



# Annual Report

➤ 2024

Don Hineman, Chair  
Melissa Rooker, Executive Director



This report was prepared by the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research on behalf of the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund.

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**Improving the health  
and well-being of Kansas  
children and families.**

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# Introduction

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- Our People
- Our Work
- Our Commitment to Kansas Children and Families
- Blueprint for Early Childhood
- Executive Summary

# Letter from the Director

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This report represents our work on behalf of Kansas children and families to create conditions for all Kansas children to thrive. With tremendous gratitude for every contributor to the early childhood ecosystem, I am reminded once again of the power behind our shared commitment. Together we are making improvements that will support Kansas families far into the future.

As we describe the impact of each funded initiative in the pages ahead, you might notice an even bigger story emerging. Kansans are coming together in support of early childhood initiatives in new and creative ways. Momentum behind *All In For Kansas Kids* is growing, and more of us are recognizing that this work is foundational to lifelong health, well-being, and prosperity. Research conclusively demonstrates that the first few years of life are critical in shaping a child's cognitive, emotional, and social development.

Our 2024 Annual Report presents program profiles and the results of annual evaluations for Children's Initiatives Fund, Early Childhood Block Grant, and Community Based Child Abuse Prevention grantees. These core programs are essential to addressing urgent state needs like improved third grade literacy and reduced placement into foster care. The report also details a new, generational investment in child care, the Child Care Capacity Accelerator, designed to rapidly and permanently boost capacity in communities across Kansas. The Accelerator combines federal funding and philanthropic dollars with local match from communities to build new facilities, support start-up operations, and renovate existing facilities for increased capacity, impacting a total of 96 child care facilities in 63 communities. And for the first time this year, we present activities and results of the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library after achieving statewide coverage. Evaluation results demonstrate that participation in the program improves early literacy skills necessary for classroom success.

Importantly, our core programs and these newer initiatives are not just about meeting immediate needs. We are making changes necessary to ensure a sustainable ecosystem that is robust and responsive, far into the future. To achieve this, we know that it is crucial to address the unique needs of rural communities in Kansas, where geographic isolation, limited access, and workforce shortages often create barriers for families.

This annual report describes work from across the early childhood ecosystem as guided by the [All In For Kansas Kids Needs Assessment](#), released early in 2024. This report, along with the Blueprint for Early Childhood informed development of the [2024 All In For Kansas Kids Strategic Plan](#), our new, five-year action plan, with roles for all members of the early childhood ecosystem.

In late September, we received notification of award from the federal Preschool Development Grant B-5 program. This systems-building grant will support *All In For Kansas Kids Strategic Plan* implementation and continued ecosystem growth over the next five years. Our funded proposal is a significant boon to our state (only ten states were awarded funds this round) and is further evidence of the growing coalescence around being "All In." We are grateful for your contributions on behalf of all Kansans.



# Our People

## Kansas Children's Cabinet Members

### FIVE VOTING MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR

#### **Don Hineman, Chair**

Don Hineman is a western Kansas farmer/rancher who works in partnership with his son Andy. He has served on numerous livestock boards and remains active in both livestock and grain industry organizations. A twelve-year veteran of the Kansas House of Representatives, he served a two-year term as House Majority Leader. His commitment to his local community has included serving on Dighton City Council, Lane County Commission, and Lane County Community Foundation. Don holds a bachelor's degree in business from the University of Kansas and master's degrees in business administration and natural resource management from the University of Michigan. His passion for early childhood education and intervention was ignited by his wife Betsy's forty-year career in early childhood. Don and Betsy reside in Dighton and have two grown children and five grandchildren.

**Dr. LeEtta Felter** is a dedicated public servant, child advocate, writer, artist, photographer, entrepreneur, philanthropist, and businesswoman from Olathe, Kansas. She has served on the Kansas Children's Cabinet under 3 different governors. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Management, a Master of Business Administration, and a Doctor of Education in Administration and Leadership. LeEtta is the Vice President of AAG Investments, and serves as a Councilwoman for the City of Olathe. LeEtta served for 12 years on the Olathe Public Schools Board of Education (2011-2023). She's the mom of four, and happily married to her husband of 35 years.

**DiAnne Owen Graham** is president of Graham Advisors, LLC, a nationally recognized consulting firm that specializes in political and issue advocacy fundraising for diverse clientele. She also serves as co-founder and partner at Strategic Advisors, LLC, a comprehensive public affairs firm. She served as a political appointee in President George W. Bush's Administration and held various roles with the U.S. Department of State. DiAnne graduated from The University of Mississippi and lives in Wichita, Kansas, with her husband, Chris, and their sons, Owen and Parker, who are students in Andover Public Schools. She was selected as one of the Wichita Business Journal's 40 Under 40 Awardees in 2017.

**Terri Rice** is Senior Marketing Manager for Cox Business and holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Management, Master of Business Administration and is a Doctor of Business Administration Candidate—May 2025. She serves on various committees and boards, and is heavily involved in nonprofit work, giving back to the community whenever possible. Terri and her husband live in Wichita, Kansas and are empty nesters, with three adult children.

**Dr. Tara D. Wallace** is a licensed clinical social worker and child trauma therapist in private practice. She volunteers on numerous community boards whose missions support the well-being of children and families in Kansas. Tara is also the founder of a nonprofit, Lighthouse Therapeutic Community Outreach Foundation, which promotes (W)Holistic Wellness in low-income and low-access communities. As an adjunct professor, best-selling author, and public speaker, Tara promotes awareness of issues related to child welfare and foster care, generational trauma, parental mental health, and social justice. Tara lives in Topeka, KS with her husband, son, and their four dogs.

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#### FOUR VOTING MEMBERS APPOINTED BY LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP

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**Renee Erickson** represents District 30 in the Kansas Senate. Her career experience includes working as a teacher, a data and assessment coordinator, a middle school principal, a financial planner, and the director of the USD 259 instructional technology center. She holds undergraduate degrees in both business and education with a master's degree in public school administration from Baker University, and a master's degree in family life education and consultation from Kansas State University.

**Kristey Williams** has served in the Kansas House since 2015. Her professional experiences include teaching secondary science, serving as mayor of Augusta, spearheading and fundraising for three major community projects, and serving as the House K-12 Education Budget Chair. She holds a bachelor's degree in biology and a master's in curriculum and instruction from the University of Kansas.

**Monica Murnan** is a licensed teacher and administrator who founded the Family Resource Center in Pittsburg, Kansas. She currently serves as director of community supports at Greenbush and has served on many nonprofit boards. She also served two terms in the Kansas Legislature representing House District 3 and four years on the Pittsburg City Commission with one year as Mayor. Monica and her husband, Rob, have three daughters and two grandchildren.

**John Wilson** is the president and CEO of Kansas Action for Children (KAC), a nonpartisan advocacy organization working to make Kansas a place where every child has the opportunity to grow up healthy and thrive. Prior to joining KAC, John served five years in the Kansas House of Representatives. John spent eleven years with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation—a partnership between the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation. During that time he coordinated strategic partnerships with corporations and celebrities, co-developed a national strategy for increasing physical activity and healthy eating in out-of-school time sites, and developed their youth engagement strategy. John also serves on the board of the Partnership for America's Children. He is a 2006 graduate of the University of Kansas, where he studied visual communication.

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#### EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

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**Laura Howard, J.D.** Secretary, Kansas Department for Children and Families

**Dr. Blake Flanders** President & CEO, Kansas Board of Regents (Karla Wiscombe, Designee)

**Janet Stanek** Secretary, Kansas Department of Health & Environment (Derik Flerlage, Amy Dean-Campmire, Co-Designees)

**Dr. Randy Watson** Commissioner of Education, Kansas State Department of Education (Amanda Petersen, Designee)

**Melissa Standridge, J.D.** Kansas Supreme Court Justice

**Jeff Zmuda** Secretary, Kansas Department of Corrections (Matthew Billinger, Designee)



## *Kansas Children's Cabinet Staff*

**Melissa Rooker** was named executive director of the Kansas Children's Cabinet in February 2019. Prior to this, Melissa served three terms in the Kansas House of Representatives, focusing on children's issues and public education. Before running for office, Melissa spent 15 years as a development executive at Warner Bros., Malpaso Productions. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Kansas and lives with her husband, Tom, in Fairway, Kansas. They have two married children and one grandson.

**Dyogga Adegbore** joined the Kansas Children's Cabinet in 2004 and has worked in state government 38 years. Dyogga handles Accounts Payables, prepares federal financial reports, board minutes, sets up contracts and grants, and makes travel arrangements. She worked with the CEOs of the Kansas Board of Regents, Kansas State Fire Marshal, and Kansas State Bank Commissioner offices. Dyogga is a graduate of Washburn University of Topeka and Platt College. She is married with one son who is in graduate school.

**Megan Brohaugh** joined the Kansas Children's Cabinet in January 2022. Prior to joining the Cabinet, Megan worked with the Kansas Attorney General's office for six years working with concealed carry licensing, private detective licensing, and bail enforcement licensing. Megan has worked with the state government for over eight years. She attended Washburn University to study business law. When she isn't running to a practice or tournament, she enjoys spending time outside with her two boys.

**Christie Wyckoff** joined the Kansas Children's Cabinet in May 2023. She graduated from Kansas State University in 2008 with a bachelor's in management and marketing. Through college, and 10 years after, Christie worked in the custom apparel industry. Just prior to coming to the Cabinet, she worked in School Finance at the Kansas State Department of Education for almost five years. Her family, friends, and their little ones are Christie's motivation for her professional and community work.

## **Thank you for your service on our board**

**Dr. Tyler K. Smith**

*(2019-2024)*

Cabinet Member

**Justice Keynen Wall Jr.**

*(2020-2024)*

Kansas Supreme Court Justice

**Delice Hofen**

*(2020-2024)*

Cabinet Member

**Jessie Piper**

*(2023-2024)*

Kansas Department of Health  
and Environment Designee

# Our Work

## Connector

Convenes diverse partners in children's issues from government, nonprofit, and the private sector.

## Champion

Elevates the importance of investing in early childhood and contributes to innovative program approaches.

## Strategist

Identifies opportunities for effective collaboration and overcomes barriers to optimal system performance.

## Manager

Manages grantmaking, fund administration, and strategic planning processes.

## Evaluator

Evaluates use of the CIF, contributes to data-informed decision making, and offers practice and policy recommendations.

# Our Commitment to Kansas Children and Families

The Kansas Children's Cabinet recognizes equitable life outcomes start with an early childhood system that acknowledges the fact children and families experience disproportionate access and opportunity across race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical and developmental abilities, home language, and geography. Equity is an organizing principle of the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan.

### *The Kansas Children's Cabinet is committed to:*

- meeting the diverse and unique needs of all Kansas families by coordinating systems-wide approaches to ensure services are available and accessible
- elevating family voice and choice
- using data in ethical, timely, and responsive ways in partnership with communities and a broad array of experts
- equitably funding programs

## OUR VISION

### Every Child Thrives

All children will have their basic needs met and have equitable access to quality early childhood care and education opportunities, so they are prepared to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

# The Blueprint for Early Childhood

The Kansas Children's Cabinet is charged with implementing a coordinated and comprehensive early childhood system, facilitating interagency cooperation, and advising the governor and legislature on investments in early childhood programs and services. To help meet this charge, the Kansas Children's Cabinet developed the Blueprint for Early Childhood (Blueprint). This visionary document guides state and local decision-making in ways that promote healthy development, strong families, and early learning.

**The Blueprint for Early Childhood is our state's strategic framework for ensuring that every child thrives.**

These three building blocks inform both cross-agency collaboration and the work within communities to ensure that all children and families get the support they need to thrive. In 2015, the Kansas State Board of Education further elevated the importance of early childhood by incorporating kindergarten readiness as a key outcome to achieving the Kansans Can vision—Kansas leading the world in the success of each student.

## Blueprint for Early Childhood

### Foundational Building Blocks



#### Healthy Development

Kansas children and families thrive when they have equitable access to comprehensive health and developmental services.



#### Strong Families

Kansas children and families are stronger when their basic needs are met.



#### Early Learning

Kansas children are prepared for success in kindergarten and beyond when their families have equitable access to quality care and early learning environments.

## Early Childhood Ecosystem

Components of the Kansas Early Childhood Ecosystem interact in complex and symbiotic ways to deliver impact. The Blueprint describes how these interactions result in positive early childhood experiences. We envision our mixed-delivery system as a healthy, sustainable ecosystem rooted in thriving communities.

### *Thriving communities are critical to ecosystem functioning*

When there is community-level buy-in from both public and private leaders to help strengthen families, invest in early learning, and support healthy development, our youngest Kansans and their families benefit. We are fortunate to have examples of thriving communities in all corners of our state where families experience a connected early childhood system and can seamlessly navigate the full range of services needed to thrive.



# Executive Summary

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The Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund is directed by state statute to undertake these four overarching responsibilities:

- Advise the governor and the legislature regarding the use of money credited to the Children’s Initiatives Fund.
- Evaluate programs that use Children’s Initiatives Fund money.
- Assist the governor in developing and implementing a coordinated, comprehensive delivery system to serve children and families in Kansas.
- Support the prevention of child abuse and neglect through the Children’s Trust Fund.

This annual report showcases the work of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet to meet these statutory responsibilities and plan for the long-term future of our children. Four sections describe the work, highlight insights, and articulate next steps:

## Our Progress

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The Kansas Children’s Cabinet distributes and oversees grants for the Children’s Initiatives Fund, Early Childhood Block Grant, and Community Based Child Abuse Prevention programs. “Our Progress” provides funding information and presents details of funded activities and program evaluation results.

## Strategic Approach

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In its role as a connector and strategist, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet is uniquely positioned to lead innovative work. “Strategic Approach” spotlights new approaches to improve conditions for children and families across the state, including generational investment in expanding child care capacity through the Child Care Capacity Accelerator program, a cross-initiative focus on the needs of rural communities, and the importance of centering the lived experience of families in all we do.

## Data for Impact

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Data-driven decision making is core to the Kansas Children’s Cabinet’s responsibility to advise the governor and legislature on issues relating to children and families. “Data for Impact” presents research projects that inform the Kansas Children’s Cabinet strategic direction, including the Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust, Our Tomorrows narrative research, and the first annual evaluation of the Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library.

## Recommendations

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The final section presents the Kansas Children’s Cabinet’s 2024 recommendations regarding use of the Children’s Initiatives Fund.



# Our Progress

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- Overview
- Children's Initiatives Fund
- Early Childhood Block Grant
- Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention
- Initiative Spotlights
  - Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
  - Early Childhood Recommendations Panel



## Overview

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet is charged by statute to manage and evaluate the use of the Children’s Initiatives Fund (CIF). The CIF is funded by Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement dollars and is one of the largest funding sources dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Kansas children and families. The Kansas Children’s Cabinet is also the state lead for managing and evaluating grant programs that support specific populations. The Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) provides support to children and families with identified risk factors, and the federally funded Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) program aims to prevent child maltreatment before it starts.

These key resources are distributed to grantees across the state to mitigate social, economic, and developmental barriers so that Kansas children and families can thrive. The CIF, ECBG, and CBCAP grant programs undergo rigorous annual evaluations to both ensure appropriate use of funding

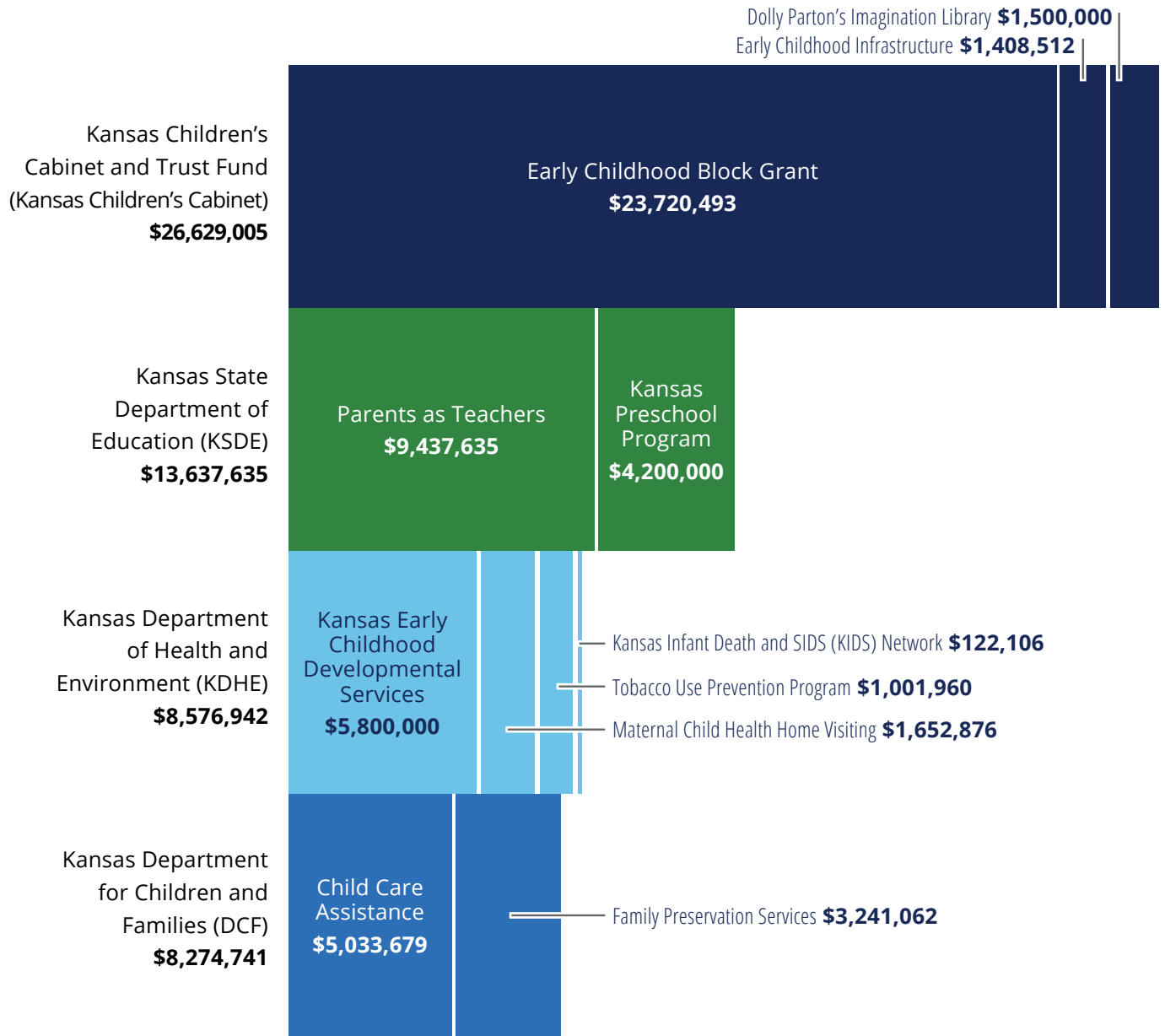
and measure progress toward child and family outcomes connected to long-term benefits for their health, well-being, and broader community.

Together, these sources strengthen the foundation of high-quality, research-based programming that facilitates healthy development, strong families, and early learning as described on the following pages.

**Consistent engagement in high-quality learning opportunities from birth through age 5 yields cumulative positive effects on the health and well-being of children and families across the lifespan and across generations, which in turn promotes community vitality and economic prosperity.**



# Total FY2024 CIF Funding | 57,493,323\*



\*Including \$375,000 allotted to the Kansas Children's Cabinet Accountability Fund.



## Children's Initiatives Fund

The 1999 Kansas Legislature created the Children's Initiatives Fund (CIF) to focus investment of Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement funds, as directed by the Kansas Children's Cabinet, in programs and services devoted to early childhood care and education. Kansas statute directs the Kansas Children's Cabinet to conduct an annual assessment of the CIF investments. The University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research conducts the annual Accountability Process for the CIF-funded programs. The Center for Applied Research and Evaluation at Wichita State University also provides support and analysis around the Common Measures Initiative for participating CIF grantees. The following pages provide an overview of each program, including the amount awarded from CIF, a brief description of services and their impacts over the past year, and the populations served.

**CIF-funded programs continue to report impact data that confirms their essential role in supporting Kansas children and families with access to high-quality early learning opportunities across settings. These programs encourage children to become lifelong learners by strengthening crucial skills related to reading proficiency and social engagement while also reducing parental stress.**

## Child Care Assistance

KANSAS DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

FY2024

\$5,033,679

The Child Care Assistance (CCA) program supports families who are initially living at or below 250% of the federal poverty level or who are at or below 85% of the state median income at their annual review. CCA provides families with financial support for child care while parents work, attend school, complete a GED, or fill a temporary emergency need. CCA promotes school readiness and financial stability for families by increasing access to high-quality child care environments. The program typically serves families with children under age 13 but some exceptions allow funding for children up to age 18.

Population FY2024	Served
Total Children	19,410
Prenatal to Age 3	9,579
Ages 3-5	4,177
Ages 5-12	5,561
Ages 12-18	93
Ages 18+	-
Caregivers	-
Professional Development	0

### Impact

- 71% of families receiving subsidies for a full year saw their household income increase or remain stable.
- Families continued to report being able to receive care they would not otherwise have access to without subsidies.

## Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

KANSAS CHILDREN'S CABINET AND TRUST FUND

FY2024

\$1,500,000

The Kansas Children's Cabinet serves as the statewide lead for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Kansas. Imagination Library mails free, age-appropriate books every month to all enrolled children from birth to their fifth birthday. As the state lead of the Imagination Library, the Kansas Children's Cabinet partners with local affiliate programs by providing a 50% financial match and promoting enrollment. Participation in the Imagination Library nurtures early literacy that prepares children's future success in school and beyond.

Population FY2024	Served
Total Children	76,955
Prenatal to Age 3	41,556
Ages 3-5	35,399
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Caregivers	0
Professional Development	0

### Impact

- 23,427 children were newly enrolled during FY2024.
- Statewide, 43% of age-eligible children participated in the Imagination Library.
- 653,632 books were distributed directly to children during FY2024.
- Children co-enrolled in the Imagination Library and Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) programming were more likely to improve in several key pre-literacy indicators than their peers only enrolled in ECBG.

## ➤ Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

### INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

Since the statewide expansion of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in 2023, program enrollment has more than doubled with about 43% of eligible children enrolled in 2024 compared to nearly 22% in 2021. An evaluation after the first year of statewide programming found that children's early literacy skills significantly improved. More details can be found in the Data for Impact section of this report. The second year of the statewide expansion of the Imagination Library of Kansas is underway with new initiatives and partnerships to ensure a sustainable future for the program.

Over the summer, the Imagination Library of Kansas partnered with Government Employees Health Association, Inc. (GEHA) to launch an awareness campaign targeting military families at Fort Leavenworth and Fort Riley. Both Army installations expressed enthusiasm for this partnership, which creatively engaged families and encouraged a love of reading through community events resulting in 938 newly enrolled families.



As of this fall, four Kansas State Parks—Clinton, El Dorado, Milford, and Wilson—now host Story Adventures, a collaboration with the Imagination Library of Kansas that promotes opportunities for families with young children to engage in literacy while enjoying time outside. Each park features a children's book on story panels throughout a trail, complete with interactive components including activities, conversation starters, and a QR code for families to scan for enrollment.

On August 14, 2024, the first anniversary of the Imagination Library of Kansas Day, the Kansas Children's Cabinet announced the formation of the Imagination Library of Kansas 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization to promote the long-term sustainability and statewide expansion of the program. The Imagination Library of Kansas 501(c)(3) will serve in a fundraising capacity as a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization for the statewide Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program.

## ➤ Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG)

KANSAS CHILDREN'S CABINET AND TRUST FUND

FY2024

**\$23,720,493**

Focusing on the critical years between birth and kindergarten, ECBG recipients provide services to at-risk children ages 0-5 and their families. Services include: Pre-K and 0-3 care and education, life skills education consultation, home visiting, literacy activities, and parent education. Programs participate in the Common Measures Initiative, which uses shared measurement tools to collect data and better understand statewide risk and program outcomes. Public-private partnerships are encouraged to maximize resources, foster innovation, and avoid duplication of services.

Population FY2024	Served
Total Children	8,067
Prenatal to Age 3	3,274
Ages 3-5	4,793
Ages 5-12	-
Ages 12-18	-
Ages 18+	-
Caregivers	6,976
Professional Development	1,937

### Impact

- 78% of classrooms were observed to be high quality, a 10% increase across the school year.
- Parent education helped increase positive parenting to 77%, a 17% increase from the start of the program.
- 87% of children were on track in early life skills, a 9% increase from the start of the school year

## ➤ Family Preservation Services

KANSAS DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

FY2024

**\$3,241,062**

Family Preservation Services equips families with the tools and supports needed to keep children safe and prevent out-of-home placements. Evidence-based assessments and family input help inform the development of a step-by-step plan to achieve family well-being. At Tier 1, Intensive In-Home Family Preservation Services are provided to mitigate immediate child safety concerns, stabilize family crises, and assess the family's needs. At Tier 2, Short-Term Family Preservation Case Management Services are provided by a Case Manager and a Family Support Worker who assess for existing risk and emergent safety issues and, when identified, initiate services to stabilize and support the family.

Population FY2024	Served
Total Children	3,605
Prenatal to Age 3	598
Ages 3-5	376
Ages 5-12	1,444
Ages 12-18	1,182
Ages 18+	5
Caregivers	2,289
Professional Development	45

### Impact

- 96% (Tier 1) and 89% (Tier 2) of children maintained safely at home.
- 98% (Tier 1) and 97% (Tier 2) of families did not experience substantiated abuse or neglect during services.

## ➤ Kansas Early Childhood Developmental Services

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

FY2024

**\$5,800,000**

As part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C, Kansas Early Childhood Developmental Services provides early intervention services for children from birth to age 3 who have a disability or a developmental delay, and their families. Services are delivered to families in their natural environments, and providers work alongside community partners to ensure families have resources to support their child's development.

Population FY2024	Served
Total Children	11,610
Prenatal to Age 3	11,610
Ages 3-5	-
Ages 5-12	-
Ages 12-18	-
Ages 18+	-
Caregivers	11,610+
Professional Development	400+

### Impact

- 99.6% of children with an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) demonstrated improved positive life skills or had skills comparable to same-aged peers.
- 99.6% of children with an IFSP demonstrated improved acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, including early language skills or had skills comparable to same-aged peers.
- 99.7% of children with an IFSP demonstrated improved use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs or had skills comparable to same-aged peers.

## ➤ Kansas Preschool Program (KPP)

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FY2024

**\$4,200,000**

KPP funds school districts and community partners to support high quality preschool programming for children ages 3-5. The program implements evidence-based curricula, instruction, and assessment practices shown to prevent later academic and behavioral challenges. Four key components guide the work of KPP: community collaboration, family engagement, high quality early learning experiences, and successful children. Each of these elements are known to improve quality in early learning and promote success in school.

Population FY2024	Served
Total Children	4,115
Prenatal to Age 3	-
Ages 3-5	4,115
Ages 5-12	-
Ages 12-18	-
Ages 18+	-
Caregivers	-
Professional Development	774

### Impact

- 96% of preschoolers showed improvement in literacy from the beginning of the program year to the end.
- 97% of preschoolers showed improvement in mathematics from the beginning of the program year to the end.
- 95% of preschoolers showed improvement in life skills education from the beginning of the program year to the end.

## ➤ Kansas Infant Death and SIDS (KIDS) Network

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

FY2024  
\$122,106

The KIDS Network serves individuals touched by the tragedy of infant death or SIDS and is a central point of contact for those working to reduce the risk of infant deaths. The program provides grief support services, community education, professional training, and associated research. Events such as Safe Sleep Instructor Certification, Baby Showers, and Crib Clinics educate current and expectant parents, relatives, community members, and health and child care providers on safe sleep practices to eradicate preventable infant deaths.

Population FY2024	Served
Total Children	12,919
Prenatal to Age 3	12,808
Ages 3-5	35
Ages 5-12	50
Ages 12-18	26
Ages 18+	-
Caregivers	15,986
Professional Development	3,017

### Impact

- 285 Safe Sleep events were held across 40 Kansas counties.
- 8 hospitals gained Safe Sleep Hospital Certification through the KIDS certification process.
- 7 Safe Sleep Clinics (obstetrics, pediatrics, and family medicine) achieved a Safe Sleep Star and were certified by the KIDS Network.

## ➤ Maternal Child Health (MCH) Home Visiting

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

FY2024  
\$1,652,876

The MCH Home Visiting Program is a strengths-based model connecting any Kansas family with infants to resources to create a safe, stable, and nurturing home environment. Families receive individualized services before, during, and after pregnancy, with the frequency of visits and duration of services based on each family's needs. Home visitors act as a bridge for families in setting and reaching their parenting goals by sharing information about child development, health and safety, and positive parenting behaviors, and by connecting them to community-based resources, services, and supports.

Population FY2024	Served
Total Children	4,460
Prenatal to Age 3	4,460
Ages 3-5	-
Ages 5-12	-
Ages 12-18	-
Ages 18+	-
Caregivers	5,464
Professional Development	550

### Impact

- Programs reductions in likelihood of child maltreatment and increases positive parenting and child interactions.
- Over 8,000 visits were conducted.
- 63% of women initiated prenatal care in the first trimester.
- 66% of mothers reported breastfeeding during the child's first year.

## ➤ Parents as Teachers (PAT)

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FY2024

**\$9,437,635**

PAT is an evidence-based parent education and family engagement home visiting model designed to give parents and caregivers tools to support their child's development. In coordination with the Kansas State Department of Education and local school districts, certified parent educators work with families to foster healthy development and promote positive parent-child interactions. Developmental and health screenings are used to identify potential delays or areas of concern, implement interventions, and refer families to additional community resources when needed.

Population FY2024	Served
Total Children	7,912
Prenatal to Age 3	6,804
Ages 3-5	1,108
Ages 5-12	-
Ages 12-18	-
Ages 18+	-
Caregivers	5,847
Professional Development	62

### Impact

- 54,572 personal visits were conducted.
- 92% of the families enrolled in PAT were linked to at least one community resource during the program year.
- The program achieved an 89% retention rate (excluding families who moved out of the service area).

## ➤ Tobacco Use Prevention Program

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

FY2024

**\$1,001,960**

The Tobacco Use Prevention Program uses evidence-based strategies and community partnerships to educate the public and increase awareness about the negative health effects of tobacco use. The program aims to prevent children from becoming smokers, reduce tobacco-related deaths and exposure to second-hand smoke, and promote policy change. To support the success of current tobacco users who are trying to quit, the program operates the Kansas Tobacco Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW).

Population FY2024	Served
Total Children	456,817
Prenatal to Age 3	69,978
Ages 3-5	74,277
Ages 5-12	154,362
Ages 12-18	158,200
Ages 18+	1,446,710
Caregivers	unknown
Professional Development	1,118

### Impact

- 93% of children were born to smoke-free mothers.
- 50% of the adult smoking population in Kansas tried to quit in the past year.
- 3 new tobacco control policies were implemented at the local level since March 31, 2024.



## ➤ Early Childhood Infrastructure

KANSAS CHILDREN'S CABINET AND TRUST FUND

FY2024

**\$1,408,512**

Early Childhood Infrastructure is a line item within the CIF to support the long-term vision of the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan. Setting aside dedicated funds to support the early childhood ecosystem will help the Kansas Children's Cabinet fulfill its role as a connector and its statutory responsibilities as the coordinating entity for the early childhood system in Kansas. Expenses will vary from year to year depending on project needs.

### **Impact**

- Provided funding support for 1-800-CHILDREN.
- Funded Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) Authorized Projects.
- Provided one-time expenses for program support.
- Funded cabinet administration.



## CIF Accountability Process

All programs receiving funding from the Children’s Initiatives Fund (CIF) participate in an annual **Accountability Process**. This process, which began in 2006, is responsive to the Kansas statute requiring that the Kansas Children’s Cabinet “review, assess, and evaluate all uses of the monies in the Children’s Initiatives Fund” as part of annual allocations.

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet works with researchers at the **University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research** to interview grantees, complete site visits, compile data, and analyze service delivery and outcomes for each program. Researchers provide ongoing technical assistance in interpreting and using results for program improvement.

Findings from this process are used to inform funding recommendations to the governor and the legislature. The process has also served as an opportunity to provide program staff with technical assistance on data and evaluation. Over the years, programs have improved their data collection and reporting processes as a result of participating in the Accountability Process. We also use the Accountability Process to provide feedback that helps our grantees improve the quality of services and outcomes. This table displays evaluation questions that guide our Accountability Process to establish and maintain high-quality early childhood programming in Kansas.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Evaluation Questions</i>
Program Service Provision	What services does each program provide and who is receiving those services?
	Which programs have made changes to their services since the last Accountability Process?
	Do these services help meet the needs of children and families in Kansas?
	How do programs know they are meeting the needs of their communities?
	What barriers are programs and families experiencing?
	How do programs involve family voices in programmatic decision-making?
Data and Evaluation	What additional services/supports could increase the positive impacts of CIF-funded programs?
	What is the data collection capacity for CIF-funded programs?
	At what level are programs collecting data (individual, aggregate)?
	What are the impacts of program services offered and how are these measured?
	How do programs use their data to inform services/practice?
Early Childhood Care and Education Ecosystem	What do families report they or their children have gained from the services provided?
	How do CIF-funded programs fit into the early childhood care and education ecosystem in Kansas and address the goals of the <i>All In For Kansas Kids</i> Strategic Plan?

Due to the varied nature of service delivery, population served, and program implementation, researchers assess each program independently using three data sources:

- **Program reports** include evaluation reports submitted to federal funding agencies, program annual reports, and/or research reports that were used internally for programmatic decision making and were collected during the previous reporting year. This information both informs the grantee interviews and guides the analysis of *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan alignment.
- **Online survey responses** provide key information relevant to funding, partnerships, and population served.
- **Program interviews** provide integral information to address each research question, offer additional context for findings, and allow the grantees to highlight success from the past year along with areas needing further support.



## CIF Program

## Evaluation Practices

Child Care Assistance	Quality Control Reviewers evaluate random samples of cases throughout the year to ensure payment and eligibility requirements, identify any training needs of staff, and align with new policies and regulations.
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library	The University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research (KU-CPPR) conduct an evaluation measuring the program's reach and impact. Programmatic data is provided by The Dollywood Foundation and connected to other early childhood indicators to examine impact.
Early Childhood Block Grant	The Center for Applied Research and Evaluation at Wichita State University conducts an annual, standardized evaluation across all ECBG programs.
Early Childhood Infrastructure	Early Childhood Infrastructure budgets and spending are tracked by the Kansas Children's Cabinet to ensure alignment with the <i>All In For Kansas Kids</i> Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan.
Family Prevention Services	The program conducts quarterly case reads to assess quality of standards, improve performance, and meet federal guidelines for in-home services. Data are gathered and reconciled monthly with providers.
Kansas Early Childhood Developmental Services	The annual Child Outcome Summary process measures progress for children with disabilities and developmental delays within early intervention programs. Data is entered into a Kansas Department of Health and Environment data system.
Kansas Preschool Program	The program collects data on evidence-based services offered through each preschool program site, and child level information is entered into the Kansas Individual Data on Students (KIDS) database.
KIDS Network	University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita conducts an annual evaluation to measure knowledge and behavioral changes, service delivery, and outcomes.
Maternal and Child Health Home Visiting	The program uses a shared measurement system (DAISEY) for data entry and reporting. Evaluations focus on program service and continuous quality improvement to better connect families to existing resources. MCH Home Visiting is partnering with KU-CPPR to evaluate the impact of home visiting expansion efforts in Kansas.
Parents as Teachers	The program reports annually on national affiliate requirements for demographics, assessment data, referral outcomes, and retention statistics.
Tobacco Use Prevention	The program's annual evaluation incorporates individual grantee performance measures and data from state-level surveillance systems. Findings are reported annually to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

## Key Takeaways

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The Accountability Process provides detailed information on goals, service delivery types, populations served, and evaluation results for each of the programs supported by CIF. It is also an opportunity to identify trends, commonalities, and emerging issues across programs to inform strategic investment decisions and recommendations to the governor and legislature. Researchers identified five key takeaways in their analysis of data collected during the 2024 Accountability Process.

### **Supporting Families**

CIF programs continue to provide essential support for the healthy development of Kansas children and families. Performance metrics reported by programs and direct feedback shared by families provide evidence supporting both the need for and benefits of this wide array of services.

### **Increasing Program Impact**

CIF provides an essential source of funding that allows early childhood programs to extend their reach and increase their impact on children and families in Kansas. All CIF programs utilize multiple funding streams, including instances where CIF dollars are utilized as Matching or Maintenance of Effort funds to draw down additional federal early childhood funding and increase its impact. Further, other programs leverage additional federal, state, and local funds as cost shares to implement their services. In all cases, programs are able to reach additional children and families not possible without CIF.

### **Basic Needs**

CIF programs connect families to additional support as necessary and reveal that while families remain resilient in the face of challenges, many of their basic needs are not being met. This parallels findings from recent needs assessments in Kansas showing a lack of food security, affordable housing, and health services. This is consistent with national trends as well. The U.S. Surgeon General recently reported that worries about meeting basic needs are a key driver of parental stress, which is increasing and remains significantly higher than that of other adults.

### **Staffing**

Programs supported by the CIF face many of the same challenges as those described in the *All In For Kansas Kids* needs assessments. While many are being innovative in their efforts to address and mitigate challenges exacerbated by the pandemic, they continue struggling to find and retain staff. Low wages are frequently cited as a main contributor to recruiting and retention concerns.

### **Mental Health**

An emerging challenge expressed by many CIF programs, which mirrors trends seen across the nation, is the need for additional mental and behavioral health resources for children, families, and service providers. Programs are not adequately prepared to serve the increasing influx of children with behavioral support needs, and both families and staff are requesting additional mental health services.



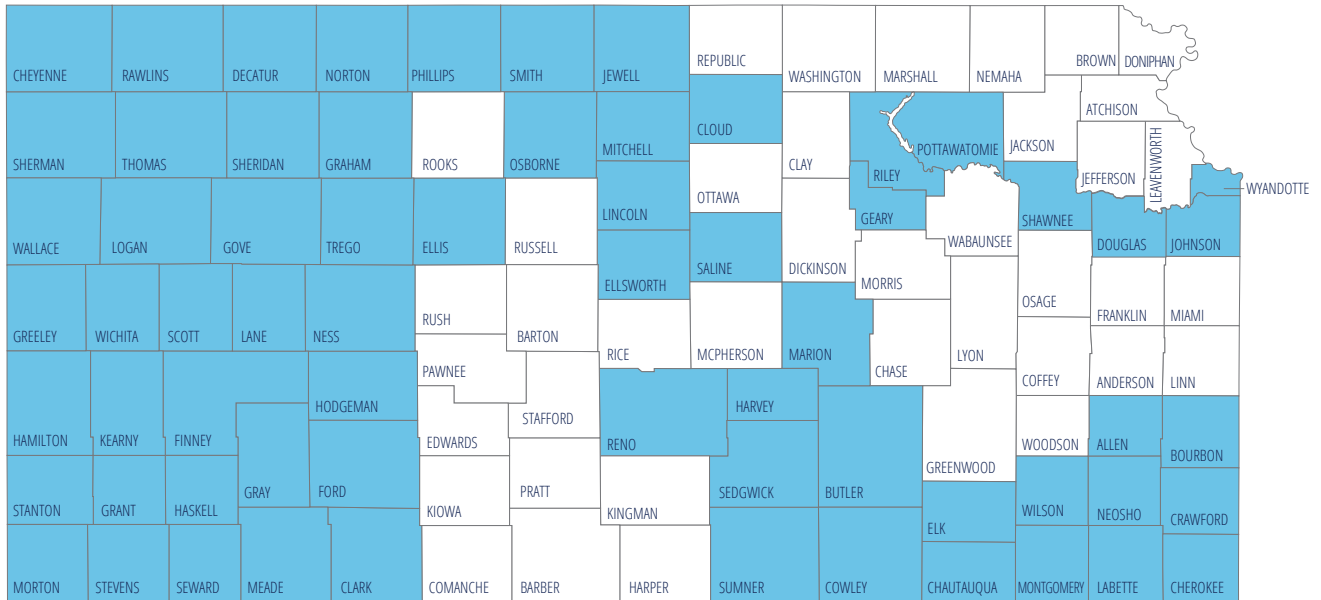
## Early Childhood Block Grant

Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) recipients provide services to children, ages birth to 5 with identified risk factors, and their families. The Kansas Children’s Cabinet distributes grants through a statewide, competitive process. ECBG programs include care and education for children birth to age 3, Pre-K services, life skills education consultation, home visiting, literacy activities, and parent education. The Center for Applied Research and Evaluation at Wichita State University (WSU) conducts an annual evaluation of these programs. ECBG programs are community-focused with services that are responsive to local needs. In 2024, 26 grantees were awarded across the state. The table on the following page shows the types of service provided and the number of grantees providing each. The following pages provide details on each of the grantees, including funding, populations served, and outcomes.

**In 2024, ECBG-funded programs served over 8,000 children and almost 7,000 caregivers across 63 counties. These programs facilitate young children’s language, literacy, and life skills competence, which increases the likelihood that children will engage in self-regulation skills, develop healthy relationships, and establish economic stability in adulthood.**

# ECBG Reach and Services

## Counties Served



Service Types	Grantees
Early Care and Education	21
Parent Education	11
Home Visiting	10
Life Skills Education	7
Case Management	4
Mental & Behavioral Health Services	7
Family Engagement & Referrals	2



**Child Advocacy and Parenting Services (CAPS) | \$1,034,660**

**567** Children Served | **474** Caregivers Served

84% of families had one or more risk factors.

89% of Pre-K children were on track in language comprehension in the spring.

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**Child Start, Inc.–Early Childhood Connections | \$187,388**

**34** Children Served | **6** Caregivers Served

53% of children had an indication of developmental risk.

71% of all classroom environments were observed to meet high quality standards.

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**Early Childhood Collective of Douglas County dba Success By 6 Coalition of Douglas County (SB6) | \$1,018,285**

**237** Children Served | **204** Caregivers Served

95% of families had one or more risk factors and 74% had three or more.

80% of environments were observed to meet high quality standards.

---

**Families And Communities Together, Inc. (FACT)–It Takes A Village (ITAV) | \$198,385**

**216** Children Served | **214** Caregivers Served

76% of families had one or more risk factors.

97% of Pre-K children were on track in language comprehension.

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**Family Resource Center, Inc. (FRC) | \$1,861,888**

**966** Children Served | **850** Caregivers Served

96% of families had one or more risk factors.

82% of children were on track in early communication.

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**Four County Mental Health Center, Inc. | \$472,209**

**108** Children Served | **78** Caregivers Served

99% of families served had one or more risk factors and 56% had three or more risk factors.

85% of caregivers displayed positive parenting at the end of the parent education program.

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**Growing Futures Early Education Center | \$510,642**

**202** Children Served | **168** Caregivers Served

100% of families had one or more risk factors and 75% had three or more.

90% of caregivers displayed positive parenting at the end of the parent education program.

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**Junction City Family YMCA (JC-YMCA) | \$463,085**

**194** Children Served | **134** Caregivers Served

99% of families had one or more risk factors.

42% increase in parents who displayed positive parenting skills by the end of services.

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**Kansas Children’s Service League (KCSL) | \$395,484**

**87** Children Served | **87** Caregivers Served

75% of families had one or more risk factors.

28% increase of children on track in life skills development by the spring.

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**LiveWell Northwest Kansas | \$496,634**

**260** Children Served | **213** Caregivers Served

88% of families had one or more risk factors.

94% of classrooms were observed to meet high quality standards.

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**Phillipsburg Child Care Center (PCCC) | \$100,911**

**25** Children Served | **15** Caregivers Served

67% of families had one or more risk factors.

100% of Pre-K children were on track in numeracy.

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**Riley County Health Department–Raising Riley | \$911,757**

**245** Children Served | **229** Caregivers Served

99% of families had one or more risk factors.

67% of Pre-K children were on track in phonological awareness, which was the highest percentage in any ECBG program.

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**Russell Child Development Center (RCDC) | \$2,569,565**

**1,142** Children Served | **894** Caregivers Served

89% of families had one or more risk factors.

45% increase in children on track in language comprehension from fall (30%) to spring (75%).

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**The Family Conservancy–Start Young | \$1,790,383**

**733** Children Served | **617** Caregivers Served

88% of families had one or more risk factors and 52% had three or more.

62% of children were on track in early communication by spring.

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**TOP Early Learning Centers | \$2,962,684**

**485** Children Served | **443** Caregivers Served

96% of families had one or more risk factors.

100% of caregivers displayed positive parenting by the end of the program.

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**Tree House Early Learning Center | \$200,000**

**11** Children Served | **11** Caregivers Served

91% of families had one or more risk factors.

100% of classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.

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**United Way of Kaw Valley–Capital Area Successful Start (CASS) | \$2,530,492**

**993** Children Served | **880** Caregivers Served

89% of families had one or more risk factors.

28% increase in proficiency in early communication from fall to spring.

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**United Way of Reno County (UWRC) | \$922,906**

**445** Children Served | **425** Caregivers Served

87% of families had one or more risk factors.

71% of 3-year-old children were on track in emergent literacy by spring.

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**United Way of the Plains (UWP) | \$779,884**

**296** Children Served | **285** Caregivers Served

93% of families had one or more risk factors, and 55% had three or more.

71% of children achieved proficiency on the DECA by spring.

---

**USD 273 Beloit–Mitchell County Partnership for Children (MCPC) | \$414,500**

**307** Children Served | **272** Caregivers Served

71% of families had one or more risk factors.

96% of classrooms were observed to meet high quality standards.

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### USD 293 Quinter | \$151,730

38 Children Served | 34 Caregivers Served

88% of families had one or more risk factors.

92% of Pre-K children were on track in language comprehension.

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### USD 298 Lincoln | \$127,396

39 Children Served | 32 Caregivers Served

78% of families had one or more risk factors.

100% of Pre-K classrooms were observed to meet high quality standards.

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### USD 445 Coffeyville | \$790,848

182 Children Served | 162 Caregivers Served

94% of families had one or more risk factors and 57% had three or more.

100% of Pre-K classrooms were observed to meet high quality standards.

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### USD 450 Shawnee Heights | \$360,504

61 Children Served | 58 Caregivers Served

81% of families had one or more risk factors.

93% of children were on track in life skills development by spring.

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### USD 489 Hays–Early Childhood Connections | \$380,733

73 Children Served | 70 Caregivers Served

100% of families had one or more risk factors and 67% had three or more.

81% of Pre-K children were on track in numeracy.

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### USD 500 Kansas City–Project SPARK | \$1,167,047

121 Children Served | 116 Caregivers Served

100% of families had one or more risk factors and 82% had three or more.

26% increase in children on track in numeracy reaching 71% in the spring.

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## ECBG Evaluation

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The Kansas Children’s Cabinet is required by state statute to direct investments toward programs and services that are data-driven and outcomes-based. The **Center for Applied Research at Wichita State University** conducts an annual evaluation of ECBG programs through collection and analysis of common measures.

The **Common Measures Initiative** is a system of shared measurement that fosters continuous quality improvement by monitoring performance, tracking progress toward goals, and learning what is and is not working. While each funded program offers unique expertise and services, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet uses common measures to:

- create alignment among grantee goals
- encourage an informal, ongoing learning community that supports quality programming
- build more collaborative problem solving

Grantees enter common measures data into DAISEY, a shared measurement system, to demonstrate success of their early childhood programming. DAISEY is a secure, HIPAA-compliant, web-based reporting system developed by the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research. DAISEY is licensed to the Kansas Children's Cabinet to support the collection and reporting of child and family outcomes.

Results from the ECBG evaluation inform the Accountability Process and the Kansas Children's Cabinet's recommendations to the governor and legislature. Evaluators also conduct site visits and provide ongoing assistance with interpreting and using results for program improvement.

### ***Ages & Stages Questionnaires®, Third Edition (ASQ-3)***

A developmental screening tool for ages 1 month to 6½ years that provides a snapshot of children's development in five areas.

### ***Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ:SE-2)***

A life skills screening tool for ages 1 month to 6½ years that provides a snapshot of children's behavior and emotions in seven areas.

### ***Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)***

An assessment of classroom quality for programs serving ages 15 months to 3 years.

### ***Devereux Early Childhood Assessments (DECA)***

A behavior rating scale for screening or assessment for ages 4 weeks to 6 years of age.

### ***Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs)***

Measures that monitor growth and development for ages 6 months to 3 ½ years using child-friendly, play-based assessments of communication, movement, social skills, and problem solving.

### ***Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS)***

An assessment of parenting skills for families with children ages 2 months to 5 years.

### ***myIndividual Growth and Development Indicators (myIGDIs)***

Progress monitoring measures designed for children 3 years and up specifically concentrating on early literacy and early numeracy.

### ***Parental Stress Index, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition Short Form (PSI SF)***

A self-report tool for parents of children birth to 12 years old helping providers and families identify different types of stress associated with parenting.

### ***Protective Factors Survey, 2nd Edition (PFS-2)***

A pre-post evaluation tool for use with families receiving child maltreatment prevention services.

## ECBG Impacts

The Early Childhood Block Grant was established to expand access to early childhood services in underserved communities. The counties served are primarily classified as rural and frontier where few, if any, other early childhood programs exist.

### ECBG prioritizes **children and families with identified needs**



● **51%** identified with a developmental delay

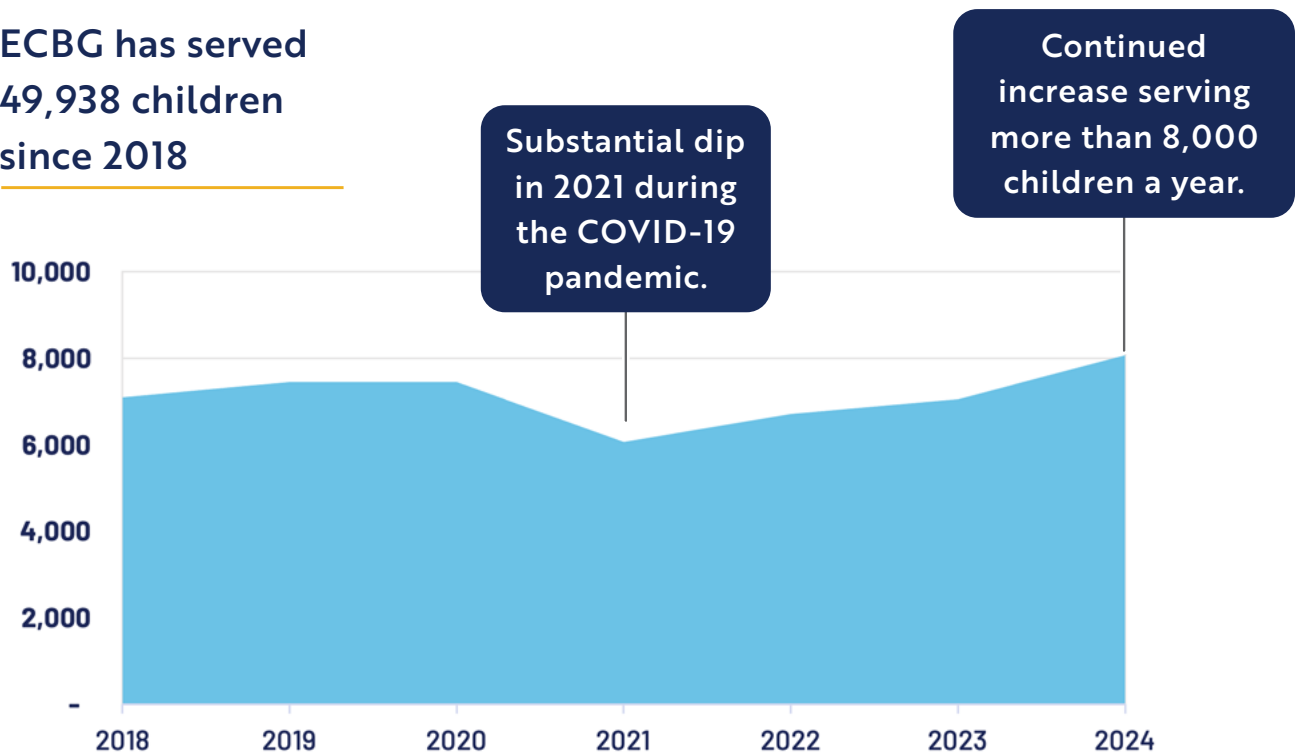
● **70%** qualified for free/reduced price lunch

● **90%** with at least one risk factor

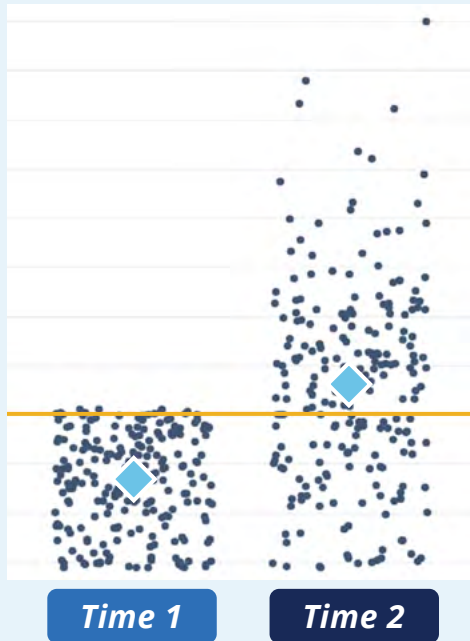
● **44%** with three or more risk factors

In 2024, ECBG was able to expand the number of children served, overcoming the reduced enrollment from the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**ECBG has served  
49,938 children  
since 2018**



## Early Life Skills improved for children considered at-risk from Time 1 to Time 2



**58%** of children in ECBG programs whose early life skills were considered at-risk at the start of the school year were proficient by the end of the year.

Research demonstrates that these skills are critical for school readiness.

◆ Average ● Scores — At-risk Cutoff

The first authorized project under the Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust consistently found that participation in ECBG is associated with reduced likelihood of children being removed from their families into foster care. Read more about the [Cumulative Prevention Effect: Reducing Foster Care Removals Through Early Childhood Services \(beginning on page 70\)](#).

Participation in ECBG is associated with reduced likelihood of children being removed from their families into foster care, yielding

**\$22 million**  
in cost avoidance to the state.

## ➤ Early Childhood Recommendations Panel

### INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

The Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel (Panel) is the working group of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet in its role as the designated Early Childhood Advisory Council. The Panel plays a key role in enabling our state to implement the *All In For Kansas Kids Strategic Plan*, respond to challenges, elevate recommendations from communities, and make decisions to help us achieve the vision of every child thriving.

On August 2, 2024, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet, in its role as the Kansas Early Childhood Advisory Council, adopted the Panel’s Promote Family Friendly Workplaces recommendation encouraging Kansas employers to implement family-friendly workplace practices that can, in turn, strengthen families, businesses, and the Kansas economy. Child Care Aware of Kansas developed the Guide to Family Forward Workplaces to help employers identify practices best suited to individual workplaces. Further, the Family Friendly Workplace Survey from Kansas Children’s Service League helps employers evaluate and improve their own policies and practices.





# Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

The Kansas Children's Cabinet is the state lead agency for federally funded Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) grants. CBCAP focuses on strengthening and supporting families to prevent the likelihood of abuse or neglect. CBCAP programs are designed to help families experiencing a life disruption by connecting them to services before it becomes a crisis. Together, CBCAP programs form a system that ensures the well-being, safety, and stability of children and families. Through authentic engagement with communities and those with lived experience, including former foster youth and caregivers, the system strengthens families, addresses social determinants of health, and promotes lifelong well-being in Kansas. Total combined 2024 funding for Kansas CBCAP was \$2,050,484, which includes American Rescue Plan Act funding.

**In 2024, CBCAP programs served over 1,200 children and caregivers in 11 communities.**

The following pages provide an overview of each program, including the award amount from CBCAP, a brief description of services, and the populations served.

## ➤ Community Children’s Center, Inc. (CCC)

FY2024  
\$194,000

CCC provides young children a nurturing and educational environment, currently offering family support programming and developing an Early Childhood Community Center. Slated to open in early 2025, the center will serve as a hub of family services and resources, including high-quality care for children aged 0-5, emphasizing infants to 18 months. Over 7,000 Douglas County children under the age of six and their families will benefit from this multigenerational, trauma-informed, evidence-based, mixed-delivery approach, which will bolster protective factors to strengthen families and reduce the likelihood of abuse or neglect.

- CCC hosted **59 family engagement opportunities, serving 720 adults and 803 children** with playgroups and caregiver support.
- By engaging with CCC programming, **438 caregivers and children received concrete supports** like hygiene items, household goods, and food assistance.

## ➤ Circle of Security

ELIZABETH LAYTON CENTER

FY2024  
\$49,274

Circle of Security is a community-based collaboration with the Franklin and Miami County Health and Education Departments. The program addresses child maltreatment prevention through home visiting, education interventions, and family therapy. Referrals come from Head Start, local primary care physicians, schools, domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters, and community mental health workers. Circle of Security parenting education curriculum is used to promote protective factors such as healthy attachment and nurturing.

Population FY2024	Served
Total Children	137
Ages 0-1	3
Ages 2-3	12
Ages 4-5	32
Ages 6-11	63
Ages 12-18	15
Ages 19+	3
Age Unknown	9
Caregivers	115

## ➤ Healthy Parents, Healthy Kids

THE FAMILY CONSERVANCY

FY2024  
\$146,914

The Healthy Parents, Healthy Kids program assists families in Wyandotte County’s public housing communities in adopting constructive relationship skills within their families, community, and as parents or caregivers of young children. The program uses three well-supported, evidence-based models: The Incredible Years, Child of Mine, and Conscious Fathering. These curricula work in concert to address the five protective factors outlined in the Strengthening Families™ research.

Population FY2024	Served
Total Children	211
Ages 0-1	49
Ages 2-3	40
Ages 4-5	40
Ages 6-11	57
Ages 12-18	19
Ages 19+	5
Age Unknown	1
Caregivers	133



## Response Advocates

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

FY2024  
**\$191,341**

Response Advocates works alongside law enforcement in the City of Pittsburg to assist families at risk for child maltreatment. This program uses home visiting, parenting education, and comprehensive case management to strengthen family protective factors and prevent child abuse and neglect. Response Advocates also works extensively to educate law enforcement about prevention and to facilitate strong collaborations with Early Head Start, Crawford County Mental Health, and local domestic violence shelters. Response Advocates employs the Protective Factors Survey and the Strengthening Families™ approach.

Population FY2024	Served
Total Children	499
Ages 0-1	58
Ages 2-3	59
Ages 4-5	56
Ages 6-11	166
Ages 12-18	132
Ages 19+	22
Age Unknown	6
Caregivers	315

## Statewide Grantee

KANSAS CHILDREN'S SERVICE LEAGUE (KCSL)

FY2024  
**\$400,000**

KCSL, the statewide CBCAP grantee, works to prevent child abuse and neglect with an emphasis on strengthening family protective factors. Statewide activities support systems change and child and family well-being by providing professional education to professionals across the state (Period of PURPLE Crying and the Governor's Conference for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect); raising public awareness of child maltreatment prevention; promoting parent partnership (Circle of Parents), leadership and engagement; and connecting families to existing local services (1-800-CHILDREN).

Population FY2024	Served
Total Children	74
Ages 0-1	8
Ages 2-3	10
Ages 4-5	7
Ages 6-11	26
Ages 12-18	12
Ages 19+	1
Age Unknown	10
Caregivers	471

## Preventative Legal Services

KANSAS HOLISTIC DEFENDERS (KHD)

FY2024  
**\$160,000**

KHD serves families with civil legal needs. Preventative legal services focus on stabilizing families' basic needs such as access to housing, benefits, and other social determinants of health. One staff attorney and one client advocate support CBCAP programming with legal services and family advocacy. As part of this grant, KHD partnered with the Harvard Access to Justice Lab to implement a randomized control trial studying the effects of access to civil legal services on improved educational and financial outcomes for children and families.

Population FY2024	Served
Total Children	57
Ages 0-1	7
Ages 2-3	7
Ages 4-5	6
Ages 6-11	17
Ages 12-18	20
Ages 19+	0
Age Unknown	0
Caregivers	43

## ➤ Mi Apoyo Prenatal

LAWRENCE-DOUGLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

FY2024  
**\$173,135**

Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department provides care coordination/case management, prenatal education, and parent/peer support for underinsured women in Douglas County. The program offers classes using the Becoming a Mom curriculum, and participants have the option to participate in the Healthy Families of Douglas County home visiting program or receive case management.

Population FY2024	Served
Total Children	51
Ages 0-1	47
Ages 2-3	3
Ages 4-5	1
Ages 6-11	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 19+	0
Age Unknown	0
Caregivers	63

## ➤ Parent-Child Assistance Program (P-CAP)

KANSAS CHILDREN'S SERVICE LEAGUE

FY2024  
**\$229,197**

KCSL P-CAP includes early identification of substance using parents and intensive, in-home, weekly support to families facing multiple challenges. The program objectives are to: 1) prevent child maltreatment; 2) engage the parent into substance use assessment and treatment services; 3) provide recovery support and positive social connections; 4) increase positive parenting skills and parent-child interactions; and 5) improve child health and well-being.

Population FY2024	Served
Total Children	69
Ages 0-1	30
Ages 2-3	13
Ages 4-5	13
Ages 6-11	8
Ages 12-18	1
Ages 19+	0
Age Unknown	4
Caregivers	59

## ➤ Family Support Program

PONY EXPRESS PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN (PEPC)

FY2024  
**\$234,500**

PEPC Family Support Program provides long-term rental assistance to unhoused families and those at-risk of homelessness, prenatal support, home visiting with comprehensive case management, early intervention screenings, individualized parenting education, resource and referral, and quality child care for second-shift working parents. In January 2023, PEPC opened Bright Beginnings, a child care facility available to families at all income levels.

Population FY2024	Served
Total Children	66
Ages 0-1	13
Ages 2-3	14
Ages 4-5	8
Ages 6-11	21
Ages 12-18	9
Ages 19+	0
Age Unknown	1
Caregivers	33

## Family Engagement in Public Libraries

SOUTHEAST KANSAS LIBRARY SYSTEM (SEKLS)

FY2024  
**\$54,000**

The SEKLS implemented the Family Engagement in Public Libraries model. Elements of the Family Engagement Model include monthly playdates to provide in-time parenting information and supports for families, opportunities for social interaction and increased parental resilience, developmentally appropriate story times to model interactions for families, which increases parenting knowledge; completion of the Grow Your Brain play area, the Family Place national certification, which provides sanitary, safe spaces with developmentally appropriate toys and manipulatives as well as parenting information and developmentally appropriate literature to share with young children.

- SEKLS libraries **hosted 272 events** that **served 1,544 adults and 2,957 children.**
- 6,719 individuals utilized the Children and Families section** of the library, including the Grow Your Brain area.

## Wichita Crisis Nursery

KANSAS CHILDREN'S SERVICE LEAGUE

FY2024  
**\$218,123**

The Wichita Crisis Nursery strengthens families by providing respite and emergency child care, case management, and parenting education. The Crisis Nursery partners with licensed child care providers to increase availability of care for families with non-traditional working hours, such as second shifts and weekends. Case managers conduct intake assessments and promote family protective factors through the evidence-based Triple P Positive Parenting Program.

Population FY2024	Served
Total Children	52
Ages 0-1	18
Ages 2-3	27
Ages 4-5	7
Ages 6-11	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 19+	0
Age Unknown	0
Caregivers	42



## CBCAP Evaluation

CBCAP-funded programs offer a range of prevention services to meet family needs and foster well-being. The annual CBCAP evaluation aims to identify and measure how grantees are cultivating strong families and communities. On behalf of the Kansas Children's Cabinet, the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research (KU-CPPR) conducted this evaluation utilizing a mixed methods design that featured the Protective Factors Survey and Ripple Effects Mapping.

### By the Numbers

In FY24, CBCAP-funded programs:

Provided concrete supports to  
**1,512 people**

Provided **511 people** with  
referrals to one or more services  
**(641 total referrals)**

Hosted **508 events**  
and trainings attended by  
**9,349 adults** and  
**7,897 children**

### Protective Factors Survey

The Protective Factors Survey was designed for use with CBCAP-funded programs. This evaluation utilized the Protective Factors Survey, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Retrospective (PFS-2 Retro). It measures the increase in protective factors within a family that reduce the risk of child maltreatment across five domains:

- Family Functioning and Resilience
- Concrete Supports
- Nurturing and Attachment
- Caregiver/Practitioner Relationship
- Social Supports

## Ripple Effects Mapping

Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) is a participatory evaluation approach that engages program implementers and participants. REM is an interactive and reflective process that yields narrative and visual insights to capture outcomes of an initiative. REM sessions progress in three stages:

- 1. Peer Interviewing/Appreciative Inquiry:**  
Participants engage in peer interviews to discuss and identify current experiences and future possibilities of the initiative.
- 2. Whole Group Discussion/Reflection:**  
Participants share their insights from peer interviews and develop mutual understandings, making connections to current or future initiatives, experiences, and implications.
- 3. Mind Mapping/Radiant Thinking:**  
Participants use mind mapping to visualize effects of an initiative and capture event chains that lead to a particular outcome or potential outcomes.

## Results

This evaluation underscored the “**what**” and “**how**” of CBCAP-funded programming outcomes.

### Growing and Sustaining Family Protective Factors

CBCAP-funded programs facilitated significant contributions to participant outcomes:

- **30%** growth in **family functioning and resilience** across program participants
- **8%** growth in **nurturing and attachment**
- **30%** growth in **social supports**
- **11%** growth in **caregiver/practitioner relationship**
- **Fewer removals into foster care**

CBCAP-funded programs ensured family access to concrete supports, which had significant, positive correlations with the remaining four protective factors:

- **greater** family functioning and resilience
- **deeper** nurturing and attachment
- **better** caregiver/practitioner relationships
- **stronger** social support

These results explain why participation in CBCAP results in fewer removals into foster care.

## **Leveraging Trusting, Consistent, and Non-Judgmental Partnerships**

Authentic partnerships between families and practitioners from CBCAP-funded programs facilitated improvement within each protective factor domain.

### **Family Functioning and Resilience**

Practitioners empowered families' sense of confidence related to system navigation, processes, and parenting.

*"[My practitioner said,] 'We are going to take it one step at a time to guide you in the right direction so you will know how to navigate from here on out. Not just tell [you] what to do'"*

### **Social Supports**

Practitioners created trusted touchpoints and referral sources in the community.

*"As lived experts, it is important to share knowledge with other families easier, to take things less for granted, and know help is authentic."*

### **Nurturing and Attachment**

Practitioners encouraged positive shifts in behaviors and/or beliefs without evoking shame or judgment.

*"My person reminded me, 'look at how far you've come! Homeless and now housed. You used to barely have patience for your neurodivergent child, but now you look back and reflect on things.'"*

### **Concrete Supports**

Practitioners connected families to resources via direct and indirect connections, thus strengthening stability.

*"Those resources did me a solid and put me in a place to provide for my child and my family... Propped me up and gave me that helping hand to get me to that stable spot where I am now. I'm in such a better place."*

### **Caregiver/Practitioner Relationship**

Practitioners maintained consistent connection with families—even when families struggled to maintain consistency themselves—ultimately sustaining families' engagement and long-term self-sufficiency.

*"It does a lot when they check in. Just [the provider] checking in makes me realize 'oh my gosh it has been a while' And it brings me back."*



# Strategic Approach

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- Overview
- Child Care Capacity Accelerator
- Capital Projects Fund
- Rural Initiatives
- KAN-LINK
- Initiative Spotlights
  - Regional Substitute Model
  - NWKS Public-Private Partnership
  - Future Fellows



## Overview

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Decades of scientific research indicate that the provision of high-quality services and supports to children throughout their first five years yields lifelong benefits, effectively decreasing the need for additional interventions later in life. However, we know from recent statewide needs assessments that many families experience pervasive challenges accessing and affording high-quality child care and other services within the early childhood ecosystem. Rural communities are particularly impacted. We are working to better understand the nuances of how Kansans experience these challenges by actively integrating families into decision making, program design, and policy work. In this section, we describe a few of the ways we prioritize the needs and perspectives of families to make lasting improvements in program design and service delivery.

**The needs of Kansas children, families, and communities are shaped by the geography, resources and priorities of their local context. Family- and community-driven innovations often yield the most meaningful and sustainable solutions for filling gaps and reducing barriers.**





# Child Care Capacity Accelerator

Child care and early childhood education are foundations for early development, academic achievement, and a lifetime of benefits supporting our youngest learners into adulthood. However, too many families struggle to access affordable, quality child care where they live and work. This trend is not unique to Kansas and the solution to this multi-faceted problem cannot be one size fits all imposed from the top down. The recipe for success involves careful planning that is community-led and community-driven.

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet, with support from the governor and the Kansas legislature, partnered with multiple state agencies, private-sector organizations, and community leaders to leverage one-time pandemic relief funding

to improve child care capacity today, while ensuring these investments lead to sustained improvements in workforce supports, training, and infrastructure over time.

**The Child Care Capacity Accelerator (Accelerator) is a generational investment designed to maximize federal, state, and local public sector funding by combining it with private sector and philanthropic support to create new licensed child care slots across the state.**

## Creating New Child Care Slots...and More

In 2023, the Accelerator awarded **\$54.5 million in competitive grants to 63 communities**. This new, one-time grant program combined three strands of federal funding with a private sector gift. These braided funding streams each come with their own opportunities and limitations, resulting in a flexible mix of support for communities to meet their full range of unique and complex needs.

- **The State Fiscal Recovery Fund of the American Rescue Plan** recommended by the Kansas SPARK Executive Committee and approved by the State Finance Council **\$20 million**
- **Federal Child Care Development Block Grant ARPA funds** through the Kansas Department for Children and Families **\$31 million**
- **Federal Preschool Development Birth-5 planning grant** through the Administration for Children and Families **\$1 million**
- **The Patterson Family Foundation** private gift **\$2.5 million**

Several Accelerator projects are addressing capacity at multiple sites; a total of **96 facilities across Kansas** are benefiting. While most Accelerator grantee projects began in July 2023 and all efforts funded by this grant will end by September 2026, each of the braided funding streams are bound to different timeframes for spending down awards. Current progress and completion rates among grantees vary widely, as detailed in the **Child Care Capacity Accelerator - Year 1** evaluation report available on the Kansas Children's Cabinet website.

Overall, after the first full year of Accelerator progress:

- **3,340 new licensed child care slots** were created, **including 1,368 slots for infants under 18 months of age.**
- **28 new child care facilities** are now open in 20 Kansas counties.
- **448 new early childhood professionals** have been hired.

This is just the start. **By the end of the program, Accelerator grantees are projected to create 5,655 new child care slots.**

Grantees secured additional funding outside of the Accelerator grant, including **more than \$58 million in local in-kind and matching contributions**, to ensure project completion. This external funding allows them to continue their work even as the Accelerator 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.

# Key Takeaways from Year One of the Accelerator

## 1. Investments in child care infrastructure are needed across Kansas

The Accelerator provided funds for construction and operations to start up or scale up. These grants offer Kansas a rare and significant opportunity to permanently expand child care capacity by addressing facility needs. At the same time, grantees are using funds from the Accelerator to implement lasting improvements in how they recruit, support, and train the child care workforce.

The Accelerator isn't just funding new construction. Each community is responding to their own unique needs, resulting in infrastructure improvements that also:

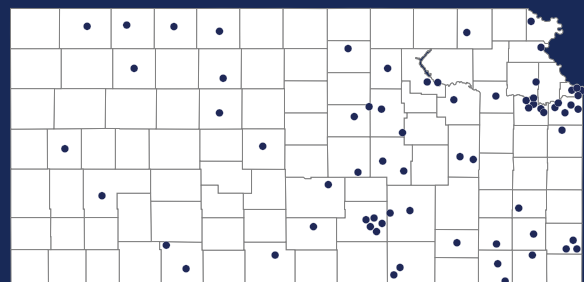
- **Establish on-site child care** centers for major local employers.
- **Renovate unused or donated buildings** to be suitable for licensed child care.
- **Develop mixed-use spaces** to integrate child care with other community services.
- **Expand existing centers** to accommodate more children.
- **Reconfigure existing facilities** to increase capacity for infants and toddlers.

Notably, by funding these kinds of targeted construction projects, Accelerator grants remove or minimize one of the biggest financial barriers for child care providers: the burden of significant overhead expenses from mortgages, leases, or loans required to build and upgrade facilities. This not only frees up resources to focus on quality care and workforce supports in the short term, but these facilities also place the sector on much stronger financial footing over the long haul, similar to the way public funding and subsidies bolster essential infrastructure like roads and bridges or sports stadiums. Over time, the value of creating 5,655 new child care slots today is multiplied greatly as new groups of children fill those slots each year. **Kansas isn't just helping the current generation of young families—we are benefiting future generations. For communities, this multiplier effect means a lasting foundation that supports local businesses, strengthens the labor force, and contributes to a resilient, thriving economy.**

Grants were awarded to communities across Kansas through a public RFP process that prioritized need and readiness. Grantees were well-positioned to carry out the grant's large-scale requirements due to their collaborative work, shared resources, expertise, ability to gather data and assess their community's child care capacity needs, and ability to complete the project within the grant timeline. The map shows 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) where shortages are particularly acute.

## Accelerator Project Locations

Blue dots on the map indicate the 63 grantee locations. The 96 child care facilities proposed by these grantees are in various stages of progress and grant completion.



## 2. Braided funding enables large investments for rapid community impact

The federal government provided states with unprecedented support to stabilize the child care industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the Accelerator grant, Kansas braided a portion of these recovery funds with philanthropic contributions and an allocation from the Preschool Development Birth-5 Planning grant to permanently improve child care access for families across the state. While the Accelerator projects are ongoing and individual communities are in varying stages of planning and implementation, we are already seeing positive results with the opening of new facilities; an increase of licensed child care slots for infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children; and more new child care professionals employed. These rapid positive outcomes were only possible because the braided funding enabled **two core elements of the Accelerator grant program**:

- **Flexibility** – The Accelerator grants allowed for capital investments (i.e., construction, expansion, and renovation). These expenditures are typically not allowable with other grant sources as funders tend to prioritize direct services. First-year Accelerator results demonstrate that investments in infrastructure are positively contributing to the number of new, licensed child care slots available to families. The Accelerator grants also included funding for major start-up operations, recruitment, and training of the workforce necessary to staff the new programs. Furthermore, Innovation Communities supplemental grants (see Key Takeaway #3 below) were flexible enough to allow grantees to pivot as necessary when faced with barriers or as they brought on new partners.
- **Community-driven Solutions** – The Accelerator approach ensures that child care solutions are tailored to each community's specific gaps. Nearly every community that received an Accelerator grant had an existing early childhood task force or newly established child care coalition, demonstrating **strong and dedicated leadership, a clear mission and goals**, representation from a wide range of **partners with expertise**, and demonstrated **commitment to using data to identify challenges and adjust strategies as necessary**. Accelerator grantees were able to clearly demonstrate through their applications how proposed capital investments would be put to use immediately to meet unique community needs.



### 3. Communities are critical sources of innovation and practical solutions.

Sixteen Accelerator applicants were awarded competitive, supplemental funding of up to \$250,000 to engage in a one-year Innovation Communities cohort. This group employed a rapid-cycle iteration process to **test strategies and pilot new models and partnerships**. Members of the Innovation Communities cohort participated in peer learning and monthly coaching sessions where they received support for identifying and overcoming barriers. Staff from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment also provided technical assistance around child care licensing and regulations, helping resolve challenges.

The work of the Innovation Community cohort of grantees has highlighted scalable strategies that can strengthen early childhood education across Kansas. One approach involves partnering with local high school and community college Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs to **build a local talent pipeline** and raise awareness of early childhood careers. Additionally, members of the cohort piloted various approaches for **sharing business administration functions**, where resources are pooled across providers around such functions as payroll and accounting, staff training, and marketing. One such approach involved piloting a **regional substitute pool** to help with staffing shortages across several counties.

#### ➤ Regional Substitute Model

##### INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

Many child care facilities struggle to maintain adequate ratios when staff call in sick, need to attend professional development, or take personal time off. This is especially challenging for family child care providers who must weigh additional criteria to determine if a substitute is appropriate for their home setting. Child care substitute pools are not a new concept. However, finding a model that works well across a wide variety of provider and license types is a challenge.

One Accelerator and Innovation Community grantee, Abilene Child Care Learning Center, used their Innovation Community supplemental funding to expand a child care provider substitute model into a business called Customized Early Education that has seen great success in their pilot year. During the year-long Innovation Communities cohort, this substitute program successfully **supported 42 child care providers in 16 counties and provided 8,800 hours of high-quality substitute care**. This grantee used Innovation Community supplemental funding alongside local contributions to offer these child care providers access to substitute services at \$100 per 8-hour shift, representing a 33% discount from the true cost of each substitute based on a livable wage. The model uses a web-based platform to recruit highly qualified professionals and match them to child care facilities in their area. The approach is attracting professionals to enter or re-enter the child care workforce while creating a resource that helps programs remain stable and offer consistent care. The pilot also helped pinpoint the gap between the actual cost of implementing a substitute program and what providers can reasonably afford. Due to its success in the pilot stage, the substitute pool model is now set to expand, with plans to reach 180 to 200 child care providers statewide by 2028, leveraging both public and private support.



## ➤ Community Spotlights

To follow are just a sampling of the many ways the Accelerator is permanently increasing child care capacity in Kansas communities.

The **Walnut Valley Learning Center** project in Cowley County partnered with local company, Creekstone Farms Premium Beef, to create a new facility with 136 child care slots. Expanded hours support the needs of shift workers at the business and in the community.

The **Grow Hays, Inc.** project, made possible by the donation of land from the Hays Medical Center, will see the creation of a new multi-use community center that includes an intergenerational facility that combines senior care and a child care center.

Several communities donated homes for renovation into child care facilities. **Sheridan County Community Foundation** renovated a duplex donated by the county to create two new child care facilities. The city of Pretty Prairie, which previously had no licensed child care options at all, donated a house for the **Reno County Task Force** to renovate into two separate child care spaces, licensed as independent family child care homes.

Training and professional development services can be shared regionally as well. The **Solomon Early Learning Center** (Dickinson County) and **Mindful Minis** (Sedgwick County) are building shared, specialty training programs for providers (e.g., advanced training for infant/toddler care, specialized support for addressing speech and mental health needs, and methods for increasing family engagement). These programs are proving extremely popular among providers who desire new, more advanced preparation for different environments and diverse family/child needs.

## Accelerator Grantees *\*Innovation Communities*

### Abilene Childcare Learning Center

**\$430,373, \$250,000\***

3 facilities in Dickinson County adding 63 slots

### Advancing Barton County Children, Inc.

**\$2,661,329**

2 facilities in Barton County adding 198 slots

### Alford Kids Academy

**\$370,000**

1 facility in Sedgwick County adding 52 slots

### Bethany Lutheran Early Childhood Center

**\$109,054**

1 facility in Sedgwick County adding 32 slots

### Bright Beginnings Childcare Center LLC

**\$385,884**

1 facility in Nemaha County adding 40 slots

### Children's Learning Center

**\$14,500**

1 facility in Cloud County adding 19 slots

### Coffeyville's Christian Preschool & Childcare, LLC

**\$882,103**

1 facility in Montgomery County adding 291 slots

### Community Children's Center

**\$628,421, \$250,000\***

1 facility in Douglas County adding 69 slots

### Creekstone Farms Premium Beef, LLC

**\$500,000**

1 facility in Cowley County adding 116 slots

### Decatur County Child Care Coalition (USD 294)

**\$73,829**

1 facility in Decatur County adding 12 slots

### Delightful Learning Center–The Village Initiative

**\$108,698**

1 facility in Wyandotte County adding 85 slots

### Doniphan Darlings, Inc.

**\$467,520**

1 facility in Doniphan County adding 15 slots

### Early Childhood Impact Center

**\$225,250\***

Multi-payer Share Care Fund Model in Cowley County

### Emporia Area Chamber Foundation

**\$551,936**

1 facility in Lyon County adding 136 slots

### Erie Church of the Nazarene

**\$964,807**

1 facility in Neosho County adding 136 slots

### Family Resource Center, Inc

**\$1,637,795**

1 facility in Crawford County adding 58 slots

### Finney County Childcare & Early Learning Network

**\$621,825**

1 facility in Finney County adding 60 slots

### Flint Hills Child Care Coalition

**\$377,280**

1 facility in Marion County adding 28 slots

### Great Adventures LLC

**\$1,279,400**

1 facility in Johnson County adding 180 slots

### Greater Manhattan Community Foundation

**\$2,172,954, \$250,000\***

1 facility in Riley County adding 100 slots

### Greater Topeka Partnership

**\$2,761,998, \$250,000\***

8 facilities in Shawnee County adding 451 slots

### Grow & Learn Childcare Center, Inc.

**\$229,032**

1 facility in Wichita County adding 10 slots

### Grow at Eden LLC

**\$204,982**

1 facility in Labette County adding 48 slots

### Grow Hays: The Grove Child Care Center

**\$170,000**

1 facility in Ellis County adding 77 slots

### Herington Community Childcare Center

**\$267,872**

1 facility in Dickinson adding 24 slots

### Hillsboro Community Child Care Center

**\$855,216**

1 facility in Marion County adding 83 slots

### Hilltop Child Development Center, Inc.

**\$2,500,325**

1 facility in Douglas County adding 138 slots

### Hope Chapel

**\$944,094**

1 facility in Wyandotte County adding 92 slots

### Humboldt Daycare & Preschool Inc.

**\$1,162,017**

1 facility in Allen County adding 48 slots

### Integrated Behavioral Technologies, Inc.

**\$220,442**

1 facility in Jefferson County adding 12 slots

### Jay's Nest Daycare

**\$412,756**

1 facility in Clark County adding 11 slots

### Kids World Child Care Learning Center LLC

**\$1,746,426**

1 facility in Sedgwick County adding 60 slots

**KidZone Learning Center of Overland Park, Inc.**  
**\$490,528**  
1 facility in Johnson County adding 88 slots

**LIFT Minneola Inc.**  
**\$530,300**  
2 facilities in Clark County adding 24 slots

**Little Learners Early Childhood Center, Inc.**  
**\$1,456,000, \$72,611\***  
1 facility in Johnson County adding 196 slots

**Littles Early Learning - E9 Properties LLC**  
**\$949,269**  
1 facility in Butler County adding 86 slots

**McPherson County Child Care Expansion**  
**\$884,108, \$250,000\***  
3 facilities in McPherson County adding 181 slots

**Mindful Minis**  
**\$368,962, \$250,000\***  
1 facility in Sedgwick County adding 58 slots

**Open Minds Child Development Center, LLC**  
**\$847,060**  
1 facility in Johnson County adding 53 slots

**Outlook Academy**  
**\$409,000**  
1 facility in Wyandotte County adding 90 slots

**Parkwood Day School Eudora**  
**\$983,732**  
3 facilities in Douglas, Johnson, and Leavenworth counties adding 54 slots

**Parkwood Day School of KCK**  
**\$696,750**  
2 facilities in Wyandotte County adding 55 slots

**Phillipsburg Child Care Center**  
**\$200,162**  
1 facility in Phillips County adding 30 slots

**Rainbow Academy, LLC**  
**\$65,310**  
3 facilities in Norton County adding 18 slots

**Raising Wildflowers Child Care Academy**  
**\$150,000**  
2 facilities in Pottawatomie County adding 83 slots

**Rawlins County Building Blocks for Childcare**  
**\$671,741**  
2 facilities in Rawlins County adding 24 slots

**Reno County Child Care Task Force**  
**\$2,292,014, \$247,600\***  
9 facilities in Reno County adding 372 slots

**Salina Area United Way**  
**\$2,188,600**  
4 facilities in Saline County adding 226 slots

**Sheridan County Community Foundation**  
**\$200,000**  
2 facilities in Sheridan County adding 24 slots

**Solomon Early Learning Center**  
**\$346,716, \$55,620\***  
1 facility in Dickinson County adding 21 slots

**Sonshine Childcare**  
**\$385,168**  
1 facility in Crawford County adding 104 slots

**South YMCA Early Learning Center**  
**\$251,000**  
1 facility in Sedgwick adding 13 slots

**Success by Six Coalition of Douglas County**  
**\$63,103\***  
BIPOC access to child care in Douglas County

**SugarCreek Packing Company**  
**\$2,000,000, \$80,370\***  
1 facility in Crawford County adding 206 slots

**The Heritage Home**  
**\$270,000**  
1 facility in Wabaunsee County adding 38 slots

**The Tree House Early Education Foundation**  
**\$387,905**  
1 facility in Montgomery County adding 52 slots

**The Learning Experience Blue Valley**  
**\$732,500**  
1 facility in Johnson County adding 159 slots

**Tri County Child Care Coalition**  
**\$1,725,004, \$250,000\***  
5 facilities in Barber, Harper, and Kiowa counties adding 198 slots

**USD 491 Eudora Schools**  
**\$160,000**  
1 facility in Douglas County adding 60 slots

**USD 252 Southern Lyon County**  
**\$207,000**  
2 facilities in Lyon County adding 10 slots

**USD 270 Plainville**  
**\$236,120, \$138,865\***  
1 facility in Rooks County adding 12 slots

**USD 331 Daycare Center**  
**\$990,043**  
1 facility in Kingman County adding 43 slots

**USD 367 and United Way of Miami County**  
**\$250,000\***  
Mentorship program, staff training, and compensation package exploration

**USD 461 Neodesha Schools**  
**\$2,690,257, \$250,000\***  
1 facility in Wilson County adding 99 slots

**West Elk USD #282**  
**\$1,182,268**  
1 facility in Elk County adding 60 slots





## Capital Projects Fund

Through a competitive process, the Kansas Children's Cabinet & Trust Fund awarded ten Capital Projects Fund grants (CPF) to qualified applicants across Kansas in 2023-24. CPF grants are a one-time opportunity made possible by the US Treasury through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. A total of **\$38 million was awarded across two rounds of competition to support building and/or renovating multipurpose community facilities** and is one aspect of our state's response to pandemic-related challenges.

### A Unique and Targeted Funding Opportunity

The CPF Accelerator provides construction-only funding to build/renovate multi-purpose community facilities that:

- **provide work and educational activities** to help community members search for and engage in employment, and/or develop the skills and knowledge to become employed;
- **ensure immediate broadband** access to community members for at least 5 years; and,
- **offer health monitoring services** for community members' physical and/or behavioral health;
- **address a critical need** resulting from, or exacerbated, by the COVID-19 public health emergency;
- **create new licensed child care slots** providing quality care and education and enabling parents/caregivers (of children birth to age 5) to participate in employment opportunities.

Eligible applicants included city and county governments, economic development organizations, community-based organizations, private entities, educational institutions, and tribes/tribal organizations.

## CPF Grantees

Community leaders from business, education, and health sectors are joining with early childhood champions in the ten awarded communities to make plans for meeting the multi-layered needs of employees, patients, children, and families. All ten grantees began their projects in spring or summer 2024 and are in various stages of implementation. **These community-driven projects are concrete investments in opportunities for Kansas families to ensure the best start for their children.**

### **Community Children’s Center, Inc.** **\$4,900,000**

69 child care slots in Douglas County

The Douglas County Early Childhood Community Center will be updating its facility to offer a wide array of community services. First, the facility will help meet the unique child care needs of busy families by offering drop-in and occasional care with sliding scale tuition. In addition, the facility will offer a large space for multi-purpose community services and a dedicated Family Resource Center to help individuals and families access broadband/internet, health care screenings and wellness services, as well as educational programming.

### **Grow Hays, Inc.** **\$3,597,250**

77 child care slots in Ellis County

Grow Hays, Inc. will construct the Grove Community Center, a 14,000+ sq foot facility that establishes an innovative multi-generational facility near an existing HaysMed health facility. The Center will house both a child care center and the Hays Senior Center, providing essential services and fostering a sense of community for residents of all ages. The large child care center will provide permanent slots for 77 children each year, from infants all the way up to preschool. In addition to these multi-generational care settings, the Center will feature a large multi-purpose space for the community and telemedicine services to facilitate remote access to health care services for the surrounding community.

### **Emporia Area Chamber Foundation** **\$1,756,759**

167 child care slots in Lyon County

With leadership from the Emporia Chamber Foundation, the child care coalition in Lyon County is renovating a former elementary school building into the Little Lyons of Emporia. This facility will fill a critical community need by providing permanent child care slots for over 150 children and will be open 24/7 to meet the diverse needs of working families in Lyon County. Importantly, the facility will also provide a range of community supports including on-site mental health services, vocational workshops, and training activities. Specific services include dental and therapy services, a clean clothing closet, a full-service kitchen, and access to community partners such as Flint Hills Technical College, Crosswinds, and programs from Emporia State University.

### **Great Bend Economic Development** **\$4,382,493**

28 child care slots in Barton County

The Great Bend IGNITE Center is an innovation hub for Barton County, that will also fill a critical child care gap for overnight shift workers. The facility will importantly add 28 new slots available during the overnight hours for local families in addition to a range of spaces and services to facilitate community innovation. Through community partnerships, the center will provide space for innovators from all sectors – including a community Makerspace, a workforce service hub, a curated offering of classes, a podcast and broadcasting center, and a commercial kitchen space. In addition, the center will partner with local healthcare providers to offer health screenings and preventative care services.

### **Clay County Growth Alliance, Inc.** **\$3,642,000**

48 child care slots in Clay County

Clay County is leveraging civic expertise and investment to establish the Clay Center Multi-Generational Life Center. This facility will meet a wide variety of community needs by providing a versatile space for children, families, and individuals of all ages. The Center will house a child care center with permanent slots each year for 40 children (including infants and toddlers) as well as a youth lounge and a space focused on supporting seniors in the community. Beyond the age-related services, the facility will also offer a commercial kitchen, training rooms, and coworking space for workforce and educational programming. Finally, Clay County will partner with Pawnee Mental Health to provide on-site well-being and mental health resources for the community.

### **Greater Manhattan Community Foundation** **\$3,500,000**

80 child care slots in Riley County

The Flint Hills Community Accelerator is establishing an innovative incubator model for expanding child care small business owners. The facility will offer space and on-site training and resources for eight independent child care providers to establish and build their business. Importantly, these businesses will have the flexibility to provide child care 24/7 for the community. In addition to the child care incubator, the project will meet the broader employment and health needs of the Manhattan community through partnerships with Heartland Works, the Manhattan Area Technical College, and the Manhattan Free Health Clinic. Services available on-site will include telemedicine and primary care services, resources for job seekers, and educational support for adult learners in the community.

**Olathe Wesleyan Church, Inc.**

**\$1,251,100**

88 child care slots in Johnson County

The KidZone Learning Center of Overland Park will host a new child care space, a Hy-Flex computer lab, business incubator program, and a mental health counseling office. This will increase access to child care for lower income families, make online degree programs available to the community at discounted rates, create workforce and job training opportunities, and provide mental health services for the uninsured, under-insured and those who receive Medicaid.

**St. Benedict’s Abbey**

**\$4,999,999**

140 child care slots in Atchison County

This project will establish the First Steps with Abbey Children & Family Complex, turning the former Kansas Juvenile Correctional Facility into a welcoming space to meet the health, education, and care needs of families in Atchison County. This project leverages the service-driven spirit and resources of the faith-based community to open a range of services for children and families. Nearly 20 classrooms will be added to provide 140 child care slots and shared conference spaces. A community-access computer lab, multi-purpose spaces, and several telemedicine rooms will be available for community partners to meet the full range of family needs. Service partners include higher education and the Atchison Community Health Clinic to bring expertise in tutoring, practicum, and medical, dental, and mental health services onsite.

**Storytime Village, Inc.**

**\$4,999,999**

50 child care slots in Sedgwick County

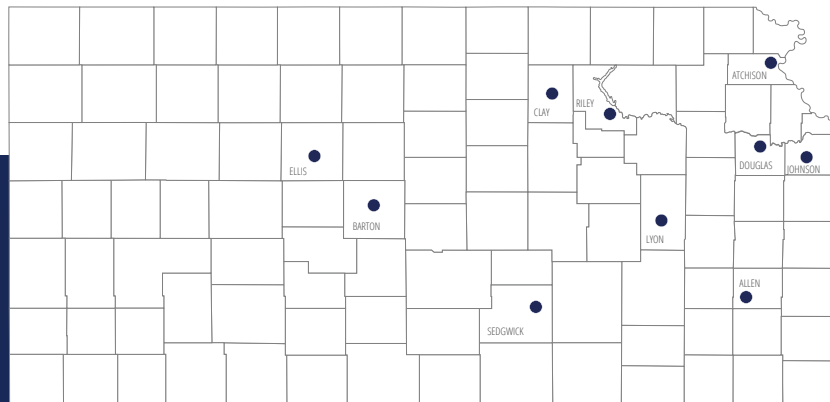
Storytime Village will transform a full city block in a low-income area of NE Wichita into a multi-purpose Literacy Center that meets both the literacy and well-being needs of the surrounding neighborhood and community. Storytime Village will be renovating two historic Kansas homes during this project to blend the old with the new for a full-service experience. In addition to on-site literacy services for both children and adults, the facility will feature resources for job seekers such as on-site job fairs, workforce training programs, and registered apprenticeship opportunities. Other partnerships will provide an on-site pediatric clinic to bridge access to vital prevention and wellness services for young children, as well as coordinated care services and screenings for families. The building will feature innovative designs that foster a love for reading with access to a library and a relaxing café.

**USD 258 Humboldt Schools**

**\$4,970,400**

24 child care slots in Allen County

School district leaders in Allen County are leveraging their spaces and expertise to establish the Cubs Community Care Center. The facility will be housed in a new 11,400 sq. ft. facility at the current Athletic and Community complex and will include 24 child care slots focused on infant and toddler care and an apprenticeship program for early childhood professionals. In addition, the project will support local job seekers in the community by providing onsite career counselors as well as access to the USD 258 Virtual Education Center for adult diploma opportunities and satellite college course. Finally, the facility will house an integrated system of care for people birth through adulthood, including primary and mental health care as well as a pharmacy.



# Addressing the Unique Needs of Rural Kansans

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More than a quarter of the Kansas population lives in rural areas, including nearly 60,000 children under the age of 6. Unfortunately, rural communities face distinct barriers when it comes to solving broader early childhood ecosystem challenges like child care deserts, workforce and housing shortages, and health disparities. The geographical spread of rural areas can make it difficult for families to access care and education close to where they live and work.

To support rural communities, we need focused efforts to attract and retain high-quality professionals equipped to practice in rural areas of the state. This includes incentive programs for new recruits, rural-friendly professional development and education and resources for family child care providers, which are often the primary programs in rural communities. Additionally, we must focus on increasing the number of licensed child care facilities that meet the diverse range of needs of rural families.

Through *All In For Kansas Kids* strategic planning efforts, the Kansas Children's Cabinet engages with partners across the ecosystem to support rural initiatives, such as:

## **Small Center Pilot**

The Small Center concept was developed by Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) to address the needs of lower population density. This approach offers flexibility to meet the unique child care challenges of rural communities, which often struggle to meet the child care needs of multiple age groups. A Small Center can serve 13-24 mixed-age children without the requirement of separate classrooms that come with large center licenses. The Small Center Pilot is now being conducted in three sites, with two more sites preparing to open. KDHE is evaluating the program for effectiveness of care while continuing to ensure health and safety standards.

## **Communities in Action and Coalitions**

Child Care Aware of Kansas offers regional support to increase child care capacity. Tailored workshops help teams of community members build coalitions and address local child care challenges. Through the Communities in Action program, 75 rural communities are being connected with other coalitions, content experts, and resources.

## **Baby Steps Pilot Program**

Baby Steps is an innovative pilot supported by a gift from the Patterson Family Foundation that aims to increase care for infants and toddlers. Child Care Aware of Kansas (CCA-KS) provides a financial incentive to increase the likelihood that a home-based family child care provider will accept additional infants. Participating programs also receive support from Kansas' Infant Toddler Specialist Network and other services aimed at improving the quality of care.

The Baby Steps pilot project is fully enrolled, and over the past year served over 50 providers in over 20 rural counties. Eligible communities have a total population of less than 50,000, a high birth rate, and a high number of children under age 3 per existing child care slot. The majority (97%) of participating providers operate in areas that have been identified as child care deserts, and 64 infants are enrolled in care due to the incentive.

## ➤ NWKS Public-Private Partnership

### INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

The Dane G. Hansen Foundation (Hansen Foundation) is establishing a Regional Childcare Endowment to support ongoing, sustainable, community-level child care solutions across 26 counties in Northwest Kansas. Following several years of investment in early childhood by the Hansen Foundation, this endowment will be held, invested, and administered by the Greater Northwest Kansas Community Foundation. This grant program will promote regional economic sustainability and development by addressing workforce shortages created by lack of affordable and high-quality child care options, particularly for infant care.

The Hansen Foundation aims to raise \$25 million over five years, with the foundation pledging the initial \$5 million. In 2024, the Kansas Legislature allocated a \$5 million match via the Children's Initiatives Fund. In June 2024, the Patterson Family Foundation approved a gift of \$1 million and promised to revisit in 2025. When fully established, the endowment will serve as source of revenue to sustain high-quality child care options for communities in Northwest Kansas.

Funds distributed through this grant program will prioritize awards for child care applicants with an emergency need or budgetary shortfall to ensure their continued operation with adequate wages and benefits for staff. Excess funds will then be awarded to applicants piloting promising, innovative solutions to sustain child care. Grant applications from child care providers will be accepted and reviewed monthly, with up to 5% of the total endowment distributed annually. Eligible applicants are licensed child care programs that enroll at least eight children, accept infants, and serve families eligible for Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) child care subsidy.



## ➤ Future Fellows

### INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

The Kansas Children's Cabinet and KU-CPPR launched the Kansas Future Fellows program in 2021 to equip community leaders with tools to manage the urgency of today while building the vision of tomorrow. To date, there have been three Future Fellows cohorts with 31 total fellows from across the state. These fellows developed plans for transformative change, and their work is especially salient for rural communities in Kansas. Like many rural areas of the US, Kansas faces challenges such as population decline, aging infrastructure, and limited access to healthcare. These disparities are forecasted to continue as our population ages, areas experience outmigration, and other social, environmental, and technological factors impact rural communities. By learning approaches for

enhancing community resilience, anticipating coming challenges, and planning for sustainable development, rural leaders can become better prepared for an array of possible futures.

A cross-cohort team is currently launching Kansas Civic Foresight—an initiative to offer futures thinking skills to 2,024 high school students and community leaders across Kansas. Their goal is to engage civic institutions, teachers, students, leaders, and community members to imagine and be architects of the future. This includes building a toolkit to disseminate futures thinking; reaching out to different communities, organizations, and individuals to create futures experience workshops; and hosting a booth at the Kansas State Fair.

# KAN-LINK

Child abuse prevention and early childhood development are intrinsically linked because the early years of a child's life are critical for establishing healthy emotional and social foundations. By implementing effective prevention strategies during this formative period, we can significantly reduce the risk of abuse and foster environments that promote safe, nurturing relationships essential for optimal development. However, strategic coordination between child welfare agencies and early childhood services remains a challenge. For instance, children in foster care are categorically eligible for enrollment in Head Start/Early Head Start yet actual enrollment remains low for this population. Child welfare and early childhood systems must work together to address these long-standing disparities and actively prevent them from continuing.

## Improving Cross-Sector Coordination and Collaboration

With funding from the Administration for Children's and Families Children's Bureau Child Welfare Discretionary Grant, the Kansas Children's Cabinet, the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research (KU-CPPR), and DCF are partnering to implement KAN-LINK, a prevention framework that works on two levels: 1) identifying and addressing state-level barriers so more families can connect to needed supports, and 2) hosting innovation labs within Family Resource Centers (FRC) for community members, leaders, and lived experts to generate solutions together. Expected outcomes include:

### ➤ Child

Expanded screening, assessment, and referrals in early childhood; increased participation in evidence-based early childhood programs and services; and improved child well-being.

### ➤ Family

Increased use of 1-800-CHILDREN, closed-loop referrals, and FRC resources.

### ➤ Community

Increased local referral networks, engagement of more lived experts in co-designed solutions, implementation of community- and family-led strategies to meet needs.

### ➤ State

Mitigation of infrastructure and policy barriers to facilitate child, family, and community outcomes.



# Data for Impact

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- Overview
- Our Tomorrows
- Dolly Parton's Imagination Library
- Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust



## Overview

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Data-driven decision making is a core component of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet’s statutory responsibility. We hold all programs to high standards of accountability and evaluation. We discussed our comprehensive accountability processes for Children’s Initiatives Fund (CIF), Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG), and Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) programs in the previous section. In this section, we turn to projects that demonstrate invaluable data insights and innovative evaluation approaches that the Kansas Children’s Cabinet uses to help answer imperative questions and inform next steps.





## Leveraging early childhood data enhances decision making by revealing connections to positive outcomes, such as:

- Greater academic achievement
- Improved ability to meet basic needs
- Reduced parental stress
- Enhanced overall health and well-being
- Increased household income and economic stability
- Fewer removals into foster care

## Bigger picture understandings of the impact of early childhood service provision can inform systems-level decision-making related to:

- Long-term cost savings
- Efficient and effective use of taxpayer dollars
- Interagency collaboration and coordination

# Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Evaluation

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After the first year of the Imagination Library statewide initiative, the Kansas Children's Cabinet worked with the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research (KU-CPPR) to evaluate the impact of the Imagination Library in Kansas. The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the added value of the program in enhancing educational and developmental progress for children already participating in ECBG programming, who are considered at-risk and may benefit from additional supports. The following research question guided this evaluation: Do children enrolled in the Imagination Library demonstrate greater improvement in emergent literacy skills when compared to children who do not participate in the program?

## Methods

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To determine the effectiveness of Imagination Library participation on emergent literacy skill development, the evaluation employed a quasi-experimental research design by matching two datasets:

- Book distribution records maintained by the Imagination Library
- Child participant records for ECBG programs

Programs funded by the ECBG collect and report myIGDIs (Individual Growth and Development Indicators) to assess preschoolers' progress towards kindergarten readiness. A subset of the myIGDIs focuses on language and literacy skills. Researchers conducted analyses to understand if Imagination Library participation had any effect on emergent literacy skills as measured by myIGDIs.

## Results

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Analyses revealed significant positive effects on two literacy skills when comparing baseline and follow-up scores across groups of children who did and did not participate in Imagination Library.

- Children who participated in Imagination Library were 23% more likely to improve in **Picture Naming**, as 34% of Imagination Library participants advanced in this vocabulary skill area compared to 29% of non-participants.
- Children who participated in Imagination Library were 34% more likely to improve in **Alliteration**, as 25% of Imagination Library participants showed growth in this phonological awareness skill area compared to 18% of non-participants.
- Both groups of children made similar improvements in **Which One Doesn't Belong, Rhyming, and Sound Identification**.

## Implications

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After the first full year of statewide implementation of the Imagination Library, results suggest implications for future early childhood literacy investments, initiatives, and evaluations.

- Early childhood literacy initiatives should target increasing Imagination Library enrollment and expanding content offerings.
- Other early childhood initiatives should facilitate emergent literacy skill development not currently targeted through participation in Imagination Library.

# What are Emergent Literacy Skills? (and why do they matter?)

- Emergent literacy skills develop over the first five years of a child’s life and provide a foundation on which conventional literacy skills can be built through formal instruction in K-12 settings. In other words, emergent literacy skills are precursors to reading, writing, and communicating.



Children must learn to walk before they can run and must lift and hold their head up before they can sit. The same is true for language and literacy.



Through a structured literacy approach based on the science of reading, formal literacy instruction begins with developing foundational skills like oral language and decoding, and then advances to improving fluency and comprehension. Conventional literacy skills include:



**Vocabulary**  
Labeling things, feelings, concepts, and ideas



**Phonological Awareness**  
Identifying letters and sounds



**Comprehension**  
Understanding content, receptive communication



**Alphabet Knowledge**  
Naming, writing, and identifying sounds of all alphabet letters



**Print Awareness**  
Recognizing that printed words convey meaning



**Print motivation**  
Enjoyment of reading, such as exploring the environment or engaging with books



Emergent literacy skills are associated with positive outcomes across the lifespan of a child.



**Academic achievement**  
throughout elementary, middle, and high school; college and post-secondary coursework



**Health and overall well-being**  
from childhood through adulthood



**Employment status and household income**  
in adulthood

In short, investing in early childhood yields long-term, positive effects for children, families, and communities, and statewide early initiatives like the Imagination Library support the growth and development of our youngest Kansans. Read more about previous and ongoing efforts to strengthen Kansas children’s literacy proficiency in the Early Childhood Literacy Brief.

# Our Tomorrows

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Our Tomorrows captures everyday experiences to learn how to better support families across Kansas. The project, implemented by the KU-CPPR, employs a community development approach that invites families, communities, and decision makers into a shared, equitable process for making sense of our daily realities and cultivating sustainable futures for all.

To date, Our Tomorrows has collected over 6,000 stories from Kansans in every county and with a breadth of backgrounds, identities, and circumstances. The Kansas Children's Cabinet uses these insights to shape innovative program design, develop responsive policy solutions, and anticipate emerging needs.

## Our Tomorrows in Action

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Three initiatives within the Kansas early childhood ecosystem are using the new framework and Our Tomorrows approach to collect stories, conduct community sensemaking sessions, and inform policy and practice at the local and state levels.

- Universal Prevention for Strong and Thriving Families (Family Strong) project in southeast Kansas
- Family Resource Center Evaluation
- Kansas Linking Infrastructure for Nurturing Kids (KAN-LINK)

## Imagining Future Scenarios

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An established body of literature indicates that problem solving is most effective when developed by and for communities. Prompting Kansans to imagine possible futures through Our Tomorrows encourages their engagement in thinking, deliberation, and problem solving about potential trajectories, realities, and outcomes that families and communities in our state will likely experience.

The *Our Tomorrows, Our Futures* framework focused on how Kansans imagine a thriving future. Almost 400 Kansans responded to the following prompt:

**In 2040, the children you see around you today may be parents themselves. Others may choose not to be parents or be connected to or involved with families in other ways. Think about what 2040 could look and feel like for families in your community if they are connected, supported, and thriving.**

**Better understanding of Kansans and their communities can shape the work of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and other state and local initiatives.**

Participants responded to a series of questions about their imagined future to help us better understand how Kansans want to be connected, engaged, and supported in the next 15 years. Researchers analyzed these shared future scenarios and identified four themes:

**ENGAGEMENT**

- Returning to “community roots”
- Embracing technology for connection
- Inclusive, supportive networks
- Education and lifelong learning
- Enhanced community and social support

**FUTURE WANTS/NEEDS**

- Affordable housing and self-efficiency
- Sustainable living and environmental responsibility
- Financial stability, empowerment
- Education and technology integration
- Safety and security

**2040 HOPES**

- Diverse, inclusive family social dynamics
- Technology and the future of work
- Affordable, accessible housing
- Community-led food security initiatives
- Holistic healthcare

**2040 FEARS**

- Rise in homelessness, poverty
- Technology overload and social isolation
- Environmental catastrophes
- Overpopulation and resource scarcity
- Erosion of personal freedoms and increased surveillance



**Two common threads emerged**

emphasizing the value of community-driven problem solving:

Inextricable connection between families, communities, systems, and the environment—when one thrives, all can thrive

Careful consideration of needs, resources, and limitations that requires contextual knowledge to ensure well-being and self-sufficiency



These findings contribute important insights about

**characteristics that Kansans and their communities possess:**

**STRENGTHS**

Community support and empowerment

**NEEDS**

Access to basic needs, self-sufficiency

**PRIORITIES**

Comprehensive and responsive systems of care

**VALUES**

Trust, mutual responsibility, innovation, sustainability

# Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust

Established in 2021, the Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust (Data Trust) is a collaboration between the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and four state agencies: the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF), the Kansas Department of Corrections (DOC), the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), and the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE). The purpose of the Data Trust is to improve the quality of early childhood data, maximize data insights through advanced analyses, and support data-driven decision making to improve services for children and families.

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet partners with the KU-CPPR to carry out secure, project-based data sharing and analyses. To date, the Data Trust has approved three Authorized Projects to support data integration and yield greater insight about impacts of early childhood service provision across the state. Projects progress through four implementation phases: planning, piloting, implementing, and maintaining. The next few pages provide descriptions for each Authorized Project and its implementation phase.

## Authorized Projects

### 1. The Cumulative Prevention Effect: Reducing Foster Care Removals Through Early Childhood Services

PARTNERS	TYPE OF PROJECT	STATUS
<p><b>Kansas Department for Children and Families</b> <i>Prevention and Protection</i></p> <p><b>Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund</b> <i>Early Childhood Block Grant</i></p>	<p><b>Longitudinal Analysis</b> <i>Historical and ongoing analysis of integrated data by early childhood intervention, demographics, and outcomes (maltreatment reports, removals)</i></p>	<p><b>Approved</b> <i>May 10, 2021</i></p> <p><b>Data Sharing Agreement</b> <i>Active</i></p>

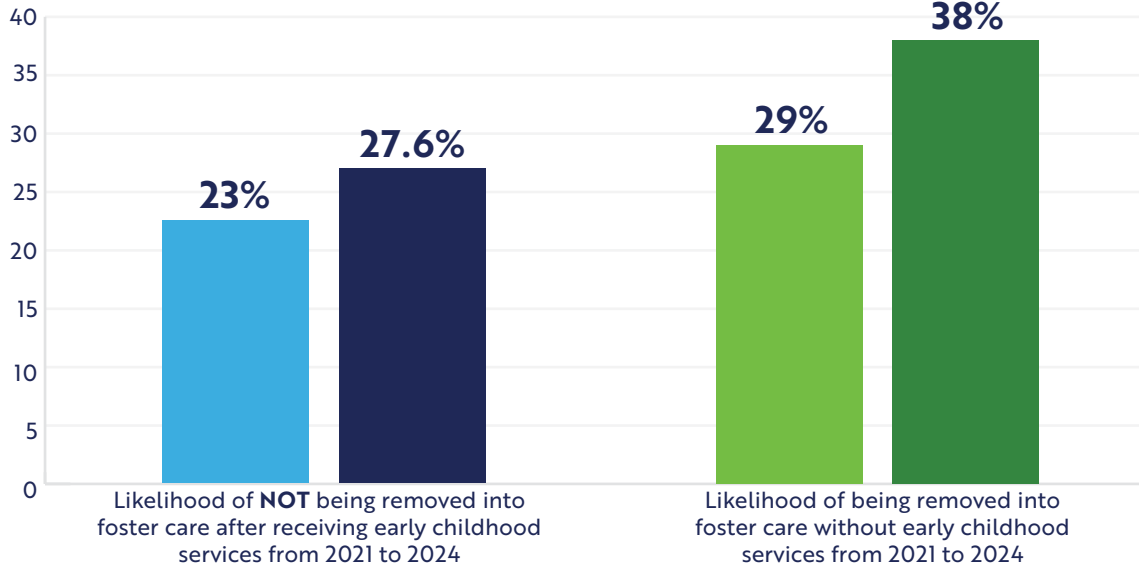
Beginning in 2021, the Data Trust piloted interagency data sharing goals when Kansas Department for Children and Families and the Kansas Children’s Cabinet investigated whether participation in ECBG and/or CBCAP was associated with reduction in child removals into foster care. Results consistently demonstrate that early childhood services are exceptionally effective at preventing children from being removed into foster care in Kansas. In 2021, it was shown that participation in early childhood services reduced the likelihood of foster care removals by 23%. This analysis was updated in 2024, revealing a reduction of 28%. Results revealed that:

- **96% of children** participating in early childhood services were not removed into foster care from 2015 to 2024.
- **384 children from birth to age 8** would have likely been removed into foster care between 2015 and 2024 had they not received ECBG or CBCAP services.

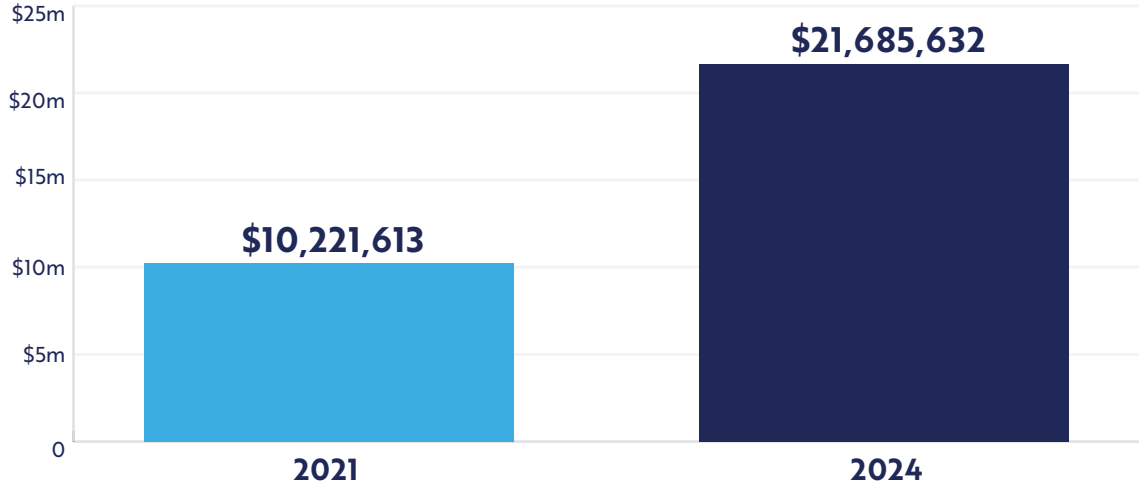
Because this replication study incorporated the original sample and additional years of data, these changes in the odds of being removed into foster care over time suggest that early childhood services play an ongoing cumulative protective role for Kansas children.

Results also consistently demonstrate that early childhood services are cost effective, saving the state \$21,685,632 in foster care and other intervention costs associated with foster care removal, such as healthcare, special education, and criminal justice. Spending on early childhood services yields a return on investment of 8% on foster care avoidance alone, which is in line with findings from previous research in Kansas and nationally.

### Change in Odds Ratio as a Percentage for Removal into Foster Care Over Time



### Estimated Accumulative Costs Avoided by Preventing Removals into Foster Care with Early Childhood Services in Kansas



## 2. Distinct Count of Children in Early Care and Education Services

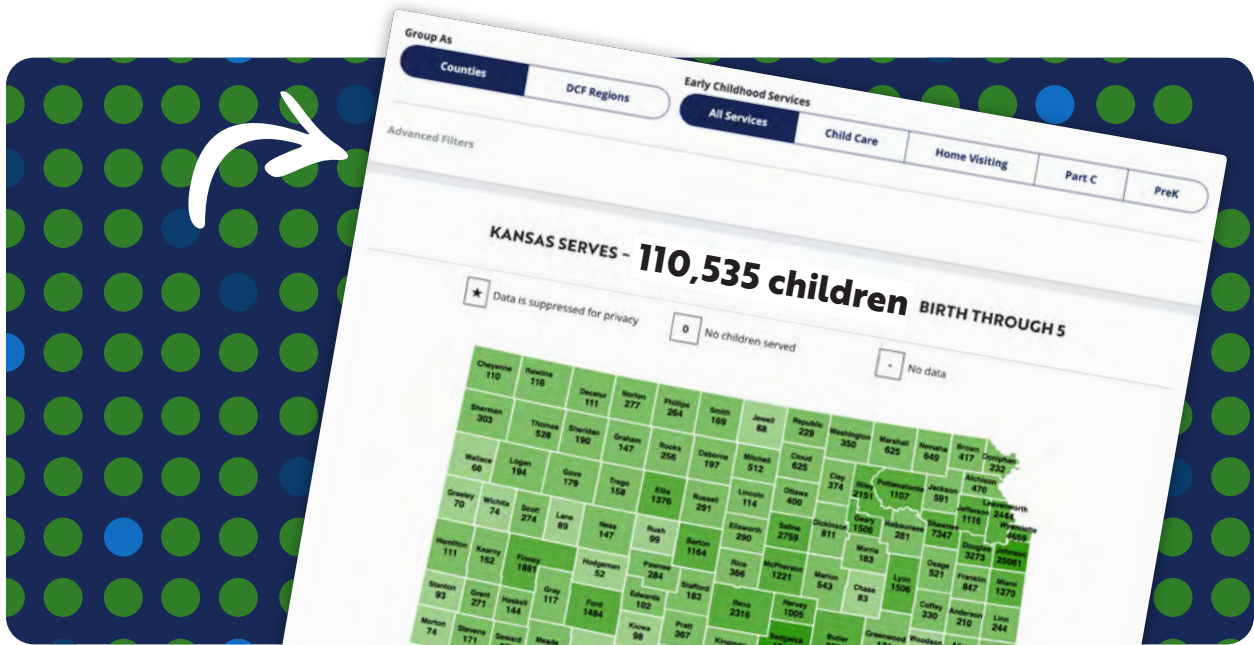
PARTNERS	TYPE OF PROJECT	STATUS
<b>Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund</b>  <b>Kansas Department of Health and Environment</b>  <b>Kansas State Department of Education</b>  <b>Kansas Department of Children and Families</b>	<b>Resource Tool</b> <i>Accurate, updated mapping of children served</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>In-home visiting, child care, IDEA Part C, IDEA Part B, and Pre-K/ preschool programs administered across agencies funded by federal and state investments</i></li><li>• <i>By demographic and risk/ protective factors</i></li><li>• <i>By geography and district</i></li></ul>	<b>Approved</b> <i>March 3, 2022</i>  <b>Data Sharing Agreement</b> <i>Active</i>

In December 2023, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet launched the Distinct Count Dashboard (Dashboard), a publicly accessible site that integrates, reports, and maps early childhood service provision across multiple state agencies serving children and families from birth to age 5. Prior to the Dashboard, each dataset, data source, and data collection methodology differed by program, which posed a complex barrier to deeper understandings of the data. Through comprehensive effort, researchers unified and standardized the data into a consistent format suitable for visualization purposes. Numbers are approximate. Some data contains duplicates and some data is under reported.

In 2024, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet implemented two key enhancements to the Dashboard to increase its utility and relevance for users over time. The Dashboard now incorporates:

- Longitudinal datasets to which state agencies contribute new data each year. This enhancement allows users to analyze historical trends at county and regional levels.
- Population-level data including county-level data overlays from the US Census population estimates. This enhancement shows the proportion of children receiving services across the state in relation to the population of children in the county or region, which helps identify needs and gaps in service provision across the state.

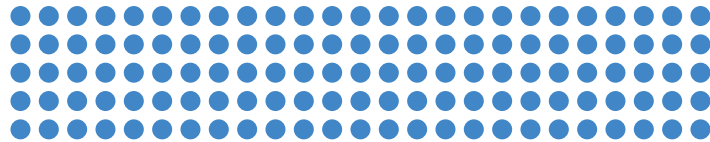




The Kansas Distinct Count Dashboard went live to the public in December 2023.

In 2024, the state served:

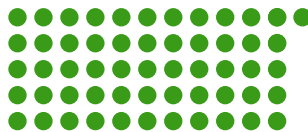
**Child Care**  
**60,684 Children**



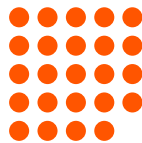
**Home Visiting**  
**10,036 Children**



**Pre-K**  
**28,206 Children**



**Part C**  
**11,609 Children**





### 3. Matching Early Childhood and State Longitudinal Data System K-12 Datasets

PARTNERS	TYPE OF PROJECT	STATUS
<b>Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund</b>  <b>Kansas State Department of Education</b>	<b>Matching Pilot</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Share individual child data for children in early childhood dataset to KSDE</li><li>• KSDE perform match to identify pre-existing child records</li><li>• Establish child records in State Longitudinal System at point of entry into services (e.g., early childhood or education)</li><li>• Maintain key identification numbers across early childhood and K-12 datasets</li></ul>	<b>Approved</b> <i>February 28, 2024</i>  <b>Data Sharing Agreement</b> <i>Active</i>

The Data Trust authorized a third project in 2024 to pilot a process for linking records between early childhood and K-12 datasets. The Institute for Education Sciences (IES) awarded KSDE a FY23 State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) grant to further develop the Kansas SLDS. The Kansas Children’s Cabinet will provide KDSE with one early childhood dataset with individual child data in a secure data environment. KSDE will then pilot a matching protocol to identify and link pre-existing child records across early childhood and K-12 datasets. This pilot linkage will serve as a proof-of-concept to establish two protocols:

1. A matching protocol for data associated with unique identifiers already assigned to children in the eScholar system.
2. A protocol for assigning a unique identifier from eScholar to a large dataset housed in another system.

This pilot will pave the way for anticipated benefits, including longitudinal analyses that evaluating the long-term effects of participation in early childhood services on outcomes throughout childhood, such as:

- Academic outcomes
- Attendance
- Educational attainment

# Building Better Evidence

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet leverages a staggered approach to implementing Authorized Projects. Introducing new projects one at a time allows us to identify and reflect on successes and challenges from one project before another starts. Through this approach, we are able to integrate lessons learned to inform and strengthen evidence that future projects will yield.

**Building better evidence yields more comprehensive and actionable information for decision making to best support children and families.**

➤ **Sustainable data practices** for Project 1 were applied to Authorized Project 2, which utilizes the same dataset.

➤ Discovery session interviews conducted with state agencies for Project 2 will inform **data structure changes** for Authorized Project 3.

➤ Findings from Project 3 will inform matching and **data integration efforts** for future projects within the Data Trust and beyond.



# Recommendations & Conclusion

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➤ 2024 Recommendations

➤ Conclusion



# Recommendations

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Since its inception in 1999, a primary charge of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet as outlined in Kansas statute has been to make recommendations for the Children’s Initiatives Fund (CIF) to the governor and legislature and evaluate its use. The Kansas Children’s Cabinet established an annual accountability process in 2006 in support of this statutory responsibility.

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet focuses on early childhood as the key moment of intervention to have the greatest impact on children’s lives.

Over the past three years, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet has taken an increasingly cohesive approach to CIF fund management by addressing early childhood care and education as a system rather than a collection of individual programs. Recommendations are intended to increase investment in the early childhood care and education system, streamline funding, and create a more sustainable path for the future.

This section presents recommendations the Kansas Children’s Cabinet adopted in 2024.

## Budget Recommendations

Several programs received increased funding for fiscal year 2023 or will be receiving an increase for fiscal year 2024. Maintaining funding levels for fiscal year 2025 will allow the impacts of increased funding for those programs to be examined and maintain a balance in the KEY fund to cover expenditures above the revenue generated from the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement.

### *Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF)*

CIF PROGRAM	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026 RECOMMENDATION
Child Care Services*	\$5,033,679	\$5,033,679	\$5,033,679
Family Preservation	\$3,241,062	-	-
Workforce Registry**	-	\$1,100,00	<i>not recommended</i>
<b>DCF Total</b>	<b>\$8,274,741</b>	<b>\$6,133,679</b>	<b>\$5,033,679</b>

### *Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE)*

Healthy Start Home Visitor	\$1,652,876	\$1,652,876	\$1,652,876
Kansas Early Childhood Developmental Services*	\$5,800,000	\$5,800,000	\$5,800,000
Smoking Prevention Grants	\$1,001,960	\$1,001,960	\$1,001,960
SIDS Network Grant	\$122,106	\$122,106	\$122,106
Child Care Health and Safety Grants**	-	\$1,300,00	<i>not recommended</i>
<b>KDHE Total</b>	<b>\$8,576,942</b>	<b>\$9,876,942</b>	<b>\$8,576,942</b>
<b>Human Services Total</b>	<b>\$16,851,683</b>	<b>\$16,010,621</b>	<b>\$13,610,621</b>

### *Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE)*

Children's Cabinet Accountability Fund	\$375,000	\$375,000	\$375,000
CIF Grants (ECBG)	\$23,720,493	\$23,720,493	\$23,720,493
Parent Education (PAT)	\$9,437,635	\$9,437,635	\$9,437,635
Pre-K Pilot Program	\$4,200,000	\$4,200,000	\$4,200,000
Early Childhood Infrastructure	\$1,408,512	\$1,408,512	\$1,408,512
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000
<b>KSDE Total</b>	<b>\$40,641,640</b>	<b>\$40,641,640</b>	<b>\$40,641,640</b>
Public Private Partnership (one time match)**	-	\$5,000,000	<i>not recommended</i>
<b>Total - Public Private Partnership</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$5,000,000</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$57,493,323</b>	<b>\$61,652,261</b>	<b>\$54,252,261</b>

\*Denotes programs with a Maintenance of Effort requirement \*\*Denotes programs with a Match requirement



## Family-Friendly Workplaces Recommendation

The Kansas Children's Cabinet recommends adoption of the *Family Friendly Workplace Survey* and the *Guide to Family Forward Workplaces*, available on the *All In For Kansas Kids* website, as tools employers can use to select and develop family-friendly policies best suited to their workplace. With this recommendation, the Kansas Children's Cabinet encourages employers to implement these practices to strengthen families, businesses, and the Kansas economy. To learn more about family-friendly workplaces, visit [allinforkansaskids.org/communities](https://allinforkansaskids.org/communities).

## Basic Needs Recommendation

The Kansas Children's Cabinet recommends increasing access to work and family support programs that help children and families meet their basic needs. Research clearly shows that children thrive when their basic needs are met, and that parents and caregivers are better able to support children when their own basic needs are met. The Kansas Children's Cabinet believes current restrictions to child care assistance, cash assistance, nutrition assistance, and health insurance programs undercut the investments made through the CIF and blunt the efficiency and effectiveness of early childhood care and education programs. The *2024 All In For Kansas Kids Needs Assessment* documents these concerns.



## Enhance State Investment in Early Childhood Recommendation

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet recommends enhanced state investment in the early childhood care and education system to better meet the needs of young children and their families, reduce CIF transfers to other agencies, and maximize Master Settlement Agreement dollars toward Kansas Children’s Cabinet priorities as outlined in the Blueprint for Early Childhood and the *All In For Kansas Kids Strategic Plan*.

## Early Childhood Care and Education Governance Recommendation

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet recommends the Governor and the Kansas Legislature work together to identify the appropriate method for unification of early childhood programs and services and create an implementation plan that recognizes the role of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet, in alignment with the 2023 Early Childhood Transition Task Force recommendations. We support exploring options to:

- fully realize the Kansas Children’s Cabinet’s statutory role as outlined in K.S.A. 38-1901;
- retain the Kansas Children’s Cabinet governing board oversight of the CIF as outlined in K.S.A. 38-2103;
- retain the role of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet governing board as grant maker for any existing or new grant programs that may be developed and administered by the unified entity;
- retain the role of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet as the state’s Early Childhood Advisory Council in accordance with the federal Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (Kansas Executive Order 20-02); and,
- establish methods of collaboration and coordination between the Kansas Children’s Cabinet board and the unified entity’s administrative leadership.



## Conclusion

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The Kansas Children's Cabinet, in the roles of connector, champion, and strategist, seeks to harness local knowledge, strengthen capacity, and promote sustainability through *All In For Kansas Kids* work. This is not a one and done process. The ongoing work of co-creating thriving futures for our children is a journey that requires commitment to being "All In" and a solid plan with multiple pathways to action. The **2024 All In For Kansas Kids Strategic Plan** outlines these pathways and actions. You can be an active contributor by following along on our website where you will find the complete plan, regular updates on progress, and opportunities to contribute your ideas and experiences on this shared journey.

We invite changemakers everywhere to engage with the plan and join us in being *All In For Kansas Kids*.

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