

KANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD RECOMMENDATIONS PANEL

Monthly Meeting Minutes
Friday, June 18, 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

Rachele Fiorito, United Way of the Plains

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

Jennifer Forker, Hutchinson Community College

Kelly Frantz-Langford, TARC, Inc.

Amy Gottschamer, Googols of Learning Child Development Center

Kim Hawkins, USD 233 - Olathe 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.

Deidre Rankin, Child Start

Amanda Petersen, Kansas State Department of Education

Angie Saenger, Child Care Aware of Kansas

Chelsea Schulte, Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities, Inc.

Cassandra Sines, Sines Virtual Assistant Service

Heather Staab, Kansas Department of Health and Environment

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

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

May 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Amy Meek moved to approve the May minutes and Eva Horn seconded, with a unanimous vote to approve the May minutes as presented.

Kansans' Open Forum - Written and Verbal Comments:

No comments submitted.

Follow-up from previous meetings - Debbie Deere

May Meeting Overview

Debbie Deere provided a recap of the May meeting, detailing the work of the #KSBeatsTheVirus initiative, Strategies for Engaging Providers workgroup, and the Federal Child Care Relief Funding.

#KSBeatsTheVirus 2021

The consensus of the Panel members who were a part of the Community Engagement workgroup was to get involved in one of the upcoming surges of #KSBeatsTheVirus that have not yet been announced by the Kansas Leadership Center. The group is interested in extending the invitation to members who will be joining the Panel in July, so the work can continue.

Strategies for Engaging Providers

This group has met a couple times since beginning of the year. Since the origination of this group, work has developed that has addressed different strategies for engaging providers. These include the Child Care Mapping Project, and the Child Care Systems Improvement Team, both of which were presented at the May meeting.

At this time, it is not necessary for the Engaging Providers workgroup to continue meeting or to develop a formal recommendation. Debbie will be working with partners to develop

ideas and bring back to the group in the future. Debbie thanked the group for their work thus far.

Federal Child Care Relief Funding

Michelle Allen from the Kansas Department for Children and Families spoke last month on several key initiatives being considered to spend the approximately \$400 million in additional federal funding that is available for Kansas child care. More information on this topic will be available in the future.

1-800-CHILDREN

Pam Noble, Assistant Director for the Prevent Child Abuse Kansas team, and Kaitlyn Moore, Community Engagement and Marketing Coordinator, both from Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL) joined to speak on the current work of 1-800-CHILDREN.

Pam presented the new 1-800-Children video, that is also available in written form. There is still a search bar available to add to webpages for ease of access.

A 12-month marketing campaign is getting ready to begin. It will focus on On-line display advertisements, streaming television, Spotify, and Facebook, and will target varying users within the State of Kansas using a variety of demographics. The campaign will be in waves, and there will be general social media posts available for partners to access in the share file.

A variety of physical marketing materials are also available. As of April 2021, over 11,000 items have been distributed. A Onesie campaign has begun with Saline County. Still working on reaching the underserved population of Saline County, and are looking for suggestions from this Panel and anyone who may have ideas on how to serve this population. Pam Noble opened the room for discussion on any ideas that members had. Suggestions included:

- Have you considered radio? Especially Spanish language radio.
- Connect with Jenny Flinders and the Our Tomorrows Team at KU CPPR.
- City of Salina.
- The faith-based community.
- Representation of shelters, specifically women's shelters. Community of subsidized housing.

Pam asked the Panel if they had questions about specific or additional age groups, and who else they can connect with. These suggestions included:

- Reaching out to licensing surveyors in those communities.
- Periodic informational meetings would be good to get information to providers that would then be passed to families.

- KAEYC (Kansas Association for the Education of Young Children) would be another place to do outreach.
- It would be helpful to have a short paragraph or two provided by KCSL that people could put in a newsletter to share out.
- Connect with Child Care Aware, and the information could be placed on the Kansas Quality Network website.

Pam shared a couple bright spots that came from the 1-800-CHILDREN platform, highlighting positive reviews from users. Pam also shared that those with questions can reach the Community Engagement & Marketing Coordinator, Kaitlyn Moore at kamoore@kcsl.org, and those interested in accessing the shared file would need to email Kaitlyn to get access to file.

Wichita State University Community Engagement Institute

Anne Maack from Wichita State University's Community Engagement Institute provided background and history on Kansas Power of the Positive's work to promote family-friendly work places.

Goal Four of the Early Childhood Strategic Plan is Private Sector Collaboration. There are two strategies under this goal with the second one being, promote family-friendly workplaces throughout the public and private sectors. Strategy 4.2 is borrowed from the Kansas Child Maltreatment Prevention Plan managed by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Strategy 4.2 also represents years of cross-sector engagement. In November, Vicky Roper presented to the Panel on Family Friendly Work Places. WSU's Community Engagement Institute is helping collect feedback from Kansans to know what they need from their work places by having employees ask themselves, "How important is this to my ability to provide a safe, stable, and nurturing environment for my children?"

When employees were asked how important subsidized child care costs were to their employee package, employees said it was extremely important, though employers, when asked, said they were not planning to make changes. Kansas Department of Health and Environment has asked the Community Engagement Institute to create educational materials to help employers understand the feasibility to understand child care affordability. The Employer Child Care Tax Credit was a result of the Kansas Power of Positive coalition work.

Patricia Houston went over materials provided to the Panel. The goal of the design of materials is to attract attention and the graphics relay what the information is about, which is children and employees. To get employer and employees to inquire about and/or advocate for flexible spending account and child care tax credit.

There is a set for employees and for employers. The information provided is to encourage the employer to provide child care information to their employees, and for the employee to advocate to their employer for these services to be a part of their benefit package.

Patricia asked the following questions for Panel members to consider, and members responded with their thoughts and suggestions:

Who do you envision delivering these materials to employers?

- Connection to employers and going through Human Resources Departments. Society for Human Resource Management of Kansas.
- Reach out to local chambers of commerce.
- Local newspapers usually have someone who handles the business side of things. Host job fairs etc. Connect with business side of the community.
- Look at the local professional organizations.
- Local economic councils that exist.
- Realtors Association.
- Local Rotary and other civic organizations.
- Annual enrollment for employees when enrolling for insurance. Provide education of services as another benefit for employees.
- Tax prep services. Get materials together quickly to push to employers.
- Financial Advisors.

Who do you envision delivering these materials to parent advocates?

- Partner with local WIC offices.
- Social media targeting parents.
- Child care providers can provide materials to parents that come from Child Care Aware and Child Care Licensing.
- Pediatric Offices – track down through Kansas Hospital Association or local medical associations.
- Kansas Department for Children and Families when people are applying for assistance and who do not qualify.
- Parents as Teachers, Tiny K, local extension offices.
- American Academy of Pediatrics and Home Visiting Programs. Family First Network through DCF.
- Head Start.
- Families Together program.
- Parent Leadership Conference.
- Domestic Violence Shelters.

Given this list of potential messengers, how could materials be adapted to be more useful?

Anne Maack requested help distributing these materials, and how these can be adapted to be more useful, like social media graphics, etc. The materials are currently in draft form. Additional suggestions from the Panel included:

- The materials are useful in terms of the impact they have, but light on the program themselves. Link to federal website for people to understand what the actual benefit is would be helpful. Employers may wonder about cost.
- Helping families understand the amount of advocacy work that is involved. Pamphlets may not be enough to equip families with the correct information on how to advocate.
- Being able to share in a way so that the 'to-do' is very clear. Share newsletter-ready or email-ready language.
- Kansas Head Start Association grant to support parent advocacy toolkit. Providing Zoom training for parents. Please contact KHSA office.
- Would be helpful to have a 'hook' about why people should care about this. Recruitment and retention language.

[Maximizing federal relief dollars to support early childhood in Kansas](#)

Melissa Rooker, Executive Director of the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund provided an overview regarding the federal relief dollars that are supporting early childhood in Kansas.

There have been three rounds of federal legislation passed to deal with pandemic issues. The first to pass was in Spring of 2020 with the CARES Act. In December of 2020, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Act (CRRSA) was passed. There was a delay to late spring for federal guidance to be issued. Next round of relief programs to roll out this summer. Additional supports will be rolled out for families and providers. In March 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act passed Congress. This plan provides state-level discretionary funding.

On June 4, 2021 the SPARK (Strengthening People and Revitalizing Kansans) Executive Committee was announced – an advisory group that will gather information and make recommendations of how the state spends the funds received in the American Rescue Plan. There will be an Executive committee that will receive recommendations and take considerations to the State Finance Council, which makes the final determination. Child care and family supports are a high priority of the American Rescue Plan.

There has been extensive work done through the Offices of the Preschool Development Grant – to create the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan – guiding document that gives framework for all of the planning that has been done the past year. The world around us is recognizing the importance of child care. For parents to return to the workforce there needs to be a system of support around them for their children. Focus needs to be on

emerging from this pandemic to system level changes and supports that leave our early care and education system better than before. Feedback has been taken from thousands of Kansans, and have worked to stay engaged and refresh the Needs Assessment to show the impact 2020 has had.

One of the core needs is the problem of wages in the early childhood workforce. There are things in development that will support the workforce, and work is being done to ensure a framework for accelerated investments and lasting impact. Congress is still considering methods of supporting early childhood. The process can be complicated and take time, and what we see today may not make it in a final plan. Current plan includes massive increases in funding for things like universal 3 and 4-year-old preschool programs. Want to put together a framework that allows us to proceed in an organized fashion, and be equipped as a state to receive a more inclusive inclusion of funding.

Sara Gardner from The University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research, gathered insights involving community and providers by asking the following questions to the Panel:

What local systems or processes are in place to help families navigate early childhood services in your community?

What works well?

- PDG – Resource Navigators, tables in DCF offices, to talk to families and connect to what’s needed
- Kansas Quality Network website
- Wyandotte County – Connections program, centralized screening and intake for children under the age of 5 or pregnant women – developmental screening, substance use/domestic violence/depression screening, staff know eligibility criteria and can refer families to services they’d qualify for and would best meet their needs
- Child Care Aware of Kansas as a tool to refer families to child care providers
- Tiny-K family service coordination component of the IFSP can be a strong mechanism to help families (for the children who are eligible for that program) to navigate community programs
- The Family Conservancy has 2 family advocates who work with families to help them access the child care assistance program, have the flexibility to drive to families so that transportation isn’t a barrier
- KDHE Special Health Care Needs Holistic Care Coordination program – PDG funds to expand to pediatricians’ offices in a pilot, looking at expanding to local Maternal Child Health programming; Geary County gold star model

What could be improved?

- Pediatricians, other sources sharing Child Care Aware of Kansas services to help families find child care
- Families who just can't get to the services or someone can't get to them to deliver services because of staffing, funding (too many families and not enough staff to meet their needs, transportation is a barrier and takes more staff to travel to family)
- Child care assistance application can be difficult for a family to navigate – needs to be easy to read, checklists, accessible in different languages – need to be really thoughtful about how families are accessing reports and what is required of them
- Have done excellent job reaching out to families for their feedback; may start incentivizing/compensating for time as participating in workgroups, filling out surveys
- 1-800-CHILDREN – families call the Helpline for one thing but may have other needs

Are we finding all the families who need resources but maybe don't know what they're looking for? How well are we doing that in different communities? Who's the trusted person on the ground?

- This is really tough. When our family moved and our son was diagnosed with a special need, we had to go through and find whatever we could find on our own. It seems like it is hard to find resources in Kansas if you don't know what you're looking for, and we need to do better; basically, it's word of mouth. Now social media makes this a bit easier. Need a resource for families to be able to go and find what they need.
- Parents don't always know what they need to ask for; maybe they know they're struggling with something, but they don't know they have the right to ask for a resource. 1-800-CHILDREN resource – a family might not have known they were able to ask, helping families understand that they can ask for a support.
 - How do we also encourage families to participate and seek organizations that provide supports? There are agencies that offers family engagement activities and resources but families sometimes do not connect.
 - Along with promotion of 1-800-CHILDREN, ad campaign that targets specific areas of need; are you struggling to pay for diapers? Does your child have a special need? Not so much "I have a question" as "I have this need" – campaign that lists possible resources families might not think to ask for, common questions that come up to help get families thinking, yes, I do need help with XYZ.
 - Might need more data – what are those "ah-ha" needs when families come in to access other services and then learn they can access, good target for campaigns

- Bridge gap between special needs (developmental, special health needs, financially at risk) – providers, those who are willing to help provide support – need funding to support staffing/overhead or training to understand how to provide services – providers need **fast** access to that information, as close to immediate as possible – funding could help bridge those gaps.
- Home visitation program uniquely equipped to develop relationships with families (not universally available)

What barriers exist for increasing quality child care in your community?

- What have you done to overcome these barriers?
- What supports (training, connections, etc.) would you need to meet the need?
- What resources (staffing, funding, etc.) would you (your organizations/agencies) need to meet the need?

Barrier: not enough child care providers for families with special health care needs.

- Need to expand facilities like Rainbows United that provide care for children with special health care needs
- Links 2 Quality – one of the links focused on family engagement – providers are trusted advocate for the child and can help direct families to resources they can use, spend time with the children to see issues
- Worked well – specialists on Family Conservancy staff to support child care providers in making accommodations, and resources if a child care provider needed additional staff to make those accommodations, help families advocate when looking for child care (what are their rights, what could they ask for) – had to end program due to end of funding, additional funding could rebuild that capacity
- Almost all community colleges have at least one course specific to children with special health care needs – providers getting continuing ed hours or those getting training to begin career
- Reno County kaleidoscope training event (\$30/day – 6 hours plus lunch/breakfast), one or two breakout sessions specific to supporting children with special health care needs, always at capacity – providers are aware this is a need – resources are available, but sparse
- As a family child care provider with a special education and behavioral analysis background, I have had to turn away families not because I don't know what to do, but because I do not have the resources to keep a child safe – if there was a system that had funding and worked well at one point, we should bring that back to support child care providers who do have the ability to serve children – children belong in the typical setting and additional resources can help serve children in the least restrictive environment

- If we were to coordinate “niche specialties” in each community – special health care needs, infant/toddler care – something set up, with appropriate funding, to incentivize providers to provide those services (start-up and continuation funding) – families may prefer family child care providers for their infants/toddlers – could provide funding to support, materials (cribs) offer local professional learning communities and training to improve quality, coordination of this funding and these supports

Reflections on the Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel’s first year of work

Amanda Petersen thanked Panel members for their commitment serving on the Panel this last year. A few bright spots to highlight from the year included:

- Strengthened relationships between partners. The work of the Panel is regularly being referred to at the state agency level.
- Created incredible materials – Kindergarten Transitions Toolkit. #KansasBeatsTheVirus video.
- Appreciated the strong response from the Collaboration Survey that was completed by members. Pulled out from survey, it was found that there is a real environment in Kansas to make change. Greatest area of growth over the year was communication. Really appreciated the thoughtful answers to the open-ended questions.

Requests for Future Agenda Items

No requests at this time.

Bright Spots

Panel members provided bright spots including:

- Peggy Kelly announced the release of the new Kansas Head Start Executive Director will be coming soon. Shared thanks for support in her role and goodbye to the group.
- Cassandra Sines noted that Kansas Department of Health and Environment Special Health Care Needs department is starting a pilot project where Care Coordinators help families who are bridging from infant toddler into the school system. The Care Coordinators are each taking 10 families to work with them. If they qualify for Part B services, they will be helped with the transition and process. Cassandra was also appointed to the Sedgewick County Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board.
- Tanya Bulluck shared that in partnership with USD 259, Child Start goes into programs for licensed providers, pick a book, and create curriculum around the book. They have partnered with school district to get unique links with Superintendents Read Along program, and they will be providing links to all of the providers in the school district to read along with the children. Funding will be

provided to purchase books for all children in those zip codes for all licensed programs.

- Emily Barnes let the Panel know that Child Care Provider Coalition of Kansas has started Family Child Care Week, and if anyone is interested, can go on the Coalition's Facebook page to see posts.

Upcoming Meetings (all via Zoom)

- Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund Meeting – Friday, August 6, 9:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.
- Early Childhood Stakeholders Group Meeting – Friday, August 6, 1:30-3:00 p.m.
- Early Childhood Recommendations Panel meeting – Friday, July 16, 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.