All In For Kansas Kids

Early Childhood Recommendations Panel

Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund

MEETING JANUARY 16, 2026

WELCOME

Thank you for serving Kansas children, their families, and our state's early childhood care and education professionals!

This is a remote meeting.

- Today's meeting materials are posted on the Panel Meetings webpage on the Children's Cabinet site.
- Panel members will clearly identify themselves when they begin speaking.
- Panel members can use the "raise hand" feature to show they are ready to share.
- The virtual chat will not be used during this meeting in compliance with KOMA and for accessibility purposes.

RECOMMENDATIONS PANEL

The Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel serves as an **advisory group** to the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund (Children's Cabinet). The Children's Cabinet was established in 1999 (K.S.A. 38-1901) to assist the Governor in developing and implementing a coordinated, comprehensive delivery system to serve Kansas children and families. Additionally, the Children's Cabinet plays a key role in enabling our state to implement the ***All In for Kansas Kids*** early childhood system strategic plan, respond to challenges, elevate recommendations from communities and stakeholders, and make key decisions to help us achieve the vision outlined in the strategic plan.

Purpose

TODAY'S AGENDA

- Welcome
- Approval of January Agenda
- Approval of December Meeting Minutes
- Panel Introductions
- Kansans' Open Forum / Kansas in the News
- Commissioner of Education Search: Focus Group
- Kindergarten Readiness Toolkit
- Governance Summit Preparation
- Work Group Summary
- System Updates
- Key Take-Away's
- Adjourn
    - *Work Groups will meet following adjournment*

ACTION ITEMS

Panel members - please clearly identify yourself when you begin speaking to make or second a motion.

- Approval of January agenda
- Approval of December minutes

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Panel Introductions

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT – ROUND 4

PANEL INTRODUCTIONS

- Mallory Arellano
- Brenda Bandy
- Megan Cook
- Amy Gottschamer
- Janine Foth

1 minute

KANSANS' OPEN FORUM

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

KANSAS IN THE NEWS

Annual Report 2025

We have a past to be proud of, but the future holds tremendous opportunity to strengthen our early childhood ecosystem and improve support for Kansas families. I look forward to working with you all to achieve our vision that ***every child thrives***.

Melissa Rooker

Annual Report 2025

https://kschildrenscabinet.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Cabinet_Annual-Report-2025.pdf

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Commissioner of Education Search

FRANK HENDERSON, HYA

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Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What are the strengths of the Kansas State Department of Education that the next Commissioner can build upon?
2. What are the challenges the new Commissioner will face in the next two to three years?
3. What should be the immediate priorities for the new Commissioner?
4. What professional qualifications and personal attributes are you looking for in the new Commissioner?
5. Please share names of any potential candidates that we should contact.

KSDE Search

Kindergarten Readiness Toolkit

KIMBERLY KENNEDY, NATALIE MCCLANE,
HEATHER SCHROTBERGER

RESOURCES FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ENTERING KINDERGARTEN

Kimberly Kennedy, Director
Kansas Head Start Collaboration Office,
Department for Children and Families

Natalie McClane, Preschool Programs Coordinator
Early Childhood, KSDE

Heather Schrotberger, Executive Director
Kansas Head Start Association

TOPICS

- History of collaborative efforts to strengthen kindergarten entry supports for young children and their families
- Benefits of positive kindergarten transition experiences
- Sharing of resources and strategies

OVERVIEW & HISTORY

- Overview of Head Start and School District Transition work in Kansas since 2019
- Collaboration between Head Start, school districts, and child care partners
- Goals
  - Share examples of effective practices
  - Expand and enhance working relationships
  - Tools, supports, and resources
- Current focus and opportunities

THE RESEARCH CASE FOR INVESTING IN THE TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

- Kindergarten teachers report that almost 50% of children have difficulty adjusting to kindergarten.[1]
- Many communities do not have transition to kindergarten plans, and those that do often focus on low-intensity, more superficial activities.[2]
- The more transition activities prekindergarten teachers implement, the better prepared children are at the beginning of kindergarten.[3]
- The more transition activities kindergarten teachers implement, the higher student achievement by the end of kindergarten.[4]
- Transition benefits are strongest for children in low- and middle-income families.[5], [6], [7], [8]

From the Alabama Transition to Kindergarten Toolkit, page 10.

FOCUSING ON THE TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN IMPROVES STUDENT OUTCOMES

"Using a large, nationally representative sample…we found that kindergarten transition policies do indeed have a modest positive effect on students' academic achievement and on parent-initiated school involvement during the kindergarten year…This finding provides the strongest empirical support to date for school policies designed to facilitate the transition to kindergarten."

Schulting, Malone, and Dodge, "The Effect of School-Based Kindergarten Transition Policies and Practices on Child Academic Outcomes," Developmental Psychology 41, no. 6 (2005)

BENEFITS OF PLANNING FOR KINDERGARTEN TRANSITIONS

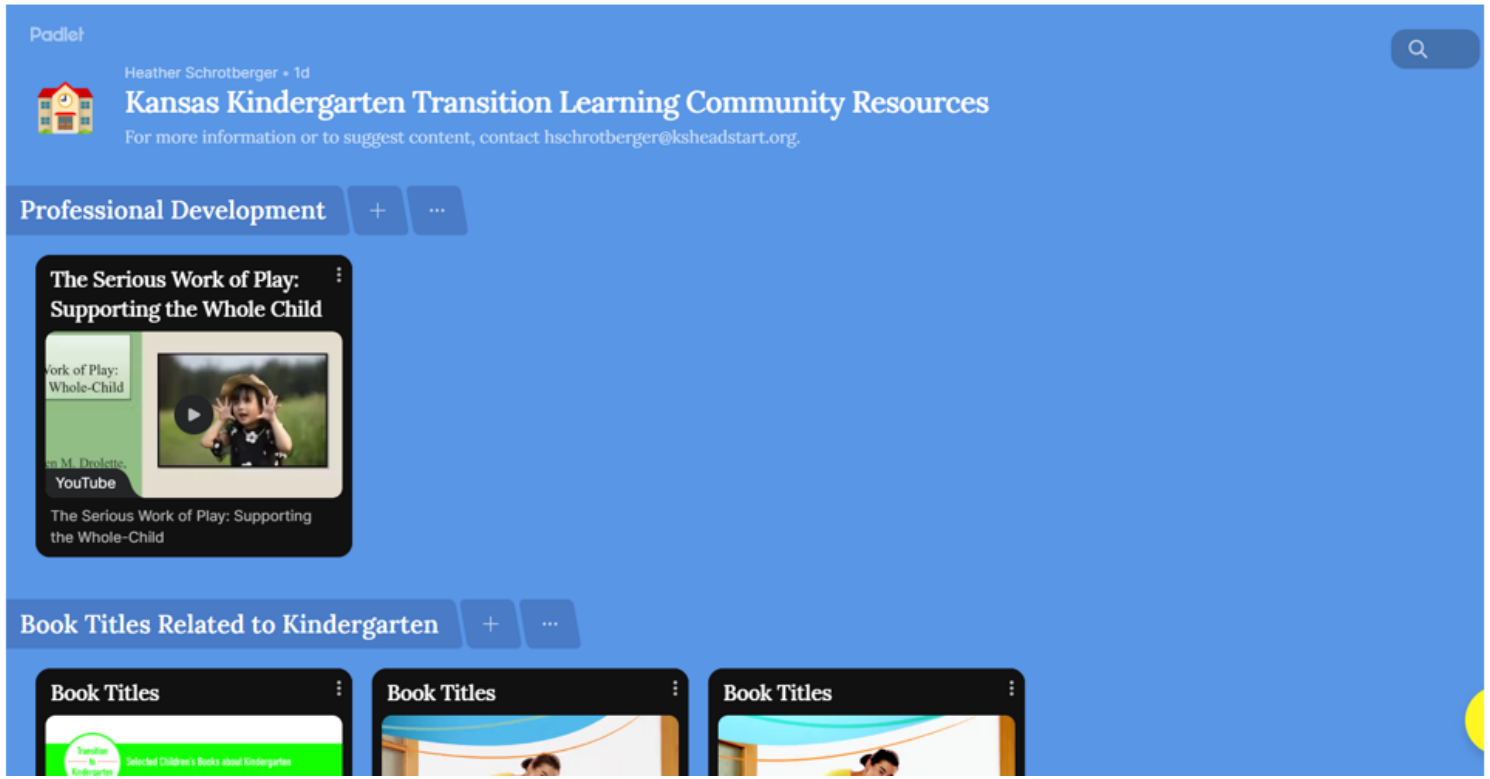
- Reduces stress at the beginning of the year
- Yields positive long-term outcomes for children
- Encourages clear expectations for kindergarten readiness
- Supports children who are dual language learners
- Supports children with special needs and IEPs/accessibility
- Promotes consistent services for children
- Encourages Family engagement and leadership
- Encourages shared teaching strategies
- Strengthens positive relationships and engagement
- Encourages community driven planning

Kindergarten Transitions Toolkit, April 2021

EXISTING RESOURCES TO SUPPORT PARTNERSHIPS

KS Kindergarten Transition Toolkit

RESOURCES


Padlet
Heather Schrotberger • 1d
Kansas Kindergarten Transition Learning Community Resources
For more information or to suggest content, contact hschrotberger@ksheadstart.org.
Professional Development
The Serious Work of Play: Supporting the Whole Child
YouTube
The Serious Work of Play: Supporting the Whole-Child
Book Titles Related to Kindergarten
Book Titles
Book Titles
Book Titles

DISCUSSION

- How are partners in your community working together to support children and families as they enter kindergarten?
- Do you have other examples to share and highlight on this resource board?

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Heather Schrotberger, Kansas Head Start Association
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Governance Summit Preparation

MELISSA SCHOENBERGER, CHAIR

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GOVERNANCE SUMMIT

- **February 20, 2026**
- **Invitations to all groups represented on current EC Governance structure**
  - How does your work support the KS EC system?
  - Please share an example of cross collaboration of your work in the EC system?
  - What are barriers and/or gaps you are experiencing that the Panel may help facilitate?
  - **Based on the work you are doing today, what would a headline and secondary headlines look like of your work in 10 years?**

Panel Tasks

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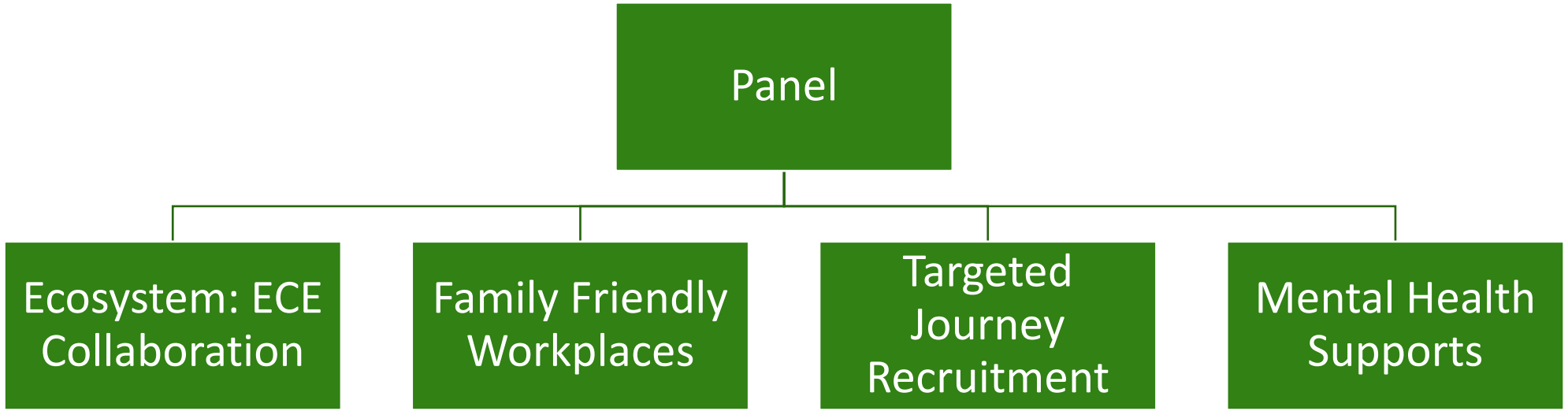
Work Group Discussion

MELISSA SCHOENBERGER, CHAIR

2025-2026 WORK GROUPS



Overview

Guiding Principles:
Review work group content
Honor placement of each group
Elicit discussion
Cross collaboration opportunities

2025-2026 WORK GROUPS

Ecosystem: Needs a co-chair. Narrow and prioritize identified ideas – ASQ, tax credits, monitoring/data systems.

Family Friendly Workplaces: Still need to brainstorm about how to "land the plane" and Chair will join group.

Targeted Journey: Heather Campbell with KSDE joining group today. Target audience for flyer – Panel input?

Mental Health: Narrow topic.

Updates

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System Updates

HEATHER SCHROTBERGER, MEGHAN KLUTH
SARA GARDNER

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STATEWIDE OPPORTUNITIES

- **KAIMH Conference**, *RESILIENCE: Building Children's Capacity to Bend Without Breaking*. April 23-24 in Wichita. Registration: Kansas Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health
- **Innovation Center,** Home-Based Childcare Provider Recruitment Pilot. This pilot project will recruit fifteen new home-based childcare providers in NWKS. The project will recruit new providers and provide childcare specific (through mentorship from current childcare professionals) and business follow-along support to establish them with long-term success. The project will run from January 1, 2026, to December 30, 2027.
  - Home-Based Childcare Provider Recruitment Pilot - Innovation Center
    - **Informational webinar January 29, 2026**
  - Program participants must reside in Cheyenne, Cloud, Decatur, Ellis, Ellsworth, Gove, Graham, Jewell, Lincoln, Logan, Mitchell, Norton, Osborne, Ottawa, Phillips, Rawlins, Republic, Rooks, Russell, Sheridan, Sherman, Smith, Thomas, Trego, or Wallace counties.

System Updates

HEAD START ASSOCIATION STATE MEETING

- Update, KS HSA 2025 Annual Report

Head Start in Kansas

by the numbers

- 6,200 funded slots
- 78 counties
- $90+ million
- 2,529 staff

From: Grantee reporting and KS Office of Head Start Summary of FY25 PIR Data

System Updates

https://www.canva.com/design/DAG7NVk23xo/1NaK3owmIWINDpLGrKTaAQ/view?utm_content=DAG7NVk23xo&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=uniquelinks&utlId=ha265cda67e#10

PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT

- Rural Family Experiences Gap Analysis report available
- Child Care Zones map and overview available
- Child Start employer resource guide coming later this year

System Updates

PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT

- Early Childhood Mental Health Community of Practice starting in February
- CPPR is updating content on early childhood mental health for AllInforKansasKids.org
  - We will work with Mental Health Support work group
  - Family facing content will live on HelpMeGrow.KDHE.KS.Gov
  - Please share ideas for resources or categories that should be included

System Updates

All In For Kansas Kids

Strategic Plan Monitoring Dashboard – Launch!

JANUARY 16, 2026

Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund

WHAT IS THE MONITORING DASHBOARD?

- The online home to **document our state's progress** towards the goals outlined in the AIFKK Strategic Plan.
- **Goals:**
  - establish transparency and a shared responsibility (with shared measurement) towards achieving success
  - understand what is working and what is not
  - communicate promising approaches, common challenges, stories, bright spots
- The monitoring framework is an initiative currently governed by the State Directors Team and implemented by KU-CPPR.

AIFKK Strategic Plan

DASHBOARD GO-LIVE!

- AIFKK Webpage - https://allinforkansaskids.org/about/strategic-plan/#sp-dashboard
- Dashboard will be updated quarterly by KU-CPPR Implementation Team – it will grow/evolve and partners need (next formal update – April 2026)
- **Share Feedback and/or Data!**
  - ANY partner can share de-identified aggregate data, stories, initiative highlights at ANY time
  - FORM LINK – also find it on the webpage and within the dashboard itself

AIFKK Strategic Plan

BRIGHT SPOT

Kansas in Action

https://www.yourcape.org/

MEETING SCHEDULE

Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund

- February 3, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Livestream via Children's Cabinet YouTube

Panel Meetings

- **February 20 – Early Childhood Governance Summit**
- March 27 (4th Friday)
- April 17
- May 15 *(proposed adjustment to Thursday 5/14)*
- June 26 (4th Friday)

Upcoming Meetings

Adjourn

All In For Kansas Kids Newsletter

kansaschildrenscabinet YouTube

Stay Up to Date