaucratic barriers (**Go-Team**) led by Child Care Aware of Kansas and funded through the Preschool Development Grant B-5, and 2) a structure for co-creating strategies with communities to help families access local child care and early childhood resources and services (**Family Navigation**). Kansas is also planning for anticipated new funding that supports direct grants to communities. These funds will create new child care slots by providing much-needed capital to build or enhance local child care facilities (**Launch Funds and Solution Supports**).

The final core component of the Accelerator approach (**Workforce Engine**) is a community-specific effort to bolster the child care workforce. The Workforce Engine aims to illuminate state-level initiatives that can be leveraged, along with local assets and ingenuity, to build targeted recruitment, retention, and sustainability approaches, unique to each community.

## Integrated Referral and Intake System

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The Integrated Referral and Intake System (IRIS), a community network tool with 15 established networks across Kansas covering 22 counties, is continuing to expand across the state to guide families in need of support. In 2022, IRIS launched the Wildcat Region with nearly 50 participating partner networks in Geary, Pottawatomie, and Riley counties, as well as a collaborative cross-state network in the Kansas City region with 105 participating partner organizations. IRIS enables communities to connect resources, facilitate referrals, improve efficiency, and streamline services so families get the help they need quickly. Fewer steps to navigating services eases frustration and results in more families served and retained in programs.

## Child Care Systems Improvement Team

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The Child Care Systems Improvement Team (CCSIT) is exploring strategies to improve the user experience for prospective and current licensed child care providers and partners. The CCSIT is implementing 14 recommendations that were developed in 2021. These recommendations aim to clarify regulations, increase tools and supports for applicants and providers, and strengthen community and system-level understanding of Child Care Licensing. Examples include developing an online toolkit to help communities start and enhance child care services, making information on high-level regulatory topics more digestible and actionable, and creating a public awareness campaign on the importance of licensed child care.

## PDG Quality Subgrants

Locally, organizations are using Quality Subgrants fueled by PDG funds to develop or expand their own custom solutions to early childhood issues. Efforts are aimed at improving access and quality of care and education for Kansas children across five categories: child care access, rural child care, connecting families to services, kindergarten readiness, and improving quality of care. Examples include:

### *Pathways for Providers*

Serving 19 primarily rural and frontier counties in Southwest Kansas, Russell Child Development Center supports those interested in starting and/or becoming licensed as a family child care business. Services include consultations, access to a technology lending library, professional development, connections to local resources and economic development groups, and a start-up mini grant. *Pathways for Providers* has served 18 participants so far and is identifying and addressing challenges in the areas of GED credentialing, navigating citizenship barriers, supporting multiple languages, and outreach to refugee communities.

### *Conscious Discipline Program*

Early childhood professionals from Cowley County Special Services Cooperative, USD 470, Winfield Early Learning Center, and Head Start learned to apply *Conscious Discipline* concepts. *Conscious Discipline* is a trauma-informed, research-based program that helps caregivers transform everyday discipline issues into teachable moments, equipping children with the skills needed to manage themselves, resolve conflict, and develop more healthy behaviors. Parents also attended a *Conscious Discipline* family night so they could learn to apply the same tactics at home. This kind of cross-caregiver partnership and training is shown to result in more consistent expectations and a secure, predictable routine for children.

### *Allen County Child Care Recruitment Initiative*

Because the lack of benefits is a significant barrier to recruiting early childhood professionals, Thrive Allen County developed an insurance rebate program for full-time child care providers who pay out-of-pocket for health insurance. Providers can qualify for a rebate of up to \$300 per month with proof of employment, coverage, and premium payment. Additionally, providers who own or manage a child care facility can qualify for reimbursement of onboarding costs for new staff (first aid and CPR, fingerprinting, required training, background checks). Thrive Allen County has also started an internship program and career pathway course through Iola High School to aid recruitment of new professionals into the field.

### *TYKES Douglas County*

Although united in the goal of providing children a safe and nurturing environment, parents, caregivers, and early childhood professionals in Douglas County lacked a platform to share their resources and experiences. Community Children's Center worked with several partners to develop TYKES Douglas County, an online resource hub. Partners include: Lawrence Public Schools USD 497, Lawrence Public Library, Child Care Aware of Eastern Kansas, LMH Health, Lawrence Chamber of Commerce, Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health, Imagemakers, Inc., and Unite Us.

### *Kindergarten Jumpstart*

*Kindergarten Jumpstart* was designed to give students a slower-paced, more personal orientation to USD 244 Burlington Elementary School. Sixty-five percent of enrolled kindergarteners attended to learn their routines and school procedures ahead of the first day, easing the transition and resulting in positive parent feedback.

## ➤ Kansas Futures Forum

### INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

The inaugural cohort of Kansas Future Fellows, a PDG funded initiative, convened a forum in May to share their passion for creating a world where future generations thrive. Future Fellows are a cross-section of Kansans committed to improving our state systems. The 2021-2022 cohort of 11 fellows from diverse regions and professions spent 9 months focusing on 4 areas: mental health and well-being, workforce, connected communities, and education. Their work culminated in the Kansas Futures Forum where they presented future scenarios and identified opportunities for human service programs to adapt to rapidly evolving economic, social, technological, and cultural conditions. Fellows invited 50 guests to the forum in Topeka to learn what they envision as the most critical opportunities and potential threats to moving forward.

*“We value change and progress. We value equity and community. We believe together we can work toward creating a future rooted in security, stability, longevity, and compassion. As fellows, we’ve learned the future is not given; there are many possible futures. We’ve learned that without action, the future will happen to us, and we are left to react. But by expanding our thinking to the long-term, we can become agents of change. We can direct the trajectory of our state for future generations. It requires commitment, sacrifice, compassion, connectivity, and different ways of thinking and working. Working and learning together, we’ve seen new ways for Kansas children and families to reconnect and to thrive.”*





# Alignment

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Bringing together state agencies, regional organizations, and local programs to work toward common goals—while avoiding duplication of effort—is a tall task requiring consistent and clear communication. Notable early childhood work is happening in both large and small communities across the state, but learning from others’ successes and obstacles is not always easy or timely. The Kansas Children’s Cabinet strives to serve as a connector—linking entities, providing opportunities for collaboration, and helping programs identify how they might complement each other.

## Kansas Early Childhood Governance Summit

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Representatives from state agencies, coalitions and workgroups, and community partners met on January 21, 2022, for the inaugural Kansas Early Childhood Governance Summit. The following groups convened to share challenges and goals for 2022:

- Early Childhood Recommendations Panel
- Family Leadership Team
- State Interagency Coordinating Council
- Child Care Systems Improvement Team
- Home Visiting Leadership Group
- Links to Quality
- Governor’s Behavioral Health Services Planning Council’s Children’s Subcommittee
- Maternal Child Health Council
- Workforce Development Advisory Group
- Professional Development Implementation Team

Considering each group’s distinct focus area, summit participants were able to learn more about unique roles and efforts of the greater mixed-delivery system.

## Governor’s Council on Education

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The Governor’s Council on Education established the Child Care and Early Learning Committee to develop recommendations that improve access to child care across Kansas. In 2021, the Council recommended expanding eligibility requirements for the Child Care Assistance Tax Credit, which incentivizes businesses to provide child care directly, contract within their community for child care for their employees, assist in the expansion of the availability of child care, or improve affordability for employees. Additionally, the Council recommended using the existing governance structure of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet as the point of connection to organize a wide variety of funding sources, both public and private, to provide immediate assistance to programs in need.

## Fingerprinting

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In late 2021, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) launched a pilot project in partnership with the Kansas Bureau of Investigation. The pilot involved using LiveScan—digital fingerprinting machines—for child care employees. In 2022, these efforts have significantly reduced wait times for fingerprint results which has long been a struggle for businesses attempting to onboard new staff. The number of digital fingerprinting locations is currently expanding, increasing access to the technology through partnerships with local law enforcement statewide.

## Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust

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The Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust expanded its membership in 2022 to include the Department of Corrections, in addition to the original four lead agencies for early childhood care and education (Kansas State Department of Education, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet, KDHE, and DCF) who executed the first Data Trust Agreement in April 2021. See [page 53 of the “Data for Impact” section](#) for more details on the efforts and results.

## Home Visiting Leadership Team Initiatives

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Work is underway in response to a Kansas Children’s Cabinet recommendation to 1) expand promising and evidence-based home visiting models and, 2) support a statewide home visiting infrastructure. Home visiting models have important differences in terms of intensity, duration, and eligibility. While this variety is essential to helping families choose the right fit, access to home visiting models varies greatly across the state. Collaboration and alignment across our state’s home visiting initiatives would help with efficiency and to ensure optimal reach without duplication of effort. A survey of home visitors and local home visiting program administrators across the state—conducted in late 2022—will inform efforts to understand the landscape and gauge readiness for expansion, including barriers and support needed.

## SNAP Changes

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A recent policy change is helping to minimize the burden on families seeking public assistance. In the summer of 2022, the Office of Head Start announced that benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) have been added to the “public assistance” category when determining Head Start eligibility. Families eligible for one program, like SNAP, can now more easily participate in other services for which they qualify, like Head Start. While this policy change does not guarantee an immediate placement in a Head Start/Early Head Start program, it will greatly reduce the effort required by families to confirm they are income eligible.



# Children's Initiatives Fund

The 1999 Kansas Legislature created the Children's Initiatives Fund (CIF) to focus investment of Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement funds, as directed by the Children's Cabinet, in programs and services devoted to early childhood care and education, health screening, home visiting, and parent education.

Kansas statute directs the Kansas Children's Cabinet to conduct an annual assessment of the CIF investments. 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.

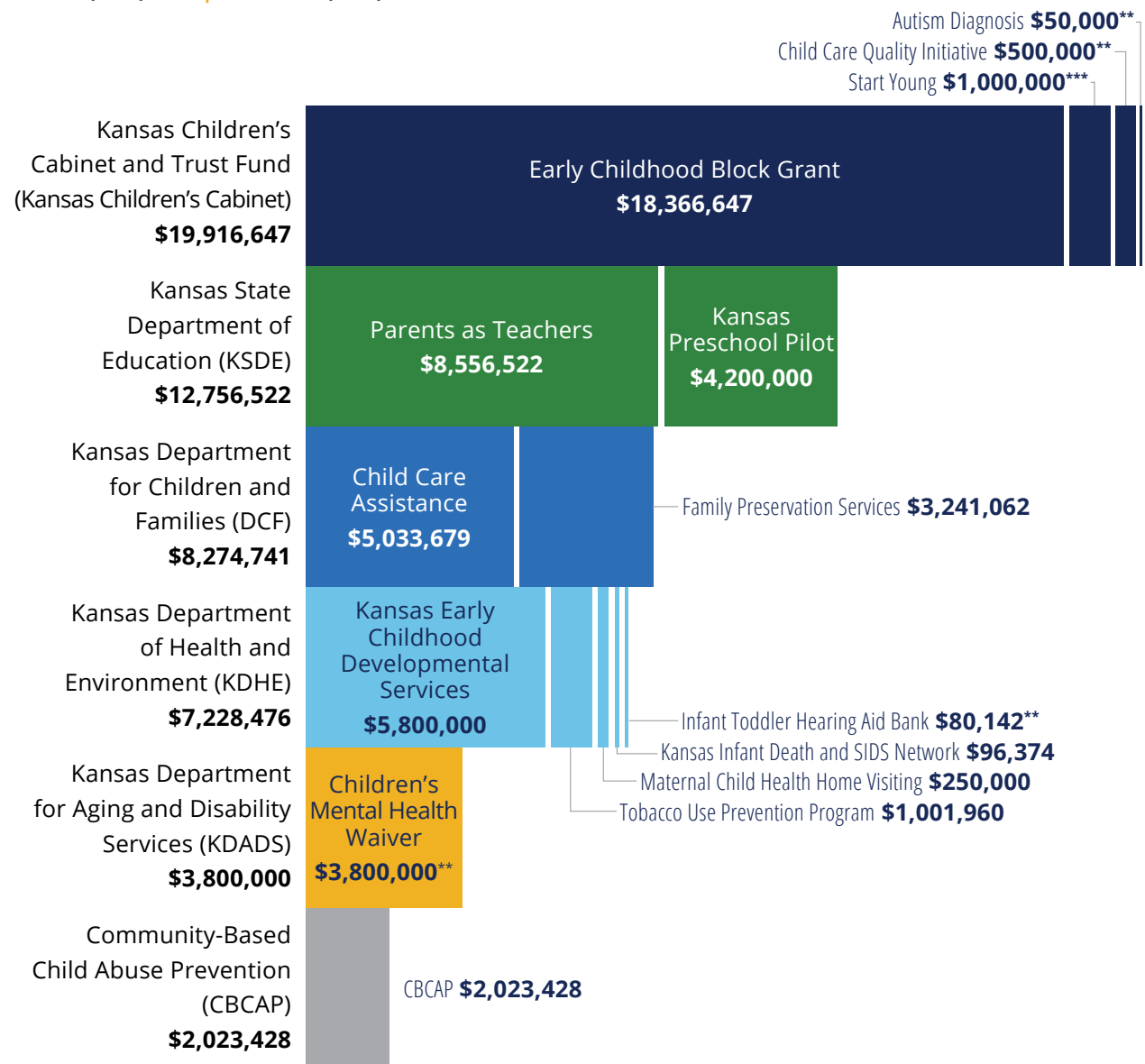
**In 2022, CIF programs expanded access to child care, children's health and mental health services, and early childhood education, and reduced the need for foster care.**



# Kansas Children’s Cabinet Funding

## Total FY2022 Funding

CIF \$52,351,386\* | CBCAP \$2,023,428



\*Including \$375,000 allotted to the Kansas Children's Cabinet Accountability Fund.  
 \*\*Final year as a CIF-funded program.  
 \*\*\*Final year as a stand-alone line item.

## ➤ Autism Diagnosis

KANSAS CHILDREN'S CABINET AND TRUST FUND

FY2022  
\$50,000

Department of Pediatrics, Division of Developmental & Behavioral Sciences collaborates with the telehealth department and Autism Diagnostic Teams (ADTs) in a state-wide initiative to increase early identification and intervention for children at risk for or with autism. Grant activities and objectives reflect the ongoing state and community need to eliminate health disparities, enhance collaboration, and build capacity within local communities to expand resources and support for ADTs and families across Kansas. The collective work of these partners helps decrease the wait time between a child's screening, diagnosis, and subsequent intervention, ensuring children and families have access to needed support as quickly as possible.

Population FY2022	Served	Impact
Total Children	42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 42 families across 13 counties completed an autism evaluation via telehealth after being screened by community ADTs.</li> <li>➤ 60% of children completing evaluations received a diagnosis of autism.</li> <li>➤ Telemedicine clinics reduced the burden of travel to receive care for families by saving a total of 13,376 miles.</li> <li>➤ 36 ADT technical assistance requests were fulfilled.</li> </ul>
Prenatal to Age 3	13	
Ages 3-5	15	
Ages 5-12	12	
Ages 12-18	2	
Ages 18+	0	
Adults	50	
Professional Development	95	

## ➤ Child Care Assistance

KANSAS DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

FY2022  
\$5,033,679

Child Care Assistance supports families who are initially living at or below 250% of the federal poverty level or who are at or below 85% of the state median income at their annual review. Child Care Assistance provides families with a subsidy to finance child care while parents work, attend school, complete a GED, or fill a temporary emergency need. Child Care Assistance promotes school readiness and financial stability by increasing families' access to high-quality child care environments. The program typically serves families with children under age 13 but some exceptions allow funding for children up to age 18.

Population FY2022	Served	Impact
Total Children	17,295	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 68% of families receiving subsidies for a full year saw their household income increase.</li> <li>➤ Families continue to report being able to receive care they would not have access to without subsidies.</li> <li>➤ The Hero Relief Program assisted families of essential workers with child care expenses, eliminated assigned family shares, and allowed a higher income limit. Child care cases were only closed during this year for very limited reasons.</li> </ul>
Prenatal to Age 2	8,372	
Ages 2-5	3,738	
Ages 5-12	5,088	
Ages 12-18	97	
Ages 18+	0	
Adults	0	
Professional Development	0	

## Child Care Quality Initiative (CCQI)

KANSAS CHILDREN'S CABINET AND TRUST FUND

FY2022

\$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 FY2022	Served	Impact
Total Children	443	➤ 100% of the target number of professional development offerings were held.
Prenatal to Age 3	193	
Ages 3-5	163	➤ 100% of the target number of CLASS Assessments were completed.
Ages 5-12	87	
Ages 12-18	0	➤ 91% of the target number of Parent Resource Boards were created.
Ages 18+	0	
Adults	395	
Professional Development	290	

## Children's Mental Health Waiver

KANSAS DEPARTMENT FOR AGING AND DISABILITY SERVICES

FY2022

\$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. The services are guided by an individualized care plan that positions parents and children as active participants and includes key services such as wraparound facilitation, parent support & training, attendant care, respite, and independent living and skill-building.

Population FY2022	Served	Impact
Total Children	4,960	➤ 3,515 children across the state were provided wraparound services.
Prenatal to Age 2	0	
Ages 2-5	120	➤ 26 centers provided 4,984 children and young people SED waiver services within their homes and communities.
Ages 5-12	1,848	
Ages 12-18	2,713	
Ages 18+	279	
Adults	3,515	
Professional Development	0	

## ➤ Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG)

KANSAS CHILDREN'S CABINET AND TRUST FUND

FY2022

**\$18,366,647**

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. ECBG-funded 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 FY2022

Population FY2022	Served
Total Children	6,719
Prenatal to Age 3	2,445
Ages 3-5	4,274
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Adults	5,968
Professional Development	1,297

### Impact

- Children on track for social-emotional strengths increased by 11% over the school year.
- 76% of classrooms were observed to be high quality.
- Parent education helped increase reports of positive parenting by 12% across the school year.
- Parental stress as measured by the Parent Stress Index saw a 3% decrease across the school year.

## ➤ Family Preservation Services

KANSAS DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

FY2022

**\$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 crises, 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 FY2022

Population FY2022	Served
Total Children	3,773
Prenatal to Age 2	627
Ages 2-5	371
Ages 5-12	1,473
Ages 12-18	1,294
Ages 18+	8
Adults	2,526
Professional Development	58

### Impact

- 96% (Tier 1) and 88% (Tier 2) of children served **were not** placed in foster care during services.
- 94% (Tier 1) and 86% (Tier 2) of families served **did not** have a child 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 (HAB)

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

FY2022  
**\$80,142**

HAB is a resource that removes financial barriers to obtaining appropriate hearing amplification for infants. The program provides a pathway to meet the Health and Human Services Healthy People 2030 goals for infants: to confirm hearing loss by 3 months of age with appropriate interventions no later than 6 months of age. Early detection and intervention are key to ensuring a child's development stays on track. Families with children up to age 3 who have any type or degree of hearing loss can access a range of hearing aids. Once the child has received the appropriate device, the HAB connects the family to early intervention services and a network of other families who have children with hearing loss.

Population FY2022	Served	Impact
Total Children	43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 100% of toddlers fit for hearing aids are also received Early Intervention Services.</li> <li>➤ 62% of children had their hearing loss identified by the age of 3 months.</li> <li>➤ 74% of children were between the ages of 3-6 months when they were fit with hearing aid(s).</li> <li>➤ 100% of parents reported their child's audiologist answered all their questions regarding their child's hearing aid(s).</li> </ul>
Prenatal to Age 3	37	
Ages 3-5	6	
Ages 5-12	0	
Ages 12-18	0	
Ages 18+	0	
Adults	84	
Professional Development	3	

## ➤ Kansas Early Childhood Developmental Services

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

FY2022  
**\$5,800,000**

As part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C, Kansas Early Childhood Developmental Services (formerly Infant-Toddler Services) provides early intervention services for children (from birth to age 3) who have a disability or a developmental delay, and their families. Services are delivered to families in their natural environments, and providers work alongside community partners to ensure families have the resources they need to support their child's development.

Population FY2022	Served	Impact
Total Children	10,232	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 99% of children with Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) demonstrated improved positive social-emotional skills or had skills comparable to same-aged peers.</li> <li>➤ 99% of children with IFSP demonstrated improved acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, including early language skills or had skills comparable to same-aged peers.</li> <li>➤ 96% of families participating in Part C reported that early intervention services have aided in their child's learning and development.</li> </ul>
Prenatal to Age 3	10,232	
Ages 3-5	0	
Ages 5-12	0	
Ages 12-18	0	
Ages 18+	0	
Adults	10,232	
Professional Development	600	

## ➤ Kansas Preschool Pilot (KPP)

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FY2022

**\$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 FY2022

Population FY2022	Served
Total Children	4,963
Prenatal to Age 3	0
Ages 3-5	4,963
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Adults	0
Professional Development	744

### Impact

- 94% of KPP students showed improvement in literacy from the beginning of the program year to the end.
- 94% of KPP students showed improvement in mathematics from the beginning of the program year to the end.
- 93% of KPP students 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

FY2022

**\$96,374**

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

### Population FY2022

Population FY2022	Served
Total Children	12,387
Prenatal to Age 3	12,322
Ages 3-5	65
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Adults	12,494
Professional Development	2,720

### Impact

- 120 Safe Sleep events were held across 27 Kansas counties.
- 7 delivering hospitals gained Safe Sleep Hospital Certification through Cribs for KIDS Hospital Certification Process and served more than 4,000 infants.
- 9 outpatient clinics (obstetrics, pediatrics and family medicine) achieved a Safe Sleep Star and were certified as KIDS Network Safe Sleep Clinics serving more than 5,550 infants.

## ➤ Maternal Child Health (MCH) Home Visiting

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

FY2022

**\$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; and by connecting to community-based resources, services, and supports as needed.

### Population FY2022 Served

Total Children	2,930
Prenatal to Age 3	2,930
Ages 3-5	0
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Adults	3,108
Professional Development	447

### Impact

- Reductions in likelihood of child maltreatment and increases positive parenting and child interactions have been reported.
- 74% of expectant mothers initiated prenatal care in the first trimester.
- 67% of mothers reported breastfeeding.
- 92% of expectant mothers reported not smoking during pregnancy.

## ➤ Parents as Teachers (PAT)

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FY2022

**\$8,556,522**

PAT is an evidence-based parent education and family engagement home visiting model designed to give parents and caregivers tools 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 FY2022 Served

Total Children	7,517
Prenatal to Age 3	6,540
Ages 3-5	977
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Adults	5,642
Professional Development	64

### Impact

- 50,412 personal visits took place.
- 48% of families reported having 1 or more stressors impacting their life.
- 90% retention rate was achieved (excluding families who moved out of the service area).
- 93% of the families had goals documented and addressed.
- 92% of children had an initial development screening allowing 2,291 potential developmental delays to be identified.

Start Young is led by The Family Conservancy and funded through Kansas Communities Aligned in Early Development and Education (CAEDE). Start Young assists child care providers in increasing the number of children served in Wyandotte County by offering material and furnishings grants for new classrooms. Families are supported through child care subsidy advocates who assist in completing the state child care subsidy application and in applying for supplemental tuition assistance scholarships through Start Young. The program also brings quality systems support to providers through multiple quality initiatives in classrooms and educational incentives for child care staff.

Population FY2022	Served
Total Children	660
0 to Age 3	322
Ages 3-5	338
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Adults	546
Professional Development	286

**Impact**

- Children on track for social-emotional strengths increased by 11% across the school year.
- High-quality classrooms increased by 15% across the school year.
- Children on track for communication skills increased by 15% across the school year.
- Language comprehension increased by 13% from fall to spring semesters and numeracy increased by 6%.

Tobacco Use Prevention Program (TUPP)

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

Population FY2022	Served
Total Children	534,245
Prenatal to Age 3	54,432
Ages 3-5	86,611
Ages 5-12	210,375
Ages 12-18	184,506
Ages 18+	0
Adults	1,709,203
Professional Development	1,018

**Impact**

- 92% of children were born to smoke-free mothers.
- 57% of adult smokers tried to quit in the past year.
- A decrease was reported in the percent of high school students who have smoked cigarettes in the previous 30 days.
- 19 tobacco control policies were implemented.
- A healthcare provider training module was developed to deliver education about the harms of secondhand smoke, thirdhand smoke, and vaping and to understand why tobacco-free environments protect children.



## ➤ Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Expansion

### INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is the world's leading book-gifting program with a mission to inspire a love of reading and learning early in a child's life. Since its inception, the program has championed early literacy and delighted young children with over 150 million book deliveries, and continues to grow each year. The magic of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is made available to all children (from birth to their 5th birthday) in communities where there is a local sponsor. Free, age-appropriate books are mailed to the child's home every month.

Efforts to greatly expand Dolly Parton's Imagination Library across Kansas began in fall of 2021 with funding from the Kansas Children's Cabinet Preschool Development Grant. To support expansion, local nonprofits in Kansas counties commit to acting as a community champion. These champions enroll children, contribute to the book and shipping costs, and promote the program locally. Governor Laura Kelly announced on July 1st that the Kansas Children's Cabinet would begin matching investments dollar-for-dollar. Made possible by an additional \$500,000 in the Children's Initiative Fund, community partners' costs reduced by half, encouraging greater participation and boosting access for families. By December 2022, only 12 Kansas counties remain in need of coverage.

The Imagination Library of Kansas Advisory Committee formed in the fall of 2022 to support promotion, participant growth, and overall program sustainability. The Kansas Children's Cabinet aims to bring a local Imagination Library program to all 105 Kansas counties, making free books available to every Kansas child while nurturing a love for reading.

## ➤ Sunflower Summer

### INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

The Sunflower Summer Family Fun program returned in 2022 offering Kansas children Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade—and their families—free admission to attractions across the state. Sunflower Summer is a program of the Kansas State Department of Education. The Sunflower Summer mobile app was first launched in 2021 to provide interactive learning opportunities and promote parent engagement in continued student learning over the summer months. Through 90 educational venues across the state (museums, parks, zoos, libraries, local and regional attractions,) residents in all 105 KS counties participated in 2022, with weekly attendance **increasing 45% over the previous summer.**

**118,477 students** used the Sunflower Summer mobile app for entry into Kansas venues. Students and their families took part in day camps, group field trips, and bonus events such as Sundays with Wichita Surge minor league baseball games and a family campout at Milford State Park. The Sunflower Summer mobile app stimulated travel and tourism across Kansas while also tracking participation data.



## Early Childhood Block Grant

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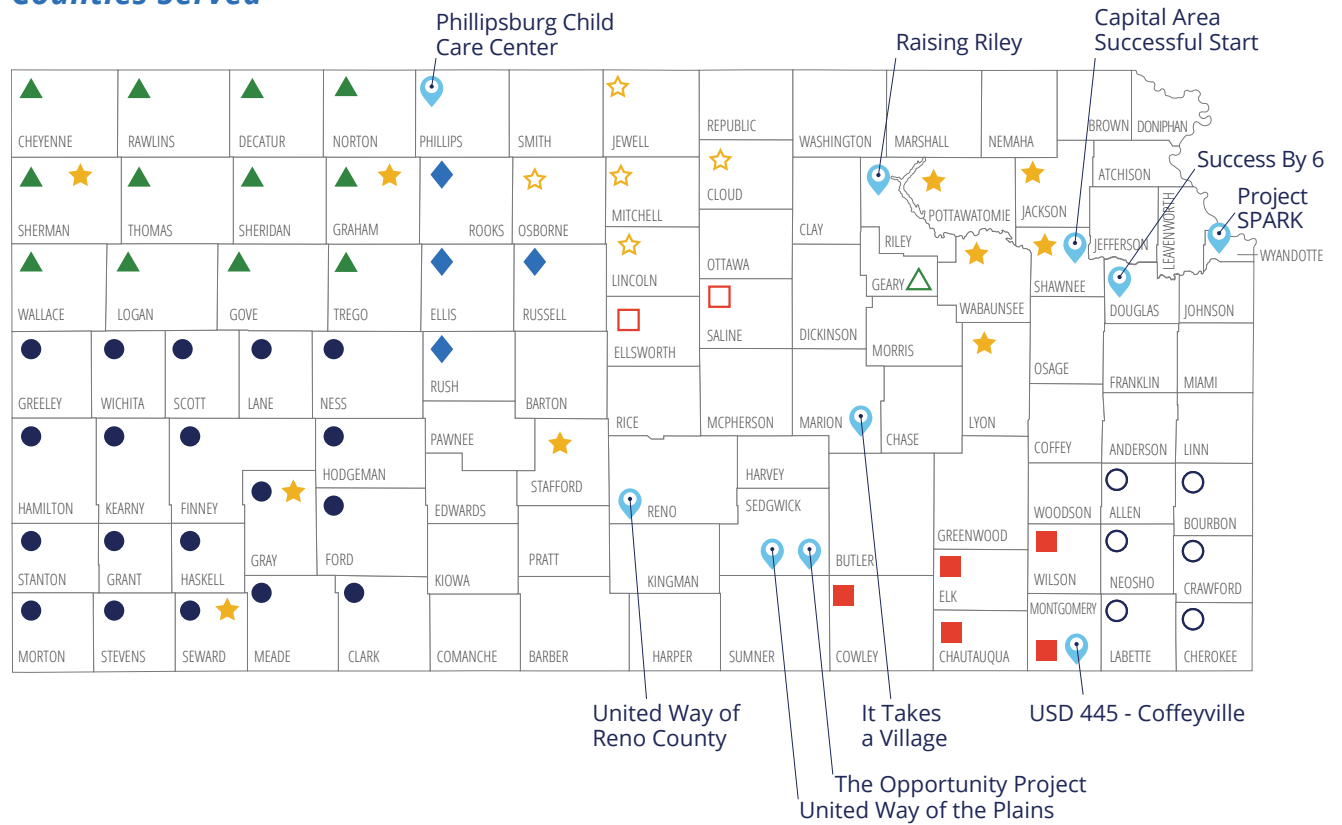
ECBG recipients provide services to at-risk children, ages 0-5, and their families. Grants from the Kansas Children's Cabinet are distributed across the state through a competitive process. ECBG programs include care and education for children birth to age 3, Pre-K services, social emotional consultation,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

**In 2022, ECBG served over 6,500 children and nearly 6,000 caregivers across 67 counties.**

ECBG programs are community-directed and services vary according to local needs. The following pages provide details on each of the grantees, including funding, counties and populations served, and outcomes.

# 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

Phillipsburg received a short-term sustainability grant and did not participate in the WSU outcome measures.

**Capital Area Successful Start | \$2,200,000**

**773** Children Served | **682** Caregivers Served

99% of families had one or more risk factors.

75% of children under age three grew in early communication skills.

The level of caregiver's stress decreased from pre to post assessment.

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

**395** Children Served | **353** Caregivers Served

91% of families had one or more risk factors.

90% of Pre-K children were on track in language comprehension.

77% of caregivers displayed positive parenting, which was a 36% increase.

---

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

**887** Children Served | **784** Caregivers Served

97% of families had one or more risk factors.

93% of children were on track in social-emotional development.

91% of classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.

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

**134** Children Served | **109** Caregivers Served

83% of families served had one or more risk factors.

89% of children were on track in social-emotional development.

84% of caregivers displayed positive parenting.

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**It Takes a Village | \$172,395**

**225** Children Served | **225** Caregivers Served

71% of families had one or more risk factors.

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

90% of classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.

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

**596** Children Served | **561** Caregivers Served

88% had one or more risk factors and 51% had three or more risk factors.

24% increased from fall to spring of Pre-K children on track in language comprehension.

78% of Pre-K children were on track in numeracy.

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**LiveWell Northwest Kansas | \$357,304**

**270** Children Served | **212** Caregivers Served

88% of families had one or more risk factors.

91% of classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.

88% of caregivers displayed positive parenting.

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**Mitchell County Partnership for Children | \$422,510**

**221** Children Served | **204** Caregivers Served

70% of families had one or more risk factors.

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

96% of classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.

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**Project SPARK | \$1,244,153**

**319** Children Served | **312** Caregivers Served

99% had one or more risk factors and 71% had three or more risk factors.

87% of children were on track in social-emotional development.

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

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### **Raising Riley | \$758,262**

**292** Children Served | **262** Caregivers Served

99% of families had one or more risk factors.

74% of Pre-K children were on track in phonological awareness, which was a 33% increase.

90% of classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.

---

### **Russell Child Development Center | \$2,200,000**

**892** Children Served | **709** Caregivers Served

89% of families had one or more risk factors.

81% of Pre-K children were on track in language comprehension.

78% of caregivers displayed positive parenting.

---

### **Saline-Ellsworth Counties School Readiness Project | \$461,249**

**247** Children Served | **209** Caregivers Served

86% of families had one or more risk factors.

75% of children were on track in language comprehension.

79% of Pre-K children were on track in numeracy.

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### **Success By 6 Coalition of Douglas County | \$914,102**

**225** Children Served | **197** Caregivers Served

98% had one or more risk factors and 59% had three or more risk factors.

83% of children were on track in social-emotional development.

100% of classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.

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### **The Opportunity Project: Early Learning Centers | \$2,200,000**

**445** Children Served | **399** Caregivers Served

95% of families had one or more risk factors.

66% of children were on track in numeracy.

85% of classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.

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### **United Way of the Plains | \$743,930**

**330** Children Served | **321** Caregivers Served

89% had one or more risk factors and 51% had three or more risk factors.

100% of classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.

A 45% increase was shown in the children who were on track in social emotional skills after intervention.

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### **United Way of Reno County | \$611,492**

**168** Children Served | **161** Caregivers Served

91% of families had one or more risk factors.

Children on track in emergent literacy increased from fall to spring.

89% of caregivers displayed positive parenting.

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### **USD 445 Coffeyville | \$881,750**

**190** Children Served | **176** Caregivers Served

92% of families had one or more risk factors.

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

82% of classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.

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### **USD 489 Early Childhood Connections | \$410,690**

**92** Children Served | **89** Caregivers Served

100% of families had one or more risk factors.

79% of Pre-K children were on track in language comprehension.

85% of Pre-K children were on track in numeracy.

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## ➤ Thriving Families, Safer Children Accountability Cohort

### INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

The Accountability Cohort, formed in May 2022, engages grassroots, community-led organizations in child abuse and prevention efforts to:

- Create more effective partnerships with smaller, community-driven organizations that are both led by and serve historically excluded populations (e.g., racial minorities, migrant workers, formerly incarcerated persons, and LGBTQ+ individuals). Partnerships aim to reach disinvested communities, inform state-wide funding strategies, and boost equity efforts.
- Expand relationships with community stakeholders and local knowledge-workers that support accountability to ensure historically-excluded voices are represented in conversations about how to create a well-being system in Kansas.

Accountability Cohort members offer oversight and strategy support for maltreatment prevention work across the state. The Accountability Cohort uses a Participatory Action Research approach to conversations and problem-solving, involving rapid cycle ideating and visual mapping.

Cohort members are learning about the Thriving Families, Safer Children movement and becoming familiar with CBCAP grantee equity action plans. Next steps for the Accountability Cohort are to build a plan for what it means to be accountable and to begin applying it to initiatives that help prevent children from entering the child welfare system. Members meet quarterly to:

- Consider strategies for power sharing/shifting at the local and state levels,
- Conduct complex problem-solving discussions around equity issues,
- Identify barriers and pathways for engagement of historically dis-invested communities, grass roots organizers, individuals with lived experience, and leaders representing Black, Native, LGBTQ+, disabled, migrant populations; and
- Consider long-term strategies for wellbeing system community investment.

### ***Participatory Action Research (PAR)***

PAR is an umbrella term for all research approaches that engage stakeholders in each step of the research process. Typically, those who are most impacted by the research take the lead in framing the questions, design, methods, and the modes of analysis. PAR is designed to generate knowledge within marginalized communities and involves researchers and participants collaborating around social change initiatives.



# 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.

**In 2022, CBCAP programs served nearly 1,600 children and over 700 caregivers in 11 communities.**

The following pages provide an overview of each program, including the amount awarded from CBCAP, a brief description of services, and the populations served. Aggregated outcome data is available in the **CBCAP Evaluation beginning on page 45.**

## ➤ Children's Community Center, Inc.

FY2022  
**\$194,000**

The Community Children's Center, Inc. is fundraising to build the Early Childhood Community Center for Douglas County while simultaneously serving children and families. The building to be used for the project has been identified and renovation costs estimated. Community Children's Center hired two new staff members to support ongoing efforts, including working with Unite Us to create a customized Assistance Request Form that allows families to self-refer for social services. This form is available on the TYKES Douglas County early childhood online resource hub.

Population FY2022	Served
Total Children	132
Ages 0-1	0
Ages 2-4	0
Ages 5-12	60
Ages 12-18	0
Age Unknown	72
Caregivers	0

## ➤ Elizabeth Layton Center's Circle of Security

FY2022  
**\$68,609**

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

Population FY2022	Served
Total Children	34
Ages 0-1	9
Ages 2-4	14
Ages 5-12	9
Ages 12-18	0
Age Unknown	2
Caregivers	124

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

FY2022  
**\$125,300**

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 FY2022	Served
Total Children	409
Ages 0-1	112
Ages 2-4	81
Ages 5-12	172
Ages 12-18	44
Age Unknown	0
Caregivers	214



## ➤ Family Resource Center's Response Advocate

FY2022  
**\$163,191**

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 FY2022	Served
Total Children	1,071
Ages 0-1	75
Ages 2-4	139
Ages 5-12	454
Ages 12-18	332
Age Unknown	71
Caregivers	230

## ➤ Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL)

FY2022  
**\$400,000**

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 policies. 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 FY2022	Served
Total Children	0
Ages 0-1	0
Ages 2-4	0
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Age Unknown	0
Caregivers	238

## ➤ Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department: Mi Apoyo Prenatal

FY2022  
**\$173,135**

Mi Apoyo Prenatal, Spanish for "my prenatal support", provides care coordination/case management, prenatal education and parent support for non-citizen, uninsured pregnant women in Douglas County. Mi Apoyo Prenatal navigates the healthcare system to find low cost/no cost prenatal care, assist with enrollment documents, and provides an interpreter as a trusted companion to accompany parents to their medical appointments. A prenatal education and peer support class, using the Becoming a Mom curriculum is offered.

Population FY2022	Served
Total Children	37
Ages 0-1	32
Ages 2-4	5
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Age Unknown	0
Caregivers	14

## ➤ Parent-Child Assistance Program (P-CAP)

FY2022  
**\$195,477**

P-CAP, a KCSL program, includes early identification of substance using parents and intensive, in-home, weekly support to families facing multiple challenges with objectives to: 1) prevent child maltreatment; 2) engage the parent into substance use assessment and treatment services; 3) provide recovery support and positive social connections; 4) increase positive parenting skills and parent-child interactions; and 5) improve child health and well-being.

Population FY2022	Served
Total Children	157
Ages 0-1	68
Ages 2-4	37
Ages 5-12	42
Ages 12-18	4
Age Unknown	6
Caregivers	61

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

FY2022  
**\$200,000**

The PEPC Family Support Program provide Family Support Services to at-risk families with children ages 0-5, including prenatal supports. These services include long-term rental assistance to homeless families and those at risk of homelessness, home visitation with comprehensive case management, early intervention screenings, individualized parenting education, resource and referral, and quality child care for second-shift working parents. It is PEPC's goal through these supports to reduce risk factors for children, increase protective factors in families, and reduce overall child abuse and neglect in Marshall and Washington Counties.

Population FY2022	Served
Total Children	213
Ages 0-1	39
Ages 2-4	17
Ages 5-12	95
Ages 12-18	45
Age Unknown	17
Caregivers	132

## ➤ Southeast Kansas Library System (SEKLS)

FY2022  
**\$54,000**

SEKLS implemented the Family Engagement in Public Libraries model which includes monthly playdates to provide in-time parenting information and supports for families; opportunities for social interaction and increased parental resilience; developmentally appropriate story times intentionally planned to model interactions for families which increased parenting knowledge; completion of the Grow Your Brain play area and completion of the Family Place national certification.

Population FY2022	Served
Total Children	129
Ages 0-1	27
Ages 2-4	70
Ages 5-12	28
Ages 12-18	3
Age Unknown	1
Caregivers	0

The Wichita Crisis Nursery, a KCSL program, strengthens families by providing respite and emergency child care, case management, and parenting education. The program partners 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.

<b>Population FY2022</b>	<b>Served</b>
Total Children	78
Ages 0-1	21
Ages 2-4	24
Ages 5-12	22
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	11
Caregivers	32

➤ **Preventive Legal Services Programs**

**Kansas Holistic Defenders (KHD) Preventive Legal Services | \$156,117**

KHD serves families with civil legal needs. Legal services focus on supporting families with challenges related to housing, accessing benefits, and other social determinants of health in order to support and stabilize families with basic needs. One staff attorney and one client advocate have been hired to support CBCAP programming. As part of this grant, KHD partnered with the Harvard Access to Justice Lab to implement a randomized control trial studying the effects of access to civil legal services on improved educational and financial outcomes for children and families.

**Kansas Legal Services | \$107,567**

To strengthen families and prevent a gap in legal needs from turning into a crisis, Kansas Legal Services (KLS) is piloting a preventive legal services program in Southwest Kansas. KLS is using a dyad approach, involving a parent advocate and attorney which are both free to families. The Parent Advocate works with families to identify goals and connect them with legal services. Housing and eviction, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and benefit access, and debt collection assistance are among the legal services being provided to families.

## ➤ Prevention Projects of the Kansas Future Fellows

### INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

The 2021-22 Kansas Future Fellows—eleven Kansas leaders from a variety of sectors—partnered with the Kansas Children’s Cabinet CBCAP program to **pilot three new prevention initiatives**. The pilots focused on relieving stressors and promoting protective factors to avoid burnout, all aimed at reducing the incidence of punitive parenting practices. Pilots emphasized building connections on multiple levels—between the parent and child, among parents and caregivers, and at the community level by strengthening social supports and working to instill a sense of belonging.

#### *SENT Topeka*

A Family Health and Well-Being series was held to build community by holding events at child care pickup times. With a focus on parent/caregiver vital skills, the events provided structured opportunities for family togetherness, unity among neighbors, and awareness of available resources. Parents reported notable positive experiences, meaningful engagement with their children, and an increase resource awareness.

#### *LiveWell Northwest Kansas*

LiveWell Northwest Kansas partnered with Akesa Health to pilot a digital solution (app) with CBCAP grantees. The app is a self-guided resource to help parents deal with anxiety and trauma through stress reduction techniques. As of Fall 2022, the app is being tested by grantees.

#### *Kansas Families and Schools Together, Inc.*

Conscious Discipline Parenting Events were held using a two-generational approach to connect parents and caregivers with educators. Using a supportive and non-judgmental approach, the events facilitated discussion around feelings of burn-out and effective social-emotional responses to stress and trauma. The events had high family turnout and resulted in an increase in new skills and concepts for parents, as well as the establishment on an ongoing support network.

#### *About Kansas Future Fellows*

The 2021-22 inaugural cohort of Future Fellows completed a 9-month fellowship to learn tools and strategies for addressing some of today’s most complex social issues while also anticipating and planning for economic, social, technological, and cultural change.

A second cohort of fellows launched in November 2022 to continue to build out a network of ambassadors that hone their skills in futures thinking around complex social problems. The future fellows program prepares cross-sector leaders to monitor trends, anticipate changing needs, and generate responsive solutions. The incoming cohort of nine includes fellows from adjacent sectors to early childhood care and education, including: a president of a community college in western Kansas, a patient resource director from Citizen’s Health, an assistant city manager, a human relations officer from a municipality, a lieutenant of investigations from a police department, and a program director from a community development organization. This cohort will join the 11 fellows from 2021-22 to be part of a growing network of social innovators charged with thinking 30-50 years out, planting seeds today for Kansas to be a place where every child thrives.



# Data for Impact

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



## Overview

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The Kansas Children's Cabinet has been a state leader in the innovative use of data in decision making for sixteen 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. The Kansas Children's Cabinet conducts an annual evaluation of all funded programs, including the collection of appropriate validated measures in accordance with K.S.A. 38-2103.

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.

As part of the CBCAP evaluation, grantees participated in a **Ripple Effects Mapping (REM)** session, a participatory action approach to evaluation that generates qualitative and visual data to map ripples of community efforts.

**Our Tomorrows** continually captures stories from Kansans to better understand personal experiences and their context, highlighting emerging patterns and opportunities for action. Finally, the **Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust** provides the structure and governance for state agencies to share data to support cross-systems data analysis for authorized projects.

This section offers details and results of each of these research and evaluation initiatives.

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	Narrative 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 (KU-CPPR)** 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 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, programs have improved their data collection and reporting processes as a result of participating in the Accountability Process. We also use the Accountability Process to provide feedback that helps our grantees improve the quality of services and outcomes.



## Category

## Evaluation Questions

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

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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.
Kansas Early Childhood Developmental 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)	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.

## Results

### Kansas Early Childhood Developmental Services

**99%** of children with Individualized Family Service Plans demonstrated improved **positive social-emotional** skills or had skills comparable to same-aged peers



### KIDS Network



**Over 96%** of parents indicated the intention to follow one of three **safe sleep practices** (sleep position, sleep location, and crib items) following KIDS Network events

### Family Preservation Services

Tier 1 participating families saw **96%** of children able to remain in the home and **99%** did not experience substantiated abuse or neglect during services

### Child Care Assistance

For families receiving **child care subsidies** over the course of the year, **68%** saw their household income increase





## ECBG Evaluation

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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 (see page 53 for **Common Measures evaluation tools**) 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; and
- 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.

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### **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

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### **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

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### **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

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### **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

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### **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

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### **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

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### **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

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### **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

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### **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

74%

TIME 2

85%



Parents displaying  
positive parenting  
interactions

TIME 1

69%

TIME 2

81%



Children on  
track in language  
comprehension

FALL

51%

SPRING

75%



Children on track  
in numeracy

FALL

57%

SPRING

73%



Classrooms achieving high-quality  
increased from **69%** to **76%** 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** targets services to 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.



## Evaluation Approach and Results

### Retrospective Protective Factors Survey-2nd Edition (PFS-2 Retro)

The PFS-2 Retro is a questionnaire completed by parents or caregivers receiving family support services. The tool measures protective factors within a family that reduce the risk of child maltreatment:

- Family Functioning and Resilience
- Nurturing and Attachment
- Concrete Supports
- Social Support
- Caregiver/Practitioner Relationship

The PFS-2 Retro illuminates the ways in which community-based child abuse and neglect programs are strengthening family protective factors as a child maltreatment prevention strategy.

### PFS-2 Retro Results

Participants in CBCAP programming noted the following protective factors after services.

Social Supports 65%

Family Functioning & Resilience 74%

Practitioner/Caregiver Relationship 77%

### Ripple Effects Mapping Evaluation

Ripple Effects Mapping is a participatory action approach to evaluation that generates qualitative and visual data to map ripples of community efforts. To close out FY22, CBCAP grantees participated in a Ripple Effects Mapping session to complement the PFS-2 Retro findings. In addition to serving as a participatory evaluation approach, the process of Ripple Effects Mapping also promotes reflection, curiosity, and innovation within organizations. Insights from Ripple Effects Mapping sessions help providers and community members ask better evaluation questions, invigorate passion for the work, and provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the impacts of program efforts.

This approach not only engaged CBCAP service providers in examining their own efforts across the last fiscal year, but also articulated the various levers of prevention activated through their services. The Ripple Effects Mapping session consists of:

- **Peer Interviewing/Appreciative Inquiry:** Engaging in peer interviewing to facilitate inquiry, identify current experiences with the program and future possibilities of the initiative, elicit desired future outcomes, and conceptualize the broader program vision.
- **Whole Group Discussion/Reflection:** Reporting out results from peer interviews and reflecting upon shared understandings, making connections to current or future program initiatives/experiences, and implications. This portion of dialogue is intended to cause a shift in perception, understanding, program possibilities, and serves as thematic foci for the visual mapping process.
- **Mind Mapping/Radiant Thinking:** Using mind mapping to visualize effects of the program and capture event chains that lead to a particular outcome or possible future. Participants engage in the co-creation of a visual map of causal factors and outcomes while considering the role of the program in the outcome, significant changes, and themes associated with outcomes.

## Ripple Effects Mapping Results

The Ripple Effects Mapping data also supported PFS-2 Retro findings, and provided a descriptive understanding of how CBCAP grantees were effectively increasing social supports and leveraging their relationship with clients as a protective factor and child maltreatment prevention strategy.

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### Community-based child maltreatment prevention providers are filling vital social support gaps for the families they serve.

- Providers are operating as an extension of the family support system by listening and validating caregivers, celebrating achievements with families, and dreaming, brainstorming, and problem-solving.
- While Protective Factor Survey data shows that the provider-caregiver relationship is effectively serving as a protective factor for preventing child maltreatment, REM data illustrates how providers are achieving those positive outcomes.
  - Provider social support behaviors such as listening and validating, celebrating successes and achievements, dreaming and brainstorming to keep working new avenues of success, and modeling essential life and parenting skills were vital for supporting long term, sustainable success for families.

*“Providers naturally become a part of the client’s lives. [Clients are] seeing the provider as a vital member of their support system. [We are] sitting at the table and dreaming with them. Caregivers are developing self-esteem and problem solving skills and making better decisions.”*

*“We are helping families feel validated and less alone. It inspires them to help others, and translating the skills they learned onto others.”*

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### CBCAP providers not only serve individual families in their communities, but also effectively serve as change agents to promote systems transformation to prevent child maltreatment.

- Providers are actively making professional connections throughout the public and private sector to grow the network of helpers.
- Providers are facilitating mindset shifts across their communities to help others better understand what families need, and organizing community members around the family well-being system.
- Providers are scaffolding their relationships with families to get more children and caregivers connected to services.

*“We are bringing more people into the circle of support and helping people understand that providing basic needs is a maltreatment prevention strategy.”*

*“We are helping people in the community reflect on what they are doing to provide hope and support for families.”*

**CBCAP providers are using their relationships to help families function better, support caregivers with parenting strategies, and model nurturing parent-child interactions.**

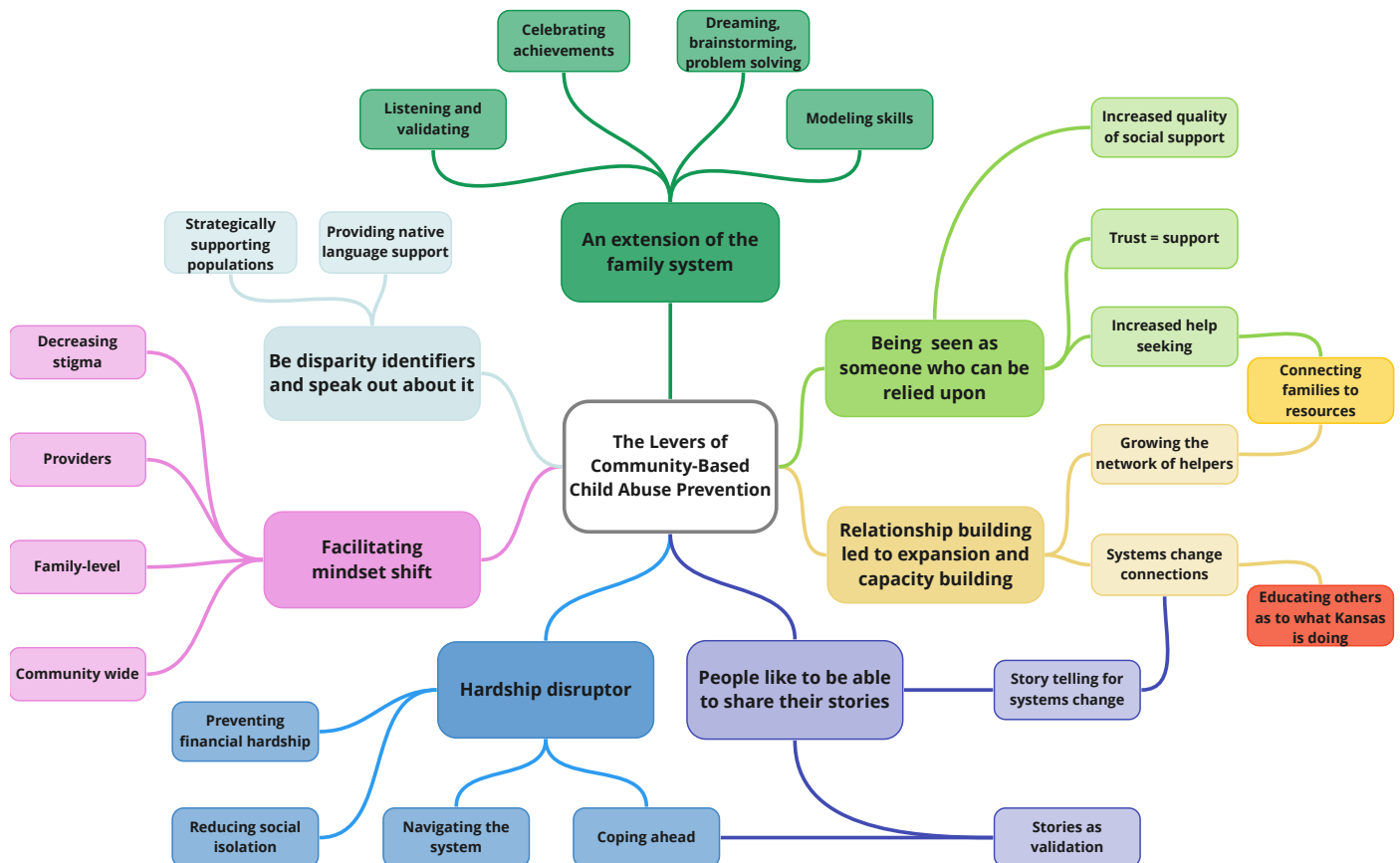
- Due to the strong relational foundation laid by providers, they were able to more effectively model parenting, problem-solving, and coping skills for families, and promote protective factors necessary for preventing child maltreatment, such as facilitating positive family functioning and attachment and nurturing.
- Providers are decreasing help-seeking stigma and helping community members identify ways they can be a part of the solution for families in crisis.
  - CBCAP providers are considered trusted helpers in the community, and as such, more families are engaged in child maltreatment prevention supports, and better utilizing supports well into the future.

*“Families are reaching out and seeing that people will help them! [We are] increasing the likelihood that they will receive help and trust other providers.”*

*“We are able to provide translation services for families. We are increasing comfort and trust for other providers when they can communicate with them in their native language.”*

**RIPPLE EFFECTS MAPPING THEMES**

The image below illustrates the various themes discovered in the CBCAP FY22 Ripple Effects Mapping session and demonstrates the broad impact community-based child abuse and neglect prevention providers are having at the individual, county, and state level.





## Our Tomorrows

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### *Community Voices in Action*

Stories are powerful connectors, linking individuals to each other and to the world at large. They are also critical pathways for centering family voices at the heart of responsive, inclusive policies and programs that meet families where they are with the support they need, when they need it. As a key connector of Kansas families, communities, and support systems across the state, the Kansas Children's Cabinet recognizes the importance of honoring and listening to the voices of individuals and families today—from all backgrounds and circumstances—to help build stronger, healthier systems tomorrow.

**More than 6,000**  
personal accounts of daily life have  
been collected and analyzed over  
the past three years.

## What is Our Tomorrows?

*Our Tomorrows*, an initiative of the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research, is an innovative approach to narrative research that captures stories from Kansans to better understand the context of personal experiences and to identify patterns that can inform program and policy design. More than 6,000 personal accounts of daily life have been collected and analyzed over the past three years as part of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet efforts to elevate and act upon the lived experiences of Kansas families.

At its core, *Our Tomorrows* is a complex way of intentionally listening and actively responding to the real situations and circumstances people encounter every day. The project brings critical depth and breadth to community assessment and program evaluation practices, supports a more holistic alignment of service delivery providers through experience-based connections, and unleashes the power of authentic and inclusive family engagement within support systems. This collaborative partnership for community-driven change is centered on four innovative strategies:

1. Empowering community members to speak to the realities of their daily lives;
2. Leveraging lived experiences to help programs co-create interventions with the families they serve;
3. Centering community voices in policy-based decisions and outcomes; and
4. Catalyzing responsive action for ground-up change across whole community systems.

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet uses the StoryBank from *Our Tomorrows* to facilitate systems-wide understanding of both the needs of families and the ongoing, real-time impact of changes and systems improvements. This approach was also used to inform the 2019 Needs Assessment. Key examples to date of this multi-faceted approach to family engagement include:

- Targeted story collection efforts that reach families in every Kansas county;
- Rapid-cycle story collection, analysis, reporting, and decision making at organizational, community, and state levels;
- Continuous capture of experiences and assessment of needs to inform work across all goals and strategies of the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan; and
- Identification and elevation of emerging opportunities for state and local action.

In 2022, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet recognized the importance of the *Our Tomorrows* StoryBank as a critical catalyst for improved program development and implementation. By supporting facilitated collaboration and collective action through rich conversation, *Our Tomorrows* sensemaking sessions helped to stimulate equitable, family-focused policy initiatives and program partnerships across Kansas.

## Making Sense of Lived Experiences, Together

The power of *Our Tomorrows* lies not only in the elevation of the voices of Kansans through heartfelt and insightful anecdotes, but also in its ability to identify patterns across experiences and make meaning out of these collective narratives. Researchers can identify emerging needs, share results with key stakeholders to drive decision making, and create opportunities for sensemaking and idea generation for responsive action. These sensemaking sessions, which utilize *Our Tomorrows* stories and patterns to facilitate open dialogue, empower communities and stakeholders to take meaningful, localized action in response to complex problems.

### **Universal Prevention for Strong and Thriving Families (Family Strong)**

One key example of the ability of *Our Tomorrows* to facilitate holistic, responsive program design is the collaborative use of the StoryBank with the Family Strong team in Kansas. In its initial planning and design phase this year, the Family Strong steering committee partnered with *Our Tomorrows* to ensure that their goal of normalizing “asking for and receiving help within a family-centered and connected community service system” is built around the lived experiences of Kansas families from the start. To set a foundational approach to this strategy, the Family Strong and *Our Tomorrows* teams hosted two sensemaking sessions—one for the steering committee and one for community members with lived experience—that featured diverse stories and data patterns from eight targeted Kansas counties.

#### KEY EXAMPLE

### **Family Strong**

#### SENSEMAKING

**2 Sessions featuring stories and data from 8 targeted counties**

#### PROGRAM GOAL

**Normalize asking for and receiving help within a family-centered and connected community service system**

#### KEY LESSONS LEARNED

**Realities of access barriers**

**Changes in help-seeking behaviors**

During the first sensemaking session with steering committee members, story-centered conversations helped identify existing service gaps, elevated structural barriers to key decision makers, and provided insights on local solutions to real and persistent family challenges. During the sensemaking session a family support worker shared the following story.

### **A Kansan's Story**



**I helped a community member who has been trying through different resources for over a year to replace her birth certificate and Social Security card in order to get a photo ID...[it] can be harder than people think depending on the state of birth and what alternative documents they will accept. She has been so thankful and states she is closer to feeling like a person who is no longer lost...**

Session participants discussed the realities of access barriers to needed services, including formal documentation and government-issued identification processes. Stories like this one are instrumental to an actionable program design that is responsive to the real, daily experiences of families in Kansas.

Additionally, session participants considered changes in help-seeking behaviors from 2020 to 2021. Looking at self-coded story patterns from Our Tomorrows respondents, Family Strong program staff and community members identified a significant change in the willingness of Kansans to reach out for help and support. As the state's response to and recovery from the pandemic progressed, respondents shared that they were increasingly more likely to reach out for help when they needed it, potentially suggesting that as families emerge from isolation and assess the needs of post-pandemic life, they are willing to engage with providers and support teams to get what they need.



The Family Strong steering committee used these sensemaking sessions to ensure its implementation plan creates an “integrated, cross-sector network of supports that mitigate Social Determinants of Health” and reduces “inequities in child welfare”—a network built on real, lived experiences from Kansas families, for Kansas families. As the *Our Tomorrows* project continues to build a robust framework of story collection opportunities based on the most urgent issues for Kansas families, sensemaking sessions offer real-time, actionable opportunities for local communities, organizations, and decisions makers across the state to leverage voices for meaningful change that help all Kansans thrive.

## Turning Stories into Action

By convening sensemaking sessions in support of the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet has assisted community members, providers, and decision makers in every region of the state with the design and implementation of family-centered interventions. Additionally, sensemaking sessions have served as the foundation for localized action through the implementation of the Community Action Lab initiative—a microgrant program that provides funds to attendees in support of innovative, small scale interventions and ideas. To date, more than 70 Community Action Labs have been awarded, spanning every region in the state and resulting in over \$160,000 invested in community-level interventions and initiatives. These ground-up innovations have impacted Kansas families in numerous ways, including:

- improved access to family resources, including culturally responsive and bilingual approaches;
- increased supports and expanded networks for child care providers;
- intergenerational early learning activities; and
- new cross-sector community collaborations.

As the *Our Tomorrows* project continues to build collaborative partnerships with communities, it will elevate ground-level innovations for thriving families, responsive programs, and connected systems for all Kansans.



# Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust

An important initiative of the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan is the Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust (Data Trust). This work reflects the commitment of five state agencies to share data and information to improve the quality, effectiveness, and equity of programs and services for Kansas children and families. Our state agencies are dedicated to working together to use the best possible information available to make data-informed decisions that support child and family well-being in communities across our state. Our Data Trust makes this critical work possible.

The prosperity of our state depends on the well-being of our youngest Kansans. Research tells us that investing in early childhood programs yields significant returns through improved health, social, education, and economic outcomes. By sharing information about early childhood investments and outcomes across Kansas agencies, we are better able to give Kansas children and families the full range of assistance and guidance they need.

**Over time, this kind of collaboration and targeted analysis of our state’s return on investment across programs and over the course of a child’s life will help ensure brighter futures for Kansas kids.**

By linking participation in services to the impact they have on children and families, we can look to the data to help us ensure accountability, equitable access, program effectiveness, and return on investment. As a state, we become better able to make data-informed decisions and follow the long-term impact of those decisions. A data governance board, with the Kansas Children’s Cabinet as Trustee, is working together to govern data well, catalog it comprehensively, and share it as needed in the most effective and efficient way possible.



## Data Governance

### *Formation, Governance, and Purpose of the Data Trust*

In 2021, Kansas enacted a data trust agreement outlining new data governance opportunities and structures among four state agencies. The Data Trust reflects Kansas' commitment to the future of our early childhood system and is the foundation of our robust Kansas Early Childhood Integrated Data (ECID) approach. We join many states across the country who place value on data-driven decision making in the public sphere for children and families.

As of July 2022, five state agencies comprise membership in the Data Trust: Kansas Children's Cabinet, Kansas Department for Children and Families, Kansas Department for Health and Environment, Kansas State Department of Education, and Kansas Department of Corrections. The Kansas Children's Cabinet serves as the Data Trustee and each member is represented in decisions regarding data sharing and good stewardship of agency information.

The Data Trust establishes a governance board whose members design sustainable practices and tools for efficiently sharing early childhood data among members. The Data Trust prioritizes data projects that apply for, and are approved to be ECID Authorized Projects. The Data Trust structure allows for additional members to be included and provides avenues for community and provider requests to be reviewed.

The data governance board meets quarterly to:

- Review/prioritize ECID authorized project plans;
- Develop best practices for improving data use and data literacy;
- Recommend sustainable data sharing practices among state agencies; and
- Incorporate community and provider input and approve data requests.

### ➤ Ethical Principals

The Data Trust is committed to:

#### *Recognizing the needs of people before data*

We are responsible for maximizing the benefit and minimizing harm when using data derived from individuals' experiences or perceptions.

#### *Empathy for all*

This includes Data Trust partners and the individuals from which the data is derived.

#### *Practicing humility and openness*

This includes being transparent about practices, engaging with communities and their unique needs, and holding parties responsible to communicate clearly and without bias.

#### *Understanding the complete data*

We will ensure every effort is made to glean a complete understanding of data, where it came from, how it was created, and who might use the data in the future.

## Goals

The overarching goal of the Data Trust is to improve the coordination, delivery of services, and outcomes for families and children in the early childhood care and education system. This Data Trust seeks to:

1. **Improve the quality of data** within and across early care and education organizations to ensure equitable access and availability of high-quality services for children birth to five.
2. **Maximize existing data resources** and/or leverage new technical infrastructure to conduct analysis and research that informs decision making by policymakers and program administrators.
3. Provide an annual state-level analysis of children and families receiving services across the state to **identify needs and gaps** in the delivery of early childhood services resulting in an unduplicated count of children and families served.

## Authorized Projects

### *ECBG and the Prevention of Foster Care Removals*

#### PARTNERS

**Kansas Department for Children and Families**  
*Prevention and Protection*

**Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund**  
*Early Childhood Block Grant*

#### TYPE OF PROJECT

**Longitudinal Analysis**  
*Historical and ongoing analysis of integrated data by early childhood intervention, demographics, and outcomes (maltreatment reports, removals)*

#### STATUS

**Approved**  
*May 10, 2021*

**Data Sharing Agreement**  
*Active*

#### PURPOSE

The Data Trust is conducting a pilot study that links ECBG and CBCAP program data with data from DCF to identify the most effective systems approach in preventing child maltreatment. The study has also served as an opportunity to pilot interagency data sharing to maximize child welfare research and programming in the early childhood system.

#### RESULTS

### **What services are the most effective at preventing removal into foster care?**

Initial results revealed that early childhood services act as a protective factor against removal into foster care. Children had a significantly lower likelihood of being removed after receiving ECBG/CBCAP services. Building on these findings, the research team analyzed the experience of families that received services specifically geared toward helping parents learn strategies to better support their children and themselves.

Parents enrolled in parent-centered services were **35% less likely to experience a removal** after receiving service.

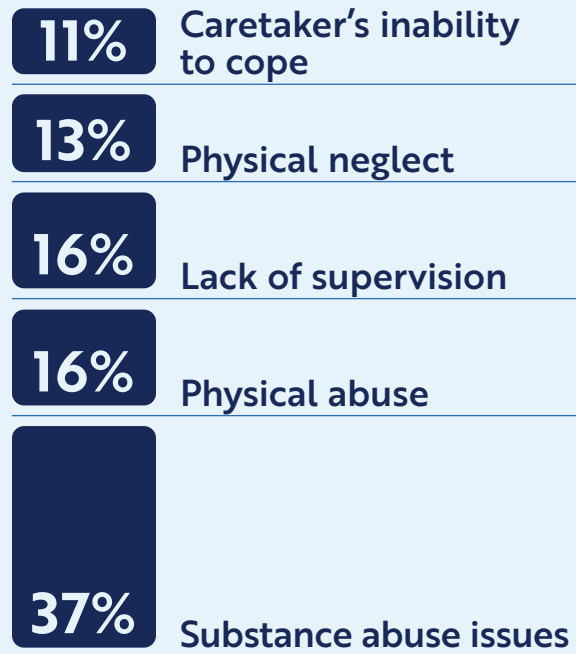
Parent-centered services include:

- Home visiting
- Case management
- Parent education

Encompassing a wide range of services:

- Building parenting skills, including strategies for managing difficult situations with children
- Drug and alcohol counseling
- Connecting parents to needed resources, including meeting basic needs

Most common reasons for removal FY2022



This kind of flexible, parent-centered support directly addresses the most common reasons for removal.

These findings confirm that child well-being is best achieved by **meeting the needs of the family as a whole.**

## Distinct Count of Children in Early Care and Education Services

### PARTNERS

**Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund**

**Kansas Department of Health and Environment**

**Kansas State Department of Education**

**Kansas Department for Children and Families**

### TYPE OF PROJECT

**Resource Tool**

*Accurate, updated mapping of children served*

- *In home visiting, childcare, Idea Part C, Idea Part B, and Pre-K/preschool programs administered across agencies funded by federal and state investments*
- *By demographic and risk/protective factors*
- *By geography and district*

### STATUS

**Approved**

*March 3, 2022*

**Data Sharing Agreement**

*Under development*

ALL IN FOR KANSAS KIDS

**Accessibility**

**Availability**

### PURPOSE

To serve children and families effectively and equitably, the Kansas early childhood system must know the population it serves. The Data Trust is working with state agencies and several data systems to identify the distinct number of children being served in programs at the state and local level.

A distinct count of children accounts for each child receiving services and identifies which program or combination of programs currently serves them. This valuable metric allows us to identify areas for improvement, answer critical questions related to the state's early childhood care and education mixed-delivery system, and refines our knowledge of child and family demographics as well as the state's capacity to provide services.





# Our Children's Future

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- Overview
- Partnering with Commerce
- Learning from Other States
- Early Childhood and Literacy
- Recommendations
- Conclusion



## Overview

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Over the past year we continued to identify and implement new ways to center family needs across systems and sectors. As highlighted throughout this report, we are working collaboratively to fill critical gaps in service and respond to the unmet needs of families.

We seek inspiration and guidance from Kansas communities across the state who deeply understand the needs and situations of their families, neighbors, coworkers, friends, and little ones. We are particularly focused on our responsibility to families in need of expanded child care opportunities, and to the child care workforce who need better support, higher wages, clearer pathways, and professional respect for their critical contributions to our children's future.

This final section of the 2022 Annual Report presents three additional, forward-looking ways the Kansas Children's Cabinet is working to prioritize, increase, and actualize early childhood investments:

- partnering with the Kansas Department of Commerce to support increased access to child care as a mechanism for economic growth,
- studying the range of solutions other states are identifying and enacting to increase workforce investments, and
- connecting our state's child literacy goals i.e. the Every Child Can Read Act, to early childhood investments and actions.

We also present details on CIF budgetary shifts along with a summary of Kansas Children's Cabinet recommendations over the past year.

Our state can't experience economic growth unless we have someone caring for our children—and unless our children's care prepares them to be thriving adults. Dedicated caregivers across Kansas provide essential support for young children and their families, while simultaneously contributing to our state's overall productivity and economic stability.

In Kansas, we recognize the vital role of small business to our state's economy, especially child care providers struggling to offer safe and consistent child care and education services. It's hard for these child care businesses to keep the doors open and maintain access for Kansas families when they continually operate at a deficit. A recent analysis by the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research estimated that statewide, the child care system is operating at an annual deficit of \$255,130,586, which amounts to \$281 per child served each month. We need more money in the system to both support these businesses and to grow a strong, talented workforce.

While recruitment and retention of a quality child care workforce is a multifaceted problem, there is no doubt that inadequate wages are the heart of the issue. Child care providers are some of the lowest-paid workers in our economy. Nationally they earn a median wage of \$13.31, well below the median across occupations of \$22.00 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2021). In Kansas, the median wage trails the national at \$10.20. To maintain a stable, committed workforce in child care, we must ensure that these professionals earn—at minimum—a wage adequate to cover basic living expenses. Ultimately, we need compensation reform that yield competitive wages that make child care a viable profession.

### *The Multiplier Effect*

The benefits of wage parity for child care professionals go far beyond simply elevating the early childhood workforce. A Kansas-specific analysis by Dr. Tim Green, Director of Research and Data, Openfields, estimated the effect new spending on workers in the child care sector would have on earnings of all workers in the state. His analysis revealed that for every additional dollar paid to childcare workers, an additional 50-51 cents are earned by other workers throughout the state. This yields a direct effect of \$131 million, with spillover effects of an additional \$66 million.





## Partnering with Commerce

Kansas early childhood is a complex ecosystem. In its role as connector, the Kansas Children's Cabinet works in families' best interests to find alignment between the many early childhood stakeholders, particularly non-traditional partners such as those in the private sector. The *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan highlights the importance of this in Goal 4, Private Sector Collaboration:

Connect local government officials, nonprofit leaders, chambers of commerce, the economic development community, and business leaders with opportunities to support families, such as wage support and scholarships for early childhood care and education professionals, expanded broadband access, and community service tax credits.

Child care is a perfect example of an early childhood issue that spans multiple sectors and interests. It is critical to young children's safety, early learning, and development; and it enables parents to work. Child care is important to families for those reasons, and because it enables parents to work. Parents aren't the only ones who depend on reliable care; employers and the communities where they are located have a vested interest in ample child care options. A recent article in the Great Bend



Tribune (“Hoisington, Barton County seek workers,” May 11, 2022) identified lack of child care as a major barrier to economic growth for their community. According to Barton County Commission Chairman Shawn Hutchinson, who also serves on the Great Bend Economic Development Board, “Housing and child care are top needs, but the number one need to grow our economy in Barton County is workers. Housing and child care are ways that we can get more workers.” Similarly, a recent study of more than 460 rural-dwelling Kansans ages 21-39 identified early education and child care as a top need (Kansas Power Up & Go, 2022).

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet embraces its position at the nexus of public interests in child care by strengthening relationships with the Kansas Department of Commerce (Commerce). Our mutual goal to increase access to child care for the prosperity of communities across the state has led to several key efforts, including:

- Collaborating on the Community Development Block Grant and Community Service Tax Credits program. Commerce has made efforts to ensure child care expansion receives a share of these incentives.
- Inviting Commerce to the table for community conversations. In July, Commerce joined an event with 10 small communities in Minneola, Kansas to connect participants to resources. Child Care Aware and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment also participated.
- Providing Commerce with the latest data and research on child care access across the state, including household need, cost to families, and effect on parents’ labor force participation.
- Providing consultation to Commerce as they work toward significant new business development and expansion projects in Kansas with companies who prioritize child care and employee quality of life in their decision-making.
- Presenting at the Kansas Housing Conference in Wichita on the role child care plays in community development and economic growth, including information on the current state of child care in Kansas, bright spots around the state, and plans underway to help stabilize and grow this important sector.

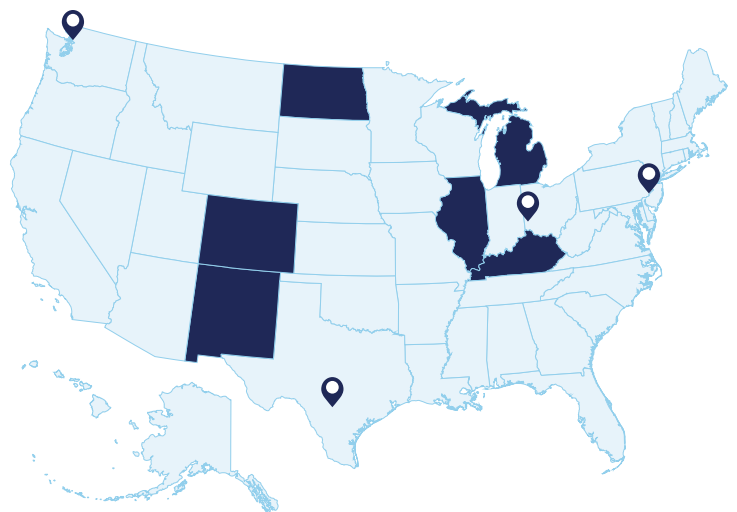
The private sector can play a significant role in expanding child care options. Companies investing in on-site child care can increase both employee retention and morale while reducing pressure on other providers in the community. Expanding public-private partnerships in communities across Kansas can help establish alternate funding streams, provide supplies and technological support to providers, and create pathways between educational institutions and child-care centers.



## Learning from Other States

A myriad of solutions are forming across the nation to better support the early childhood workforce in individual states and communities, and to help families access and afford child care. State legislatures, often using federal stimulus money, enacted more than 200 child-care bills in 2021, and another 100 bills were passed in the first half of 2022—a rate of lawmaking that is twice the average of recent years, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures (Goldstein, 2022). States are trying different models, from supplementing stimulus dollars with state revenue, to ballot initiatives and matching employer child care assistance benefits.

States and communities across the country are recognizing the critical importance of stabilizing child care with ongoing, reliable funding. At a time when Kansas revenues are healthy and economic development is a bipartisan focus, we too must prioritize investment in strategies that keep parents and caregivers working, and that generate enough high-quality care and education options for all Kansas children.



## Support for Child Care Providers

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### *Illinois*

Illinois is piloting a program to address obstacles faced by rural child care providers in meeting the state's quality of care standards. The program provides 35 child care centers in rural counties with \$3.8 million in funding per year to hire additional staff or increase the salaries of existing staff.

### *Colorado*

Colorado has passed bipartisan legislation to cut property taxes for child care centers and provide an early childhood educator income tax credit. As followup to a successful 2020 ballot initiative that increased state taxes on tobacco and nicotine to fund the creation of a universal preschool program, Colorado established the Department of Early Childhood in April 2022 to organize and streamline the array of programs and services for children birth to 5 and their families.

### *New Mexico*

In response to a growing early childhood professional shortage, particularly in rural areas, New Mexico has introduced a new grant available to child care providers. The state will provide funding to any licensed child care program in the state that attests that staff will receive a \$3/hour wage increase. Additionally, during the November 2022 elections, New Mexico passed a constitutional amendment that will now allocate an additional 1.25% of the money in the state's land grant permanent fund to early childhood education.

## Community-led Funding Initiatives

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### *King County, Washington*

Since 2015, the voter-approved initiative Best Starts for Kids has supported more than a half million children, youth, and families; partnered with more than 500 organizations; and launched more than 570 community-led programs to support the wellbeing and health of the county's children.

### *San Antonio, Texas*

In San Antonio, a 1/8 cent sales tax generates up to \$31 million per year to fund Pre-K.

### *Dayton, Ohio*

In 2016, voters in Dayton voted to increase its income tax revenue to support high-quality early care and education for low-income families, including early care and education for all of the city's 1,900 four-year-old children.

### *Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

The Philadelphia Beverage Tax on sugary beverages provides funding for free, quality Pre-K to children ages 3-4.

## Partnerships with Employers

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### *Kentucky*

A new program creates employee child care assistance partnerships, matching employer child care assistance benefits dollar for dollar depending on a household's income.

### *Michigan*

Under the Michigan Tri-Share Child Care Program, child care costs are split evenly between families, the state, and employers. Originally piloted in three regions, then it expanded in 2022 to cover most of the state.

### *North Dakota*

Governor Doug Burgum has proposed a child care plan to be considered next legislative session which includes matching funds for businesses that offer employees child care, as well as a child care tax credit for families and an expansion of child care assistance.



## Early Childhood and Literacy

Safe and nurturing child care environments for our youngest Kansans are a prerequisite for early learning. In fact, quality care environments are early learning environments. They support healthy brain development and help ensure that children start strong on the path to literacy.

In spring 2022, the Kansas Legislature passed the “Every Child Can Read” Act to promote literacy initiatives in the K-12 public school system geared towards improving third grade literacy outcomes. As we collectively set our sights to improve literacy in Kansas, it is critical to understand the opportunities lost by waiting to begin when children arrive in kindergarten. Research consistently demonstrates that there is no better investment in educational outcomes

than starting in early childhood; however, many children in Kansas do not have access to quality programming. This high level of need combined with lack of access puts our school districts in the position of having to remediate and provide wrap-around services to overcome deficiencies created by missed opportunities early on that could have been avoided through targeted investment and expanded access. Inadequate investment in early childhood programming carries significant costs to businesses, taxpayers, and our state’s economy. *All In For Kansas Kids* seeks to increase access, enhance quality, and seize this critical moment in child development for all Kansas children.

## Investing in What Works

Early childhood is the most important time of our lives for brain development and lays the foundation for all future learning. This presents an enormous opportunity to give all kids the start they need to succeed in school, their communities, and eventually their careers. It also presents a dangerous liability. The costs of not investing in young children, including low educational attainment, compromised physical and mental health, and low labor market participation, are significant and alarming.

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet Blueprint for Early Childhood is built on decades of science identifying the conditions under which children thrive. It focuses on the needs of the whole child organized by three critical building blocks: early learning, healthy development, and strong families. Investments guided by the Blueprint have a demonstrated track record of success, including improved literacy, reduced time in special education, and avoidance of foster care.

Kansas can become the best place in the country to raise a family, while attracting and retaining young people, bringing in new employment and investment, and producing the next generation of innovators, entrepreneurs, scientists, and artists. In the process, we can reduce the money we spend on foster care and incarceration, revitalize our rural communities, and avoid needless misery and loss. We know what it takes to get there. We just need to be willing to commit to investing in the opportunities before us. See a list of opportunities for various stakeholders to improve early childhood literacy in the Recommendations section at the end of this section.

### *Return on Investment*

The long-term efficacy of early childhood programming shows a consistent return on investment of 7%-14%. In stock market terms, this is a desired average. Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman and colleagues have repeatedly demonstrated the benefits of investing in early childhood education, particularly for disadvantaged families. Heckman (2012) contends that “The highest rate of return in early childhood development comes from investing as early as possible, from birth through age five, in disadvantaged families.”

### *Example of Investments Guided by the Blueprint*

#### **The Opportunity Project (TOP) of Wichita**

On average, TOP graduates compared to a control group have:

- ↑ higher attendance rates
- ↑ higher GPAs
- ↓ lower repeat discipline referrals

TOP graduates are **35% less likely** than a control group to be involved in special education services provided an **11% annual return on investment** to the state based on a cost analysis.

*(Wichita State University College of Education, 2019) (Sprague-Jones and Counts, 2016)*



## Recommendations

Since its inception in 1999, the primary charge of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet has been to make recommendations for the Children’s Initiatives Fund (CIF) and evaluate its use. The Kansas Children’s Cabinet established an annual Accountability Process in 2006 and adopted the Blueprint for Early Childhood in 2014. Today, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet maintains a focus on early childhood as the key moment of intervention to have the greatest impact on children’s lives.

Over the past two years, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet has continued to take an increasingly cohesive approach to CIF fund management by addressing early childhood care and education as a system, rather than a collection of individual programs. Recommendations are intended to increase investment in the early childhood care and education system, streamline funding, and create a more sustainable plan for the future.

### *Recommendations include*

1. Adopting a **two-year transfer approach** that allows for strategic investment decisions and balances the risks associated with one-time funding increases for local programs.
2. Creating a line item within the CIF for **Early Childhood Infrastructure** to support the long-term vision of the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan while helping the Kansas Children’s Cabinet fulfill its role as a connector and its statutory responsibilities as the coordinating entity for the early childhood system in Kansas.
3. Creating a line item in the CIF to support the Kansas Children’s Cabinet in its role as statewide sponsor of Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library.

## Budget Recommendations

Transfer \$5,311,851 from the KEY Fund ending balance to the CIF in FY24 and \$5,444,473 in FY25 for targeted investments. The proposed budget below represents the FY24 recommendation, which builds on the statutory increase (102.5% from previous year or \$1,311,851) by adding installment one of a two-year plan.

### Human Services | Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF)

CIF PROGRAM	FY23 ACTUAL	RECOMMENDED INCREASE	FY24 RECOMMENDATION
Child Care Services*	\$5,033,679		\$5,033,679
Family Preservation	\$3,241,062		\$3,241,062
<b>DCF Total</b>	<b>\$8,274,741</b>		<b>\$8,274,741</b>

### Human Services | Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE)

Healthy Start Home Visitor	\$1,650,000		\$1,650,000
Kansas Early Childhood Developmental Services*	\$5,800,000		\$5,800,000
Smoking Prevention Grants	\$1,001,960		\$1,001,960
SIDS Network Grant	\$96,374	\$25,732	\$122,106
<b>KDHE Total</b>	<b>\$8,548,334</b>		<b>\$8,574,066</b>
<b>Human Services Total</b>	<b>\$16,823,075</b>		<b>\$16,848,807</b>

### Education | Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE)

Kansas Children's Cabinet Accountability Fund	\$375,000		\$375,000
CIF Grants (ECBG)	\$20,729,848	\$2,985,782	\$23,715,630
Parent Education (PAT)	\$8,437,635	\$1,300,337	\$9,737,972
Pre-K Pilot Program**	\$4,200,000		\$4,200,000
Early Childhood Infrastructure	\$1,400,773		\$1,400,773
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library	\$500,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,500,000
<b>Education Total</b>	<b>\$35,643,256</b>		<b>\$41,929,375</b>
State Employee Pay Plan	\$7,739		\$0
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$52,474,070</b>	<b>\$5,311,851</b>	<b>\$57,778,182</b>

\*Denotes programs with a Maintenance of Effort requirement

\*\*Denotes programs with a Match requirement

## Home Visiting Recommendation

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet recognizes the importance of home visiting within the system of early childhood services, and the nine home visiting models held in different state agencies provide unique support to families. The State Home Visiting Leadership Team should provide an initial proposal for a more aligned approach to funding these multiple home visiting models.

### ➤ Update

By April 2023, the State Home Visiting Leadership Team will develop an informal proposal to build a more aligned approach to home visiting, with sections on governance, funding, and services. To support this proposal, the Leadership Team has asked the Center for Public Partnerships and Research to collect additional information from home visiting programs to determine current services, gaps, and total operating costs across funding sources and models. Work is ongoing.

## Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library Recommendations

Create a Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library Advisory Committee to assist the Kansas Children’s Cabinet in its role as the state lead for Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library.

Give the Kansas Children’s Cabinet statutory authority to create a 501c3 nonprofit “Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library of Kansas” in order to meet the requirements set forth by The Dollywood Foundation.

### ➤ Update

A state level advisory committee was established in August 2022. The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to assist the Kansas Children’s Cabinet in activities related to promoting, growing, and sustaining an Imagination Library of Kansas. The Advisory Committee is providing input on the formation of a 501c3 nonprofit foundation and identifying opportunities for growing private sector support for the program. Membership includes representatives of the business sector, philanthropy, elected officials, and interested Kansas Children’s Cabinet members.



## Early Literacy Recommendation

Support the Every Child Can Read Act third grade literacy policy goal and the Kansans Can vision for public education goal of kindergarten readiness by increasing investments in programs that support the Kansas Early Childhood Blueprint vision which says, “All children will have their basic needs met and have equitable access to quality early childhood care and education opportunities, so they are prepared to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.” Pages 81-82 catalogue actions for consideration by the Governor, the Kansas legislature, school districts, families, and employers.

## Actions to Promote Childhood Literacy

### *Governor and Kansas Legislature*

The Governor and Kansas Legislature can take several actions to improve access to early childhood care and education and ensure that all Kansas children can read:

1. Match the investment in the CIF Initiatives from the State General Fund to double the investment in the Early Childhood Care and Education System.
  - Kansas is home to 188,852 children ages birth to 5 (United States Census Bureau, 2020). The current CIF funding capacity of \$52,474,070 equates to \$278 per child. Matching the CIF investment using state general funds would increase the investment to \$107,571,842 or \$556 per child.
2. Meet the statutory requirement to fund 92% of excess costs for special education, leaving more of school districts’ general operating budget available to support early childhood initiatives.
3. Support initiatives and policies that contribute to economic security for families. 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.
  - Adopt policies that maximize Medicaid by expanding covered/billable services for children and families, the types of providers who qualify for reimbursement, and the settings where services can be provided.
  - Reduce eligibility barriers and administrative burdens so that more Kansas families can access concrete economic supports like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food assistance, and child care assistance.
  - Analyze the impact of current and future policies on funding, services, and programs specifically for underserved populations to help families improve access to basic supports.

### **Local School Districts**

Local school districts can take action to improve early learning and the transition into kindergarten:

4. Participate in Kansas Can Star Recognition Program.
5. Utilize the Kansas Early Childhood Advisory Council's Kindergarten Transitions Toolkit to support intentional, active community planning for transitions to kindergarten.
6. Prioritize quality preschool opportunities for children, as well as home visiting, family engagement, and educational programming for families, either through in-house programs or in partnership with local private providers.

### **Families**

Families can promote early literacy by:

7. Signing their eligible children (any child from birth to their 5th birthday) up for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.
8. Using 1-800-CHILDREN as a direct resource when they have questions or need specific services in their area.
9. Tracking their little one's development by getting familiar with the Center for Disease Control's Learn the Signs, Act Early milestones on their website or mobile app.

### **Employers**

Kansas employers should:

10. Adopt family friendly workplace policies to help support families with young children. These strategies are proven to increase recruitment, retention and productivity for employers as an added benefit. Examples include, but are not limited to:
  - Flexible work schedules and/or hybrid or remote work
  - Paid parental leave and sick leave
  - Comprehensive employee wellness programs
  - Continued breastfeeding and lactation support
  - Infants at work programs, on-site or subsidized child care, and dependent care flexible spending accounts
11. Take advantage of the Child Day Care Business Tax Credit, which has been expanded to make eligible all Kansas businesses that provide child care for employees or help employees pay for child care.

### **Supporting Dual Language Learners**

To support dual language learners, early childhood care and education providers should:

12. Help connect families to resources available in their home language. Examples include:
  - 1-800-CHILDREN online resources available in over 200 different languages, and personnel available to provide support in Spanish and multiple other languages for callers.

- Dolly Parton's Imagination Library publishes two Spanish/English bilingual titles per age group each year and the web-based resources can be translated into Spanish.
  - Kindergarten in Kansas handbooks for families available in six languages on the Kansas State Department of Education website.
13. Make a point of introducing and explaining vocabulary during activities and while reading out loud.
  14. Provide ongoing commentary on activities taking place to expose children to language within context.
  15. Encourage families to read, sing, and play games with their children in their home language: early literacy skills transfer to second language and provide a strong foundation for learning in English.
  16. Make efforts to provide bilingual or multilingual education as appropriate to the community served:
    - Incorporate songs, stories, and other materials in children's home language(s) into the care environment.
    - Hire staff who reflect children's language and culture.
    - Invite parents and community members to contribute to children's education through materials and activities suggestions and visits to the care environment.
    - Invite parents and community members to contribute to children's education through materials and activities suggestions and visits to the care environment.



## Basic Needs Recommendation

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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 Kansas Children's 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 comprehensive, statewide 2019 Needs Assessment and 2020 and 2021 Needs Assessment Update document these concerns.

## Child Care Subsidy Recommendation

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Contribute State General Fund dollars to fully draw down matching Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds from the federal level.

## Data-driven Decision Making Recommendation

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The Kansas Children's Cabinet, representing the best interests of children, recommends that the best available data and evidence-based research drive decisions about regulations safeguarding the health and wellbeing of children.

## Early Childhood Core Competencies Recommendation

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The Kansas Children's Cabinet, in its role as the Kansas Early Childhood Advisory Council, recommends Kansas adapt the Nebraska Core Competencies for use by the Kansas early childhood workforce, professional development organizations, and higher education.



## Conclusion

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Early childhood care and education services have far too long been narrowly conceived as an issue affecting parents of young children. However, living in pandemic times has illuminated our collective reliance on Kansas children having a safe place to be, getting age-appropriate education, and families getting the support they need. We all bear the costs when this doesn't happen. Child care is the backbone of an effective economy, and we know that investing in a more functional and equitable system would yield enormous dividends in labor, productivity, and childhood development.

If there's a silver lining to the pandemic for the child care industry, it's that more of us now understand the importance of high-quality care and education. There is consensus that such a significant, multifaceted issue like child care is not going to be solved with a single approach.

We have an opportunity to apply a myriad of innovative solutions, at both the system level and within our communities, and, in doing so, can make great strides in "fixing child care" for good. The Kansas Children's Cabinet continues developing and implementing solutions alongside families and community leaders, with state agency collaboration and researcher insights.

Whether responding to the developmental importance of the early years, the economic case for early childhood investment, or concerns of inequity in child care access, we continue to double down on our dedication to remain *All In For Kansas Kids*. We are learning from each other and know we must act with the urgency and foresight that our children's futures deserve.

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