

KANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD RECOMMENDATIONS PANEL

Monthly Meeting Minutes
Friday, January 15, 2021



Visit the [Children's Cabinet website](#) for meeting materials and the [YouTube recording](#).

Members Present

Nichelle Adams, Kansas Department for Children and Families

Jennifer Adhima, Project Eagle, University of Kansas Medical Center

Marites Altuna, Kansas Deaf-Blind Project

Rachel Anno, Kansas Department for Children and Families

Mallory Arellano, Newman University

Emily Barnes, Barnes Child Care

Deanna Berry, Russell Child Development Center

Tanya Bulluck, Child Start

Gail Cozadd, Kansas Children's Service League

Rachele FioRito, United Way of the Plain

Jenny Flinders, University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research

Kelly Frantz-Langford, TARC, Inc.

Amy Gottschamer, Googols of Learning

Kim Hawkins, USD 233 Olathe Public Schools

Eva Horn, University of Kansas Department of Special Education

Kim Kennedy, Kansas Department for Children and Families

Emily Killough, Children's Mercy Kansas City

Lorrena (Lori) Kravitz, Kansas Department of Health and Environment

David Lindeman, University of Kansas Life Span Institute at Parsons

Kelli Mark, Kansas Department of Health and Environment

Natalie McClane, Kansas State Department of Education

Amy Meek, Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund

Paula Neth, The Family Conservancy

Patti Peschel, Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities, Inc.

Amanda Petersen, Kansas State Department of Education

Dee Rankin, Child Start, Inc.

Angie Saenger, Child Care Aware of Kansas

Chelsea Schulte, Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities, Inc.

Cassandra Sines, Sines Virtual Assistant Service

Christi Smith, DCCCA

Heather Staab, Kansas Department of Health and Environment

Cornelia Stevens, TOP Early Learning Centers

Amber Tankersley, Pittsburg State University

Minutes

Welcome

Amanda Petersen called the meeting to order with a quorum present, described processes for a remote meeting, and directed participants to the [Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund website](#) for meeting materials.

Meeting Agenda

Amy Meek moved to approve the agenda and Gail Cozadd seconded, with a unanimous vote to approve the agenda as presented.

October 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Dave Lindeman moved to approve the November minutes and Cornelia Stevens seconded, with a unanimous vote to approve the November minutes as presented.

Kansans' Open Forum - Written and Verbal Comments:

No written or verbal comments provided.

Follow-up from last meeting - Debbie Deere

Debbie Deere provided an update on the various workgroups meeting.

- Kindergarten Transitions Workgroup
 - Continues to be productive.
 - Started on the dissemination plan, and spent the hour working on language to put together an introduction or explanation page about the importance of kindergarten transitions, and what success looks like.
- #KSBeatsTheVirus
 - An initiative started by the Kansas Leadership Center in partnership with the State of Kansas.
 - Put together to inspire groups of alumni to continue the positive messaging of safety practices in Kansas for the pandemic. A group of 10 people were gathered from The Panel to put together what our plan was. The decision was made to do a social media campaign throughout the early childhood network. Group will continue talking about this and talking points for messaging. Want to be creative with pictures and dialogue.
- Engaging Providers Workgroup
 - Brand new.
 - Suggested that The Panel needs to recommend strategies to better engage providers and families. Looking forward to identifying strategies that will empower providers. Will also tie family members in.

In conversation regarding the panel's role in policy advocacy, takeaways were:

- The Panel serves as an advisory group to the Children's Cabinet

- Workshop and brainstorm details regarding specific policy proposals.
- Eventually work through a process to make recommendations to the Children’s Cabinet, while influencing the early childhood system now and in the future. Individual Panel members have the ability to independently advocate, and offer testimony from their own organization, but we do not anticipate panel members make recommendation or testimony to the legislature. We can mimic what we did with the MOU template to create messaging and shared understanding.

Nichelle Adams provided an update on the Child Care Development Fund. Feedback sessions will take place before the end of February. Panel member asked about the plans for additional COVID-19 relief funding, and what the state will do with these dollars in regard to child care. Melissa Rooker noted that the road ahead is still being determined. In the new relief package, it is important to note the funding is directed to specific programs at state agencies. It will look different than the CARES Act did. Unsure if those programs will be continued or if different decisions being made with CARES Act funding. There is significant funding headed to Kansas.

Kansas Child Care Tax Credit Policy

Mitch Rucker from Kansas Action for Children gave additional background from the verbal comment from the December panel meeting, and presented the existing state of play for employer child care tax credit. It is limited at \$3 million, and covers about half the expenses for on-site care, and 30% for those employers who choose to pay for child care off-site, or help employees find a child care provider. Fully refundable, meaning a business has a lower tax liability, than the amount of the credit they will receive, they would get a check from the state for the difference.

- Changes we want to make were already a part of the tax credit when it came into existence in 1991, and the change to limit to c-corporations and to privilege tax payers was made in 2013, presumably because taxes for those businesses were eliminated in a different tax bill. They made this change to fit within that context.
- Did receive a bill draft from revisors office, and what’s in that bill and what we are proising, expand the eligibility beyond c-corporations. Any employer could apply for this credit. Eliminate dropdown of what they are eligible for on-site care. We would keep it at 50% for all years.
- Why we are trying to do this? The credit is underutilized. We want to make sure more employers are taking advantage of this, and helping their employees find child care and pay for it. We think that this is also a really good concrete piece of policy, that can start conversation around investing funds in child care. It will have no impact on state budget.

Mitch Rucker noted that as long as the provider is registered as a business, they should qualify for this credit. And business has to be for-profit, but the facility does not.

Amanda Petersen reminded panel members when community sessions were done for the Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan, there was a great response from local economic

development entities. We highlighted the Department of Commerce has regional offices, and people to support the business community in Kansas. These would be a resource to turn to in spreading word of tax credits and economic development incentives.

Kansas Power of the Positive coalition have developed great relationships with businesses and Chamber of Commerce.

Mitch provided a timeline that includes Kansas Society of CPAs will reviewing the bill draft. Once we get that back, we will go back to revisor, and introduce to the House and Senate.

Good ways to stay up-to-date are advocating at the individual level. Feel free to email Mitch Rucker at mitch@kac.org. If you would be interested in providing testimony, Mitch will let you know when that may be needed.

Role, Norms, and Procedures of the Panel – proposed plain language changes

Chelsea Schulte provided proposed changes to the Role, Norms, and Procedures document. We should be looking through the lens of the Plain Language Guidelines.

Proposed changes to the set are:

- Replace “shall” with “must”, “should”, or “will.”
- Simplify language and change passive voice to active voice.
- Refer consistently to the “Children’s Cabinet.”

Emily Barnes moved to adopt the proposed changes, and Natalie McClane seconded, with a unanimous vote to adopt the changes as presented.

Reflections on Recommendation Panel’s Work

Amanda Petersen noted that back in July, we thought it would be helpful to revisit at the six-month mark. She asked Panel members to remember what they wanted to accomplish with this Panel and their role. A timeline of the work that has taken place over the past year was provided for reference. When members were surveyed on the issue they wanted to make progress on, they responded with:

- Idea on strengthening the early childhood system. Working in the same direction and coordinating with one another.
- Better understanding of the landscape.
- Connect the early learning community.
- Support communities so that they have what they need to solve problems at the local level.
- Identify and fill the real gaps in the system.
- Improve access to affordable early childhood programs

Panel members provided feedback on what their role has been like so far:

- “I have had half of this group reach out personally, or reach out to get help at a local level to start working on getting things done across the state. We are making progress as a group and spreading the wealth across.”

- “Came into this Panel with lens of family child care provider, and spent time trying to understand what was going on. See the level of dedicated active work going on behind the scenes. Came in trying to bridge the gap. What I have seen is listening with the intent to move the conversation forward. Favorite Panel meeting was December’s meeting. The group was listening. This group cares about these big issues, and with some follow-up action. This has helped see how strong our field is and the steps we are capable of taking. Thank everyone for bridging and taking projects forward to benefit everyone.”
- “Appreciated hearing from local folks and across the state. We always seek to get input from a diverse group, but often it is easy to get off-center of what would truly be beneficial at the local level. Family voice has been good as well.”

Amanda Petersen asked how the Panel can coordinate and have shared leadership, so we are aware of what is going on? Do you feel we have the tools to understand what is happening? Do we need to think about how to continue to build relationships and coordinate? Feedback included:

- Most info comes from state-level agencies. Is there a way to do a monthly newsletter? Or maybe from our group? 5 sentences of what we are working on right now.
- Weekly all in for Kansas kids updates. How might we be able to think through the weekly email updates, webinars and stakeholders. All a cohesive system working together and tools we have available to us.
- Try to summarize main point into graphic that is posted to social media, that is linked to information. Finding what would be the simplest way to summarize information. Trigger that they go this through email. Concise way to take what we discussed as a summary and link to video...
- Need a more cohesive organization amongst all of those tools. Hard to stay engaged with hearing information multiple times. We can make more use of our time if we watch beforehand. Use our time more effectively if we can use do these in advance.
- Felt my hope of this Panel was mobilizing efforts. Goes beyond message delivery. Presentation is more technical. Our role is taking how this fit with families. Unusual voice for families. Not sure how much work has penetrated to the family-level. How do we mobilize 1800Children to families?
- One of the reasons I joined was the action piece. Put us to work. I signed up to contribute, and while enjoying presentations, the piece is missing is what do I do in my role to take these things and create action.
- Hoped to see the state level and all of the programming that impacts us. Still learning about different departments. Long term goal of this group, maybe be able to make recommendations for departments.
- Even though we are not able to meet in person, it is easier to be able to participate and be at the table when virtual. This is helpful.

- Joined The Panel to better understand EC landscape and how to integrate practices of KS School of the Blind. Joined because I need your input, and hope to have the opportunity to share the work KSOB does.

Amanda Petersen reminded Panel members to reach out to have time on the agenda, or have members workshop. Member's favorite bright spots from the year so far included:

- Appreciation of all of the partnerships and connections made. I have learned a lot. Wanted to gain more knowledge and be an advocate for early childhood.
- Excited to be a part of the dialogue. What I've enjoyed about The Panel is the freedom to be candid.

A recommendation was made to review presentations prior to meetings, look at it on a more in-depth level during the meeting, and then decide what is an action plan we can leave that meeting with.

What, and how should Panel members prioritize in 2021?

- Supporting the work of the Quality Subgrants.
- Make sure someone is looking from a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens.
- We should outline diversity, equity, and inclusion in our information. Keep that piece when Panel members leave.
- Make effort to look at professional development opportunities for providers.
- Take hold of notion to recruit new people. Young people who think they can change the world need to come to this field. How can we entice folks, and support a very diverse workforce?
- Mentorship is so important across the state, but we do need to determine as a state what the line is between mentorship and professional development. And who is a qualified mentor?
- We also need to address compensation. If we want to get a diverse workforce, we need to compensate people.
- Thinking about Kansas Early Learning Standards. Worthwhile for The Panel to take a look at Kansas Early Learning Standards in 2021, and make recommendations about whether they are due for an update and develop a work plan.

Amanda Petersen opened conversation about the future of Panel membership. The Children's Cabinet to approve memberships at the June Cabinet meeting. We will be considering:

- Balancing continuity and new ideas
- Ensuring representation reflects our overall early childhood care and education system and the makeup of our state
- Overall group size
- Connections with other councils, committees, and workgroups

Panel members noted:

- If we trying to drive business support, it would be worth to invite Chamber of Commerce members and family members to group.

- With the Engaging Providers group, we hope to gain interest from providers. This may mean having a subgroup that allows for after business hours, who cannot access during this time.

Discussion of Role, Norms, and Procedures of the Panel

No changes were proposed to the Role, Norms, and Procedures.

Requests for Future Agenda Items

Melissa Rooker provided next steps on Kansas vaccine plan. The plan is a Kansas Department of Health and Environment document. Kansas is currently in phase 1. We will be transitioning to phase 2 in the coming weeks, and official announcements will come from Kansas Department of Health and Environment. The website:

<https://www.kansasvaccine.gov/> is where you need to look for information on shifts in phases, and when the vaccine becomes available to you.

Upcoming Meetings (all via Zoom)

- Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund Meeting – Friday, February 5, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Early Childhood Stakeholders Group Meeting – Friday, February 5, 1:30–3:00 p.m.
- Early Childhood Recommendations Panel meeting – Friday, January 15, 9:00–11:30 a.m.
 - Third Fridays of the month, beginning at 9:00 a.m.
- *Scheduled workgroup meetings will be posted at [Panel Meetings | Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund \(kschildrenscabinet.org\)](#)*

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.