

Kansas Children's Cabinet

The Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund comprises leaders from the private and public sectors with a shared commitment to the well-being of children and families. The Kansas Children's Cabinet is directed by statute to undertake these four overarching responsibilities:

- Advising the governor and the legislature regarding the use of money credited to the Children's Initiatives Fund
- Evaluating programs which use Children's Initiatives Fund money
- Assisting the governor in developing and implementing a coordinated, comprehensive delivery system to serve children and families in Kansas
- Supporting the prevention of child abuse and neglect

With a singular focus on meeting the needs of Kansas children, the Kansas Children's Cabinet is uniquely positioned to nimbly address system challenges and foster innovative thinking regarding funding and service provision.

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.



Key Issues



Importance of Early Childhood

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, economic growth, and literacy in grade school.



Workforce Elevation

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 is happening on multiple fronts.



Community Focus

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.



Statewide Alignment

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.



Support for Businesses

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 to help amplify business involvement in child care solutions.



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 promoting the well-being of children and families. 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 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

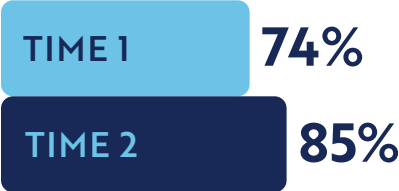


Early Childhood Block Grant

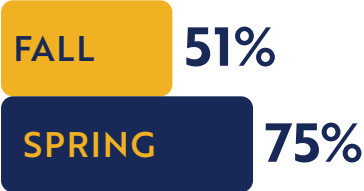
Focusing on the critical years between birth and kindergarten, the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) funds community initiatives providing services to at-risk children ages 0-5 and their families. Local public-private partnerships are encouraged to maximize resources, foster innovation, and avoid duplication of services. In 2022, ECBG served over 6,500 children and nearly 6,000 caregivers across 67 counties.



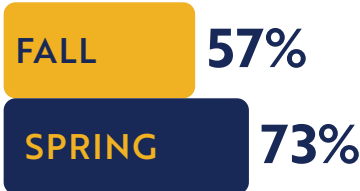
Children on track in social-emotional well-being



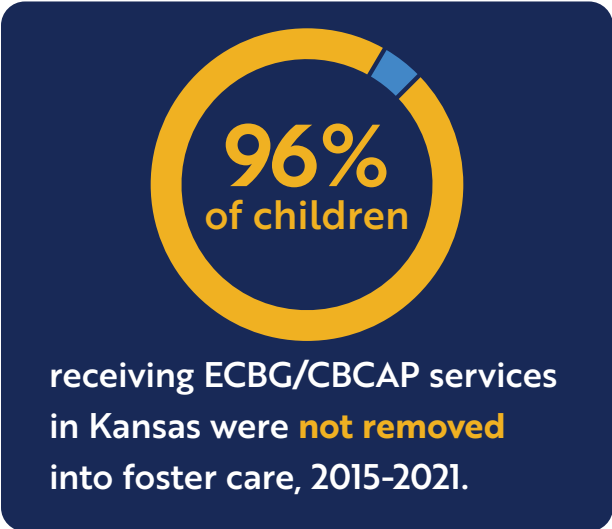
Children on track in language comprehension



Children on track in numeracy



ECBG services **reduced** the likelihood of removals into foster care by **23%**.



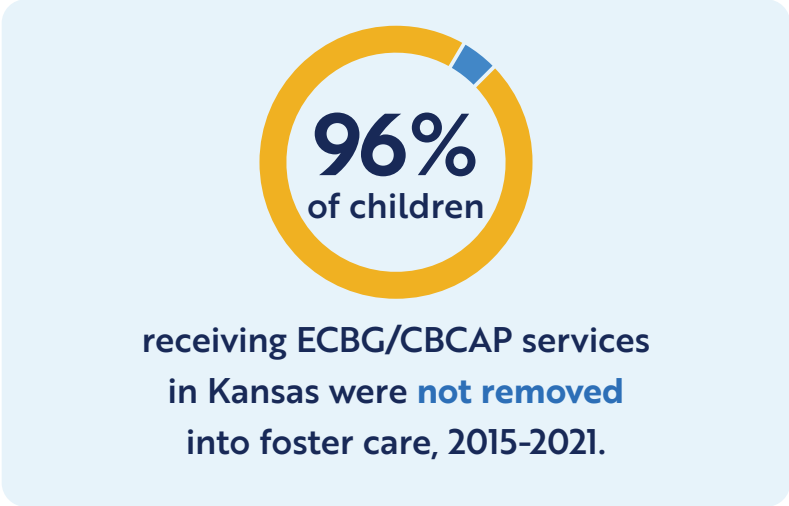
Parents displaying positive parenting interactions



Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust

An innovative new data set made possible by the Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust links Kansas Children’s Cabinet early childhood data to Department for Children and Families data on removals into foster care.

Early childhood services act as a protective factor against removal into foster care and **reduced** the likelihood of removals into foster care by **23%**.



\$17,564,095
Estimated cost avoidance for the **181 children** from 2015-2021 who likely would have been removed into foster care, but weren’t due to ECBG/CBCAP services.

Cost avoidance estimate based on

- \$9,817,476 Foster Care
- \$4,797,043 Healthcare
- \$1,622,303 Special Education
- \$1,327,273 Criminal Justice

Estimate based on \$2,279 average per month cost of foster care for 23.8 month length of stay (DCF), \$26,503 for healthcare due to maltreatment (CDC), \$8,963 for special education costs (CDC), and \$7,333 for criminal justice costs (CDC).



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

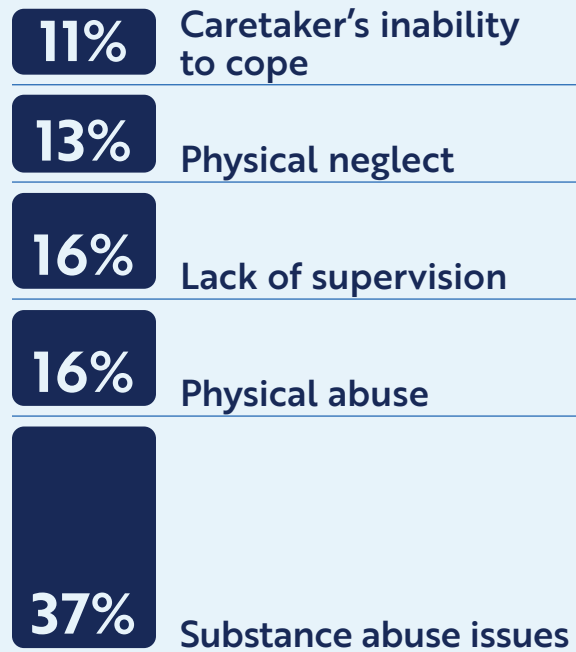
Parent-centered services include:

- 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.**



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 following recommendations are intended to increase investment in the system, streamline funding, and create conditions for a sustained, thriving future.

Increasing 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 investments made through the CIF and blunt the efficacy of early childhood care and education programs.

Contributing State General Fund dollars to fully draw down matching Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds from the federal level, increasing the amount available for child care subsidy.

Child Care Assistance (CCA) supports families who are living at or below 250% of the federal poverty level. CCA provides families with a subsidy to finance child care while parents work, attend school, complete a GED, or fill a temporary emergency. The program increases Kansas families' access to high-quality child care environments.

Driving decisions about regulations safeguarding the health and wellbeing of children using the best available data and evidence-based research.

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. The aim of these data analysis efforts is to establish which interventions lead to meaningful and lasting change.

Establishing statutory authority to create a 501c3 nonprofit, "Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Kansas" to meet the requirements set forth by The Dollywood Foundation.

A state-level advisory committee was established in August 2022 to assist the Kansas Children's Cabinet in promoting, growing, and sustaining an Imagination Library of Kansas. The Advisory Committee will provide input on the formation of a nonprofit and is identifying opportunities for growing private sector support for the program.

Supporting 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 Blueprint for Early Childhood.

Recommended actions to support this vision are available on the Kansas Children's Cabinet website and include actions by the governor and Kansas legislature, local school districts, families, and employers.

