

KANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD RECOMMENDATIONS PANEL

Monthly Meeting Minutes
Friday, April 16, 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

Tanya Bulluck, Child Start, Inc.

Gail Cozadd, Kansas Children's Service League

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

Kelly Frantz-Langford, TARC, Inc.

Amy Gottschamer, Googols of Learning

Sheila Hermocillo, USD 443 - Dodge City Public Schools

Eva Horn, University of Kansas Department of Special Education

Peggy Kelly, Kansas Head Start Association

Kim Kennedy, Kansas Department for Children and Families

Emily Killough, Children's Mercy Kansas City

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

Patty Peschel, Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities, Inc.

Amanda Petersen, Kansas State Department of Education

Dee Rankin, Child Start, Inc.

Sarah Rivers, Via Christi Rehabilitation

Angie Saenger, Child Care Aware of Kansas

Jan Scheideman, Riley County Health Department

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

Reva Wywadis, Child Care Aware of Eastern Kansas

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 Jennifer Adhima seconded, with a unanimous vote to approve the agenda as presented.

March 19, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Kim Kennedy moved to approve the March minutes and Reva Wywadis seconded, with a unanimous vote to approve the March minutes as presented.

Kansans' Open Forum - Written and Verbal Comments:

No comments submitted.

Follow-up from previous meetings - Debbie Deere

Debbie Deere provided an update from the March meeting:

Strategies for Engaging Providers workgroup

Discussion regarding an acronym list and a visual early childhood system graphic that could help to clarify and simplify the early childhood system in Kansas for providers. After looking into the ideas further, this will be revisited again at a later date. There is ongoing work with the Child Care Mapping project, and the Child Care Systems Improvement Team, that may begin addressing this need.

Breastfeeding in Kansas

Panel members should be prepared to discuss the question of "What can the Recommendations Panel do to support breastfeeding in our Kansas early childhood system," at the May or June meeting.

Child Care Development Fund State Plan 2022-2024 Update

Nichelle Adams, from the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF), provided an update on the Child Care Development Fund State Plan for 2022-2024, and sent the following information as follow-up to the meeting:

Six sessions were facilitated that focused on different sections of the plan, including one on February 19th with the Recommendations Panel to discuss workforce recruitment and retention

and quality improvement efforts. Although the intent of this input was to help with the state plan development, many ideas and opportunities were presented that would require additional funding. At this same time, there are federal recovery and relief funds being allocated through the Child Care Development Block Grant. These funds add more than \$400 million dollars to what we normally received. The majority of these funds must be obligated by September 2022. Because of this urgency and the amount of funds being provided, we are working to determine the best way to balance short-term investments that will provide immediate relief as well as investments that can lead to long term lasting impacts in Kansas child care. Most of the input received aligns with these investment opportunities.

- Funds will be used to assist providers:
 - There will be direct financial assistance such as more sustainability grants to provide immediate relief.
 - Incentives for things like operating during non-traditional hours, enrollment with the subsidy program, and other special prioritized populations and areas. These may include differential payments for subsidy providers that are above the base payments they receive.
 - There will also be start-up grants to help grow the provider pool in underserved areas and will include covering licensing fees and offer supplemental awards in child care deserts.
 - There will also be funds used to increase capacity through community partnerships, including schools and employers.
 - ECE shared resources, shared service models and additional technical assistance are other supports that will assist providers.
- In addition, we will help support the workforce:
 - Through financial support for the registry development,
 - A recruitment campaign for child care workers,
 - And trainings and scholarships for child care workers.
- Some funds will be used to build quality:
 - Funds will be used to support the Links to Quality (QRIS) statewide rollout,
 - And build consumer education on what quality care is.
- Additional funds will be used to help families through the expansion of the subsidy program.
 - We will also work to improve our understanding of what families need and want for child care to adapt the subsidy program to better meet those needs and recruit providers to increase access for the families to providers who meet their needs.

There are many other opportunities that have been shared through both the CCDF input sessions for the state plan, the needs assessment work and strategic plan work done with *All in for Kansas Kids*, and surveys and input received for these recovery funds specifically. DCF will

continue using this information to inform any decisions made regarding what works best for Kansas.

Kindergarten Transitions Toolkit Dissemination Plan

Debbie Deere provided a refresher on the Kindergarten Transitions Toolkit. The final designed toolkit was shared with the Children's Cabinet at the April 9 Children's Cabinet meeting. [The Kindergarten Transitions Toolkit is available now on the Children's Cabinet website.](#)

Peggy Kelly and Amy Gottschamer walked through the toolkit documents with the Panel. The documents have been rebranded for *All In For Kansas Kids*. The editable template can be downloaded from the website, and is a place to get things started to reflect the needs and desires for your community. The ask is to continue to disseminate this toolkit to members of your community. Panel members responded with thoughts and suggestions:

- The Kansas State Department of Education has shared this out with a couple of different communities seeking support in this area. There is a relatively new federal requirement that each school district receiving federal Title I funds must develop agreements and carry out coordination with Head Start and, if feasible, with other early childhood programs. The Kansas State Department of Education has been highlighting and educating schools on the requirement, and this toolkit has been a great help to share.
- A spot on the website would be nice to have bright spots and positive information section to help build excitement and understanding of what we are all doing.
- There are communities that went to the Summit, and also Kindergarten Readiness grantees. Between these two groups, there might be an opportunity to share at biweekly webinars in the future.
- Stories and bright spots from the Kindergarten Readiness grantee reports would be good to share.

Our Tomorrows - Unheard Voices

A facilitated discussion for Panel members to create "action plans" to engage Kansans in sharing stories to the Our Tomorrows Story Bank.

Jenny Flinders from the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research followed up on the Children's Cabinet's request for support in collecting stories for the Our Tomorrows Story Bank, and the ongoing work that is being done to use those stories to build more responsive policy decisions at the local and state level.

Links were sent out in English and Spanish, and can be tracked to see how many stories are coming in for this effort. There were no stories that came in directly from the links shared with Panel members, so the Panel discussed how this is going, and whether Panel members need help. Panel members shared strategies they have been considering:

- The Kansas State Department of Education team has been thinking of ways to push this out to schools and the programs served. Created sample social media posts. Thinking in the shoes of an administrator, and how they can be invited in as champions? Some schools may be interested in a custom URL so that they can know that they are analyzing stories from their district when completing needs assessments and planning for the future.
- The Center for Public Partnerships and Research has done targeted work with different stakeholder groups. Custom URLs can be made. Sensemaking sessions are the most powerful piece of the Our Tomorrows work. The magic happens when people can come around the data collected, and share stories, and ask questions. To do this, there needs to be about 100 stories from a group to protect anonymity, and see patterns emerge. Sharing examples to potential champions.
- The Child Care Providers Coalition of Kansas is hosting an annual conference, and would be interested in sharing this message with the larger group. Want to get together and brainstorm together on some ideas how to get the message out.
- Panel members should share their own story as well.
- Need to be diligent and intentional about stories shared.
- One Panel members sits on a local task force for maximizing American Rescue Plan funding, and suggested using the Our Tomorrows link and stories with this group. Working on a proposal to get 150-200 stories in a two-week period from the task force.

Jenny and the Our Tomorrows team will keep Panel members up-to-date on the story collection efforts. Panel members will continue working to engage a broad range of Kansans in sharing stories.

Kansas Quality Network (KQN)

Michelle Allen from the Kansas Department for Children and Families & Jevan Bremby from the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research presented on the Kansas Quality Network (KQN). The KQN website, <https://ksqualitynetwork.org/>, was launched in 2017, and in addition to branding, the KQN team wanted to clarify the purpose and vision. To do this, the team wanted to ask and answer several questions that may come to mind.

What Is the Kansas Quality Network (KQN)?

It is a website offered through the Kansas Department for Children and Families that helps families, child care providers, and communities find resources available for the advancement, support, and recognition of continuous quality improvement efforts in child care in Kansas.

- KQN provides information on child care assistance, and other services available to children and families including eligibility requirements for various programs, and instructions on how to access and apply for them.
- Supports parents with how to choose child care for their families.
- Assists child care providers in enhancing professional skills through links.

- KQN is designed to meet the regulatory requirements within the federal Child Care Development Block Grant Act and Child Care Development Fund.

Where did KQN come from?

CCDBG Act requires that certain information is made available to parents, providers, and the general public through a website or other electronic means.

This information must be:

- Assessible
- Consumer friendly
- Available for those who do not speak English
- Available for individuals who have disabilities

What does KQN have to be?

Requirements include:

- Social support information
- Safety information related to child care
- State policies and procedures
- Provider-specific information
- Aggregate annual data
- Child care referrals

What Is KQN doing now?

KQN Philosophy and Approach:

- Provide education, not just a "land o' links"
 - [How to become a provider](#)
 - [How to access subsidy](#)
 - [Foster care subsidy](#)

Tried to be exhaustive in the drop-down menus. All pages translate with Google Translate, and all applications available in English and Spanish.

Frequently Asked Questions pages available, and as well contact information for anyone who needed assistance.

- Be responsive to and reflective of each audience
 - COVID-19 Response
 - Able to take common phrases from Our Tomorrows story collection, and identified trends to pull together resources that helped answer questions.
- Current Reach and Impact

- Since the start of 2021 over 2,000 people have visited the website, averaging 689 visitors a month. Top search terms include Head Start, Subsidy, Group Home, and TANF.

The KQN team is working on aligning with Goals 1, 2, and 3, of the *All In for Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan.

What could KQN be moving forward?

Jevan facilitated a discussion with Panel members about what they think KQN can be in the future. Panel members shared their suggestions and comments regarding the website:

- Website is beautiful, easy to read, and makes sense. So many positive things to say about the website as it stands right now.
- Looking at other states' websites, KQN is really great. One state went a little further on information addressing concerns, and maybe building out a little more in the unknowns.
- The website is clean and easy to navigate. How do people find this, and how are we promoting it? How do parents find this? How is it found in a Google search?
- Want to see if the "Kansas Quality Network" is the right purpose for this website, and what will the purpose be over the next couple years. Help us take a look at our entire website, and see if KQN is the correct name for this website. Is the traffic and purpose captured with this name?
- In a Google search, this may not be pulled up as one of the top pieces when families are searching for child care. Maybe adding a child care piece to the name KQN.
- Could be a website that is disseminated at doctor's offices in pamphlets, or sharing through the Parent As Teachers network.
- Look at the number of users in a month's time - see how they are accessing the device. Make sure that the site is mobile-friendly.
- There is a two-sided flyer for Links to Quality that is provided in new licensed child care provider packets. They are available if anyone would like them, and in multiple languages.
- Suggestion would be clearer paths for providers and families with children with disabilities - clustered together in a cleaner way to identify those sources. The Division for Early Childhood should be included.
- Connect with 1-800-CHILDREN to make sure KQN is listed on the app.
 - There is work underway to discuss how these two resources work together.
- Is there a space for certain organizations that occur through counties, that maybe won't be linked? An additional search may be needed, but can be narrowed down.
- Could include link to Our Tomorrows to collect stories.
- Two-way avenue for communication.
- KQN can be on a future *All in for Kansas Kids* webinar. Information for stories in the "News" section is pulled from press releases, and if there is anything you want to share with KQN, news releases are helpful to pull this information together.

- The vision for KQN is to be the first-stop for families and providers. A strong communication strategy will need to be created for the website, and this will be a time and opportunity to come together and think of strategies.

2021-22 Recommendations Panel Application Announcement

Debbie Deere shared information on the 2021-22 Recommendations Panel Application process. Applications are currently being accepted until May 1. All Kansans are welcome to apply so that the Panel can represent a diversity of perspectives. Reach out to Debbie Deere at ddeere@ksde.org for any questions. The Children's Cabinet will consider recommended appointments for approval on June 4, 2021, and the one-year term will begin on July 1, 2021.

- State Agency directors will be reviewing the list of which agency staff will serve on the Panel, and will ask these Panel members to submit their application to Debbie.
- The application has been updated this year, and the most recent application will have Debbie's contact information at the top.
- Virtual meetings are planned for now, but in hopes of bringing people together sometime between now and July 2022 - recognizing both the convenience of meeting virtually and the relationship-building that can happen in person. Will certainly want to make sure people feel comfortable and safe.

Wilder Collaboration Survey and Levels of Collaboration Scale - Survey to evaluate Panel collaboration

Rebecca Gillam informed Panel members that they will be receiving an email with a survey link, that is a repeat of the survey done at the beginning of the Panel cycle. The survey will ask questions about the level of information-sharing, decision-making with each other, membership, process and structure, and purpose and resources of the group. A strong response to this survey is important as Kansas continues working to strengthen our early childhood system and governance. The link will be sent directly, as well as in the follow-up email.

Requests for Future Agenda Items

No requests at this time.

Bright Spots

Panel members provided bright spots including:

- Head Start directors were able to have a small, socially-distant in-person quarterly meeting.
- [The Kansas Head Start Association Board is seeking applicants for the next Kansas Head State Association Executive Director](#). Asking for contacts of people interested by May 3.

Upcoming Meetings (all via Zoom)

- Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund Meeting – Friday, June 4, 9:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.
- Early Childhood Stakeholders Group Meeting – Friday, June 4, 1:30-3:00 p.m.
- Early Childhood Recommendations Panel meeting – Friday, May 21, 9:00-11:30 a.m.
 - Third Fridays of the month, beginning at 9:00 a.m.
- Scheduled workgroup meetings will be posted on the [Panel Meetings webpage](#) of the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund website (kschildrenscabinet.org)

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.