

KANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD RECOMMENDATIONS PANEL

Monthly Meeting Minutes
Friday, November 19, 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, Kansas Head Start Association
Marites Altuna, Kansas Deaf-Blind Project
Rachel Anno, Kansas Department for Children and Families
Mallory Arellano, Newman University
Emily Barnes, Barnes Child Care
Amanda Billings, Stepping Stones Academy
Tanya Bulluck, Child Start Inc.
Gail Cozadd, Kansas Children's Service League
Kelly Davydov, Child Care Aware of Kansas
Tabitha Ewing, KDHE Advisory Board
Jennifer Foraker, Hutchinson Community College
Jennifer Francois, Kansas Institute for Early Childhood Education and Research
Amy Gottschamer, Googols of Learning Child Development Center
Sheila Hermocillo, USD 443 Dodge City
Callie Hoffman, Kansas Parents as Teachers Association
Eva Horn, University of Kansas
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
Heather Staab, Kansas Department of Health and Environment
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

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

Cornelia Stevens moved to approve the agenda and Eva Horn seconded, with a unanimous vote to approve the agenda as presented.

October 15, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Jennifer Francois moved to approve the October minutes and Natalie McClane seconded, with a unanimous vote to approve the minutes as presented.

Kansans' Open Forum - Written and Verbal Comments:

No comments submitted.

Build Back Better Act overview / discussion

Dr. Dan Wuori, Senior Director of Early Learning, [The Hunt Institute](#), provided an overview of the Build Back Better Act's child care and prekindergarten provisions. He noted that the following information refers to the version of the bill passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on November 19, but that provisions may change as the Senate considers the bill.

- The bill includes \$1.75 trillion total in investments over 10 years. It includes the following, but this is not a complete list of what is included in the bill:
 - 4 weeks of Paid Family Leave
 - 1-year extension of the \$3,600 American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) child tax credit
 - Universal prekindergarten for 3- and 4-year olds
 - Significant expansion of child care subsidy funding
- Passed by the U.S. House of Representatives November 19, now moving on for consideration by the Senate.
- **The child care provisions include:**
 - Expansion of child care subsidy to families up to 250% of state median income (SMI)
 - Creates a copayment system similar to that used in health insurance
 - Copayments on a sliding fee scale based on income level
 - Eligibility phased in over a 4-year timeline, beginning in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2022 with families making 100% or less of state median income (SMI)
- Kansas Examples:

- Average cost of infant care \$11,222 or \$935 per month (from the Economic Policy Institute)
- Average cost of four-year-old care: \$8,798 or \$733 per month
- Under Build Back Better: (Copayment would cover all children under 6 in household)
 - Family of 4 at \$69,668 = no copay (75% of state median income)
 - Family of 4 at \$92,890 = monthly copay of \$1-\$155 (100% of state median income)
 - Family of 4 at \$116,113 = monthly copay of \$194-\$387 (150% of state median income)
 - Family of 4 at \$232,225 = monthly copay of \$1,355 (250% of state median income)
- Implemented by states in two phases:
 - 3-year transitional application – fully funded via Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) formula
 - 3-year “full state plan” – 90% federal/10% state split on subsidy costs
- As part of full plan (Federal Fiscal Year 2025) states will be required to be implementing a quality measurement system and have a plan to make care available to all children at the highest level.
- Living wages for ALL child care staff, pay parity with elementary schools for teachers with similar credentials, experience.
- Licensed center-based, home-based, and faith-based preschool settings all eligible to participate.
- Grant funding to improve quality and increase supply during transition phase.
- **Universal Prekindergarten for 3- and 4-year olds proposal**
 - Designed as a partnership between federal and state governments. Would expand access to – rather than replace – existing state prekindergarten programs (as applicable).
 - Mixed-delivery model incorporating public schools, private sector providers, family child care, Head Start. States must develop plans to ensure equitable distribution and attest that PreK plan will not endanger access to infant-toddler care.
 - All 3- and 4-year-old children eligible, independent of income. Must have turned 3 or 4 by cutoff date established by states for kindergarten entry.
 - Formula funding based on population of children under 6. States will split \$4 billion, \$6 billion, and \$8 billion annually over the 3-year transition period and give priority to high-risk communities and students. Effective Federal Fiscal Year 2025, this will become an entitlement to states with funding as needed to cover all eligible children.
 - No state match during first 3 years. Afterward ramps up gradually to a 60% federal – 40% state split.
 - 1,020 hours per year minimum

- States will attest that they have developed rigorous, developmentally appropriate program standards
- Governor will designate a lead agency
- By the end of 6 years, teachers will require a bachelor's degree in early childhood, with provisions to "grandfather" in teachers who have taught PreK for 3 of 5 years prior to enactment.
- Pay parity with elementary school teachers
- Additional funds for programs providing comprehensive services
- Can State Opt Out?
 - Yes and no. In the event a state elects not to apply for these opportunities, provisions in the Act exist that would allow localities to apply directly and for the expansion of Head Start and Early Head Start grants.

That said, as currently configured, it is unlikely the funds held in reserve for this purpose would be sufficient to fully cover the need if a large number of states elected not to participate.

Funds unobligated by a state may be recouped for use by other states.

Questions & Answers with Dan Wuori:

- Currently our prekindergarten program is a ½ day program for at-risk students, special education students, and paid slots. Will these types of programs have to switch to the 1020 hours/year, 5 ½ hour school days?
 - Some of these implementation details are not spelled out yet and will be addressed in forthcoming rules and regulations issued by federal agencies. It appears states will need to show that their programs are 1020 hours/year to receive this federal funding. It might require a re-configuration of current programs. Some additional options might be available to accommodate this. Amanda Petersen noted that Kansas school districts receiving preschool-aged at-risk funding through the school finance formula are currently required to provide 465 instructional hours per year.
- Is there any consideration of a cost ceiling for providers to charge what they need to reach the pay parity requirements, etc.?
 - States will need to update their licensing standards. The full state plan, 3 years into implementation would need to do a cost study. Child care subsidies are currently based on the market rates. This Act recognizes that what providers are charging do not reflect the true cost of what quality care is. States will need to develop a plan on what the costs of this quality of care are and model a plan for providers to charge accordingly. No ceiling is in place at this time.
- Will states have to write into their plan what pay parity looks like and who decides what a living wage is?

- Finer details are still to come. Vision is that states will put plans in place to match pay parity with elementary school staff and costs that need to be charged.
- My center is licensed for 100 children. Would I convert to a situation where different age groups within my program would be funded from different buckets? My staff would then receive pay parity from those different buckets. Does that sound feasible?
 - You are right. It's important to keep in mind that the prekindergarten program allows for universal access for all children but is **not** mandatory. Child care funding is good for up to age 6 years of age. In broad strokes, what you described is correct, but it might be a little more complicated in practice.
- Will all teachers need to be degreed? I am dealing with a staffing shortage.
 - The Act does not address ratios or staffing. That decision will be left up to the states to determine.
- As a parent, I don't see how kids can make it through a 5 ½ hour school day. I have children who have ADHD and health care needs. I found all day Kindergarten was difficult for my children. I have concerns about what we are asking of these little people at such a young age. We are forgetting that it is important to let them be little. The expectations of children now are much higher, but are they learning any more, or is it causing more stress and anxiety for them? This could put a lot of the smaller preschool programs out of business.
 - There is nothing inherently appropriate or inappropriate of the length of day for a program, rather the expectations put forth by the provider. As a parent, you know what is in the best interest of your child. It is important to find the program that is right for you. In the mixed-delivery model, it gives the flexibility needed for families to make the right choice. These various programs will need to have age appropriate curriculums.
 - Amanda Petersen noted that Kansas will update the Kansas Early Learning Standards in 2022. This gives us the opportunity to engage Kansans in the design of expectations so that programs can set appropriate expectations and implement developmentally appropriate practice for all children.
- I am the director of a licensed program for 2 ½ years through school age. Is there anything in this Act that addresses developing the work force? I am having trouble finding staff now. It is much easier for many people to find easier work in other industries. Is there any sustainability to securing the next generation of our work force?
 - The Act is structured in a way to address this. This is envisioned as a 3-year transitional phase process. Grant dollars are available to states to address professional development, recruit and retain teachers, and for them to maintain the required credentials. More details on the parameters of this area for the states are yet to come. It is acknowledged that providers nationwide are operating at minimum capacity, due to staff shortages.

Moving towards pay parity and a livable wage will hopefully make early childhood a more viable job to go into.

- I am a family child care provider. Moving forward, a family child care will move into a prekindergarten environment. How do we address the challenges of additional training requirements as this transition happens?
 - This Act is placing priority on family child care providers and the need for them. It is especially important for states like Kansas, who have a lot of rural child care needs. The mixed delivery system is no reflection on public school programs. They don't have the capacity for this in most places. The idea of this happening strictly through school districts, isn't reasonable. This boosts the importance of family child care. States will have flexibility on how to make this happen. There is a way to grandfather in programs that are currently providing prekindergarten, but also within child care licensing guidelines.
 - In Kansas, school districts currently have the ability to partner with community prekindergarten programs. Funding supports these partnerships.
- Very difficult for our community-based preschool that partners with the school district, and offers the same quality of programs to our families, to compete with the salaries/benefits that the district offers their teachers. We are also challenged with finding a quality workforce. I do have concern about how community-based preschools will be impacted if school districts expand their programs. How do we make sure that we aren't negatively impacted by this? We work harder to build our enrollment because school districts are working towards expansion. I hope that the state will include community-based providers in this planning process.
 - I would recommend that you be prepared to discuss these thoughts when the state begins its planning process. This is an opportunity for us to think very differently than in the past. What does pay parity really look like with community programs vs. school districts? It is recommended that as you work on what does pay parity mean, you will need to make this case. Working longer vs. shorter days, or year-round vs. having summers off, etc. You will need to be prepared to advocate for true pay parity.
 - Amanda Petersen noted that Kansans have indicated throughout the state that a mixed-delivery system is very important as we seek to expand early childhood opportunities.
- We had a meeting with providers in Kansas last night. Does the pay parity also apply to center directors? If so, is that comparable to what a school principal would make?
 - Right now, it is more specific to teachers, rather than administration. Much of those types of details are yet to be addressed. Currently, if teachers reach pay parity, they would be making more than many directors.
- If a family exceeds the income eligibility by a small margin, is there a benefits cliff?

- The hard cap on eligibility is 250% of State Median Income. Above this amount of income, no subsidies are available. All other families below this percentage, will qualify for some type of subsidy, based on their income bracket. [The Hunt Institute](#) has a calculator tool, which allows individuals to calculate estimates of their personal child care copayments under the proposed Build Back Better Act. [You can click here to view the interactive Build Back Better Child Care Copayment Calculator.](#)

Break – 10 minutes

Continued full group discussion on the Build Back Better Act:

The Panel began developing the following list of questions to consider while developing the Kansas implementation plan:

- How will existing programs shift from part-day programs to meet the 1,020 hours per year requirement?
 - Different families need different types of care (full-day, full-year) and different partners may be better prepared to provide that than school districts. How do we help match programs to the needs of families and children? K-5 challenges – in-service, 3pm dismissal, late start – challenging for working families
 - Where does the funding come to support a full-day program with wraparound child care?
 - Is this a requirement for the program to offer or for a child to attend?
- How can we ensure programs and expectations are developmentally appropriate for all children?
 - Play-based, developmentally appropriate practice, alignment to kindergarten, considering prenatal to age 8
 - How do we help the broader public understand what quality early learning programs look like?
 - Partnering with private providers to deliver IEP services
 - Emphasizing Kansas Early Learning Standards
- How will we reconcile licensing requirements between KDHE preschool, KDHE child care, and KSDE preschool – opportunities for dual licensure for group day care homes and preschool, center license and preschool. Ability to advertise to parents as a preschool when offering full-day care
- Can providers raise rates?
- How will we cost-model the true cost of care (rather than the market rate families can afford to pay)?
- How do we engage family child care providers and help them understand their role?
- How do we build a workforce pipeline?

- Bachelors degree/difference in preservice/additional requirements for someone with a BA to get a teaching license
- Haysville using Teacher Apprentice Program so that they can complete their training while teaching in the classroom
- How do we create pay parity between community-based programs and districts?
Account for:
 - Differences in year (full-year vs school-year)
 - Differences in hours worked per day
 - Differences in benefits
 - What is parity for administrators?
- How do we meet requirements that states assure that PreK expansion is equitable across settings and does not negatively impact infant-toddler slots?
- What are the steps between Build Back Better Act passing to implementation?
- What are the differences in implementation between participating in the child care proposal and the PreK proposal? How does that support parent choice?

Panel members are also invited to continue sharing additional feedback to add to this list after this meeting. These can be submitted to [Debbie Deere](#).

Panel discussion included further conversations around the:

- Concerns of age appropriate programs/expectations took place among panel members, with clarification from various administrators describing how programs can implement developmentally appropriate practice.
- Child care provider teaching credentials and getting the professional development providers need to match what teachers with Kansas teaching licenses have. Examples were shared of what is happening in Kansas and lessons learned to use in this implementation process.
- What is the plan to advocate for this plan in Kansas? What is the order of the steps that will happen in this process as it moves closer towards implementation?

Bright Spots shared:

- A Kindergarten Transitions team presented at the recent Great Ideas in Education Conference hosted by the Kansas Department of Education (KSDE). This team included panel members: Kimberly Kennedy, Jennifer Adhima, Lisa Schmidt, Amy Gottschamer, and Debbie Deere. [You can click here to view the recording of the session "Building Successful Kindergarten Transition Experiences: Examples for Kansas Communities."](#)
- The Child Care Providers Coalition (CCPC), the Kansas Association for the Education for Young Children (KSAEYC) and Kansas Action for Children hosted a very

successful town hall meeting with Kansas child care providers to discuss the Build Back Better Act on November 18. They hope to schedule more of these conversations for the future. Positive feedback is being received from child care providers throughout the network. More information will be made available when these opportunities become available in the future. [You can click here to watch the youtube video of the Child Care Providers Town Hall Meeting.](#)

- The Child Care Aware of Kansas grants team, in partnership with the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) is preparing to distribute the funds for round 2 of the sustainability grants, totaling \$47,560,000! These will be sent out directly to child care providers on November 30th!
- In 2018 the Kansas Legislature updated the statutory definition of “Preschool-aged at-risk student” for the Preschool-Aged At-Risk program (formerly the State Pre-K 4-Year-Old At-Risk) to include 3-year-old at-risk students. Preschool enrollment remains lower than pre-pandemic estimates. As a result, [the Kansas State Department of Education shared the update](#) that 3-year-old at-risk preschool students will be funded beginning in the 2021-22 school year and moving forward.

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, December 17, 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.