

STRENGTHENING early childhood in KANSAS

"We are ALL Early Childhood Stakeholders"
Governor Laura Kelly

In 2019, Kansas has the opportunity through new federal grant funding to shape our state's future direction for early childhood by developing a comprehensive needs assessment and strategic plan. This collaborative effort invited the voices of all Kansans and resulted in an impressive cross-section of nearly 6,000 contributors. As part of this effort, individuals across the state joined to share their vision for the early childhood care and education (ECCE) system they want to see in their communities.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND WORKFORCE SURVEYS

Child Care Aware of Kansas completed an Environmental Needs Assessment with childcare providers across the state of Kansas to identify opportunities related to childcare environments. The survey covered materials in the learning environment, program practices, and physical repairs and renovations.

Additionally, Child Care Aware of Kansas and KCCTO (Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities) conducted a joint survey to assess the professional development (PD) needs of the Kansas early childhood workforce. This comprehensive survey (45 questions) covered provider and program information and professional development practices.

87

on-site visits

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

- 93% Serve meals
- 67% Enrolled in Child and Adult Care Food Program
- 78% Talk with children during meals
- 80% Have adequate outdoor play areas
- 88% Have adequate indoor play areas
- 61% Do not have a security system

400

program responses

805

individuals

PD WORKFORCE SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

- Work at or provide:
- 30% Child care facility
 - 35% Family child care
 - 18% In-home group day care
 - 8% Preschool
 - 3% Relative care
 - 3% Head Start Program
 - 3% Other (including Pre-K and home visiting)
- 78% of respondents have 15+ years of experience in the field

84

counties represented

"The child care workforce in our community is at an all-time low, with a 200% turnover rate, largely due to non-competitive wages."

- Pre-K Teacher

What we heard from Kansans

UNIVERSAL FINDINGS

Families have basic needs that are not being met, and that is driving the way they do or do not interact with the early childhood system. These experiences differ greatly across the state.

OTHER FINDINGS THAT EMERGED

Environmental Scan

- ★ Nutrition services are a strength in Kansas childcare programs. The number one family education topic was nutrition.
- ★ Indoor and outdoor play areas are a strength in most Kansas facilities. Many have space for outdoor activities, indoor big body play, dramatic play, reading areas, constructive equipment, fine motor equipment, art, and music equipment.
- ★ Efforts around facilities are largely driven by regulation and current areas of focus in the field.
- ★ Because the majority of the data is self-reported, additional confirmed data is needed regarding the physical conditions of many childcare facilities.
- ★ Additional learning materials needed as part of quality improvement efforts.

Workforce Survey

- ★ Program leadership primarily looks for intermediate or advance training opportunities for their staff. Areas where they seek entry-level training for their teams include trauma-informed care, infant-toddler care, and early learning standards.
- ★ Greatest opportunities to improve participation in professional development include offering relevant topics, offering online trainings, reducing travel distance for in-person trainings, and lowering training costs.
- ★ Providers are primarily focused on required trainings for licensing purposes and most report receiving as much training as needed to do their jobs. Two-thirds report training above and beyond minimal requirements about 1-5 times per year.
- ★ 43% of the current workforce is traveling 25 miles or more for professional development. 81% are currently accessing on-line training and about 60% are currently receiving some type of on-site professional development/coaching.

“Funding creates silos and inhibits or prohibits collaboration. We need to minimize barriers to meshing funds across programs.” - Pre-K Teacher

BRIGHT SPOTS

Efficient, innovative, and responsive efforts are occurring amongst early childhood care and education system partners across the state. Bright spots in both surveys highlighted the important role childcare providers play in their communities through strong relationships and dedication to both their work and the children and families they serve.

“I develop very strong relationships with my families and pour myself wholeheartedly into my business.”

- Childcare provider