

**Strengthening
Early Childhood
in Kansas in 2019**

WEBINAR

August 21, 2019



Statewide Needs Assessment

- ▶ Review Existing Needs Assessment Reports and Information
- ▶ Community Engagement Sessions
- ▶ **Our Tomorrows Story Collection**
- ▶ Gather Additional Information – **PD Survey, Parent Cafes, Environmental/Facilities Scan, Visioning Sessions**

"We are ALL Early Childhood Stakeholders"
Governor Laura Kelly

Parent and Family Engagement

- ▶ **Parent Stipends available – even for previous sessions!**
Contact Peggy Kelly (pkelly@ksheadstart.org) or download/submit the online form.

Parent Stipend Request Form 2019 Kansas Early Childhood Systems-Building Grant meetings

Organization _____

Date of Meeting _____

Community _____

Check One: Community Conversation Sense Making Road Show

We are requesting a \$40 stipend for the following parents who attended the above event related to the Kansas Early Childhood Systems-Building Grant. (1 per family)

1)
2)
3)
4)
5)

We understand that funds will be sent to our organization and we are responsible for compensating the parent



tomorrow
OUR



Project Update
August 21, 2019



@cprpr_media

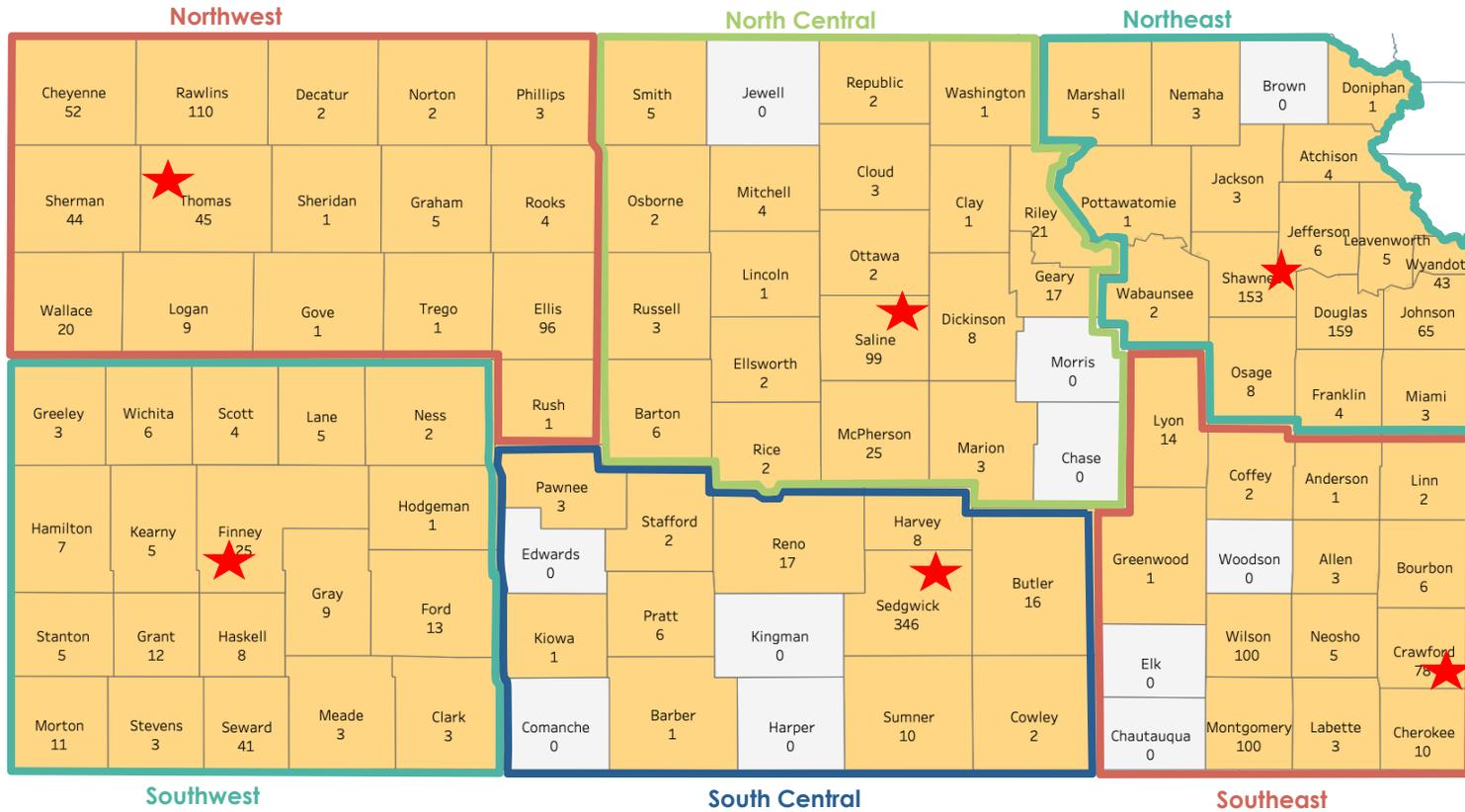


kucprpr.org/OurTomorrows

KU CENTER FOR
PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS
& RESEARCH

The University of Kansas

2071 STORIES SHARED BY KANSANS*



Community Action Lab Region Legend

★ Regional Community Sensemaking Workshop Location

*2436 Total Stories Shared

South Central Sensemaking



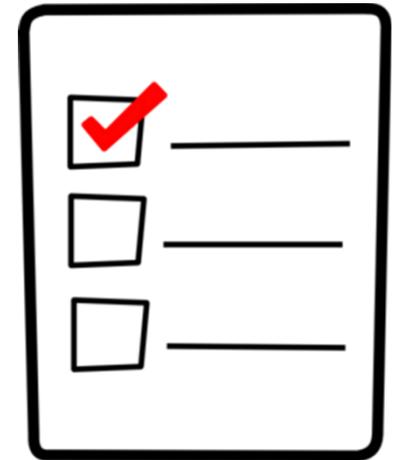


Needs Assessment – Key Understandings

- ▶ Overall Needs Assessment - 2 Key Understandings:
 - ▶ The experience of families is really different based on geography.
 - ▶ Families have really practical basic needs that are not being met, and that is driving the way they do or do not interact with the Early Childhood system.

Statewide Needs Assessment – Professional Development Survey

- ▶ Joint survey by Child Care Aware of Kansas and KCCTO (Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities)
- ▶ June and July of 2019
- ▶ Purpose: assess the professional development needs of the Kansas early childhood workforce
- ▶ Survey link was widely distributed across the state via existing networks





Statewide Needs Assessment – Professional Development Survey

- ▶ 45 questions.
- ▶ Focused on provider background, program information, and professional development needs and practices.
 - ▶ “How long have you been working with young children?”
 - ▶ “Do you develop an annual training plan and/or professional development plan for your employees?”
 - ▶ “Please tell us something about your program that is unique or outstanding.”

Statewide Needs Assessment – Professional Development Survey

- ▶ 805 individuals from childcare and early education settings
 - ▶ 30% child care facility
 - ▶ 35% family child care
 - ▶ 18% group day care home
- ▶ Owners, directors, lead teachers, assistant teachers, and others.
- ▶ Over 80% of counties represented by at least one survey.
- ▶ 50% of respondents have been in the field over 15 years; 28% have been in the field more than 25 years.



805

Responses!



Statewide Needs Assessment – Professional Development Survey

Key Findings:

- ▶ Greatest opportunities to improve participation:
 - ▶ Offering relevant topics.
 - ▶ Offering online trainings.
 - ▶ Reducing distance between providers and in-person training locations.
 - ▶ Lowering cost.
- ▶ 43% are traveling 25+ miles for professional development.
- ▶ Providers are primarily focused on required trainings for licensing purposes.



Statewide Needs Assessment – Professional Development Survey

Key Findings:

- ▶ Most providers report receiving training as necessary for the job.
- ▶ Two-thirds report training beyond minimum req. 1-5 times/year.
- ▶ 81% are currently accessing on-line training.
- ▶ 60% are currently receiving some type of on-site PD/coaching.
- ▶ Program leadership looks primarily for advance training for staff except in key areas – these need beginner training:
 - ▶ Trauma informed care, care for special needs, infant-toddler care, and early learning standards.



Statewide Needs Assessment – Professional Development Survey

Bright Spots:

- ▶ “I develop very strong relationships with my families. I pour myself whole heartedly into my business.”
- ▶ “Relationships with families that last forever. Some students that I taught have come back to work for us or have their children with us now. “
- ▶ “I'm flexible in cooperation with my families. I love the kids like they are my own. I have a special goodbye with the kids each day. I operate my child care in a manner of how I'd like to be treated if I were the parent looking for child care.”
- ▶ “Our Preschool prides itself in being a family with the children who attend. We have a wonderful relationship and we retain families for many, many years. “
- ▶ “We treat each child equal and as an individually accepting the differences in each child and encouraging them to be themselves.”



tomorrow
OUR



SUMMARY

 @cprpr_media

 kucprpr.org/OurTomorrows

KU CENTER FOR
PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS
& RESEARCH

The University of Kansas

South Central Sensemaking





Themes of Data

- ▶ Bright Spots
- ▶ Disruptors
- ▶ Unheard Voices
- ▶ Unmet Needs



Process Bright Spots

- ▶ Families wanted others to learn from their stories and for their experiences to be used to make positive changes
- ▶ People are already trying new things with little resources
- ▶ Communities are supportive of families – people get support from other family members, friends, church communities, and local organizations
- ▶ Youth were some of the most effective Citizen Journalists
- ▶ Hearing people's stories is an intervention





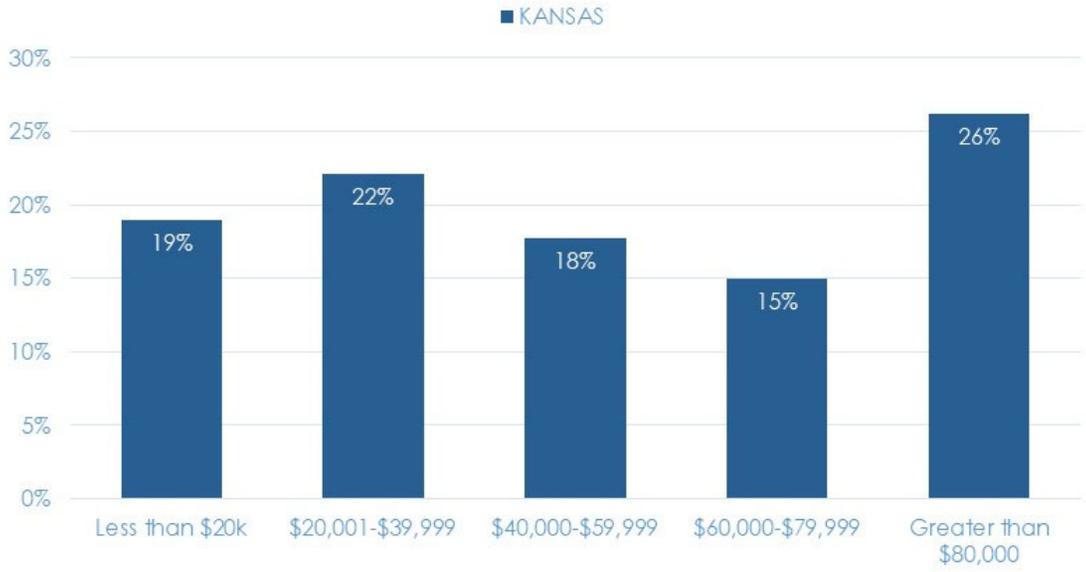
Bright Spots

- ▶ Stories were coded as containing a Bright Spot if they contained: no Disruptor or Unmet Need; resilience or hope; things going well
 - ▶ **Thriving (1239)**
I was 7 months clean with the help of sober living and treatment in Enid, OK. I had just purchased a beautiful house and had gotten a promotion at my job and was also in the running for another higher up position. My finances were in order and I was saving up for a new car.
 - ▶ **Parents as Teachers Savior (1262)**
When I brought my oldest daughter home from the hospital as a teen mom, I had no idea what I was doing. I had no family support or experience with children. My Parents as Teachers contact helped me learn how to be an involved mom. She taught me how to interact with my child so that she would grow and learn. She made me feel like I could be a good mom despite my age.
 - ▶ **having a good time (1284)**
well we were thriving we were going to school and having a good time our father has a great self owned bussiness
- 

41% of respondents had an annual family income under \$40,000

INCOME

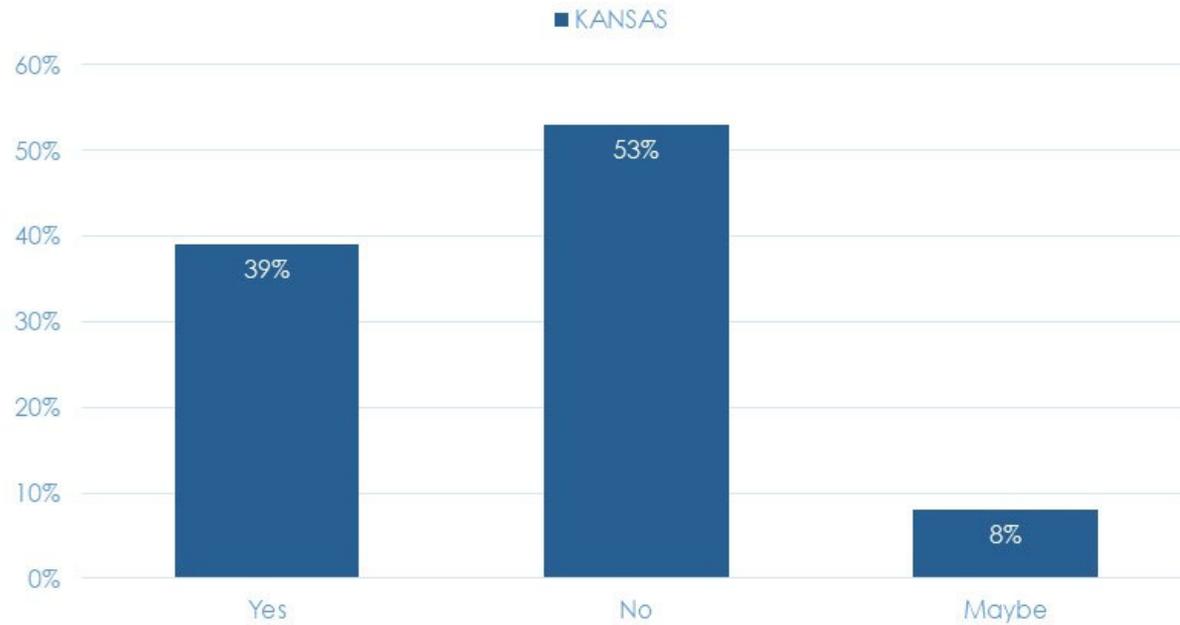
N=1856



Almost 40% of stories had a Bright Spot

BRIGHT SPOTS

N=2069

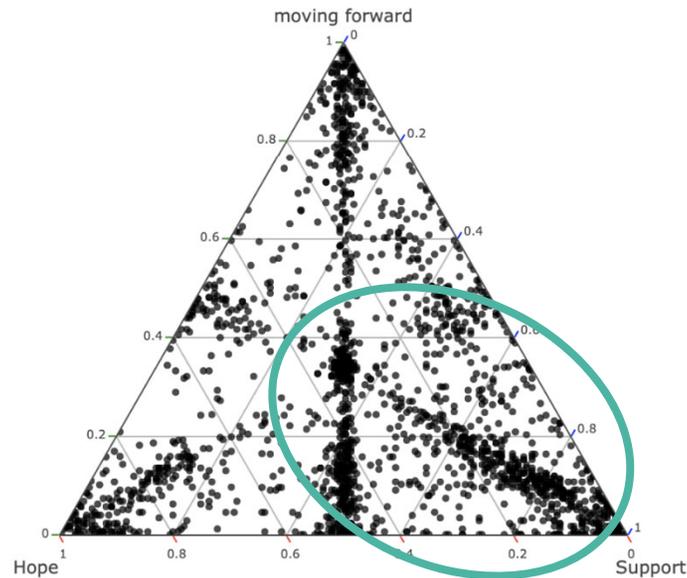


Families received support from various places

Things got tough

In the experience you shared, when things got tough, what helped the family get through?

- Hope for the future
- Gritty Triads leeth and moving forward
- Support from others





Events disrupt a family's positive trajectory in the EC system

Disruptor Category	Example	Additional Example
Unemployment	Losing a job	Unable to get employed due to criminal record
Transportation	Car breaking down	No way to transport child to/from child care
Housing	Becoming homeless	Unable to qualify for housing assistance
Health	Health crisis	Behavior health; substance abuse
Safety	Domestic abuse	General violence in neighborhood
Family Separation	Divorce	Child Protective Services remove child from home
New Child	Baby is born	Adopt a child or add a stepchild
Other	Lose social service	No longer qualify for child care subsidy



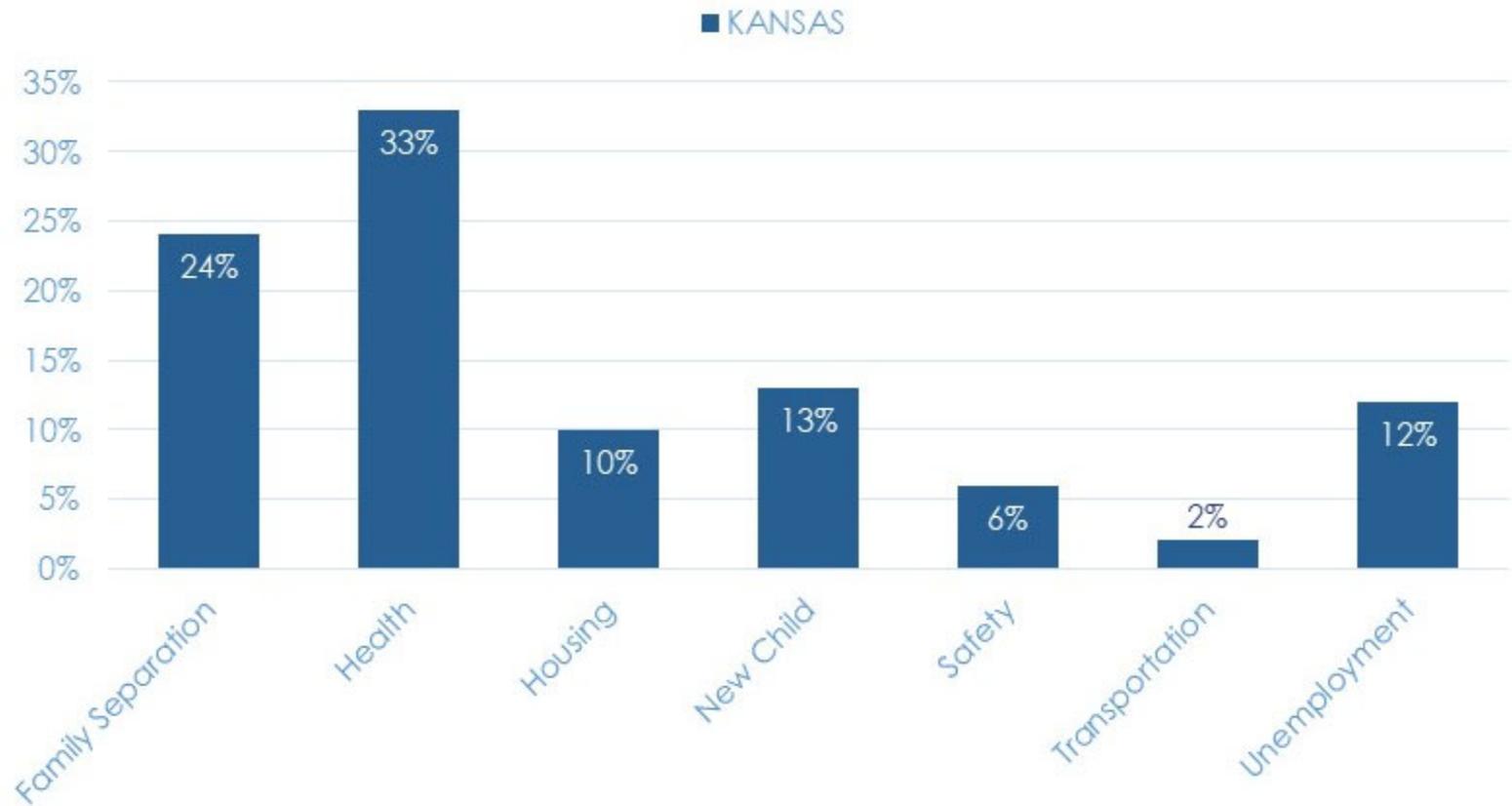
65% of stories had a Disruptor

- ▶ Most common Disruptors:
 - Health
 - Family Separation
 - New Child
- ▶ Unemployment or job changes also significant



DISRUPTORS

N=1385





Disruptor - Health

The Accident to remember. (2225)

Terrible Accident that happened to my husband. Thought he might not make it but thank heavens for our Community's EMT's Hospital, doctors, airport for Flight and the expertise of Doctors in Swedish & Porter hospitals in Denver as well as the Physical Therapy facilities (Including our own), he has made much progress. Spending 3 months in Denver was not fun but thankfully our children and grandchildren and family members were able to be there to support both of us!





Disruptor – Family Separation

26 payments a year is problematic (2090)

Parents had divorced. Dad had to enforce visitation with the courts because Mom wasn't allowing it. Mom filed a motion to increase child support from \$500+ to \$900+. It crippled Dad financially. His job paid every 2 weeks so he paid 26 times a year. Child support worksheet figured his child support to reflect the 2 times a year he made 3 payments in a month. Dad actually placed an income withholding order on himself through his job so his support payment was never late. Every year he filed his income tax return, the State of Kansas took his refund because it showed he had a child support arrearage because of the 26 payment year but then refunded it when his 3 payments in a month happened in the summer months. The Hays Kansas Child Support Enforcement is a joke. One of the case workers actually told Dad the system would learn how he pays and not take his refund. They still took it. NOT how this is supposed to work!





Disruptor – New Child

Single Mother (2193)

I just had my daughter and as a single mother who has health issues I was struggling to pay bills and provide for her.





Our Tomorrows amplifies lived experience

Unheard Voice Category	Example
Low income working families	Single mother trying to go to school and work
Incarcerated	Family loses source of income when parent incarcerated
Young children not in school	Children placed in foster care system, must move a lot
Diagnosed Emotional behavioral or developmental conditions	Special education needs have been diagnosed but no access to specialist or can't pay for services or therapies
Special health care needs	Accident or illness causes parent to lose employment
Rural areas in poverty	Isolated w/no access to basic services: healthcare, childcare
Foster care	Foster care system difficult to navigate, few supports
Non-English Speaker	Services not available in native language





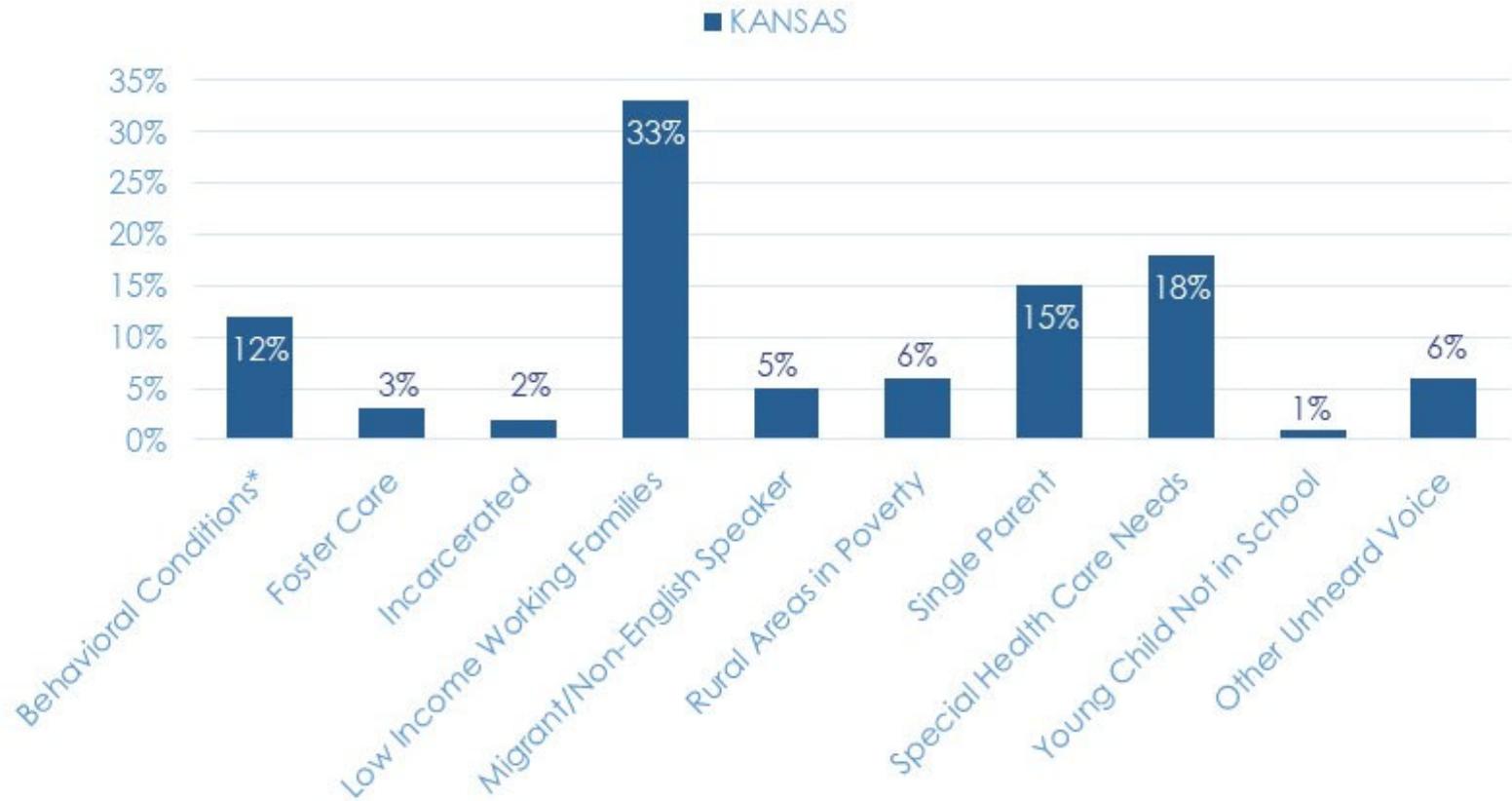
Almost 60% of stories represented Unheard Voices

- ▶ Most common Unheard Voices:
 - Low Income Working Families
 - Special Healthcare Needs
 - Single Parent



UNHEARD VOICES

N=1225



*Full title of category: Diagnosed Emotional, Behavioral or Developmental Conditions



Unheard Voice – Low Income Working Families

▶ **Almost lost my job! (679)**

My provider supported me through making a difficult decision recently. I was about to lose my job because I was having to take my child to work with me each day. I couldn't afford childcare full time and I was afraid to seek help with his care. Her provider suggested she put in help from DCF and after much encouragement I did. I was approved for childcare. I now have a wonderful provider who cares for my child every day and I still have my job! My provider says she is so proud of me and I'm glad I had her to help me through this situation.





Unheard Voice – Special Healthcare Needs

▶ **Mental Health Struggles for People of Color (908)**

A few years ago, my son was diagnosed on the autism spectrum. We didn't (and still don't) have a lot of support in the community. He was already a junior in high school. We were told that he scored high on the chart when he was in middle school but were also told that we didn't need to worry about it. Even though I questioned it several times through the years, no one really helped us until we got to KU Mental Health. It seemed like we were just going through the motions before then because we didn't understand what it was like for him. We still don't somewhat but we're learning how to cope with it better.





Unheard Voice – Single Parent

▶ **Single Mother Life (1473)**

I was a single mother who was working full time to provide for myself and my child. It was exhausting to be at work all day long and then parenting full time once I got home. I had recently gotten a small raise that kicked me out of the income scale for WIC. I remember being very upset that I thought that small pay raise would help me, only to find out that I would in fact be losing a supplement that was helping us to get by.





Needs are uncovered through shared experience

Unmet Need Category	Example	Additional Example
Stress/Anxiety/Depression	Maternal depression, Postpartum stress	Suicide, substance abuse
Access to Childcare	Unaffordable or too far away	Waiting list for child care space
Parenting Knowledge	Need basic parenting help with difficult child; little support from relatives or community	Unaware of/unable to access parenting support services, unable to navigate systems for special ed
Safety	Neighborhood is unsafe, no play areas	Domestic violence in home
Basic Needs	Need job training, help applying	Don't have 'work' clothes for job
Financial	Can't afford nutritious food for family	Unable to pay for medications
Other – Check Later	Military family struggles with PTSD	Can't attend school while working





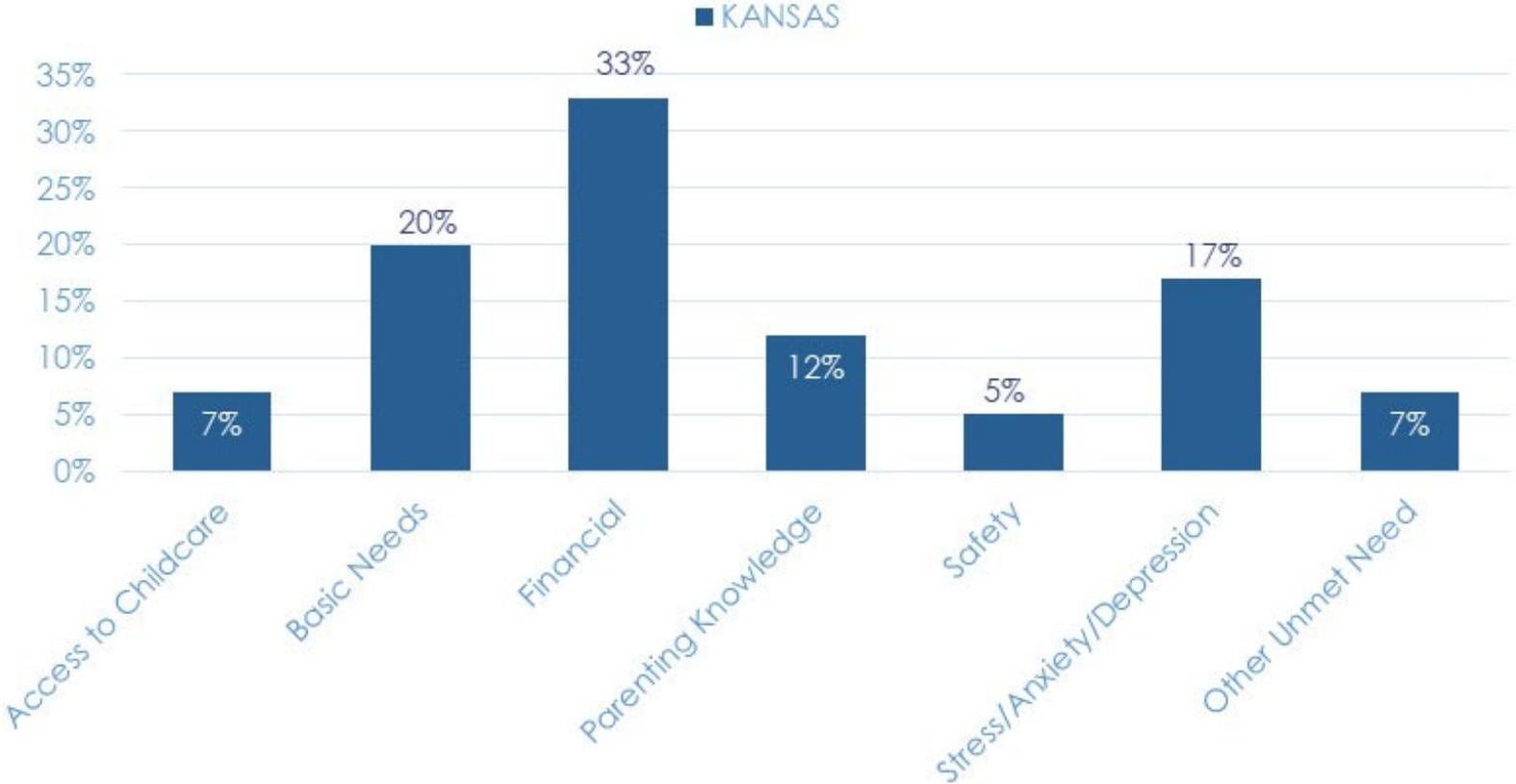
Almost 2/3 of stories had an Unmet Need

- ▶ Most common Unmet Needs:
 - Financial
 - Basic Needs
 - Stress/Anxiety/Depression



UNMET NEEDS

N=1365



Unmet Need - Financial

- ▶ **paycheck to paycheck (1483)**

starting out when my husband and i were first married. we were young and struggling to make it. there were times when we had to choose to pay a bill and have no food or get to eat and be late on our bill payment we eventually got our heds above water and just live within our means



Unmet Need – Basic Needs

- ▶ **growing up (1641)**

There was a time when i was growing up that we didnt have electric and we barely had food to eat. We ate a lot of beans because they were cheap and filling. We had to take cold showers and we went to bed when the sun went down. I didnt understand it at the time except that we were camping or having a fun adventure. I get it now.





Unmet Need – Stress/Anxiety/Depression

► **My testimony (907)**

In 2015 my youngest daughters father died when she was 3 months old. I often seen myself not thinking there was light at the end of the tunnel. Such as my children being my only hope, my thrive, and motivation. I was depressed for a while but what helped me the most was mentally I would tell my self daily to thrive to do better. That if I wanted a better life or future for my kids I had to think positive and or keep positivity around me and my children.





Next Steps – Upcoming Workshops

- ▶ North Central:
 - Monday, August 26
 - 2:30 – 4:30pm
 - Donna Vanier Children's Center
 - 155 N Oakdale Ave, Salina, KS
 - ▶ Northeast:
 - Thursday, September 5
 - 10:00am – 12:00pm
 - Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library
 - 1515 SW 10th Ave, Topeka, KS
 - ▶ Four County Mental Health Center:
 - Friday, August 30
 - 10:00am – 12:00pm
 - K-State Research Extension - Montgomery County
 - 410 Peter Pan Rd # B, Independence, KS
 - ▶ Hays:
 - Tuesday, September 17
 - 11:00am – 1:00pm
 - Early Childhood Connections
 - Building 1 Activity Room
 - 2501 E. 13th Street, Hays, KS
- 



tomorrow OUR



Thank you!



@cprpr_media



kucprpr.org/OurTomorrows

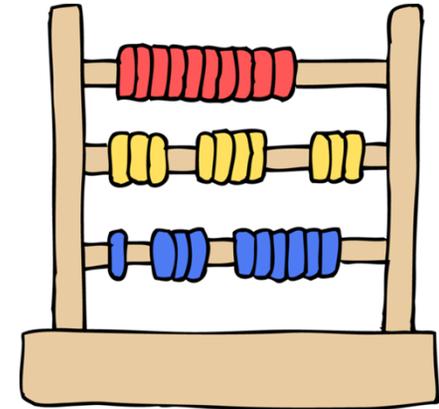
KU

CENTER FOR
PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS
& RESEARCH

The University of Kansas

Visioning Sessions - By The Numbers

- ▶ 20 Visioning Sessions with 510 total participants
- ▶ 8 statewide early childhood leadership groups
- ▶ 6 local early childhood coalitions.
- ▶ 4 meetings of statewide groups
- ▶ 2 statewide school administrator groups
- ▶ 20 Parent Cafes with 130 parents
(hosted by KCSL Parent Engagement Staff)





Visioning Sessions - Questions

- ▶ What **bright spots**, services, or attributes does your community have to support infants, young children and families that we should be amplifying and celebrating?
- ▶ Tell us about your **vision** for early childhood in your community? What would you see, hear, and experience?
- ▶ What **gaps** do you see between the early childhood system as it is and your vision?



Bright Spots from Parent Cafes

- ▶ **What bright spots, services, or attributes does your community have to support young children and families that we should be amplifying and celebrating?**
 - ▶ Local faith-based entities (churches, organizations, etc.). They help provide food, clothing, diapers and sometimes even shelter.
 - ▶ Local support groups such as healthy families, network groups, and those offered by social service providers.
 - ▶ Mental health services (counseling, therapy, or rehab), federal assistance programs, and local banks for budgeting/setting goals, credit counseling, etc.
 - ▶ Life skills classes and community activities - parenting, language, home-related, computer/technology, recreation services, etc.



Challenges/Gaps from Parent Cafes

- ▶ **What gaps do you see between the current EC system and your vision?**
 - ▶ Financial Gaps – high cost of services/programs coupled with low family income.
 - ▶ Awareness Gaps – general lack of knowledge about available resources and fear of asking for help (due to stigma, judgement, or personal pride).
 - ▶ Reliable transportation.
 - ▶ Cultural barriers such as language and status.
 - ▶ Need for universal family-friendly workplaces – many families work long hours or 2nd/3rd shift jobs and cannot find childcare, or they lack flexibility for time off for family illness or the necessary appointments for their children.
 - ▶ Gaps in access to quality medical care for both parents and children – both geographic barriers and insurance barriers.



Vision from Parent Cafes

- ▶ **Tell us about your vision for early childhood in your community? What would you see, hear, and experience?**
 - ▶ Childcare programs that are trustworthy, universally available (time and location), affordable or take subsidies, licensed, and have few barriers to entry.
 - ▶ Affordable, safe housing options that have few barriers to entry (low intervention, 2nd chance) and that are appropriate for families of all sizes and ages.
 - ▶ Mental health services and supports in schools as well as early childhood programs, particularly around topics such as ACEs, bullying prevention, and parent engagement.
 - ▶ General supports such as high quality family counseling, affordable legal services, family-friendly shelters, expanded community activities, a culture of family support, and improved medical options for under-insured.

Visioning Sessions Summary - Themes

▶ **Lack of affordable, accessible childcare**

- ▶ Severe shortage for infants, children with special needs and non-traditional work hours (e.g., 2nd and 3rd shifts and weekends), and in rural and frontier counties.
- ▶ Infant care not economically feasible for providers, particularly when preschool-aged children are not part of the mix.

▶ **Workforce challenges**

- ▶ Decreasing number of providers entering and remaining in the field, primarily due to inability to make a living wage.
- ▶ The need for valuing, respecting and fairly compensating child care providers was voiced by many, often with a link to the quality of services for children.

“Caregivers must be supported in order for them to help children develop.”



Visioning Sessions Summary - Themes

- ▶ **A significant number of young children are not having preschool experiences prior to kindergarten**
 - ▶ Transportation and affordability are significant barriers. Smaller communities lack preschools outside of special needs and Head Start.
 - ▶ An additional barrier is the length of the preschool program. More flexibility in scheduling could better accommodate the range of family needs.
 - ▶ Many emphasized the importance of a holistic approach to early learning.

“Academics are important, but the skills students need are interpersonal, intrapersonal and social emotional.”

Visioning Sessions Summary - Themes

- ▶ **Parent engagement/support should be the norm, starting prenatally**
 - ▶ Supports that allow parents to work and still have the time and energy to provide emotional and physical nurturing of their children.
 - ▶ Help with basic life skills, especially those who are vulnerable, at risk and/or from different cultures.
 - ▶ Inconsistency in basic services and supports, including affordable housing, availability of healthy food, transportation and safe play spaces for children.
 - ▶ Personal connections to help avoid isolation from geography, social media, etc.

“We often hear from parents ‘We don’t have anyone to talk with.’ Parents need safe adult time.”

“We need paid parental leave—it is pivotal to economic security during a child’s earliest development.”

“Breastfeeding should be normalized and destigmatized.”

“Families are living in houses that are unsafe, falling down around them because it’s all they can afford.”

Visioning Sessions Summary - Themes

- ▶ **Awareness gaps and stigma limit parents' access to services**
 - ▶ Services are too limited by eligibility criteria, excluding families above the poverty level or without significant risk factors.
 - ▶ Services should be “normalized”—“as common as going to the grocery store and part of our community conversations.”
 - ▶ Parents lack knowledge about the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of accessing services.
- ▶ **While often a bright spot, continued need for greater collaboration.**
 - ▶ Gaps for families experiencing a disruption or transition (ex. transitions from pre-k to K or into special healthcare services).

“You have to be in crisis to get connected.”

“Our greatest need is linkages and alignment of all who impact the lives of young children and families.”



Visioning Sessions Summary - Themes

▶ **Lack of health care availability**

- ▶ Many communities don't have a pediatrician within 60 miles
- ▶ The need for Medicaid expansion (widely voiced)
- ▶ Limited access to dental care, especially in more rural areas
- ▶ Lack of specialists outside urban areas, including physicians and allied health professionals (e.g., speech therapists)
- ▶ Shortage of mental/behavioral health services for parents and children statewide
- ▶ A few notable communities have navigators to help families connect with maternal and child health services, as well as early childhood programs.

“We need stronger connections between health care and early childhood providers.”

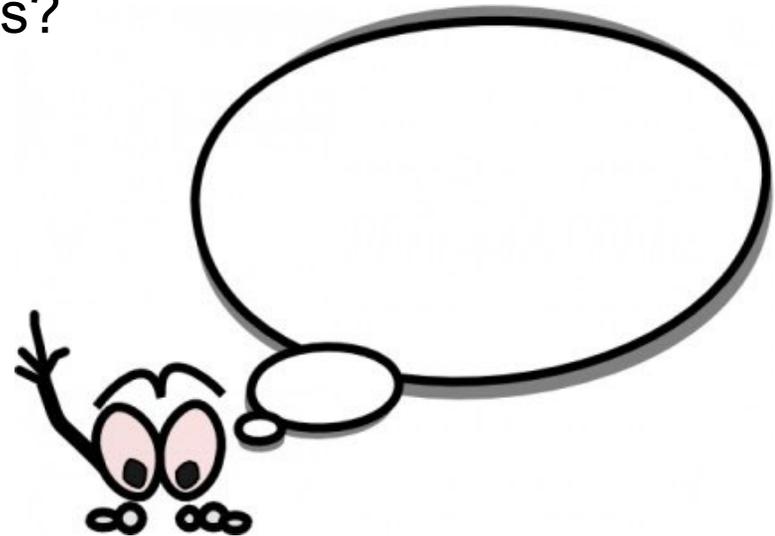


Visioning Sessions Summary - Themes

- ▶ **Need for additional funding and flexibility or a restructuring in how it is allocated**
 - ▶ Both community and state leaders voiced the need to “minimize barriers to meshing funds across programs.”
 - ▶ Private funding is sometimes focused on specific activities that limit capacity to address emerging priorities (trauma was specifically mentioned).
 - ▶ There is a perception of inequitable funding between prevention and intervention, as well as the need for a common definition of prevention.

Remarks and Reflections

- ▶ General reactions or questions?
- ▶ Is this what you expected?
- ▶ What did you hear that you didn't expect?
- ▶ What didn't you hear that you did expect?





Statewide Needs Assessment

- ▶ Additional Needs Assessment Activities - **Opportunity to hear synthesis and provide feedback or reactions**
- ▶ Upcoming Webinars
 - ▶ **September 4** – Overall
- ▶ Advisory Team Meeting
 - ▶ **August 23** – RSVP by emailing sgardner10@ku.edu

Kansas Early Childhood Journey

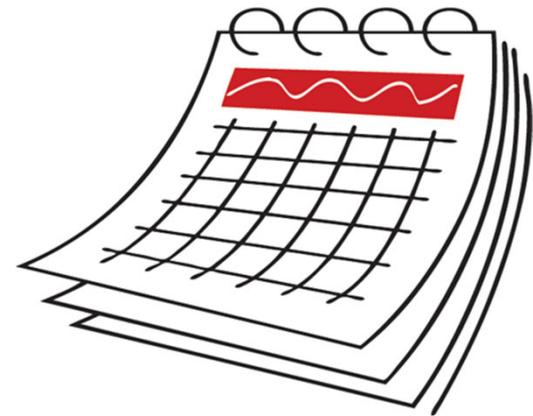
- ▶ Explore the timeline of moments and follow it to see where this journey began.
- ▶ All Community Engagement Sessions are now available!
- ▶ Moments include bright spots and aspirations!



Find the Kansas Early Childhood Journey here –
kschildrenscabinet.org/journey

Upcoming Events

- ▶ **Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund Meeting**
 - ▶ Friday, August 23rd -- 9:30am
 - ▶ Topeka Library
- ▶ **Advisory Team Meeting**
 - ▶ Friday, August 23rd -- 1:00pm
 - ▶ Topeka, Kansas Medical Society
- ▶ **Governor's Symposium on Early Childhood**
 - ▶ Monday, October 7
 - ▶ Hyatt Regency Hotel in Wichita, KS
- ▶ **Parent Leadership Conference**
 - ▶ November 15-16, 2019 @ Capitol Plaza Hotel – Topeka
 - ▶ Contact Pam Noble or visit www.kcsl.org for more information





What's Next?

- ▶ Needs Assessment

- ▶ Our Tomorrows Story Collection – **Help get to Zero Zeros!**
- ▶ Synthesis and Final Report Writing

- ▶ Strategic Plan

- ▶ Online Share Form Option
- ▶ Governor's Symposium on Early Childhood – October 7, 2019 in Wichita.
- ▶ Registration will open soon!

- ▶ Stay Connected

- ▶ Upcoming Webinars –September 4th and September 18th
- ▶ August 23rd Advisory Team Meeting

**Strengthening
Early Childhood
in Kansas in 2019**

Thank you!!