

KANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD RECOMMENDATIONS PANEL

Monthly Meeting Minutes
Friday, December 20, 2024



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

Members Present

Nichelle Adams, Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF)
Dana Book, Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL)
Jarvis Doleman, Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE)
Teresa Houston, Envision Inc.
Bronwyn Fees, Kansas State University
Janine Foth, Cougar Cubs Daycare USD 397 Centre
Kelly Frantz-Langford, TARC
Amy Gottschamer, Googols of Learning Child Development Center
Cathy Gray, Butler Community College
Kim Kennedy, Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF)
Hilary Koehn, Kansas Parents as Teachers Association (KPATA)
Malissa Martin, SparkWheel, Inc.
Natalie McClane, Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE)
Patty Peschel, Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities (KCCTO)
Bethany Samuel, Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF)
Heather Schrotberger, Kansas Head Start Association
Natalie Sollo, Kansas Head Start Association

Cornelia Stevens, Chair, TOP Early Learning Centers
Marie Treichel, Kansas Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (KAIMH)
Christie Wyckoff, Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund
Jeanneret Lisa, DCF
Talia Juiliano-Myers, Child Care Aware of Eastern KS
Mandi Waugh, Child Start, Inc.
Stephanie Waterman, Geary County Schools USD 475
Lisa Schmidt, Women's Community Y
Lisa Gehring, Plainville Jr/Sr High School
Larry Lewis, Growing Futures Early Education Center
Karen MacCroy, Mitchell County Partnership for Children
Brenda Bandy, Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc.

Minutes

Welcome

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

December Meeting Agenda

Natalie McClane moved to approve the agenda. Brenda Bandy seconded the motion, and the agenda was approved unanimously.

November 15, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Cathy Gray moved to approve the November minutes. Bronwyn Fees seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously as presented.

Kansans' Open Forum - Written and Verbal Comments

Kansans are encouraged to submit comments through the [Kansans' Open Forum Comment Form](#) by 5:00pm the day preceding each meeting to share written comments or to sign up to share verbal comments with the Panel during this portion of the meeting.

All in For Kansas Kids Strategic Plan Progress Update

Cornelia Stevens introduced Megan Kluth, Research Project Manager at KU-CPPR, who provided an update on the All in for Kansas Kids Strategic Plan as well information about the Preschool Development Grant. She highlighted the plan's focus on co-creating indicators of success with families and ensuring ongoing progress sharing across systems.

Meghan also discussed initiatives under the Preschool Development Grant, including health insurance support for childcare professionals, navigation assistance, and various training programs. She emphasized the importance of collaboration and input from the panel to ensure the plan is inclusive and truly reflects the needs of families. Below are some key highlights from the presentation.

2025 Plans:

- Co-create indicators of success with families: Collaborate with families to define what quality means and how success should be measured (e.g. how do families define quality?)
- System-wide dissemination of progress: Ensure progress is communicated broadly across the system.
- Collaboration opportunities: Explore opportunities to work with the Systems Progress Communication work group.
- Tracking and communication of progress: Develop effective methods to track progress and keep people informed, ensuring they feel connected to the work.

Preschool Development Grant Updates:

- Child care professional health insurance support: Applications open January 1, 2025, to provide health insurance support for child care professionals.
- Specialized care trainings: Trainings focused on mental health, service provider collaboration, and special health care needs.
- Regional care conferences: Scheduled for spring 2025 to address local care needs.
- Cape Portal: Implementation and development of the Cape Portal.
- Needs Assessment Gap Analyses – Rural Care Needs: Conduct gap analyses to assess and address rural care needs.

Opportunities to Collaborate:

- Promote opportunities: Support promotion of training, resources, and other opportunities within professional networks.
- Stay connected to AIFKK Strategic Plan and PDG funded work: Ensure alignment with the AIFKK Strategic Plan and PDG initiatives and share information across the system and with families.

For a detailed breakdown of the information presented by Meghan Kluth in this section, please refer to the December Early Childhood Recommendations Panel, timestamp: [8:09 – 30:05](#). If you have any questions, feel free to contact Meghan Kluth at mkluth@ku.edu.

Office of Rural Prosperity

Cornelia Stevens introduced Trisha Purdon and Kerri Falletti from the [Office of Rural Prosperity](#), along with Sara Bloom from the Quality Places Division of the Kansas Department of Commerce, who provided an overview of their departments and other agencies addressing child-related initiatives. Trisha discussed their rural-focused programs aimed at supporting childcare. Below are some key highlights from the presentation.

[Power Up and GO report](#)

- Identified the lack of quality childcare as a barrier to retaining young people in rural Kansas.
- Emphasized the need for better coordination among state programs, regulations, advocacy efforts, and providers, as well as the importance of elevating teachers and providers in rural communities.

Impact of Lack of Quality Childcare:

- The shortage of quality childcare in rural Kansas is preventing young people from taking jobs or starting families, potentially driving them away from rural areas. The lack of childcare options is hindering economic development efforts focused on job growth. When combined with housing shortages, it undermines the viability and appeal of rural living.

Improving Coordination of State Programs and Support:

- Coordination of Programs, Regulations, Advocacy, and Providers: Focus on improving coordination between state programs, regulations, advocacy efforts, and providers to create a more streamlined system.
- Elevating Teachers and Providers: Emphasize the importance of elevating the role of teachers and providers within the system.
- Training and Supporting Local Champions: Train and support local champions by considering the use of the Skilled KC Technical Institute model for rapid-response training. This will help local champions understand and navigate systemic challenges more effectively.

2023 Rural Childcare Champions



Susie Swanson
Grow Clay County



Rebecca Nedland
Oberlin USD 294



Dalila Boys
Dodge City/Ford County

Amy Wallace - Kingman County

- Above is a snapshot of the 2023 [Rural Childcare Champions](#) who were honored based on the recommendations from the Power Up and Go report. Rural Champions Program Success and Challenges
- Trisha provided information about the Rural Champions program, which addresses systemic challenges in rural communities. The program funded part-time positions focused on local needs, with childcare being the primary focus in the first cohort. Successes included the creation of a new childcare center in Clay County and increased capacity for licensed home facilities in Dodge City. Challenges included finding contractors, zoning issues, and community negativity.
- The program also offered technical assistance, training, and multilingual support. Trisha concluded by mentioning ongoing projects in Kingman County and the potential for expansion. To learn more about the honorees and more about insight

on this opportunity, please check out the timestamps to hear the Office of Rural Prosperity's presentations. [32:32 – 53:02](#).

Commerce Programs and Community Grants

Trisha discussed several programs at Commerce supporting childcare, including the TEFFI Seed Program, #RuralbybyChoice Champions, and Heal – Building or Façade Grants. She also mentioned the Love Kansas initiative, which recruits people back to the state by highlighting the benefits of living in Kansas.

Sara Bloom, the Quality Places Manager at the Kansas Department of Commerce's Office of Rural Prosperity, CDBG, and Kansas Main Street and Broadband Development (all part of one umbrella), provided an update on the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which supports low- to moderate-income individuals and families. She explained that childcare facilities can apply for up to \$650,000 or \$800,000, depending on community size, for construction or renovations. Sara also highlighted the Community Service Program (CSP) Tax Credits.

Sara and Trisha encouraged attendees to utilize these resources and stay in touch. For a detailed breakdown of the information presented in this section, please refer to the December Early Childhood Recommendations Panel, timestamp: [30:11-1:09:49](#).

[Kansas Child & Family Well-Being Pathway](#)

Cornelia Stevens introduced Jenny Welch Buller, Research Project Manager at CPPR, who provided an update on the Kansas Child and Family Well-being Pathway. She outlined the development of county-level strength-based indicators by domain and requested help identifying Kansas' bright spots tied to these indicators.

Jenny led a discussion on developing a website focused on community well-being, inviting ideas and examples from the group for each domain. She emphasized celebrating successes to inspire others.

- The group shared initiatives like community baby showers, story walks, and accessible playgrounds. Jenny also mentioned a link for regular idea submissions. The discussion highlighted the interconnectedness of domains in promoting well-being and the importance of accessible resources and community connections.
- Great discussions and examples were shared. If you would like to hear more about this open discussion, please refer to the December Early Childhood Recommendations Panel, timestamp: [1:10:10-1:44:32](#).

Work Group Reports

Cornelia Stevens introduced a representative from each work group to provide an update on the work they have done since last month's meeting.

Family Friendly Workplaces

Brenda Bandy spoke on behalf of their group.

- Update: Discussed the progress of the family-friendly workplaces work group. They are considering the components of an employer designation and researching other states and national organizations that have created similar designations. They plan to meet with the developers of the North Carolina Family Forward Designation in early January.

Workforce: Exit Interviews

Natalie McClane spoke on behalf of their group.

Update: Shared that they are refining the draft exit interview and exploring opportunities to leverage data from the workforce survey to further refine the tool. Moving forward, the group plans to involve research and evaluation experts to discuss how this effort might fit into CAPE.

Workforce: Mental Health Supports

Hillary Koehn spoke on behalf of their group.

- Update: Stephanie Parks, the Associate Director at KCCTO, discussed the findings from the statewide workforce study. The Mental Health Supports workgroup will review policy briefs from the study, including one focused on well-being.

Workforce: Targeted Journey Recruitment

Amy Gottschamer spoke on behalf of their group.

- Update: Discussed their efforts to connect with agencies, such as KSDE Career and Technical Education, to explore programs offering recruitment for high school students. They are hoping to have Stephanie Parks speak to the group about the Early Childhood Workforce Study and to explore the possibility of having someone discuss the Career Navigators program. The discussion also highlighted the need for stories to illustrate some of the barriers to workforce recruitment. The goal for this meeting is to focus and align efforts to streamline their approach.

System Progress Communications

Kelly Frantz-Langford spoke on behalf of their group.

- Update: They shared that they are focusing on existing groups and forums addressing early childhood issues in Kansas. The Systems Progress Communications group will create an inventory of these early childhood groups and forums.

Bright Spots:

Cornelia Stevens opened the floor for panel members to share any updates and highlight bright spots.

- Natalie McClane announced that 25 Kansas Parents as Teachers programs received a Blue Ribbon endorsement, and the Kansas State Department of Education is accepting applications for the Kansas Preschool Pilot Grant.
- Brenda Bandy shared that Kansas received funding from the Pritzker's Children's Initiative to support a paid family and medical leave education campaign. Panel members interested in the paid family and medical leave education campaign to contact Brenda Bandy for more information.

Upcoming Meetings: (all via Zoom)

- Early Childhood Recommendations Panel meeting – Friday, January 17, 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
- Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund meeting – Friday, February 7, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.