

# KANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD RECOMMENDATIONS PANEL

Monthly Meeting Minutes  
Friday, October 17, 2021



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

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## Members Present

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Nichelle Adams, Kansas Department for Children and Families  
Jennifer Adhima, Kansas Head Start Association  
Marites Altuna, Kansas Deaf-Blind Project  
Rachel Anno, Kansas Department for Children and Families  
Emily Barnes, Barnes Child Care  
Tanya Bulluck, Child Start Inc.  
Gail Cozadd, Kansas Children's Service League  
Kelly Davydov, Child Care Aware of Kansas  
Tabitha Ewing, KDHE Advisory Board  
Jeremy Fite, Hilltop Child Development Center  
Jennifer Foraker, Hutchinson Community College  
Jennifer Francois, Kansas Institute for Early Childhood Education and Research  
Amy Gottschamer, Googols of Learning Child Development Center  
Crystal Henry, The Family Conservancy  
Callie Hoffman, Kansas Parents as Teachers Association  
Kim Kennedy, Kansas Department for Children and Families  
Audra Kenneson, Rainbows United  
Esther Kottwitz, USD 497 Lawrence  
David Lindeman, University of Kansas Life Span Institute at Parsons  
Kelli Mark, Kansas Department of Health and Environment  
Malissa Martin, Communities in Schools Mid-America  
Natalie McClane, Kansas State Department of Education  
Amy Meek, Kansas Children's Cabinet & Trust Fund  
Lucas Neece, City of Lindsborg  
Patty Peschel, Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities, Inc.  
Amanda Petersen, Kansas State Department of Education  
Kate Roggenbaum, Parent Leader  
Dannah Schatz, Russell Child Development Center  
Lisa Schmidt, Women's Community Y  
Cassandra Sines, Parent Leader

Cornelia Stevens, TOP Early Learning Centers  
Jenny Welch Buller, University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research  
Reva Wywadis, Child Care Aware of Eastern Kansas

## Minutes

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### 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 Natalie McClane seconded, with a unanimous vote to approve the agenda as presented.

### September 17, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Marites Altuna moved to approve the September minutes and Kim Kennedy seconded, with a unanimous vote to approve the minutes as presented.

### Kansans' Open Forum - Written and Verbal Comments:

No comments submitted.

### October 1 Children's Cabinet meeting follow up discussion

Debbie Deere gave a recap of discussion from the October 1, 2021 Children's Cabinet meeting. Cabinet members asked what type of feedback Debbie has heard about the use of the [Kindergarten Transitions Toolkit](#). Panel members shared:

- Lawrence – Began Kindergarten Transitions Team, have learned that this is a larger process than initially thought. As using the toolkit, finding some potential for updates. As a brand-new team, not yet in a position to be writing an MOU – we expect that will come later, as we've worked through needs assessment, identified goals and objectives, and determined best fit for roles – it takes time to develop those relationships before agreeing. The Kindergarten Readiness Summit included a useful worksheet, "[Making Connections – Present and Future](#)", that shows the types of connections and different focuses (sharing information, building relationships, fostering alignment). Would recommend adding that resource to the toolkit as a starting point. Planned – information night for parents, hired Kindergarten Ambassador to meet with licensed programs and distribute Kindergarten in Kansas booklets, planning a spring fair with a wide range of providers to keep this on peoples' minds throughout the PreK year, recognizing this isn't a transition that just happens in August. Pandemic has been a challenge; school districts have a lot on their plates. Feel like it's going well and would recommend to other communities! Schools supporting children who have been home for two years and are now transitioning to learning in a group, interacting with peers – early childhood staff has been providing workshops for kindergarten teachers on basic behavior strategies to refresh on good strategies/supports, and a behavior game for teaching basic skills that in previous years may have been learned in PreK.

- Olathe, home-based child care provider – explaining what the MOU means to providers. May be initial defensiveness of adding a new requirement – explanation that this is about laying out the role and activities currently doing. Need for more information on what this toolkit is and how child care providers can participate without feeling overwhelmed. Education around specific parts – like use of the Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) and sharing data – some providers don't yet know what that is to know what you're asking them to sign up to do. Community teams may be able to provide that kind of information to providers – here's how you can participate and be a part of the process in the community. For example, what does this work mean for a provider who does not serve 4-year-olds but who provides a quality early learning environment for infants and toddlers?
- Leavenworth County has used Kindergarten Readiness Subgrant funding to extend ASQ training to providers in the community, provided ASQ Starter Kits, 20 providers attended training – many were not familiar with ASQ but were willing to become familiar with that tool and how it helps the child and the family in their future education. A win!
- Kansas City-area partner providers received literacy kits from the school district that included a bilingual book about going to kindergarten and a kindergarten roundup flyer. Had enough to give to every child in the preschool classroom of 14 centers in Wyandotte County. County and state borders create additional challenges – some children will be going to kindergarten in Missouri or other counties.

### Making Panel recommendations/Discussion

Debbie Deere presented to the members the guidelines for developing a recommendation within their existing work groups. The Panel reviewed Article 4 (page 5) of the [Panel Role, Norms, and Procedures](#) document:

*The Panel recommendations will include the following:*

- *Clear identification of the entity that will receive the recommendation*
- *Background information explaining the issue that includes a description of:*
  - *How considerations of equity have informed this recommendation,*
  - *How Kansas families have shaped this recommendation, and*
  - *The councils, committees, or workgroups with expertise, experience, or jurisdiction related to the issue*
- *The Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel recommends that [insert recommendation specifying both actor and recommended action]*

The [Kindergarten Transitions recommendation that the Children's Cabinet approved in December 2020](#) is a good example for future reference. The *All In for Kansas Kids* [needs assessment](#) and [strategic plan](#) are also valuable resources. In 2021, each work group has been working on identifying focus areas and will next narrow down those areas to work toward developing a recommendation or action plan to address them. These can be

presented to the full Panel for consideration and discussion when they are ready. Draft recommendations or action plans can also be shared at [Early Childhood Stakeholder Group meetings](#) for further feedback and discussion. Final recommendations can be presented to the Children's Cabinet for consideration.

### Panel member poll questions and results:

Debbie polled Panel members on the current Panel meeting structure. Panel members considered the following questions:

- Are you finding the current meeting and work group format favorable?
  - 88% responded "Yes" and 12% responded "No".
- Do you feel the Work Groups are a productive use of the Panel's meeting time?
  - 88% responded "Yes" and 12% responded "No".
- Is the progress of your Work Group meeting your expectations?
  - 77% responded "Yes" and 23% responded "No".
- Do you have any suggestions for change to the current meeting format?
  - 77% responded "Not at this time" and 23% responded "Yes".

Members were encouraged to email any suggestions for changes to [Debbie Deere](#).

### Work Group Breakout Sessions

Three Panel Work Groups, focusing on Child Care Recruitment & Retention, Family Partnerships, and Quality & Environments, continued their discussions. Descriptions of these conversations, and recordings of these sessions can be found on [The Kansas Children's website](#).

### Work Group Breakout Sessions – Reports

Following the breakout of the Work Groups, Panel members joined back together to provide reports from their meetings.

**The Child Care Recruitment & Retention Work Group** discussed three ideas to explore to move forward: insurance and retirement (KPERs) for the child care workforce, loan forgiveness for educators who work in settings other than school districts, and bonuses/raising wages. The next steps are to narrow those down.

The group discussed some of the big "rocks", like wages, and what may be needed to get the ball rolling on addressing those issues. The group discussed gathering information needed to help develop plans to increase early educators' wages, like pulling information about previous Kansas initiatives and what strategies some pockets of the state are currently using to address this. The group will look at what New Mexico is doing to offer retirement benefits to their child care workforce.

Public awareness and what a formal campaign would look like would be important for any of these ideas, because all of these strategies need the general public and those in

positions of authority to make funding decisions to really understand the importance of early learning as a field for new professionals to want to join.

Lastly, discussion around retention: what does it take to retain a provider, time needed to onboard a new professional and the investment that an employer needs to make when hiring a new employee and how can we help along the way.

**The Family Partnerships Work Group** addressed many areas of need and landed on two of these to explore. Conversation centered around how many great resources we have in Kansas and how to connect those dots to help families navigate services. The group discussed personal experiences of leaving the NICU with a newborn and not having a clear understanding of next steps or knowing what resources are out there. The group decided that a good starting place is to identify a common definition of family partnership within the agencies who provide those services and using shared language. The group will also continue to not lose sight of the importance of connecting the dots for families to alleviate stress of families needing to do that themselves, because finding and accessing resources takes a lot of effort.

**The Quality & Environments Work Group** focused on how local interagency coordinating councils (local ICCs) can be a resource to share more broadly and to connect with child care providers. Is there a “one stop shop” out there – one connection point in the state to access resources? If not, how can that get created to make it more of a seamless process? Discussed funding for children with special needs and how can families who don’t qualify for subsidies be considered to receive the needed funding to help them cover extra costs involved in caring for their child. Conversation about not missing opportunities to discuss “big picture” things that could positively impact these issues, like the federal child care tax credit.

## Requests for Future Agenda Items

No requests at this time.

## Bright Spots

- The Kansas Parent Information Resource Center and the Kansas State Department of Education partnered to update *Kindergarten in Kansas*, a booklet for families of young children who are getting ready to begin kindergarten. Free updated versions of *Kindergarten in Kansas* are now available – in [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Arabic](#), [Burmese](#), [Swahili](#), and [Vietnamese](#). Organizations serving young children and their families can [click HERE to order free copies of the booklets](#), and you can email Natalie Schweda ([nschweda@kpirc.org](mailto:nschweda@kpirc.org)) with questions.
- Child Care Provider Coalition of Kansas has opened up the nomination process for “Provider of the Year” for family child care providers. Go [ccpcofks.com](http://ccpcofks.com) to make a nomination. The winner will be announced at the April 2022 conference.
- We work hand in hand with families applying for child care assistance from the Kansas Department for Children and Families. Locally we have seen an increase in approvals for families to child care assistance and the number of families for whom

assistance covers the full cost of tuition. The changes that have been made recently are really working and really supporting families.

### Upcoming Meetings (all via Zoom)

- Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund Meeting – Friday, December 3, 9:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.
- Early Childhood Stakeholders Group Meeting – Friday, December 3, 1:30-3:00 p.m.
- Early Childhood Recommendations Panel meeting – Friday, November 19, 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 11:05 a.m.

**Making Connections – Present and Future**

<b>Type of Connection</b>	<b>Sharing Information</b>	<b>Building Relations</b>	<b>Fostering Alignment</b>
<p><b>Child-School</b> To provide children with familiar, stable relationships and classroom experiences.</p>			
<p><b>Family-School</b> To foster family collaboration and engagement with the school.</p>			
<p><b>Program-School</b> To align practices, environments, and information between settings.</p>			
<p><b>Community-School</b> To create a network of understanding and support around kindergarten transitions.</p>			