

# KANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD RECOMMENDATIONS PANEL

Monthly Meeting Minutes  
Friday, August 16, 2024



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

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## Members Present

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Nichelle Adams, DCF  
Marites Altuna, Kansas State  
School for the Blind  
Brenda Bandy, Kansas  
Breastfeeding Coalition, Inc.  
Jarvis Doleman, KDHE  
Kim Kennedy, DCF-HSCO  
Karen MacCroy, Mitchell County  
Partnership for Children  
Malissa Martin, Spark Wheel  
Natalie McClane, KSDE  
Lindsay Orion, KU CPPR  
Tabatha Rosproy, Kansas Parent  
Information Resource Center  
Heather Schrotberger, Kansas  
Head Start Association  
Christie Wyckoff, KCCTF  
Stephanie Wiggins, KCCTO  
Cathy Gray, Butler Community  
College  
Lisa Gehring, Plainville Jr/Sr High  
School  
Talia Juiliano-Myers, Child Care  
Aware of Eastern KS  
Stephanie Waterman, USD 475  
Geary County Schools

Sheila Bertelsen, Bright Beginnings  
- Dodge City Public Schools  
Kerri Falletti, KDC  
Marie Treichel, KAIMH  
Amy Gottschamer, Googols of  
Learning  
Kelly Frantz-Langford, TARC  
Patty Peschel, KCCTO  
Dr. Amber Wheeler, USD 258  
Humboldt Schools  
Natalie Sollo, KU School of  
Medicine-Wichita  
Larry Lewis, Growing Futures Early  
Education Center  
Teresa Houston, Envision, Inc.  
Charlotte Neuschafer, Russell Child  
Development Center  
Mandi Waugh, Child Start, Inc.  
Dr. Leigh Anne Neal, USD 512  
Shawnee Mission School District  
Tanya Koehn, Child Care Aware of  
Kansas

# Minutes

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## Welcome

Lindsay Orion called the meeting to order, with a quorum present. For the August 2024 Panel Meeting, the Chair Pro Tem will outline the processes for remote participation and direct attendees to the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund website for meeting materials.

## Chair Pro Tem

Lindsay Orion called the meeting to order, and a Chair Pro Tem was elected to preside over the meeting.

- Nomination for Chair Pro Tem: Brenda Bandy
- Marties Altuna moved to approve Brenda Bandy as Chair Pro Tem, and Natalie McClane seconded the motion. The nomination was approved unanimously.

## August Meeting Agenda

Dr. Amber Wheeler moved to approve the agenda. Leigh Anne Neal seconded the motion, and the agenda was approved unanimously.

## July 19, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Karen MacCrory moved to approve the July minutes. Lisa Gehring seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously as presented. Note: A correction was submitted to correct the spelling of Kris Nicholson's name.

## 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.

## Panel Member Support & Reflection

Brenda Bandy introduced Sara Garner, Assistant Director of KU-CPPR, who welcomed the 2024-2025 Early Childhood Recommendation Panel members. Sara Garner provided an overview of panel member support and responsibilities, explaining what it means to be a panel member. She also described how the team at KU-CPPR offer backbone support for the Kansas Children's Cabinet and assist with all preschool development grant-funded activities.

### **A Word of System Change:**

The panel is distinct from other governance groups because it focuses on the broad system. The diversity of the group's subject matter and expertise is considered a strength. Systemic change often requires time to yield visible results.

Panel Member Reflections:

Being a panel member involves understanding and engaging with the broad system perspective. Here are some tips and considerations for listening to presentations and evaluating the challenges or updates provided:

- Reflect on the early childhood-related landscape around you.
  - What issues/challenges are you seeing within your work?
  - What issues/challenges are you seeing within your community?
- Reflect on the 'Hats' you wear
  - Community Member Hat
  - Profession/Sector/Organization Role Hat
  - Passion/Know-How Hat
- Become familiar with the KS EC Governance Structure – it's alive!
  - Address things at the most appropriate level
  - Utilize the expertise within our system

### **Panel Member Suggestions:**

Below are some suggestions on how to approach and participate effectively in meetings:

- In-Meeting Suggestions
  - Elevate issues/challenges
  - Engage with presentations – Use your Hats!
  - Engage with your work groups – Use your Hats!
  - Set yourself up for between-meeting work
- Between-Meeting Suggestions
  - Be the bridge or connection point
  - Observe and listen for new ideas or issues
  - Use and share the SharePoint resources

### **Panel Member Supports**

SharePoint site – below are a list of supports that exist to help:

- Agendas and Notes
- Prior Workgroup Notes and Resources
- Agenda/Resource Submission Form
- Governance Chart
- What else would you like here?
  - Fantastic opportunity for panel members to recommend additions or changes they'd like to see on the site. For more information, please refer to: [Early Childhood Recommendations Panel SharePoint](#)

### **All in for Kansas Kids Strategic Plan**

- This plan is a collection of the work of the entire system written into a document that helps clarify what's next and it's a 5 year strategic plan.

## **Post-Meeting Survey**

Note: A Post-Meeting Survey will be distributed this month to gather additional input from panel members. Participation is optional, but the feedback will help shape future panel meetings. The goal is to use the feedback collected to help shape the meeting spaces and determine the group's focus areas. Below are some of the questions that will be included in the survey.

- What part(s) of today's meeting did you enjoy? What level of relevance was the meeting information for you?
- What topics would you like to discuss in upcoming meetings?
  - Reflection Cheat Sheet: additional resource to gain information from panel members.

## **2024 Strategic Plan Overview**

Brenda Bandy reintroduced Sara Garner, Assistant Director of KU-CPPR, who then provided an overview of an additional component related to the 2024 Strategic Plan. For a more in-depth breakdown of all of the helpful information presented by Sara Gardner under this section please refer to the August Early Childhood Recommendations Panel timestamp: [26.08-41:13](#). Below is a snapshot of some of the topics that were discussed.

## **All In For Kansas Kids Strategic Plan**

- 5-year time horizon
  - Responsive to 2024 Needs Assessment
    - Considered entire system (programs and services)
    - How they are funded.
- Feedback and opportunities for input from governance groups and professionals in the field
- Deliverable for PDG B-5 Planning Grant (Awarded December 2022)
  - Stands for Preschool Development Grant. All about system building.
- Available Online
  - Children's Cabinet Website
  - AIFKK Website

## **Pathways to Action**

What are the different pathways to explore for taking action?

- State-Level Opportunities
  - EC Recommendations Panel
  - Family Leadership Team or Family First Advisory Board
  - Child Care Systems Improvement Team
  - State Home Visiting Leadership Team
  - Maternal Child Health Council

- Take Action Locally
  - Community-led Child Care Coalitions
  - Local Interagency Coordinating Councils
  - Family Resource Centers
  - Parent Engagement Groups
  - Local LiveWell or Healthy Community Groups
  - Local Chambers

### **Call to Action**

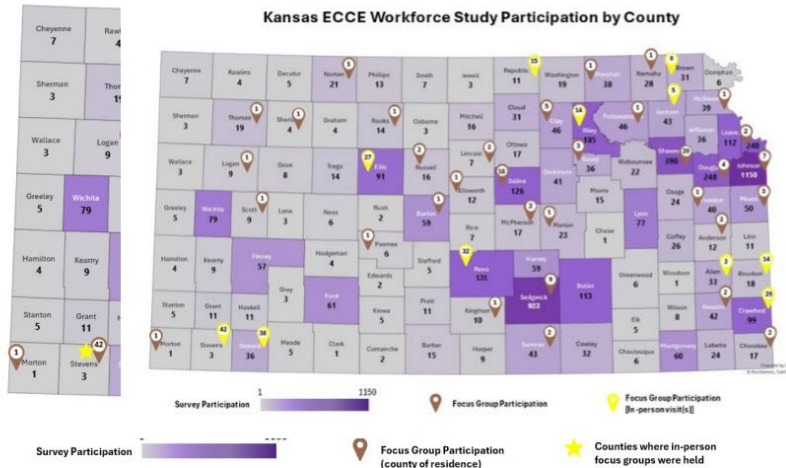
- Maximize Investments in Early Childhood
  - Establish/strengthen private sector partnerships
  - Utilize flexibility in federal funding to optimize impact (braiding sources to meet priority needs)
  - Make strategic, state-level investments that leverages local investments and boosts sustainability

### **Career Pathway Comprehensive Workforce Study**

Brenda Bandy introduced Stephanie Parks and Patty Peschel from Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities (KCCTO). Stephanie Parks, Associate Director at KCCTO, presented on the Career Pathway Comprehensive Workforce Study. This study, funded by federal recovery dollars through the Kansas Department for Children and Families and as part of the "All In For Kansas Kids" strategic plan, aimed to establish a baseline understanding of the Early Childhood Workforce. The study also involved collaboration with the Educational Innovation and Evaluation team at Kansas State University.

The study group sought insights from both current professionals and those who have left the Early Childhood care field. The study covered nearly 6,000 Early Childhood care professionals across all 105 counties in Kansas. For this meeting, the group focused on data from 4,696 individuals currently working in the field. Additionally, four key findings and potential recommendations were discussed. Below is a brief overview of these key findings.

## Kansas ECCE Workforce Study Participation by County



**39**  
Focus Groups

**5,623**  
Surveys Completed

**100%**  
Representation from  
Kansas Counties

### Supporting Partners



- **Key Finding #1 Recruitment**

- ECCE professionals enter the field because they are passionate about the work with children (overall rated 4.5 on a scale of 1 to 5).
- FCC professionals urgently need support, particularly in securing adequate salaries, benefits and retirement preparation, as many face retirement with minimal savings.

- **Key Finding #2 Compensation and Benefits**

- Low wages create severe hardships for the ECCE workforce and impacts recruitment and retention.

- **Key Finding #3 Higher Education and Professional Development**

- Education levels among FCC professionals vary widely, with nearly two-thirds having some college or higher degrees. There is significant interest in advancing their education, though focus groups expressed concerns about the return on investment.

- **Key Findings #4 Supports for ECCE Workforce**

- ECCE professionals in Kansas provide care and education to young children and families within a complex, mixed-delivery system and need supports across agencies/departments.

For a more in-depth breakdown of the insightful data, including quotes from focus group participants, as well as graphs and charts presented by Stephanie Parks, please refer to the August Early Childhood Recommendations Panel timestamp: [41:08-59:38](#).

## National Breastfeeding Month Activities

Brenda Bandy presented on behalf of the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition in recognition of National Breastfeeding Month. August is National Breastfeeding Month, a key time for raising lactation awareness. Highlighting Kansas, recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show a significant increase in breastfeeding rates. Kansas is ranked 4th in the nation for the rate of infants exclusively breastfeeding at three months and 5th for exclusively breastfeeding at six months. For more information on this topic and to view more data on this information please check out: [State of Breastfeeding in Kansas 2024](#).

### Highlights:

- The Governor of Kansas has proclaimed August as Kansas Breastfeeding Month. Some of you may have seen local events celebrating this initiative, which typically occur during the first week of August. Throughout the month, specific weeks are dedicated to different populations.
- Breastfeeding support is integral to early childhood care. This support plays a vital role in the well-being of breastfed infants.
- Child Care Aware of Kansas recognizes child care providers who support breastfeeding families and employees through the Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Designation program. For those interested, you can access the application for the [Kansas Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Designation](#). Both Child Care Aware of Kansas and the Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition collaborate to guide this initiative. Additionally, if you wish to connect with a local coalition in your area, you can find more information at [Local Breastfeeding Coalitions](#).

For more in-depth opportunities to hear and see remarks and reflections from child care providers who have completed this course, please refer to the August Early Childhood Recommendations Panel timestamp: [1:11:05- 11:11:45](#).

## Workgroup Discussion Overview

Brenda Bandy provided context for this month's work groups during the session, noting that they will differ from the typical breakout sessions. This portion of the meeting focused on the AIFKK work group discussion. This month, the breakout groups had a new format. The overall objective of this month's workgroups was to address issues and challenges in alignment with the Strategic Plan Actions, with the goal of "leaving it better than you found it." After the meeting, panel members should receive an email with feedback from these two discussion groups. If you do not receive this email, please check the SharePoint site.

## Bright Spots:

- Natalie McClane shared that Kansas Early Learning Standards (KELS) website is now live. If you'd like to explore the Kansas Early Learning Standards, visit the [KSDE](#) website. There, you will find updated KELS work, as well as additional resources and training content.

- Tanya Koehn shared a few bright spots on behalf of Child Care Aware of Kansas. They have hired a full-time executive director, and she also previewed an upcoming development: the launch of a new Business Support Center on their website, set to go live within the next week. This resource will provide guidance for businesses interested in entering the early childhood field, offering ideas and a roadmap for getting started.
- Malissa Martin provided an update from SparkWheel. Last month, she announced that they will be implementing two new SparkWheel early childhood programs: one in Neodesha, Kansas, and the other in Cheney, Kansas.

### Upcoming Meetings: (all via Zoom)

- Early Childhood Recommendations Panel meeting – Friday, September 20, 9:00 a.m. -11:30 a.m.
- Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund meeting – Friday, October 4, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

### Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m.