Building Child Care Capacity and Innovation

Evaluating the Impact to Date of the Child Care Capacity Accelerator in Kansas

KU THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS | Center for Public Partnerships and Research

Acknowledgments

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Introduction

Kansas is undergoing an ambitious effort to expand access to child care. Much of the state has been in a child care desert for decades, made especially challenging by its rural nature. Currently, child care supply meets 49% of the potential demand, and an estimated 37% to 44% of Kansans live in a child care desert (Child Care Aware of Kansas, 2024). The shortage of infant and toddler slots is particularly pronounced, with no licensed openings for infants and toddlers in 15 of Kansas' 105 counties. In 40 counties, there are 11 or more children under the age of three for every opening (Child Care Aware of America, 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated child care shortages, especially for those most in need, making the child care sector a greater public priority than ever before (All In For Kansas Kids, 2024a).

In 2023, the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund (Kansas Children's Cabinet) launched a grant opportunity to address these long-standing shortages. The purpose was to accelerate the capacity of communities to meet their child care needs. The Kansas Child Care Capacity Accelerator (CCCA) has provided funding to 63 communities to build or renovate spaces, as well as support operational expenses to create additional licensed child care spots. Currently, the CCCA grantees have completed one year of project implementation.

Ensuring families have access to child care is a core focus of the state's strategic plan for improving the early childhood ecosystem (All In For Kansas Kids, 2024b). The CCCA grant opportunity represents a coordinated effort to make meaningful progress on this complex issue by providing communities with financial resources to take direct action and generate novel solutions.

Purpose

This report presents the results and insights gained from the work of CCCA grantees at the end of their first year of implementation and, in some cases, their first and only year of support. We begin by providing background on the CCCA grant opportunity, including details on the distribution and needs of recipients across the state. The methods section outlines the evaluation design and data used by the evaluation team to assess the effectiveness and impact of the program. We share results from the evaluation, including statewide and grantee-level outcomes. To date, **3,340 new licensed child care slots have been opened through the CCCA**, and we anticipate a total of 5,655 new child care slots will be created over the life of the grant.

Additionally, **448 new early childhood professionals have been hired to date**, and **22 projects across the state have been completed in the past year**. The report concludes with lessons learned and recommendations for designing and implementing future funding opportunities.

Background

The CCCA was developed to advance three major goals:

1. create more sustainable, licensed child care seats across the state,
2. accelerate the capacity-building and innovative efforts of Kansas communities, and
3. utilize pilot findings to inform community development strategies and drive broader child care systems change.

The CCCA grant is made possible through allocations from four primary one-time sources, each with its own timeline and requirements:

- $31 million from the Child Care and Development Fund American Rescue Plan Discretionary Fund (CCDF ARPA) administered by the Kansas Department for Children and Families,
- $20 million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) administered by the Kansas Strengthening People and Revitalizing Kansas (SPARK) Executive Committee,
- $1 million from the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) Planning Grant administered by the Kansas Children's Cabinet, and
- $2.5 million gift from the Patterson Family Foundation.

The timeline for carrying out grant activities varies among the 63 grantees due to the constraints of the different funding sources. The CCCA grant funding period began on July 1, 2023, for all grantees. Thirty-three grantees received CCDF ARPA and/or PDG B-5 funding, and their CCCA funding ended in June 2024. Twenty-four grantees who received funds from ARPA will conclude their projects by the end of September 2025. Partial funding for six CCCA grantees came from the Patterson Family Foundation. These grantees will continue to work on their CCCA projects until September 2026.

Most CCCA projects are ongoing, regardless of the specific funding timelines. Grantees secured additional funding outside of the CCCA grant, such as in-kind and matching contributions, to ensure project completion. This external funding allows them to continue their work even as CCCA grant periods conclude. Each grantee has developed a plan to maintain their projects, demonstrating their commitment to fully executing their proposed activities while meeting the timelines required by their respective funding sources.

Who Was Funded?

Grants were awarded competitively to communities across Kansas through a public RFP process. The map in Figure 1 indicates the 63 locations that received funding. Of those 63 communities, 36 are located in rural parts of the state (classified as frontier, rural, or densely-settled rural areas; Kansas Statistical Abstract, 2021). While child care shortages affect families across Kansas, shortages are particularly acute in rural areas. Grantee estimates of the percent of child care demand to be met through completed CCCA projects in each county ranged from 8 - 75%.

Figure 1
Accelerator project locations
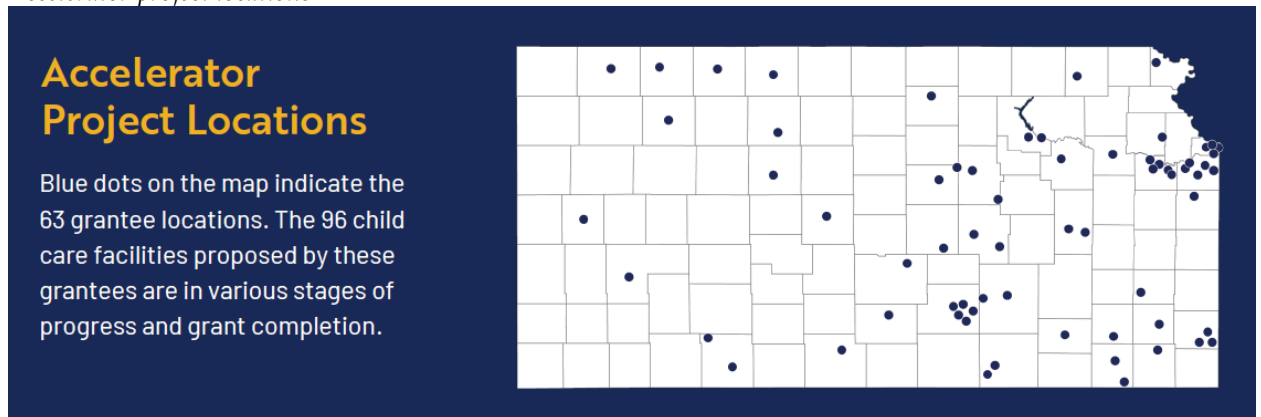
Successful CCCA applicants demonstrated strong community partnerships, with support from school districts, employers, civic organizations, and others. Grants were awarded for capital investments in child care facilities, operational expenses, and for piloting innovative approaches to build sustainable capacity, positioning these communities as models for long-term, systemic change. Figure 2 presents the breakdown of how funding was spent.

Fig. 2
Accelerator grantees by funding purpose

63 Total Child Care Accelerator Grantees

Operations Only	Construction and Operations	Innovation Only	
12	37	3	
		Construction Only	11

16 2   8   3   3
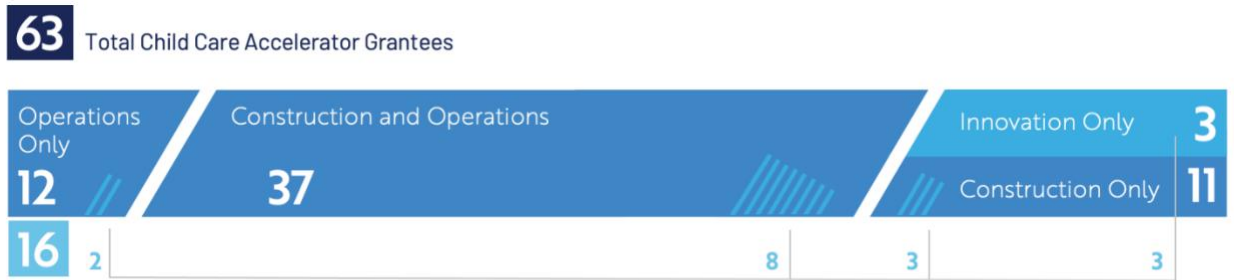
Sixteen Accelerator grantees also received Innovation Communities (IC) awards
(IC recipients are spread across funding purposes as indicated in light blue above)

All communities demonstrated the potential for transformational change through community-led investment. The application materials required evidence of a minimum 25% match and details on collaborating entities. The 63 communities participating in this evaluation generated over $58 million in match funding locally through community fundraising, land/building donations, and local financing partners.

Sixteen Innovation Communities (IC) received competitive add-on funds of up to $250,000 to be spent within the first year of the CCCA to design and pilot innovative approaches for expanding child care capacity. The 16 communities participated in a 12-month cohort from July 2023 to June 2024.

Evaluation Design & Methods

Methods, Research Questions, and Data Sources

We chose a mixed methods approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of CCCA's effectiveness and the contextual factors that influence the implementation of each community's strategies. We drew on multiple data sources, shown in Table 1, to answer the research questions guiding this evaluation.

Table 1

Data sources

Research Questions	Data Source	Description	N
How do communities perceive their child care needs and readiness to address them?	Grant applications	Narratives in each grantee application analyzed to identify themes related to needs and readiness.	N = 63
What was the overall impact on child care capacity within communities (e.g., counties) and across Kansas?	Quarterly progress reports. Site visit interviews and observations Secondary data from the CCAKS Point-in-time data.	The grantees submitted quarterly progress reports with data for key indicators and updates on their progress.	Quarterly reports (N = 63) Site visits (N = 26)
What innovative strategies are IC grantees employing to expand access to child care in their communities, and to what extent were those strategies implemented?	Semi-structured interviews Focus groups End-of-project (EOP) survey	IC grantees were interviewed twice during project implementation. Focus groups were conducted with representatives from each innovation community during a peer learning session. The EOP survey was distributed to IC grantees through Qualtrics after they completed their grants.	Two-part Interviews (N = 13) Focus groups (N = 13) EOP survey (N = 15)
What challenges and opportunities did IC grantees face when implementing their pilot innovation projects?	Semi-structured interviews Focus groups End-of-project (EOP) survey	See the description above.	Two-part Interviews (N = 13) Focus groups (N = 13) Site visits (N = 26) EOP survey (N = 15)

Findings

Highlights

Highlights from this evaluation include the following key points, with additional context detailed in the narrative sections below.

- 28 new child care facilities were opened by 23 CCCA grantees in 20 Kansas counties
- CCCA grantees created **3,340 new licensed child care slots** in Year 1 and are projected **to create 5,655 new licensed child care slots** by the end of the grant program.
- 38% of CCCA grantees used the funding for **new construction projects.**
- 48% of CCCA grantees used the funding for **major renovation projects** to expand existing child care facilities or retrofit unused spaces in their communities.
- To date, the CCCA grant contributed to the hiring of 448 new child care staff members.
- The 63 CCCA grantees secured over $58 million in matching cash and/or in-kind funds from community sources
- 22 CCCA grantees are 100% complete after just one year

Outcomes

CCCA's Statewide Impact

The findings below illustrate the statewide impact of projects funded by CCCA after one year of implementation by grantees. Key metrics include the percentage of project completion, the number of new facilities, and child care slots created. The distribution of total slots by age group and the overall number of professionals employed by CCCA grantees are also discussed below.

Project Completion Across Grantees:

CCCA grantees report an average rate of completion of 83% by quarter four. This includes 45 grantees reporting completion rates over 75% and 22 grantees at 100% completion and reporting positive impacts in their communities by actively serving or recruiting children to their newly created child care slots. Overall, the results indicate that the grantee's pace of completion significantly increased after the second quarter, as shown in Figure 3. Several of the grantees reporting lower levels of progress had planned for longer project timeframes because of the sources of funding being utilized. We present each grantee's reported progress in creating new child care and the proposed child care slots alongside their project timeline in Tables A.A.1-3 in the Appendices.

Fig. 3
Average project completion by quarter

Average Project Completion

	Quarter1	Quarter2	Quarter3	Quarter4
	22%	35%	64%	83%
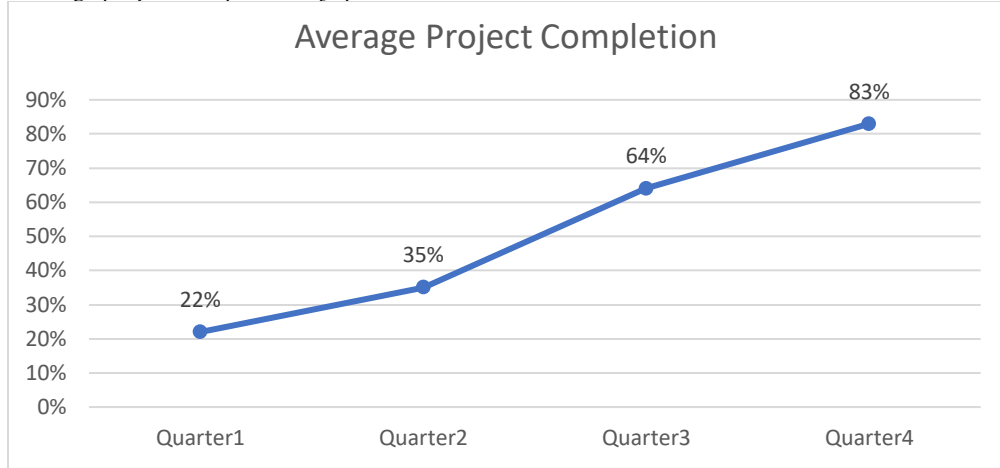
Newly Created Child Care Facilities

As of quarter four, 28 new child care facilities were opened by 23 different grantees in 20 different counties across Kansas because of CCCA grant funding. Figure 4 shows that new facilities were reported in all regions of Kansas including both urban and rural counties. While construction remains underway for additional new facilities that have yet to open their doors, many CCCA grantees report renovations to current facilities which have increased their capacity.

Fig. 4
Counties with new facilities added
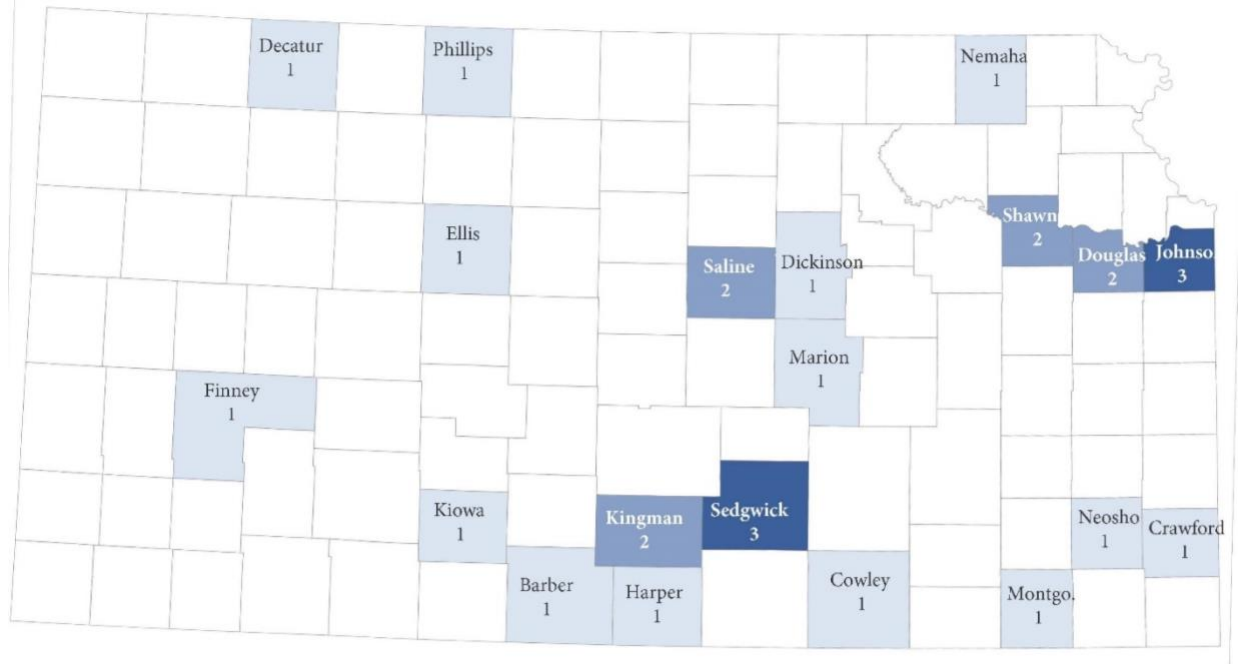
Newly Created Child Care Slots

A total of **3,340 new licensed child care slots were created** by CCCA grantees in the program's first year which increased their total overall capacity to 5,620 child care slots, **including 1,368 slots specifically for infants under 18 months of age**. Of the current 5,620 child care slots, 4,196 are eligible for Department for Children and Families (DCF) Child Care Assistance, a benefit program that helps pay for child care costs for eligible families, further supporting families in need. By the program's end, CCCA grantees are projected to create **5,655 new child care slots** increasing their total overall capacity to 7,915 child care slots.

New Child Care Staff Hires

To date, the additional funds provided by the CCCA grant have also contributed to the hiring of 448 new child care staff members with an average of eight years of experience across the CCCA grantees. In total, CCCA grantees now staff 1,167 child care professionals in Kansas. Data on reported minimum and maximum hourly wages also showed progress across the nine months of wage reporting, with the average minimum wage increasing by 2.6% and the average maximum wage increasing by 14.4% (the average minimum goes from $12.00 to $12.31, while the average maximum from $20.30 to $23.22; wage data uses full-time positions when available).

Fig. 5
Number of new hires

Number of New Hires to Date
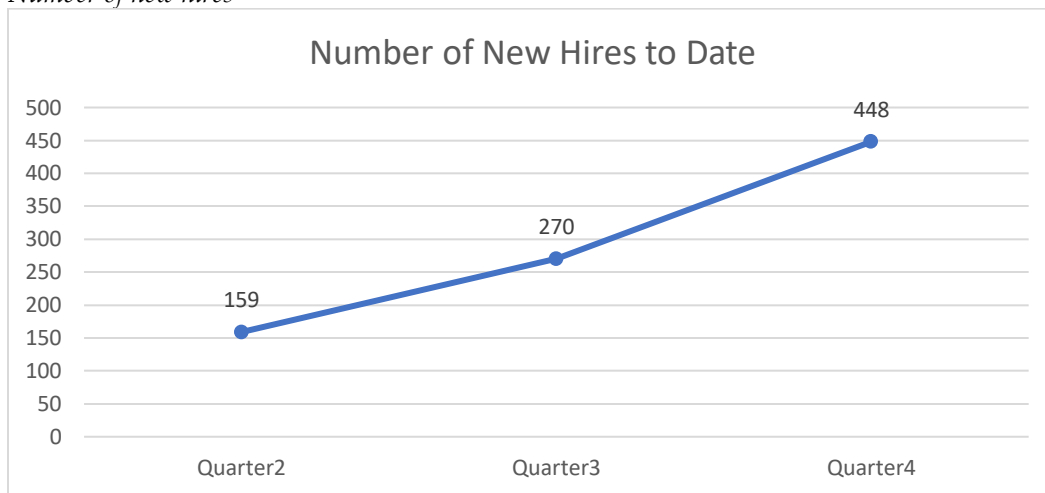
Community Child Care Capacity

Child care capacity in CCCA communities measured using Kansas Department of Health and Environment Licensed Child Care Capacity data indicated that counties with CCCA grantees saw an increase in child care capacity. Overall, counties with CCCA grantees had an average increase of +2% from June 2023 through June 2024, while non-CCCA counties in Kansas experienced a

decline in child care capacity of -7% across the same period. Continued monitoring and evaluation of CCCA grantees and their counties are expected to show additional impacts over time as grantees continue to finish their projects.

Grantee-level Progress and Outcomes

The CCCA grantees submitted quarterly reports on their progress. The reporting forms prompted grantees to self-rate their percentage of project completion and distinguish between the number of licensed slots currently available and the number of newly created licensed slots. Grantees also reported how many new staff they hired because of their programs. Appendix A tabulates the results of individual grantee progress and those outcomes.

Key takeaways from the data provided by grantees include:

➢ 38% of CCCA grantees utilized the funding for **new construction projects.**

➢ 48% of CCCA grantees utilized the funding for **renovation projects** to expand existing child care facilities or retrofit unused spaces in their communities.

➢ The impact of new construction versus renovation projects on the number of licensed child care slots created, and early childhood professionals hired, is nearly the same.

➢ A few CCCA grantees used most of their funding for operational expenses and programs to expand child care capacity. Three grantees extended hours and increased infant and toddler care by investing in staff and operations, while another three attracted new early childhood professionals through recruitment bonuses and enhanced benefits. Two grantees supported multiple community organizations and providers, boosting overall child care capacity.

CCCA grantees used their funding through a mix of construction, major renovation, and operational investments to start up and expand child care capacity. New construction and renovation projects had similar impacts on creating licensed child care slots and hiring early childhood professionals, highlighting the flexibility of these approaches based on community needs. Additionally, grantees focused on operational improvements to further enhance overall capacity. Together, these strategies significantly contributed to expanding child care access in diverse ways.

Building Community Collaborations

All CCCA grantees were required to collaborate with community partners. Our analysis of grant applications and quarterly reports found that, in 2023, the 63 CCCA grantees secured over $58

million in matching funds from private sources, including philanthropy, businesses, healthcare organizations, donors, and faith-based groups. The support combined in-kind and direct financial investment to match the CCCA funding for new construction, facility renovation, and operations. Table 3 provides some examples of the significant in-kind support partners provided.

Collaboration success often depended on clear communication, shared goals, and partners' willingness to adopt unconventional solutions. Educating the community on child care issues—such as licensing, programming, workforce requirements, and compensation—was identified as crucial to building strong partnerships and fostering collaboration.

Three IC grantees struggled to engage local businesses in partnerships, citing challenges with initiating conversations and a lack of interest. One grantee mentioned that in her community, "you have to get an invitation to participate." She explained that it required significant time and effort to earn an invitation to discuss community needs and potential business solutions.

Table 3
Examples of in-kind contributions

Grantee	Project Description	In-kind Description and Value
The Grove Child Care Center (Grow Hays, Inc.)	The Grove project through Grow Hays Inc. will feature a new multi-use community center that includes an intergenerational senior and child care center located near the Hays Medical Center.	The Grove project has received a **donation of the land** from the Hays Medical Center – an in-kind contribution valued at **$250,000.**
McPherson County Child Care Taskforce	A two-phased project that will build a pipeline of ECE professionals and renovate four existing facilities to increase capacity	The four existing child care programs are contributing **staff time and effort** to support the ECE professional pipeline and other activities. This staff time is **valued at just under $378,000.**
Advancing Barton County Child Care	Constructing two of three new child care facilities across three communities in Barton County	The two new centers will be adjacent to a high school in Claflin and an elementary school in Hoisington. USD 431 and USD 112 donated **property valued at just under $150,000.**
Community Children's Center (Douglas County)	Community center renovation to add child care during nontraditional hours and wraparound services.	Bartlett & West, a local design and architecture firm provided **$5,000 worth of design services in-kind.**

Community Context – An Application Analysis

In addition to reporting data from grantees, this evaluation analyzed CCCA grant applications to identify key factors that shape how communities assess their child care needs and their capacity

to address them. We found four primary factors influencing communities' child care capacity: geographic location, workforce recruitment and retention challenges, economic development priorities, and the increasing demand for infant care. A common element across these themes emerged as a critical indicator of community readiness. We will first explore this readiness factor and then summarize the four factors, along with examples and an analysis of their impact on Kansas communities.

Readiness Factor: A Dedicated Early Childhood Task Force or Collaborative

A consistent theme across all grant applications is the establishment or development of early childhood coalitions dedicated to addressing child care capacity needs. Nearly every application emphasized their county or region's success in bringing together individuals and organizations to collaboratively tackle the challenges of child care.

Based on our assessment of how communities described their task force, we concluded that an effective early childhood task force has the following characteristics:

- ➢ Strong and dedicated leadership.
- ➢ Representation from a wide range of partners with diverse expertise, such as community leaders, early childhood professionals, and non-profit organizations.
- ➢ A clear mission and goals.
- ➢ Data-driven decision-making: The coalition regularly gathers and reviews data to identify challenges and adjust their strategies.
- ➢ Resource mobilization: The task force seeks funding like the CCCA and resources to support its initiatives.

The CCCA applicants chosen for funding were well-positioned to carry out the grant's large-scale requirements due to their collaborative work, shared resources, expertise, and ability to gather data and assess their community's child care capacity needs.

Factors that Impact Community Child Care Capacity

Geographic Location
Findings: Nearly all applicants noted location as a key factor impacting their child care capacity needs. Frontier, rural, and densely settled rural areas had acute child care shortages. Many rural areas lack sufficient child care, with some CCCA grants allowing communities to establish their first-ever center-based child care facility.

Example: One rural community had only eight home-based providers with no openings. They proposed to use CCCA funding to build and operate a new child care center in collaboration with a medical center.

Economic Development

Findings: Rapid economic growth has increased child care demand, with applicants citing new jobs attracting workers but insufficient child care capacity to support them. Communities face pressure from businesses to expand child care, and some employers lose potential hires due to limited child care options.

Example: In a community that considers itself a "hub" for employment opportunities in surrounding rural areas, they described how the arrival of new families and commuting workers has led to a local child care crisis.

Workforce Recruitment and Retention Challenges

Findings: Many applications highlighted staff shortages, with open child care slots at facilities going unused due to a lack of qualified staff. In some applications, they described low compensation as a co-factor challenging their ability to recruit and retain an early childhood workforce. Staffing challenges hinder capacity growth, with grantees seeking solutions to recruit and retain skilled employees.

Example: Several grantees aimed to partner with community colleges and high schools to train new staff through licensure and certification pathways. Grantees proposed implementing compensation packages that included higher-than-average pay, bonuses, improved benefits, or a combination of the three to recruit a new workforce.

Demand for Infant Care

Findings: Applicants reported a shortage of affordable infant care. Increasing infant care capacity requires more staff and incentivizing providers to offer more infant slots.

Example: One grantee will develop a model for incentivizing child care providers who increase and maintain the number of infants they enroll.

Piloting Innovative Approaches

The final core activity of the CCCA program design is piloting innovative approaches. This core activity was included in the CCCA program design to encourage and support community-driven innovation to accelerate child care capacity building. The IC grantees completed an anonymous

End-of-Project (EOP) survey in July 2024 with questions related to the strategies they implemented and their perceived feasibility of implementing their projects, and factors that supported or hindered implementation. We received 15 survey responses out of 16 grantees. In this section, we present findings from the EOP survey to answer the following research questions:

> ➢ What innovative strategies are IC grantees employing to expand access to child care in their communities, and to what extent were those strategies implemented?
> ➢ What challenges and opportunities did IC grantees face when implementing their pilot innovation projects?

Examples of Innovative Strategies

To address the evolving needs of child care providers and their families, additional funds were allocated through the IC grant to explore new models and strategies that support increasing capacity, quality, and sustainability of new or existing child care services. Innovation Community grantees were asked to identify at least one, but up to two innovation categories that best represent their proposal strategies. Workforce recruitment and retention is the most common primary innovation category among grantees, with 33% selecting it. Examples of strategies include providing shared human resources and staffing support across programs and developing career pathways for early childhood professionals in the area. Public-private partnerships are the second most common primary innovation category at 27%. One grantee's strategy was based on the Michigan Tri-Share program, a multi-payer model where the cost of an employee's child care is shared equally among the employer, the employee, and the State of Michigan (in this case, the grantee organization).

Although half of the IC grantees were in frontier, rural, or densely-settled rural communities, only 20% chose rural communities as their primary innovation category, and none selected it as their secondary innovation category. Many projects focused on a single innovation area: 40% of grantees did not select a secondary category. Additionally, no grantees selected "child care plus" (innovative child care business models) as a primary category, but 13% chose it as a secondary category.

By leveraging the IC-added funds and resources, communities pioneered approaches that support the workforce and create more resilient and responsive child care systems. Table 4 describes the strategies piloted with these additional funds.

Table 4

Innovation community grantee strategies

Grantee	Strategy Descriptions
Abilene Child Care Learning Center	Expand an existing substitute program for child care providers
Community Children's Center (Douglas County)	Offer non-traditional service hours with drop-in and scheduled care options; establish employer sponsored child care fund
Early Childhood Impact Center (Cowley County) *	Establish a multi-payer Share Care Fund modeled after the Michigan Tri-Share program
Greater Manhattan Community Foundation	Build an incubation model for child care including cost sharing (e.g., shared services)
Little Learners Early Childhood Center – Early Childhood Consultants	Develop a career pathway for early childhood professionals in the area
Mindful Minis in Sedgwick County	Offer special mental health care services for children and families in the child care program and the community
McPherson County Child Care Task Force	Develop a career pathway through a CTE program, shared services for child care providers across the county, and exploration of a public/private partnership model
Reno County Collaboration	Provide incentives for local providers who enroll infants and toddlers and targeted workforce training efforts
Shawnee County Collaboration – Greater Topeka Partnership	Provide shared services and resources (e.g., HR and staffing support) across programs in the collaboration
Solomon Early Learning Center	Add infant/toddler slots through targeted workforce training and a substitute pool.
Success By Six Early Childhood Coalition of Douglas County *	Provide targeted family navigation supports to help BIPOC families access child care
SugarCreek Child Care Center (Crawford County)	Career pathway development through a school district run Early Childhood CTE program; offer professional development and a substitute program for local child care providers
Tri County Child Care Coalition (Barber, Harper, and Kiowa Counties)	Offer shared services for child care providers across three counties including professional development and a substitute program
USD 270 Plainville – Little Nests	Establish a substitute program for child care providers
USD 367 and United Way of Miami County *	Build a mentorship program and training for new child care professionals; exploration of a new compensation package
USD 461 Neodesha Early Learning Center	Develop a career pathway, in collaboration with the high school, through an internship/community-based training program

Note. Asterisks (*) indicate that the program only received IC funding, not CCCA funding.

Promising Strategies

The work carried out by the IC grantees provided insight into promising strategies that may be applicable across many communities in Kansas. These strategies include developing early childhood career and professional pathways that start with high school Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and finding creative ways to share resources.

Developing Career Pathways

Five of the 16 IC grantees piloted CTE pathway programs. In rural communities especially, building a new early childhood-focused CTE program encouraged collaboration between early childhood professionals in the community and school district educators and administrators, strengthening relationships and aligning educational goals with community needs. By introducing students to early childhood education in high school, communities are beginning to build a local talent pipeline, addressing workforce shortages.

Starting career education early also raises awareness of the importance of early childhood development and encourages more students to pursue careers in this field, boosting local expertise and capacity.

Identifying Shared Resources and Trainings

Another strategy that shows promise is developing programs for shared services. In Dickinson County, the Abilene Child Care Learning Center grantee utilized the IC funding to expand an existing substitute program for child care providers in one county. However, in just one year, they developed partnerships across several counties. Shared services allow for more efficient use of limited resources, particularly in rural or under-resourced areas. Child care centers can reduce individual administrative burdens and costs by pooling resources like substitute providers while maintaining operational continuity. Expanding from one county to several within a year demonstrates the model's scalability.

We learned from IC grantees that training and professional development services can also be shared across community providers and several communities. Solomon Early Learning Center and Mindful Minis used the IC funding to build specialized training programs for providers across their communities. These training programs were extremely popular with providers who desired new, more advanced training. Shared training programs ensure that providers across different centers and communities receive the same high-quality, specialized education. This leads to a more consistent standard of care for children, improving outcomes across multiple settings. Programs like those developed by Solomon Early Learning Center and Mindful Minis

can impact a much larger geographic area, making the investment more efficient and broadening the benefits to more providers and children.

Feasibility of Implementation

Implementing something new generally involves four phases: exploring, installing, initial implementation, and full implementation When the IC grant ended, 80% of the communities were implementing their innovation projects, with most grantees (60%; see Figure 6) reporting that they were in the initial implementation phase.

Figure 6
End-of-project survey results

Please select the implementation phase that best describes your current state with these project(s) or initiative(s) (select one).

20%, 3 — 13%, 2
— 7%, 1

60%, 9 —

■ Exploring ■ Installing ■ Initial Implementation ■ Full Implementation
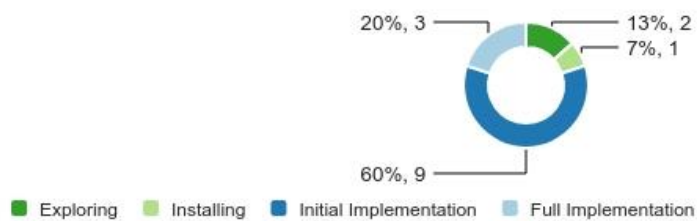
Factors That Support Implementation

The EOP survey prompted IC grantees to rate the extent to which factors like community and business partnerships, knowledge and expertise, financial contributions, and coaching or technical assistance helped them implement their innovation projects. All 15 respondents indicated that **having knowledge or expertise in early childhood education or child care services** (either their own or someone else's) helped, with 11 respondents reporting that this factor "helped a lot." Similarly, all respondents indicated **partnerships with organizations that support child care providers**, like Child Care Aware of Kansas and Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities (KCCTO) helped, with ten respondents indicating those partnerships "helped a lot." Of the 15 respondents, 14 reported **that support provided through coaching, peer learning, or technical assistance** helped with implementation, with nine respondents indicating that it "helped a lot."

In open-ended responses and focus group discussions, grantees highlighted that the flexibility of IC funding allowed them to move from exploration and installation phases to implementation. Unlike traditional grants, which restrict spending to pre-approved plans, IC funding supported iteration, enabling grantees to pivot as needed. They emphasized that this would not have been possible with other grant programs, where budget adjustments are typically restricted. The

Kansas Children's Cabinet's willingness to consider revisions gave grantees the flexibility to reallocate funds and strengthen resources aligned with their evolving project goals.

Many IC grantees faced delays during exploration and installation, with most reporting that they did not begin implementing until six months into the 12-month grant period. Some expressed frustration that the grant ended just as their projects were gaining momentum, with one grantee calling for more multi-year funding opportunities.

A recurring challenge was the time required to align advisory committees, train staff, and address logistical barriers, including delays in construction and licensing. In some cases, grantees faced resistance from contractors unfamiliar with child care licensing requirements, further slowing project implementation. These experiences underscored the need for better support and education for partners on child care regulations, especially in facilities construction or renovation.

The ability to iterate was crucial to overcoming obstacles and seizing new opportunities. Grantees agreed that the technical assistance they received—through coaching, peer learning, and other supports—was essential in facilitating these necessary pivots. Two experienced coaches, one evaluator, and two directors from the Center for Public Partnerships and Research provided coaching and resource navigation support and facilitated the peer learning network. Staff from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment helped answer questions and resolve challenges related to child care licensing. Enhanced technical assistance emerged as a key factor in successfully piloting and implementing innovative projects.

Discussion

The goal of this evaluation is to collect and analyze data to provide usable information to support the Kansas Children's Cabinet and others refine strategies, improve implementation, and maximize the impact of future investments in Kansas' child care infrastructure. The following lessons and implications are meant to guide discussions and decisions on how to best support community-led solutions to address their specific child care needs, ensuring the long-term goals of the CCCA are met.

Lesson One: Flexible funding is critical to support community-led solutions.

The CCCA program design allowed communities to invest in new construction, major renovations—something that is rarely allowed with grant funding as funders often prioritize initiatives that show immediate impact, like training programs or direct services, rather than long-term infrastructure projects. First-year results demonstrate that investments in infrastructure are positively impacting the number of new, licensed child care slots available to families, and an increase in the child care workforce. Furthermore, the IC supplemental grants were flexible enough to allow grantees to pivot as they learned of better approaches during implementation. Grantees identified flexibility as a factor that facilitated the implementation of their innovation pilot programs. Having funding to support major start-up operations also proved to be crucial in the success of these projects.

Lesson Two: Educating Communities and Building Strategic Partnerships is Essential for Child Care Innovation.

Child care is proven to have positive impacts on the economy and society (Jenkins, 2014; White House Council of Economic Advisors, 2024). To maximize these economic and community benefits, innovative programs must engage a wide range of local partners. Based on the experiences of IC grantees, it is apparent that there is a need to educate community members about the unique issues child care programs and businesses face, including child care licensing and regulations, local ordinances, high-quality programming, and workforce requirements (e.g., required training), and compensation.

Community collaborations, such as partnerships between school districts and early childhood providers, may be an opportunity to explore further, as some CCCA grantees demonstrated valuable results from these partnerships. However, this kind of partnership can be more challenging than anticipated due to the many differences in how school districts and early childhood programs operate. School districts have clear governance structures and funding compared to early childhood programs that can be privately owned, non-profit, faith-based or have public funding sources. This impacts both types of organizations, from their program goals to regulations and licensing requirements, how they compensate their employees and even their daily schedules.

Lesson Three: Innovation Takes Time and Iteration

Implementing innovative programs is a process that unfolds over time and often requires adaptation. Innovation Community grantees were given 12 months to implement their initiatives,

progressing through four phases: exploration, installation, initial implementation, and full implementation. However, most grantees found that the exploration and installation phases took longer than anticipated, delaying the start of their programming until halfway through the grant period. During a focus group discussion, many grantees expressed that the grant seemed to be ending just as their initiatives were gaining momentum, with one grantee suggesting that an 18-month timeline would better accommodate the time needed to explore feasibility and set up infrastructure.

In addition to time constraints, iteration was a key part of the process. Like successful entrepreneurs, IC grantees adjusted their strategies as they progressed. Some made substantial changes due to challenges, and these shifts often resulted in stronger programs than their original plans. Grantees were supported by evaluation tools and regular meetings with coaches and peers, which allowed them to break down challenges, assess progress, and adjust their approaches as needed. This iterative process not only helped overcome obstacles but also created opportunities for greater success.

Implications for the Kansas Early Childhood Ecosystem

State and Local Government

Continue to Offer Multi-year Funding for Early Childhood Programs

The CCCA is increasing child care capacity in Kansas. However, we have learned from grantees with a 12-month spending timeline that they need more time to implement their projects, especially those that build large infrastructure, and are innovative and require iteration. Potential funders (whether public sector or private) should consider multi-year funding opportunities to support the various phases of the implementation process for infrastructure and innovative child care projects. This allows them to support the growth and scaling of innovative ideas by providing funding tailored to the specific requirements of each stage of implementation.

Enhanced Technical Assistance for Iteration

Future funding should include enhanced technical assistance, including coaching and evaluation support and peer-to-peer learning opportunities, to ensure the successful rollout and continuous improvement of innovative child care programs. This would support communities in iterating and refining their approaches, ultimately leading to more effective and sustainable solutions.

Communities

Dedicated Task Force or Coalition

Communities should prioritize building or sustaining a dedicated task force or coalition focused on the ongoing collection and analysis of data related to child care capacity and needs. The task force or coalition should then use that data to pursue funding that will enable them to address those needs.

Child Care Organizations and Families

Engagement in the Early Childhood Ecosystem

People with expertise, such as child care business owners, and those with personal experience, like families, play a crucial role in shaping the early childhood ecosystem. Just as we have witnessed community leaders participating in state system discussions and opportunities because of their involvement in the CCCA, we hope to see early childhood care and education professionals and families motivated to do the same.

Limitations

This report presents a preliminary investigation into the effects of an opportunity to invest in the rapid expansion of child care capacity in Kansas. While the findings are a valuable first step in tracking progress, they only scratch the surface of the impact the CCCA will have when communities start utilizing new child care spaces and fully implementing innovative projects. At this stage of the evaluation, the most valuable findings are those that highlight the lessons learned from challenges with new construction, establishing operations, and piloting innovative projects. We present the results of this evaluation as guidance for future initiatives and to inform partners in the Kansas Early Childhood Ecosystem of best practices for overcoming obstacles in expanding child care capacity. By acknowledging the opportunities and addressing the challenges encountered during this first year, we can refine strategies, improve implementation, and maximize the impact of future investments in Kansas' child care infrastructure.

Conclusion

The opportunities created through the CCCA funding have laid the groundwork for lasting, impactful change in communities across Kansas. By leveraging existing and newly formed partnerships, grantees have successfully expanded their reach and capacity, creating sustainable

models for child care and early education. These collaborations support the immediate needs of children and families and foster a culture of innovation and resilience within the child care sector. These efforts have demonstrated the power of community-driven solutions, from establishing county-wide coalitions to securing private sector investment and improving workforce compensation. As these projects evolve, the initial successes and lessons learned will serve as a blueprint for other communities seeking to enhance their child care services and ensure that all children have access to the high-quality care they deserve.

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Appendix

In October 2024, grantees submitted their fourth-quarter reports to provide self-reported progress for Appendix A. For projects that concluded at the end of June (summarized in the first section of Table A), the evaluation team conducted a follow-up survey to gather additional updates on their project outcomes. The table below categorizes the 63 grantees by funding sources and provides an overview of their progress, including site visit data for SPARK-funded grants, staffing increases, slot creation, and program descriptions. Most CCCA projects are ongoing, regardless of the specific funding timelines. Grantees secured additional funding outside of the CCCA grant, such as in-kind and matching contributions, to ensure project completion.

Table A

CCCA Grantee outcomes last updated in October 2024

CCCA Project Timeline: July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024 - (Funding Sources: CCDF ARPA and/or PDG B-5)			
Grantee *(Funding Source) -* **Unless noted, grantee has 1 facility**	**Location (County)**	**Slots Added**	**Project Description (in bold) & Overview of Progress**
Abilene Childcare Learning Center in Dickinson County – 3 facilities *(CCDF ARPA & PDG)*	Dickinson	35	**Three centers are collaborating on workforce support and facility renovation.** The grantee reports they successfully opened and filled the new addition, but staffing continues to be a challenge. They have increased starting and teacher wages and plan to reconfigure and relicense rooms to accommodate more infant and toddler slots.
Alford Kids Academy in Wichita *(CCDF ARPA)*	Sedgwick	75	**Expanding overall capacity, including new slots for infants, and toddlers and providing care during non-traditional hours.** Grantee has hired staff and close to obtaining their license. The facility is almost ready to operate at full capacity, with plans to continue growing in the upcoming quarter.
Cloud County Community College Children's Learning Center *(CCDF ARPA)*	Cloud	3	**Recruitment bonuses to grow an existing center.** The CCCC Children's Center expanded its infant care capacity by three slots and started accepting infants. They succeeded in initiating recruitment bonuses to attract new staff and retain existing staff.

Community Children's Center, Inc., in Douglas County *(CCDF ARPA)*	Douglas	0 (69 projected)	**Community center renovation to add child care during nontraditional hours and wraparound services.** The Early Childhood Community Center's child care facility is now expected to open by March 2025. To accelerate progress, the grantee revised the budget to use Accelerator funds for reopening a closed facility. Since July, they have been making repairs, deep cleaning, painting, and hiring staff.
Delightful Village & Delight Ahead in Wyandotte County *(CCDF ARPA)*	Wyandotte	60	**Support completion of renovations to recently purchased facility to expand child care.** The number of facilities has increased from one to two, and they have added support for 25 new families. The plan is to expand facilities from Delight Ahead to Delightful Learning Centers in the upcoming quarter. New fire ordinances have surfaced, creating unexpected barriers.
Emporia Area Chamber Foundation *(CCDF ARPA)*	Lyon	48	**Renovating an old school building to have 10 child care rooms for infants and children through age 5. Increasing wages and compensation of their child care professionals.** The grantee has purchased an old school building and is set to open three classrooms for infants to 5-year-olds, starting with 48 children. They are waiting for final inspections from the fire marshal and licensing agent, expecting it to open in the next eight weeks.
Family Resource Center, Inc. in Crawford County *(CCDF ARPA)*	Crawford	58	**Expansion of FRC space and wrap-around services to serve more families.** The building has undergone extensive renovation. A new building code footprint was submitted to the State Fire Marshal, including additional structural changes and installing extra sprinklers. The hospital has been sold to new owners, so the lease has been renegotiated. Due to the change in ownership, the process has been delayed. The new opening date is scheduled for December 1, 2024, when they can accommodate the projected 58 slots.
Finney County Child Care and Early Learning Network (aka Garden Academy ELC) *(CCDF ARPA)*	Finney	94	**Build and launch a new child care facility and expand their early learning network.** Grantee has met their stated goals but continues to have low enrollment in their preschool rooms. They anticipate that new families will join towards the start of the school year. Their infants and toddler rooms are fully enrolled and have a waitlist.

Flint Hills Child Care Coalition Inc. (4074) (*CCDF ARPA*)	Marion	29	**New child care facility with support from USD and space provided by the city.** The facility has all the required licenses and permits, and we have qualified staff. The grantees are receiving support from the City of Florence, the Florence UMC, and the Masonic Advance Lodge in Florence. The main challenges are securing future financing and increasing enrollment.
Great Adventures LLC. In Johnson County (*CCDF ARPA*)	Johnson	39	**Great Adventures LLC is constructing a new building that will increase the current licensed capacity. Operational funding will accelerate the opening date and provide additional slots in Shawnee, KS.** The grantee reports that they were able to open our new facility and reach capacity in 2024. They continue to focus on retention and recruitment of high quality workers.
The Grove Child Care Center (Grow Hays, Inc.) (*CCDF ARPA*)	Ellis	77	**A new facility connected to a new multi-generational community center within a housing development.** This project is complete. Hays Medical Center and Bright Minds Academy now operate the program. *Of note: a similar project model is being funded by CPF.*
Grow and Learn Child Care Center in Wichita County (*CCDF ARPA*)	Wichita	3	**Worker recruitment through a work-study program with USD 467 to expand services.** They have added 3 more infant slots, bringing the total to 6. However, they only have enough staff for three additional infants now. A barrier continues to be recruiting qualified staff. "Without staff, we can't open more seats." They struggle even with several recruitment incentives in place.
Grow at Eden, LLC. In Labette County (*CCDF ARPA*)	Labette	12	**Expansion of an existing child care facility to serve more children and add professional development.** In June 2024, an additional outdoor space for toddlers was completed, featuring a playset structure, safety turf, and sunshades. With the operational funds awarded, they were able to maintain full enrollment, which helped sustain the elevated salaries of teachers, and enrollment increased. **Of note – grantee was not awarded construction funds for larger planned construction due to funding limitations. Had to pursue a construction loan for smaller scale project.*
Herington Community Childcare Center (*CCDF ARPA*)	Dickinson	12	**Center expansion on USD property.** The playground equipment, canopies, turf, fencing, storage units, and sidewalks have all been completed. They are still waiting for sandboxes to arrive and then reseeding the playground area.

The Heritage Home in Wabaunsee (CCDF ARPA)	Wabaunsee	23	**Renovate and update a prior nursing home facility to be transformed into an intergenerational facility for child care and senior living.** The grantee met their goal of retaining highly qualified, passionate staff and reports that their intergenerational model offers added benefits to the elderly population and community. Currently, they are operating at full licensed capacity.
Hilltop Child Development Center in Lawrence (CCDF ARPA)	Douglas	133	**Supported Hilltop expansion with new facilities and operational support.** Hilltop has completed construction on our new facility and enrollment for fall 2024 has begun. The major challenge is reaching the preschool population in Lawrence. Enrollment has been steady. Hilltop has two full-time teacher openings for fall, a great improvement from previous years, and about 80% of the new hires required for the expansion have been filled.
The Kids Place – Integrated Behavioral Technologies, Inc. in Jefferson County (CCDF ARPA)	Jefferson	12	**Renovation and staff recruitment will add slots to the existing infant/toddler capacity.** They have hired five new lead teachers for this project, exceeding their goal. As a result, they have opened 12 spots for children under 5. The infant/toddler rooms are seeing increased attendance, and although there are some final construction projects being completed, the facility has been able to operate smoothly during this phase.
KidZone Early Learning of Overland Park (CCDF ARPA)	Johnson	94	**New licensed child care center for children from birth through school age.** Currently open and operating. They have 9 classrooms that can serve up to 94 children (infants to school-age children). Currently working on completing DCF and CACFP applications.
The Learning Experience Blue Valley (CCDF ARPA)	Johnson	172	**Funding to support the opening of a new facility.** All rooms are furnished with furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E) and are fully staffed with trained personnel.
Little Learners Early Childhood Center – Johnson County (CCDF ARPA & PDG)	Johnson	44	**Expansion of existing facility to support community with high economic development growth.** In January 2024, they opened their new spaces to families. Their current enrollment is 89%. They also have a summer program for 16 school-age children.

McPherson County Childcare Task Force – 3 facilities *(CCDF ARPA & PDG)*	McPherson	15	**Multi-phase approach to expanding the workforce, adding shared services, and supporting new facilities.** Over the past year, they have opened 15 new slots without physically expanding any existing facilities. A significant achievement has been the successful transformation of Playhouse Kids into a small pilot center, thanks to the support of many individuals at KDHE and the Innovation Communities coaching team.
Mindful Minis in Sedgwick County *(CCDF ARPA & PDG)*	Sedgwick	51	**New facility with specialized programming to implement mental health informed approaches into their child care facility and the community.** Mindful Minis has opened and started providing quality care for families in the community. Despite facing barriers, they collaborated with the state to ensure their ability to open. Their goal is full enrollment for financial sustainability.
Open Minds Infant and Toddler Center in Johnson County *(CCDF ARPA)*	Johnson	56	**Open Minds Child Development Center, LLC is a privately owned center in Johnson County that opened a new facility.** Open Minds' is 100% complete with the project's construction phase. They operate as a licensed child care center with 90% of their spots filled.
Phillipsburg Child Care Center *(CCDF ARPA)*	Phillips	20	**Increasing capacity of an existing child care center to serve more children.** The grantee reports that they will be able to accept children for enrollment once the license is amended to increase numbers in each classroom. This project also offers extended hours for families that need it (up to 10pm).
Raising Wildflowers *(CCDF ARPA)*	Pottawatomie	0 (99 projected)	**Open a new center in for infants and children through 5 years old.** Grantee reports that they will complete the remodel soon and be able to open. They struggled to get permits but have those secured now. Once open, they will have 10 classrooms with the ability to serve 99 children and their families.
Sonshine Child Care in Pittsburg *(CCDF ARPA)*	Crawford	100	**Expanding to meet the demand for infant care in Pittsburg, KS.** The grantee reports that they have opened both phases, with two brand new infant rooms and two brand new 1-year-old rooms. With the second phase completed, we were able to provide 100 new child care spots for our community.
South YMCA Learning Center in Sedgwick County *(CCDF ARPA)*	Sedgwick	13	**Increase space to serve more infants and toddlers.** The grantee reported, "Our project is complete!!" They are operating their new space with eight of the nine classrooms at 90% or higher enrollment, and the 9th room will open in August.

USD 270 Plainville's Little Nests *(CCDF ARPA)*	Rooks	0 (12 projected)	**Multi-phase initiative adding child care strategically throughout the community.** Grantee reports facility is nearing completion and ready for opening with 50 children on the waiting list. The model they have used they feel could be replicated with additional funding.
USD 294 Decatur County Child Care Coalition *(CCDF ARPA)*	Decatur	12	**Support new facility close to the USD; staff will receive KPERS benefits as USD staff.** They have received their KDHE license and are working with DCF to become a subsidy provider. Delays in completing the playground were due to contractor issues. Next step: build larger playground equipment and create a pedal path for bikes.
USD 491 Eudora *(CCDF ARPA)*	Douglas	75	**With the addition of operational funds, USD 491 will be able to extend program hours and provide year-round child care in Eudora.** This project is complete and delivered the projected 75 preschool child care slots for the community in addition to new jobs. In addition, this project provides a new year around preschool option through Eudora Schools for the community.
Walnut Valley Learning Center – Creekstone Farms Premium Beef in Cowley County *(CCDF ARPA)*	Cowley	136	**New center operating expanded hours to support Creekstone employees and the surrounding community.** The grantee reports that the project is approximately 90% complete. The facility is built, and enrollment is continuing to grow. The facility opened two months later than expected. They currently host a staff of 22 and have 61 children enrolled. They continue to hire staff and take enrollment.
The Tree House Early Education Foundation *(CCDF ARPA)*	Montgomery	53	**Grantee has opened doors and created 53 childcare slots for the community**. As of the time of this report, they had 44 spots filled and will soon have the last nine filled. Grantee also has every family with a child enrolled participate in their Community Navigator program and are working on outreach to help more families who are not a part of the program.
USD 252 Southern Lyon County *(CCDF ARPA)*	Lyon	16	**Expanded workforce supports to increase slots in existing facility.** Grantee added a 0-3 classroom as well as upgraded indoor and outdoor play materials. In addition, they were able to reconfigure existing mixed-age group I/T classroom into two separate classrooms (one for infants; one for toddlers) to increase capacity.

Bethany Lutheran Early Childhood Center *(CCDF ARPA)*	Sedgwick	0 (32 projected)	**Adding an infant room and increasing capacity within existing classrooms.** Grantee reports the new infant room is nearing completion and scheduled for inspection, as well as all but one new hire added to support expanded capacity in the new classroom as well as fully staff in the older-age classrooms.
Outlook Academy *(CCDF ARPA)*	Wyandotte	20	**Operating support to hire additional highly qualified staff to support expansion within facility.** Grantee has been able to hire and expand infant care options, as well as offer extended hours (6:30am-7:00pm) to the local neighborhood, including KU hospital staff who are walking distance from the child care facility.
Rainbow Academy – 3 facilities *(CCDF ARPA)*	Norton	24	**Expanded capacity across 3 small facilities.** Grantee increased capacity and made health and safety improvements across three facilities. At the project end, the grantee had to close the facility located in her personal residence (personal reasons), but the other two remain open, including one transferring ownership to a former employee.

CCCA Project Timeline: July 1, 2023, to September 30, 2025 - (Funding Sources: CCDF ARPA, PDG B-5, and SPARK ARPA)			
Grantee	**Location (county)**	**Slots Added**	**Project Description (in bold) & Overview of Progress**
Advancing Barton County Children, Inc. – 2 facilities *(CCDF ARPA, SPARK, & Patterson)*	Barton	78	**Constructing two new child care facilities in Barton County.** The county's initial plan included three new childcare sites: Great Bend, Hoisington, and Claflin. Due to funding limitations, CCCA funding was only able to support Great Bend and Hoisington. Bright Beginnings Child Care in Great Bend opened on June 5, 2024. Families have provided very positive feedback. The Hoisington site is facing delays due to city planning and zoning processes. The site is expected to open in May or June 2025 in the backyard of the elementary school, with a capacity for 59 children.
Bright Beginnings Child Care Center *(CCDF ARPA & SPARK)*	Nemaha	38	**A new, four-room facility in Nemaha Co.** The building is complete, and the center opened in December. With 2 more staff, they can fill the remaining available slots. This project offers drop-in care as well. They will be at capacity soon according to staffing ratio and will continue to look for additional staff.

Coffeyville Area Child Care Coalition *(SPARK, & Patterson)*	Montgomery	0 (75 projected)	**24-hour, 6-day/week care for second and third shift families.** The grantee began construction June 2024 on a facility that will be able to offer 24/7 care to families who work non-traditional hours. This is the second facility from this team, with the other building open extended morning hours (starting at 5am).
Doniphan Darlings, Inc. *(CCDF ARPA & SPARK)*	Doniphan	0 (15 projected)	**Completion of renovation on a child care center in a former school building.** The grantee completed all construction updates to the building. Reported barriers to recruiting and retaining high quality staff are prohibiting them from being able to add additional children to their program at this time, but slots will increase once staff are hired.
Erie Community Child Care *(CCDF ARPA, SPARK, & Patterson)*	Neosho	48	**Opening a second child care center with four large classrooms.** The grantee reports that the building is complete and work on the playground is underway. Due to increased material costs compared to last year, they are raising additional funds. Enrollment has consistently grown (up to 10 new families a month) since opening.
Greater Manhattan Community Foundation (3826) *(SPARK & PDG)*	Riley	0 (100 projected)	**New building for a Child Care Business Accelerator with shared professional development and business growth opportunities.** Progress update from the grantee: "Our project started slow but is gaining momentum. The architectural design process is nearing completion. Had the official groundbreaking ceremony for the project. By the end of October, the project should start gaining momentum quickly." *Of note, this project is also funded with CPF grant funding.*
The Growing Place – Humboldt Daycare & Preschool, Inc. *(CCDF ARPA & SPARK)*	Allen	0 (48 projected)	**Expansion of existing child care facility to serve more children, 81% of which will be infant/toddler slots.** The grantee reports that they have spent down the CCDF portion of this funding, and that they are meeting with the City of Humboldt to finalize all questions before construction begins. They report meeting all their goals and deliverables for this point in the project timeline.
Hillsboro Community Child Care Center *(CCDF ARPA, SPARK, & Patterson)*	Marion	0 (83 projected)	**Adapting a church building to create a new child care facility.** Construction has begun, with completion expected in February 2025. Monthly progress meetings are being held to track developments.

Hope Chapel Legends/Hope Academy *(CCDF ARPA & SPARK)*	Wyandotte	132	**New facility with shared staff and training leveraged from sister facilities.** The facility is open. They have experienced delays throughout the project with both construction and hiring and retention. They continue to recruit and hire high quality staff to get to full enrollment.
Jays Nest Day Care in Clark County *(CCDF ARPA & SPARK)*	Clark	24	**Small center pilot approach to enable expansion of an existing facility.** The grantee reports that they have completed all the major projects and now only need to finish up the aesthetic details.
Kids World Child Care Learning Center in Sedgwick County *(CCDF ARPA & SPARK)*	Sedgwick	55	**Expansion of the current child care facility into 7,000 sq. ft. facility serving low-income families.** The grantee reported the project is complete and open and operating.
LIFT Minneola – 2 facilities *(CCDF ARPA & SPARK)*	Clark	0 (24 projected)	**Renovate an existing building into two licensed child care facilities.** It was determined that the original building had to be torn down. Two modular units will be placed on the site. Each building will be divided into two separate child care spaces, allowing for a total of 4 family child care providers and 40 slots.
Littles Early Learning – E9 Properties, LLC. – 2 facilities *(CCDF ARPA & SPARK)*	Butler	290	**Private center expansion in collaboration with the USD near the future location of the Integra computer chip facility.** One building project is complete and the grantee is open and filled to capacity. The other location will be completed in late 2024. Grantee has a goal to ensure high wages.
Parkwood Day School of Eudora – 3 facilities *(CCDF ARPA & SPARK)*	Douglas, Johnson, Leavenworth	0 (54 projected)	**Parkwood Day School LLC operates three inclusion-based early childhood centers; they will renovate to open additional B-5 child care slots across programs in Leavenworth, Douglas, and Johnson Counties.** The grantees report that they are open and have moved to our new location in Johnson County. The Basehor location has been updated and Eudora location expansion is currently underway.
Parkwood Day School of KCK – 2 facilities *(CCDF ARPA & SPARK)*	Wyandotte	6	**Parkwood Day School Garnett and Little Learners of KCK will expand B-5 slots and renovate the outdoor space to increase capacity.** Grantee has opened an additional room within the facilities and retained employees with retention bonuses, PTO, and benefits.

Rawlins County Economic Development *(CCDF ARPA & SPARK)*	Rawlins	0 (24 projected)	**Renovating a former dental clinic to add two licensed facilities.** The original plan was to open two adjacent child care programs, but the plan was amended to instead open one small center pilot that would serve 24 children. The target date for opening the new child care site is tentatively set for January 2025.
Reno County Collaboration – 9 facilities *(CCDF ARPA & SPARK)*	Reno	249	**A County Task Force is supporting a collaborative effort involving 6 organizations and 8 distinct projects/facilities to expand child care.** The Reno County Child Care Task Force is monitoring each project closely to ensure the slot creation and expansion meet the community's needs and the goals and outcomes stipulated in the grant submission. While different projects are at different stages of completion, it is evident from the site visit that slots have been (or are being) created in each of these efforts.
Salina Area United Way – 6 facilities *(CCDF ARPA & SPARK)*	Saline	187	**Expanding the size of multiple existing centers to serve more children.** Centers 1 and 2 have opened and filled all infant and toddler spots but continue to face staffing challenges and have added acoustic tiles to improve sound absorption. Center 3 has hired new staff to manage classrooms and support children with behavioral issues. Center 4 opened early 2024, though unexpected costs and lack of health insurance remain barriers (pursuing additional grants to address these issues). Center 5 is complete except for the playground installation. Center 6 is progressing on construction.
Shawnee County Collaboration – Greater Topeka Partnership – 8 facilities *(CCDF ARPA, SPARK, & PDG)*	Shawnee	431	**New construction, renovation, and operational support to expand child care across 8 projects.** The grantee reports 7 projects have been completed and are up and running. Programs are continuing to enroll and hire. 1 program temporarily closed due to change in management and staffing, but another provider is stepping in to re-open the facility. The new construction project is complete and had a ribbon cutting in August. They are already at full capacity as they had a wait list prior to opening.
Sheridan County Community Foundation – 2 facilities *(CCDF ARPA & SPARK)*	Sheridan	0 (24 projected)	**Support expansion of a duplex facility purchased specifically for two licensed child care spaces.** The grantees report that the construction of the facility is complete and that they have two candidates lined up to lease their spaces and open their new daycare businesses before the end of the year. They held an Open House/Ribbon Cutting event on Oct. 20.

Solomon Early Learning Center *(CCDF ARPA, SPARK, & PDG)*	Dickinson	23	**Led by USD 393, three additional classrooms will hire early childhood staff eligible for KPERS.** The site opened in August 2023. They report that maintaining staff has been a challenge. The grantee shared that a key lesson learned is to make the staffing hires closer to actual opening of classrooms or new enrollments.
SugarCreek Child Care Center in Crawford County *(CCDF ARPA & SPARK)*	Crawford	0 (206 projected)	**Creation of a new child care facility with mix of schedule to accommodate multiple shifts; ongoing business support.** Grantee notes the building layout and site plan have been approved. The architect is completing drawings and competitive process to select the builder is next step.
Tri County Child Care Coalition – 5 facilities *(CCDF ARPA & SPARK)*	Barber, Harper, Kiowa	107	**Renovate and expand five new child care facilities across 3 counties (Barber, Harper, Kiowa).** Kiowa District Healthcare Child Care Center is 98% complete and fully operational. Medicine Lodge Daycare is 95% complete and fully operational. Harper County Childcare is 90% complete with Anthony location fully operational at 100% complete. Attica location is 80% complete with an anticipated opening date near the beginning of 2025. Greensburg/Kiowa County is just started with ground-breaking scheduled.
USD 331 Daycare Center *(CCDF ARPA, SPARK, & Patterson)*	Kingman	48	**Licensing unused space in USD for two separate daycare homes (commercial setting).** Grantee reports doors are open with plans to continue hiring to reach full enrollment!
USD 461 Neodesha Early Learning Center *(CCDF ARPA, SPARK, & Patterson)*	Wilson	100	**New child care facility in Wilson County in the works since 2017.** The project is complete and facility is open. They are currently working to staff up and market available slots to reach full enrollment!
West Elk Early Child Center in Elk County *(CCDF ARPA & SPARK)*	Elk	0 (60 projected)	**Building new child care center in partnership with USD 282 and SEK-CAP.** The school district is building a new child care building that will serve 60 children aged 0-5. Construction is well underway. The grantee had hoped to open by the beginning of the school year, but the project has experienced some delays and is now working toward an opening date later in 2024.