

# KANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD RECOMMENDATIONS PANEL

Monthly Meeting Minutes  
Friday, April 19, 2024



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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, DCF  
Marites Altuna, Kansas State School for  
the Blind  
Mallory Arellano, Kansas State School for  
the Blind  
Brenda Bandy, Kansas Breastfeeding  
Coalition, Inc.  
Dana Book, KCSL  
Eldonna Chesnut, Johnson County  
Department of Health and Environment  
Jarvis Doleman, KDHE  
Nick Engels, Littles Early Learning  
Kelly Franz-Langford, TARC  
Amy Gottschamer, Googols of Learning  
Kim Kennedy, DCF-HSCO  
Hilary Koehn, KPATA  
Tanya Koehn, CCAKS  
Karen MacCrory, Mitchell County  
Partnership for Children  
Malissa Martin, Spark Wheel  
Natalie McClane, KSDE  
Leigh Anne Neal, USD 512 Shawnee  
Mission School District  
Lindsay Orion, KU CPPR  
Stephanie Parks, KCCTO  
Patty Peschel, KCCTO  
Cornelia Stevens, TOP Early Learning  
Centers  
Tabatha Rosproy, Kansas Parent  
Information Resource Center

Bethany Samuel, DCF  
Brett Schmidt, Learning Cross  
Lisa Schmidt, Women's Community Y  
Child Development Center  
Heather Schrotberger, Kansas Head Start  
Association  
Ly Tran, DCF  
Christie Wyckoff, KCCTF  
Bronwyn Fees, Kansas State University  
Kristina Cullison, Frontenac Public  
Schools  
Cheisa Myles, Blessed Assurance  
Daycare  
Tanya Bulluck, Child Start  
Dana Stanton, Northwest Kansas  
Economic Innovation Center, Inc.  
Logan Stenseng, Thrive Allen County  
Cora Ungerer, KDHE  
Stephanie Wiggins, KCCTO

# Minutes

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## Welcome

Cornelia Stevens 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.

## April Meeting Agenda

Marites Altuna moved to approve the agenda and Natalie McClane seconded, with a unanimous vote to approve the agenda as presented.

## March 22, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Tanya Koehn moved to approve the March minutes and Karen MacCrory seconded, with a unanimous vote to approve the minutes as presented.

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

Kansans are encouraged to submit comments through the [Kansans' Open Forum Comment Form](#) by 5:00pm the day preceding each meeting to share written comments or to sign up to share verbal comments with the Panel during this portion of the meeting. No comments submitted.

## Family Well-Being Measure Tool

Cornelia introduced Jared Barton of KU's Center for Public Partnerships and Research (CPPR). Jared is a/the lead evaluator for the ESPP initiative in Kansas known as University Supports for Strong and Thriving Families or Family Strong for short. Part of Family Strong involves the development of well-being measures to better understand when improvements have been made across several different concepts and ideas. In Southeast Kansas, Family Strong is known as a demonstration project which is essentially a designed collection of interventions. In this month's panel meeting, Jared discussed the development of a new, comprehensive measure of Family Well-Being called the "Family Well-Being Survey". Four main objectives were covered: Need for Well-Being Measure, Theoretical Frameworks Informing Development, Development Process of *Family Well-Being Survey*, and Overview of *Family Well-Being Survey*.

## Need for Well-Being Measure

### Needs:

- Comprehensive cross-sector assessment to evaluate family well-being across multiple domains
- Assessment to serve as basis for broader community well-being
- Enhance understanding of underlying factors driving health and well-being outcomes to target systems and policy change
- Theoretically grounded tool capturing the range of family experiences

**Gaps:**

- Existing measures of well-being...
- Focus heavily on individual domains (e.g., economic security and self-sufficiency)
- Overlooked critical factors related to social support, access to education, health care, and community resources
- Lacked examination of structural factors and inequities in favor of prioritizing individual strengths and deficits

**Theoretical Frameworks Informing Development**

The critical need was for the Family Well Being Survey to be theologically grounded. Recognizing the multi-dimensional nature of well-being, various theoretical frameworks were explored in the development of the survey's structure and framework. Presented below are the five theoretical frameworks that guided this process.

- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- Strengths Perspective
- Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)
- Protective Factors Framework
- Systems Theory

**Development Process of *Family Well-Being Survey***

In conducting the structure survey, they conducted an extensive review and explored existing tools for potential insights. Through this research, the group was able to uncover strengths in several existing tools. Leveraging these strengths, the group was able to integrate aspects from three existing tools to seamlessly develop their own unique structure. Below are some details about the tool development phase of the Family Well-Being survey.

**Structure**

- Leveraged three existing tools
- North Carolina Family Assessment Scale
- Arizona Family Self-Sufficiency Matrix
- Protective Factors Survey Version 2 – Retrospective

**Unique Features**

- Situated in the SDOH
- Five-point scale with specific definitions for each rating
- 3 is a mid-point representing a baseline level of well-being
- Poles representing crises/scarcity through abundance/opportunity
- Retrospective
- Captures both provider and individual perspectives that can be aggregated into a community index

For additional information on the *Development Process of Family Well-Being Survey's* Iterative & Collaborative and Ongoing Development & Validation components can be found on [Slide #12](#).

### Overview of Family Well-Being Survey

Enclosed below are two snapshots of the Family Well-Being tool: one focusing on economic well-being and the other on neighborhood and built environment. The economic well-being snapshot addresses individual challenges, while the neighborhood and built environment snapshot emphasizes community dynamics and accessibility within neighborhoods. Both snapshots employ a rating scale from 1 to 5, with 3 serving as the benchmark for well-being. For further insights into the breakdown of this survey, please refer to the [Early Childhood Recommendations Panel](#) livestream timestamp: 32:50-47:12.

## FAMILY WELL-BEING SURVEY

Economic Well-Being							
ITEM	1	2	3	4	5	This time last year	Today
<b>Employment</b>	I am NOT currently working because I struggle to find job opportunities where I live.	I am employed, but my pay and benefits are NOT adequate.	I am employed AND my pay and benefits ARE adequate.	I have stable employment with adequate pay and benefits, AND I have opportunities for advancement.	I have stable employment with adequate pay & benefits. If I needed to find a new job I have MANY options.		
<b>Regular Income</b>	I do not have a source of regular income.	I have a regular income BUT it is not enough to meet my family's needs.	I have a regular income that is enough to meet my family's needs.	I have a regular income that is MORE than enough to meet my family's needs.	I have a regular income that provides for my family's needs and many of our wants.		
<b>Food</b>	I have NO access to a variety of quality food.	I have LIMITED access to a variety of quality food.	I have regular access to a variety of quality food.	I have regular access to a variety of quality food that is more than enough to meet my family's needs.	I can access any food my family needs and many of our wants.		

Neighborhood and Built Environment							
ITEM	1	2	3	4	5	This time last year	Today
<b>Housing Quality</b>	No housing options in my neighborhood meet livable standards (i.e., decent, safe, sanitary).	Fewer than half the housing options in my neighborhood meet livable standards (i.e., decent, safe, sanitary).	Most housing in my neighborhood meets livable standards (i.e., decent, safe, and sanitary).	All housing in my neighborhood meets livable standards (i.e., decent, safe, sanitary).	All housing in my neighborhood EXCEEDS livable standards (i.e., decent, safe, sanitary).		
<b>Neighborhood Safety</b>	I NEVER feel safe in my neighborhood.	I RARELY feel safe in my neighborhood.	I feel safe in my neighborhood.	I feel VERY safe in my neighborhood.	I ALWAYS feel safe in my neighborhood.		
<b>Neighborhood Safety for Children</b>	I feel so uncomfortable that I NEVER let my children play outside.	I don't feel comfortable letting my children play outside.	I am comfortable letting my children play outside.	I am VERY comfortable letting my children play outside.	I am ALWAYS comfortable letting my children play outside.		

It's important to note that the information provided is currently in the drafting phase. Be on the lookout for the Family Strong logo or a well-being survey link/QR code as indications that the survey is being rolled out statewide. You're encouraged to participate, rate, and share the survey once things go live. We'll continue to keep you updated on developments as the survey launches.

### Child Care Assistance Study

Cornelia introduced Tara Gregory of Wichita State University (WSU) who presented an update on the 2023 Child Care Assistance Study. This research was conducted at the Center of Applied Research and Evaluation, in conjunction with the Public Policy and Management Center, both at WSU. The aim was to develop a survey on behalf of the

Department for Children and Families (DCF) in response to an RFP request. The focus of the inquiry was to understand why many eligible families were not applying for the child care assistance program. The overarching goal was to investigate the reasons behind eligible parents' non-application to the DCF Child Care Assistance Program and to identify avenues for enhancing the application process for all prospective and qualified applicants.

The survey employed two distinct methodologies. The first method revolved around a caregiver survey, developed collaboratively with the Department for Children and Families. This evaluation was distributed through trusted organizations. This method produced a total of 770 responses. The second method involved conducting interviews based on the findings from the survey. Recruitment for these interviews was facilitated through the survey itself and outreached to trusted organizations. In total, 12 interviews were conducted, including 6 with parents and 6 with child care-related professionals.

### **Overall Findings:**

Based on the 770 survey responses and 12 interviews found:

- Some struggled with the application
- Lack of awareness of the program
- Transportation is a barrier to access
- Service providers could help with recruitment
- Lack of quality, affordable child care

### **Survey Results:**

- Responses from at least 60 counties across the state
- 75% had applied for Child Care Assistance (84% currently receiving benefits)
- 97% had at least some awareness of the program; of those who were not aware, 42% were likely to apply
- 57% had an issue in the last 6 months with reliable child care
- 46% don't own a vehicle; of those, 63% don't have access to transportation
- Top three factors in choosing child care:
  - Cost (30%)
    - Whether child likes going (27%)
    - Whether it is licensed (25%)
- "Optimal price point" is \$291.84 per child per week (range of \$196.02-\$492.23)
- Participants were mostly neutral about their experiences with Child Care Assistance (but more positive than negative)
  - Ease of applying (44%~;37%+)
  - Ease of continuing (50%~;40%+)
  - Ease of finding providers (51%~;35%+)



## Survey Results (continued)

Figure 30: Reasons for Believing Applying is Difficult

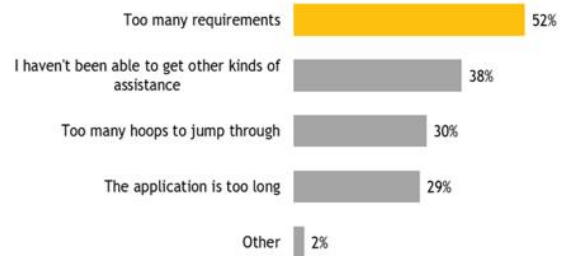
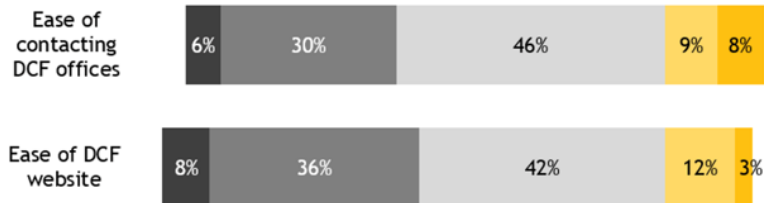


Figure 30: Illustrates the reasons respondents believe applying is difficult.

Figure 31: Ease of Contacting DCF Offices and Using the DCF Website



## Survey Results (continued)

Figure 31: Showcases the ease of contacting DCF offices and using the DCF website. The colors in yellow are the “very hard” and “hard” representation of ease of contacting DCF while the light and dark grey represent the “very easy” and “easy” side of contacting DCF’s offices and website. For the most part, more people felt positive about contacting the DCF offices and utilizing the website than they are negative about it.

## **Interview Results: Key Themes**

- Lack of availability of providers
- Lack of providers that accept DCF Child Care Assistance
- Extensive and confusing paperwork
- Unclear processes and deadlines
- Inconsistent procedures
- Stigma and shame
- Unpleasant interactions with DCF staff
- Fear of repercussions
- Lack of knowledge of program/criteria

Based on the findings the team will continue to work towards improving the system and utilize resources to get the word out about child care assistance. Additionally, hoping to continue efforts with working with partners closely to help people apply for assistance. If you would like to read more about the findings [2023 Child Care Assistance Study](#). Also, it can be found on the Panel's SharePoint Hub.

## **AIFKK Tactic Work Group Reports**

Cornelia introduced a representative from each work group to provide an update on the work they have done since last month's meeting.

### **Tactic 4.2: Family-Friendly Workplaces**

Update given by Dana Book. The group took a hard look into the original recommendations and have refined them down to a few big recommendations for the cabinet. The child care piece is a huge component to the family-friendly workplace work and looking at actual strategies. Have three strategies: outreach, implementation, and support of the work.

### **Tactic 7.1.2: Zoning**

Update given by Eldonna Chesnut. The survey has been successfully launched. Childcare Aware of Kansas (CCA KS) is promoting it. This survey has been shared with childcare providers with the aim of seeking valuable input. Currently, they have received limited feedback and plan to resend surveys in the hopes of gathering more responses. So far, 21 total responses have been received; 15 of which were complete responses. As of right now, the sample size is too small to indicate anything. For context: The target population was home providers that were operating within the homeowner's association (HOA). Part of the discussion involved the possibility of reaching out to past providers to find out if their closure was due to issues with an HOA. Once providers are no longer in operation, they were removed from the Child Care Aware database, so there is not a mechanism to reach those that are closed. For this reason, the group is currently prioritizing outreach to current providers who indicate they are operating within an HOA or have encountered HOA-related problems. Within the small sample, most of the respondents have indicated no barriers from an HOA, but there have been those referring to their barriers being from zoning restrictions.

### **Tactic 6.1.1: Compensation and Benefits**

Update given by Heather Schrotberger. Continued discussion on components of competitive compensation for Kansas early childhood workforce. Recommendations forthcoming due to the ongoing work with Watershed group and recommendations centered around salaries and wages. Have turned their attention to exploring avenues available for increasing employer health care coverage and/or benefits for the early childhood workforce.

### **Tactic 6.1.5: Recruitment and Retention**

Update given by Amy Gottschamer. Continued moving forward with the online toolkit that would provide the different strategies to address the various recruitment and retention challenges outside of compensation and benefits. Currently, in the planning phase, still determining where this tool kit will be hosted. One potential option is to host the toolkit on the All in for Kansas Kids website. Another possibility is to place it within the registry. Once the decision is made and finalized on the location they will begin assembling the online guide.

**For the June 21, 2024 Panel:** Request that each work group prepare a comprehensive report or presentation. Share any valuable recommendations based on the work groups findings or experiences. Can outline actionable next steps that can be used as a guide as we transition into next year's panel work groups. The goal is to utilize this information as a guide for the upcoming 2024-2025 panel.

### **2024-2025 Panel Applications:**

Open to any Kansan interested in serving on the working group for the Kansas Early Childhood Advisory Council, known as the Early Childhood Recommendations Panel. Applications will be accepted from April 1<sup>st</sup> through May 3<sup>rd</sup>. This is a one year term from July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025. All current Panel members are encouraged to re-apply and share with others. Applications can be found on the [Children's Cabinet website](#).

### **Bright Spots:**

- Eldonna Chesnut: The Raising JoCo Coalition hosted their first conference and had over 100 providers that attended.
- Mallory Arellano: Had an opportunity to talk with the CEO of Economic Planning for Finni County. They are onboard with working with businesses in this area so that families are aware of family-friendly workspaces.
- Karen MacCrory: Mitchell County partnership for children hosted early childhood educators from five counties and provided in-person KDHE training for about 60 early childhood educators.
- Bronwyn Fee: Provided updated on the Early Childhood Comprehensive Survey conducted by the Kansas childcare training opportunity through funding from Department for Children and Families. There were over 6,000 responses and now have an excellent data set that they can sort through.



### Upcoming Meetings: (all via Zoom)

- Early Childhood Recommendations Panel meeting – Friday, May 17, 9:00 a.m. -11:30 a.m.
- Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund meeting – Friday, June 7, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

### Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.