

KANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD RECOMMENDATIONS PANEL

Monthly Meeting Minutes
Friday, May 21, 2021



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

Members Present

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

Deanna Berry, Russell Child Development Center

Tanya Bulluck, Child Start, Inc.

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

Kelly Frantz-Langford, TARC, Inc.

Amy Gottschamer, Gogols 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

Lorrena 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

Patty Peschel, Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities,
Inc.

Amanda Petersen, Kansas State Department of Education

Sarah Rivers, Via Christi Rehabilitation

Chelsea Schulte, Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities,
Inc.

Cassandra Sines, Sines Virtual Assistant Service

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

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

April 16, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Patty Peschel moved to approve the April minutes and Eva Horn seconded, with a unanimous vote to approve the April minutes as presented.

Kansans' Open Forum - Written and Verbal Comments:

No comments submitted.

Follow-up from previous meetings - Debbie Deere

April Meeting Overview

Debbie provided a recap on the April Meeting, where the Kansas Quality Network presented their program. A reminder to Panel members is to contact Jevan Bremby at jevan.bremby@ku.edu with any information on public awareness campaigns.

The Our Tomorrows Story Bank continues, and Jenny Flinders shared information as a follow-up to a request by Melissa Rooker for support in collecting stories. The reminder to Panel members is to continue working to engage a broad range of Kansans to share those stories out.

[Share A Story at Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund \(kschildrenscabinet.org\)](https://kschildrenscabinet.org)

Panel application process continues. All applications have been received/reviewed, and the final slate of applicants has been submitted for review to the Children's Cabinet. Final appointments will be made by the Children's Cabinet at their June 4 meeting. The upcoming membership year will begin on July 1.

Amanda Petersen thanked all Panel members for completing the Early Childhood Recommendations Panel Collaboration Survey, as this provides valuable information in the implementation of the All In For Kansas Kids strategic plan and preparations for the future work of the Panel. She highlighted two things in response to questions asked in the survey responses:

- Please feel welcome to invite team members from your organization to join Panel meetings when the agenda is relevant to their work. Asked that for non-state agency partners, to let Amanda Petersen or Debbie Deere know in advance.
- Working groups can invite participants who are not appointed to the Panel to engage in the work.

The ask of Panel members as they serve on the Panel is to think about how the Panel's work can be taken back to organizations so that others can receive the information shared and engage in the work as needed.

Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition Feedback “Homework”

Panel members were asked to respond to the question, "What can the members of the Recommendations Panel do to elevate breastfeeding in our system?" Panel members can continue to submit responses to Debbie Deere at ddeere@ksde.org. Responses will be compiled and shared with the Panel and the Kansas Breastfeeding coalition to assist in moving this work forward.

#KSBeatsTheVirus 2021

The Kansas Leadership Center is challenging Kansans to design action plans in their communities to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus. In January/February of this year, a group of Panel members designed two informational videos for distribution. Now, there is another opportunity for members of the Panel interested in volunteering for a civic engagement group. Those interested can contact Debbie Deere at ddeere@ksde.org. Future meetings will be scheduled based on interest.

Kansas Power of the Positive

In November Kansas Power of the Positive joined the Panel to present on family-friendly work places. Rachele Soden from Kansas Children's Service League re-introduced a Facilitators Training opportunity to all interested Panel members to participate in.

The Family Friendly Workplace Facilitators Training will be on Thursday, June 17th, 2021 from 1-4:30PM via Zoom. To register or for more information, please email Rachele Soden at rsoden@kcsll.org. This training will equip others with language that can be used in quick conversations and easily engage businesses in communities to create thriving work places for their employees.

Child Care Mapping Project

Meghan Kluth from the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research (CPPR), and Isabelle Swiderski from Orange Sparkle Ball shared about the Child Care Mapping Project, and the work that has been completed to date.

- Orange Sparkle Ball partnered with CPPR to capture lived experiences from child care providers, and try to distill the experiences in a way to identify opportunities for improving access to child care in Kansas.
- The project was started in January 2021, and the mission was to identify and map out the journey a child care provider would go through during the licensing process.
- Orange Sparkle Ball worked with CPPR team to design a survey in both Spanish and English to reach as many providers possible. Social media campaigns were also used to reach providers. The survey asked folks who were interested to join a co-creation session for 90 minutes. Based on that, individual interviews were conducted, and the work was analyzed, defined, and opportunities were identified.
- There were 389 respondents for the survey, and 93.3 percent of the respondents were owners/directors. Additional survey data included:
 - 70% of responders had been in the child care provider space for 11 years or more
 - 47% of respondents cared for 1-10 children.
 - 99.5% of respondents named their first language as English.
 - 85% of respondents identified as White, 4.9% African American, and 4% Latina
 - 35% of respondents struggled with understanding where to start, supports available to them, and the licensing application process
 - 31% of respondents reported that they received or are receiving county or local level support from their surveyor
 - 93% of respondents indicated that children, kids, or families were the bright spots in their child care provider experience.

For a deeper dive, this information will be on the June 2nd Early Childhood Systems-Building Biweekly Webinar to discuss these findings. [Early Childhood Systems-Building Webinars](#)

Participants in the co-creation session on May 11th surfaced these opportunities as being easy to implement and high impact:

- Provide starter kits to new providers
- Regularly scheduled accessible and open contact with surveyors and Kansas Department of Health and Environment staff (office hours).
- Checklist and timeline of all steps for starting and licensing a child care business.

Participants from the session were prompted with the question, "How might we make Kansas the best place for quality child care for everyone involved." They were asked to consider different ideas of all sizes.

The ask of the Panel was think about the mapping findings, and utilize the list of ideas presented, as a resource, and how they can inform members' work and professional lives.

Panel members shared ideas, feedback, and questions relating to this work, including:

- Looking at demographics, it looks like quite a bit have been licensed for 10 years or more. Is there a way to compare those licensed for 10 years or more, and 10 years or less, and see if we are moving in the right direction to plan next steps?
- Want to make sure we are thinking about strategies to support those wanting to get into this work. There is an opportunity to try things out with the new relief funding.
- It is important to pay attention to the perception of in-home child care providers and how they see themselves in the system.
- It was surprising that there were two different quotes about people who were working in a center and chose family child care as an alternative. It's important to really look at the expenses of working in different settings. Give people the information needed to make a sound decision regarding their business.
- The toolkit idea is exciting because not only can it help the provider, but the licensure person. Conversations can be shaped from this study in future workgroup meetings.
- Living wage stands out because we know that is an issue, and it is a top priority. It will need to be addressed before more progress is made.

Child Care Systems Improvement Team

Lori Kravitz, Program Director for Early Care and Youth Programs of the Bureau of Family Health with Kansas Department of Health and Environment Child Care Licensing, provided an update on the [Child Care Systems Improvement Team](#) and the work that is currently ongoing. The Systems Improvement Team makes recommendations and provides guidance to implement agreed upon strategies, and convenes on an as-needed basis.

This year the team wanted to look at the *All In For Kansas Kids* strategic plan, and focused on three goals from the plan. These goals were Goal 5: Capacity and Access, Goal 6: Workforce, and Goal 7: Quality and Environments.

There were a lot of conversations and the team drilled down to three working groups; Starting and Maximizing Child Care Business, Awareness and Resource Sharing: Elevating Rural Child Care, and Regulatory Practices and Standards. End goal of these groups is to have recommendations come out of the work. Some of the recommendations are not going to fall back to Kansas Department of Health and Environment Child Care Licensing, they will need to be elevated somewhere else. The groups will also identify related efforts and how to coordinate and share information with partners, and move information, concerns or recommendations to the Panel to determine the best pathway forward within the system.

The last meeting was exciting as there is now mapping information available from the provider voice. The provider voice is a huge piece of the work, but all things are to be taken into consideration.

A question was asked regarding if children with special needs were included in the Capacity and Access conversations, and it was noted that all categories of care are a part of these

conversations, but this piece will be looked into further. Debbie will connect Lori Kravitz with Cassandra Sines to share more detailed information.

Maximizing Federal Child Care Relief Funding

Michelle Allen from the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) provided an overview of federal funding sources and initial portfolio of initiative to address child care needs across Kansas, outlined how partners will play an essential role in maximizing the impact of federal relief dollars, and fostered a spirit of collaboration and partnership across DCF and partners to achieve the common goals. It is important to acknowledge this information is preliminary and not for distribution.

Michelle noted some of the pre-existing challenges in the Kansas child care landscape that have been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic including:

- Families lack access to affordable care that reflects their preferences, especially in rural areas.
- Providers face difficulty sustaining profitable operations
- No accessible measures of quality of provider care to guide parents
- Slow growth in workforce with high turnover due to low compensation
- DCF infrastructure constrained by outdated systems and processes
- COVID-19: Families of essential workers face increased need for care during non-traditional hours
- COVID-19: Provider margins decreasing due to lower enrollment and increased safety measures

Michelle noted about \$440 million in additional spending power for Kansas child care through September 2023 and September 2024.

Several key initiatives supported by relief funding will balance immediate relief and lasting impact. This is not an exhaustive list. These include:

- Expansion of eligibility for Hero Relief subsidy program to essential workers
- Offering sustainability grants to all KDHE licensed providers
- Offering new trainings to child care providers
- Launch of primary research on Kansas families' needs and preferences
- Development of shared resources and services platform for providers
- Phased rollout of Links to Quality child care quality recognition and improvement system (QRIS) program to providers

Through these initiatives, impact will be delivered across families, providers, and child care worker which include:

- 3,000 additional families to receive subsidized care, requiring additional capacity to assure access

- \$70 million invested in direct financial assistance to providers in an initial 3-month distribution
- Increase in DCF subsidy-accepting providers
- Increase in capacity of home-based providers
- Scholarships to cover 100,000+ hours' worth of workforce training

DCF has worked internally to place guardrails for the process, and there are overarching principles to guide execution to maximize benefit to Kansas families and providers. The vision is to define principles supported prioritization of investments. The fulfillment will be projects that best maximize the use of one-time funds through aligning intended impact with execution. Alignment of work requires continued balance of timeliness, flexibility, impact, equity, and transparency.

The child care team at DCF has begun meeting, and more meetings will be scheduled with partners as the time goes on. If anyone has initiatives in mind, they are welcome to reach out to Michelle Allen at michelle.allen@ks.gov to share.

DCF needs help to maximize the impact of relief funding through the following:

- Continued partnership in executing initiatives
- Sharing experience and insights to ensure messaging materials resound with Kansas families and providers
- Disseminating provided materials on new initiatives to providers and families with who you interact
- Helping to direct families and providers to new initiatives and resources across the child care space

Michelle opened the floor for questions and comments from Panel members. These included:

- Has there been any ways to leverage or collaborate with Head Start in the state?
- Keep in mind to keep collecting stories to share with Our Tomorrows Story Bank
- Workforce issue has been an issue. The Family Conservancy has created a Job Board: [The Family Conservancy Job Board website](#). Is there a quick solution to hiring more teachers?
- Staff may be leaving for higher paying jobs, and maybe because other jobs are less stressful. The teachers are left behind with even more stressful situations. There needs to be more people in classrooms. Is there a way to come up with bonuses to thank people for staying?
- Finding quality teachers is difficult, but also finding para support.
- Another important part of employment are benefits. Is there any opportunity to set up a child care provider health Insurance group In Kansas?
 - Thinking about leveraging opportunities through the Affordable Care Act.

- Most younger staff seem to be focused on money in their pockets and not on health care. If we have to prioritize cash in their pockets is the most important thing we can do.
- Para staff often have experienced trauma themselves, and makes the work a little more difficult for them. Money would help them in that aspect. Dental health is also hard to find within the southwest Kansas area.
- Is there any funding in the stream to beef up partnerships with high school tech programs?
- Recognize the unprecedented moment and this may be a time to advocate for linkages across the state
- Legislators are going to be looking at how successfully these funds are used, and the impact on equitable access to families and children. Don't want to shy away from being bold to address gaps.

The Panel thanked Michelle for presenting and being available to hear questions and comments.

Requests for Future Agenda Items

No requests at this time.

Bright Spots

Panel members provided bright spots including:

- The Kansas State School for the Blind is having the first Preschool Enrichment Program specially designed for visual impaired children, June 8-24. [Summer Enrichment Program](#). The Panel is also invited to tour the facility and experience the space.
- Due to additional funding, the Grassroots Advocacy Toolkit Trainings will continue virtually. If you have a parent or individual in your system who is passionate about advocacy, and would like to become a trainer, small stipends are available. Contact Peggy Kelly for parent leadership/advocacy interest at pkelly@ksheadstart.org.
- Scholarship opportunities for those in early childhood areas at Pittsburg State University in hopes of students working in tribal communities. Great for those who are wanting to continue their degree. Funding for students is \$7,000-10,000 per semester. Visit [Pittsburg State University webpage](#) if interested.

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, June 18, 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 11:00 a.m.