

KANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD RECOMMENDATIONS PANEL

Monthly Meeting Minutes
Friday, March 28, 2025



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

Members Present

Nichelle Adams, Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF)
Marites Altuna, Kansas State School for the Blind
Mallory Arellano, Newman University
Brenda Bandy, Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc.
Dana Book, Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL)
Jarvis Doleman, Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE)
Kerri Falletti, KDC-Office of Rural Prosperity
Tabatha Rosproy, Kansas Parent Information Resource Center
Janine Foth, Cougar Cubs Daycare USD 397 Centre
Kelly Frantz-Langford, TARC
Holly Frye, Kansas Department for Health and Environment (KDHE)
Amy Gottschamer, Googols of Learning Child Development Center
Cathy Gray, Butler Community College
Kim Kennedy, Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF)
Leigh Anne Neal, Shawnee Mission School District
Malissa Martin, SparkWheel, Inc.
Natalie McClane, Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE)

Stephanie Wiggins, KCCTO Infant-Toddler Specialist Network
Bethany Samuel, Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF)
Amber Wheeler, USD 258
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
Lisa Jeanneret, DCF
Karen MacCrory, Mitchell County Partnership for Children
Bronwyn Fees, Kansas State University & KCCTO
Cheisa Myles, Blessed Assurance Daycare
Patty Peschel, KCCTO
Larry Lewis, Growing Futures Early Education Center
Heather Schrotberger, Kansas Head Start Association
Hilary Koehn, Kansas Parents as Teachers Association (KPATA)
Lisa Gehring, Plainville Jr/Sr High School

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.

2025 Early Childhood Governance Summit Recap

To view the Governance Summit Presentation via YouTube [February, 21 2025 - Early Childhood Governance Summit](#). Additionally, if you would like to view the list of presenters [Early Childhood Governance Summit Summary](#).

- John Wilson, Kansas Action for Children, provided a legislative update on early childhood issues in Kansas, covering key bills and the budget process.
- Melissa Rooker, Executive Director, Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund, welcomed everyone to the 4th Annual Governance Summit for the Early Childhood Care and Education System sponsored by the Early Childhood Recommendations Panel.
- This year there were 13 Early Childhood Governance Group Presentations

March Meeting Agenda

Marites Altuna moved to approve the agenda. Lisa Gehring seconded the motion, and the agenda was approved unanimously.

January 17, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Cathy Gray moved to approve the January minutes. Natalie McClane 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. This month, we received a submission to the Kansans' Open Forum from Grethen Shanahan:

"iPads (screens) have no place in the early childhood setting. Any benefits routes come from those who have a stake in the success of EdTech rather than the children. I'm happy to recommend various books that explain this. I've been a parent who has been studying this since 2018 and if you look behind the curtain all roads lead to industry profit while children become more sedentary and more dependent on digital media to give them information and entertainment. Parents and caregivers have been deceived and need ongoing education to counter the marketing and false claims made by industry (EdTech is Big tech in sheep's clothing). Our family is currently in a class action lawsuit against an EdTech company. Many claim the data they collect is deidentified but they own many apps and platforms (buying up

other companies) and then they sell data to data brokers (for advertisers). Data brokering is ENORMOUSly profiting off our children's data and then identity resolution companies re-identify the data to the child creating a dossier on a student. This is seriously unethical but society at large is uninformed. The harms are still unknown beyond this. Data and privacy are but only one harm to our children."

After presenting this submission, the panel had an opportunity to discuss their thoughts and had the chance to provide feedback. More context from that discussion can be found between 6:36-12:43 at the following link: [March 28, 2025 - Early Childhood Recommendations Panel Meeting](#)

All in For Kansas Kids Strategic Plan Progress Update

Cornelia Stevens introduced Meghan Kluth, Research Project Manager at KU-CPPR, who provided an update on the All in For Kansas Kids Strategic Plan. Her presentation offered an opportunity to share several key updates and highlight upcoming events related to early childhood initiatives across Kansas. Notably, Meghan announced a series of upcoming regional care and well-being conferences focused on early childhood mental health, along with new training opportunities for childcare providers centered on best practices in mental health support.

An update was provided on the Preschool Development Grant, including details about the Child Care Zones initiative.

- Second round of applications due August 25
- Technical assistance available starting in mid-April

Additionally, more information was shared regarding upcoming regional roundtables focused on child care. CC-SIT Child Care Licensing – Child Care Regional Roundtable Event

- May 20th at 6:30-8:00pm
- Location: Garden City
- Flyer: [Garden City Regional Roundtable Flyer](#)

Future Fellows Early Childhood Cohort - Application Coming Soon

The *Future Fellows* program, led by CPPR, has been running for several years and will soon launch its next cohort. This upcoming group will specifically focus on individuals working within the early childhood system. Participants from across the state will come together over the course of several months to engage in collaborative training, peer learning, and the exploration of innovative practices. A key element of the program is the application of futures thinking to participants' day-to-day work in the field.

Currently, the application process for the program is in development. The hope is that by the next meeting, the application will be live. Once it's ready, it will be shared with Lindsay

to ensure it gets distributed widely. There is optimism about seeing strong interest from the early childhood community once the application is released.

Upcoming Opportunities and Resources

Regional care conferences will be held on May 6 (Garden City) and May 8 (Hays) - flyers coming soon.

- These events are free and open to the public. Please share with your network.
- Mental health best practices coaching and consultation available for Kansas child care providers. Contact bailey@mindfulminisdaycare.com to learn more.

The panel was encouraged to help promote these opportunities and events to ensure broad participation across the state. For a detailed breakdown of the information presented by Meghan Kluth in this section, please refer to the March Early Childhood Recommendations Panel, timestamp: [12:49 – 24:03](#). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Meghan Kluth at mkluth@ku.edu.

Kansas Legislative Wrap-up

Cornelia Stevens introduced John Wilson from Kansas Action for Children, who provided an update on the Kansas legislative session. He noted that the session is not fully wrapped up yet, as there are still some lingering issues. The legislature is scheduled to reconvene on April 10th to consider veto overrides and continue work on any remaining bills.

John also discussed the proposed creation of the Office of Early Childhood, which would consolidate several programs and services into a single state agency. The bill is currently in a conference committee and may still be worked on through the end of the session. He also highlighted other key bills related to telehealth services, child tax credits, and the elimination of the affordable housing tax credit. In terms of the state budget, John noted that it is smaller than last year's and includes across-the-board cuts. However, he pointed out some early childhood-focused investments, including funding for the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas Child Care Center Partnership and the Sunflower Summer Program.

For more information about the Kansas legislative wrap-up including the most up-to-date child care/early learning bills, economic security, health, and budget legislation shared please refer to the March Early Childhood Recommendations Panel meeting, timestamp: [23:08 – 41:51](#).

Model of Lived Expert Engagement for Systems Change

Cornelia Stevens introduced Dr. Kaela Byers, Associate Director at KU-CPPR, who presents a model for engaging lived experts in systems change. The model includes five core components: cohort structure, mechanisms of accountability, equity-based compensation, shared and conferred power, and low barrier entry.

Dr. Byers emphasized the importance of authentic partnership with lived experts, highlighting that programs co-designed with them are more effective and aligned with community needs. She provided examples of how this model has led to impactful changes

in Kansas, including shaping service arrays, revising policies, and influencing decision-making processes in child welfare and early childhood support systems.

Call to Action Opportunity:

EARLY CHILDHOOD RECOMMENDATION PANEL LIVED EXPERT MEMBER RECRUITMENT

Request: Recruit Lived experts for Panel membership

Eligibility: Parent of a child currently receiving services from the State

Term: July 1 – June 30

Stipend:

- \$40 per monthly Panel meeting (\$15/hour for ~ 2.5 hours)
- Child care stipend up to \$50 per day for weekend meetings and meetings held outside school day

Panel Call to Action



Recruitment for lived expert members of the Recommendations Panel will be opening soon. This recruitment is for the upcoming term, and eligibility is limited to parents of a child currently receiving services from the state. Panel members are encouraged to help identify and recruit individuals who may be interested in serving. A stipend is available for members, which includes payment for attendance at each meeting as well as reimbursement for child care expenses incurred during meeting times.

Work Group Reports

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

Family Friendly Workplaces

Dana Book spoke on behalf of their group.

- Update: The team has been very active in advancing the development of a recognition program for employers who implement family-friendly workplace policies. This idea originated from feedback received through past survey responses. A recognition framework already exists in some form, but efforts are now focused on refining the criteria employers would need to meet in order to be recognized. The group has conducted significant research into similar programs.

- A draft set of recommendations has been developed and will serve as the foundation for further refinement. The group is in the process of identifying key criteria and bullet points to include in the final recognition framework. As a related update, the Department of Commerce has agreed to implement the survey, with a planned launch next week. This is a significant milestone

Workforce: Exit Interviews

Stephanie Wiggins spoke on behalf of their group.

- Update: The group has met again since the last full panel meeting, with a continued focus on key areas of interest. The team has drafted materials with a data-focused lens and was able to make edits and changes based on feedback received. In addition, they met with key stakeholders to gather a broader range of perspectives. Looking ahead, the group plans to develop a formal recommendation over the next couple of months. Overall, the work is on track and good progress is being made.

Workforce: Mental Health Supports

Hilary Koehn spoke on behalf of their group.

- Update: The group has been working to narrow its scope based on conversations and data shared through the workforce study. Recent discussions have focused on identifying three key systems where targeted efforts could have a more significant impact. These areas include: affordable and accessible substitute services, reflective supervision, including both training and implementation support, and mental health therapy services.
- Group briefly met following last month's Summit to continue this discussion. The next steps include reviewing the shared board where committee members have prioritized their ideas and input. This review will help guide the group's focus and determine the direction for future work.

Workforce: Targeted Journey Recruitment

Amy Gottschamer spoke on behalf of their group.

- Update: Shared that the Recruitment group is struggling with having too broad a focus, often overlapping with work already being done by other groups, such as compensation, benefits, and mental health. This has led to discussions about whether the group should take on a broader, coordinating role or redefine its focus entirely. While their efforts support recruitment and retention, they don't fall squarely within the group's domain. A clearer path forward may be to focus on helping individuals enter and stay engaged in the field by fostering connection, pride, and professional identity.

System Progress Communications

Kelly Frantz-Langford spoke on behalf of their group.

- Update: The group identified an action item to build an inventory of workgroups and entities across the state involved in early childhood. The goal is to better understand who these groups represent and how communication flows among them. The

inventory is now close to being finalized, though it will remain a living document. After the recent Summit, the group was able to fill in many of the existing gaps. The group plans to discuss potential next steps, including whether and how the inventory should be shared and what that process might look like moving forward.

2025-2026 Panel Application

The Early Childhood Recommendations Panel is accepting applications for new members from April 1st to May 2nd for a one-year term starting July 1, 2025. Lindsay Orian provides guidance on how to access information and apply through the Children's Cabinet Trust Fund website. We encourage current members to reapply and to share the opportunity with colleagues who might be interested in shaping early childhood initiatives in Kansas. The application process is straightforward and includes providing basic contact information and a short bio.

Summary of Requirements:

- Open to any Kansan interested in serving on the working group for the Kansas Early Childhood Advisory Council, known as the Early Childhood Recommendations Panel.
- Accepting applications April 1 through May 2, 2025
- One year term – July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026
- Panel members encouraged to re-apply and share with others
- Visit the [Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund Website](#) to learn more

Bright Spots

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

- Hilary Koehn shared that the Home Visiting Program Day, held on March 5th, was a successful event with all programs from the State Home Visiting Leadership Team represented. The event focused on informing and educating, featuring a presentation to the Early Learning Caucus about home visiting models. A parent and educator also shared their experiences, highlighting the impact of home visiting services in Kansas.
- Bronwyn Fees shared about the announcement of a new conference developed through a four-state collaboration, including Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, and Arkansas. The conference, called "OK PreK," is designed specifically for principals and administrators working with early childhood programs in public schools. The conference will take place in Branson, Missouri, from July 23-30. This event is focused on supporting educators and administrators in the public school system, with a particular emphasis on early childhood education. While this is the first conference and a bit of a pilot, it is currently targeted at public school administrators. However, it is open to anyone who finds the information relevant.
- Brenda Bandy: shared two bright spots.

- Paid Family and Medical Leave: The coalition is part of a statewide effort to establish a state-run Paid Family and Medical Leave program. Brenda encouraged individuals and organizations to join this coalition in support of the initiative, which would benefit families, including child care providers.
- First Friday Policy Updates: A reminder was given about the ongoing First Friday Policy Updates. The next update will be on May 2nd, featuring Melissa Rooker providing state policy updates. Additionally, Logan Stening from Zero to Thrive will provide updates on April 4th.
- Natalie McClane shared two bright spots.
 - On March 12th, the monthly All In for Kansas Kids webinar featured school districts sharing their experiences operating licensed child care facilities. Representatives from Southern Lyon County, Kingman-Norwich, and Satanta discussed bright spots and lessons learned. The recording is available on the Kansas Children's Cabinet website and is a helpful resource for districts considering on-site child care. For the 2025-2026 school year, all Kansas schools will have access to the ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2 tools, including Spanish versions. Printable questionnaires are also available.

Upcoming Meetings: (all via Zoom)

- Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund – Friday, April 4, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Early Childhood Recommendations Panel – Friday, April 18, 9:00 a.m. -11:30 a.m.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.