

# KANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD RECOMMENDATIONS PANEL

Monthly Meeting Minutes  
Friday, June 21, 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  
Brenda Bandy, Kansas Breastfeeding  
Coalition, Inc.  
Dana Book, KCSL  
Jarvis Doleman, KDHE  
Amy Gottschamer, Googols of Learning  
Kim Kennedy, DCF-HSCO  
Tanya Koehn, CCAKS  
Karen MacCrary, Mitchell County  
Partnership for Children  
Malissa Martin, Spark Wheel  
Natalie McClane, KSDE  
Bethany Samuel, DCF  
Lindsay Orion, KU CPPR  
Cornelia Stevens, TOP Early Learning  
Centers  
Tabatha Rosproy, Kansas Parent  
Information Resource Center  
Hilary Koehn, KPATA  
Heather Schrotberger, Kansas Head Start  
Association  
Christie Wyckoff, KCCTF  
Kristina Cullison, Frontenac Public  
Schools  
Cheisa Myles, Blessed Assurance  
Daycare  
Stephanie Wiggins, KCCTO  
Emily Barnes, KAC

Katrina Lowry, Russell Child Development  
Center  
Marie Treichel, KAIMH  
Kerri Falletti, KDC  
Nick Engels, Littles Early Learning  
Amy Dean-Campmire, KDHE  
Janine Foth, Cougar Cubs Daycare USD  
397 Centre  
Eldonna Chesnut, Johnson County  
Department of Health and Environment

# 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.

## June Meeting Agenda

Eldonna Chesnut moved to approve the agenda and Emily Barnes seconded, with a unanimous vote to approve the agenda as presented.

## May 17, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Emily Barnes moved to approve the May 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.

This month we did have a comment that was submitted to the Kansas' Open Forum. Margaret Nicholes from (Olathe, KS), submitted a comment centered around improving school reading with music. Her statement reads: 'Knowing how to read is critical to all other learning. Children love to sing! Incorporating music as a tool for teaching how to read could help improve school reading scores.'" Emily Barnes thanked Margaret for sharing her thoughts, as she finds it an incredible idea to consider. She, too, has seen the benefits of incorporating music into teaching.

## AIFKK Tactic Work Group Summary Report

Cornelia opened the floor for a representative from each work group to provide an update on the work they had done to summarize the end of this year's 2023-2024 panel.

For the June 21, 2024 Panel, work groups were requested to prepare a comprehensive summary and presentation for that Panel meeting. Work groups were encouraged to present any recommendations based on findings and experience, and to outline actionable next steps that could be used as a guide as the transition into next year's Panel work groups began. Work groups had the option to complete their work during that cycle or to make recommendations for how the work could continue into the next Panel year.

## Tactic 7.1.2: Zoning

Tanya Koehn, Eldonna Chesnut, and Emily Barnes presented on behalf of Tactic 7.1.2's Zoning. This group studies local zoning and homeowner associations across the state to identify laws that adversely affect the ability to operate a child care business in residential and commercial spaces.

**Based on their year-long efforts, the group suggested the following:**

The Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel (Tactic 7.1.2) suggests that the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Statewide Go Team collaborate to promote the '[Community Child Care Support Center](#)' webpage across various organizations in Kansas. They also recommend mobilizing child care providers to partner with their local Community Child Care Task Force/Coalitions to amend overly restrictive local zoning regulations compared to state standards. The support center offers tools and resources to aid these efforts aimed at eliminating such zoning codes or regulations.

**Background information:**

With [~85k child care](#) slots across the state of Kansas, child care providers face zoning barriers which increases the risk of child care slots declining. In turn, this affects parents who may struggle to maintain a job due to not having child care and affects businesses needing to hire reliable employees.

There is a significant need for child care. When the group began investigating this two years ago, their initial focus was on zoning barriers. Through surveys, the group discovered that these barriers were common across the state, with more pronounced effects in larger counties like Johnson and Sedgwick. These zoning restrictions particularly affect home providers, although centers also face challenges.

**Study Local Zoning and Homeowner Association:**

Giving child care providers and Community Child Care Task Force/Coalitions the tools to advocate for themselves and breakdown zoning regulation barriers will allow all available slots in communities in need to be used. The "[Community Child Care Support Center](#)" webpage is intended to be a resource to assist communities and child care providers to make changes to zoning regulations in their community.

The second survey this year focused on homeowner associations and was divided into two distinct phases due to project complexity and time constraints. The response rate for the homeownership survey was low, and the group encountered challenges in establishing a methodology. The survey was distributed through Child Care Aware of Kansas, leveraging direct contact with providers and homeowners' associations. They anticipated a significant response from larger cities like Johnson and Sedgwick counties because providers there often mentioned homeowner associations as significant barriers alongside zoning regulations. Upon closer examination, they found that some perceived barriers might have been mistakenly attributed to homeowner associations rather than zoning regulations. The data didn't indicate that homeowner associations were nearly as significant a barrier across the state as zoning regulations. Therefore, their recommendation primarily focuses on zoning, because it is supported by the data.

**Action Steps:**

- Advertise the completed "[Community Child Care Support Center](#)" webpage in Child Care Aware’s quarterly Kansas Child magazine.

- There will be a [Local Codes & Ordinances FAQ](#) document that will generally remain consistent.
- Promote the completed “Community Child Care Support Center” webpage.

After reviewing the survey feedback regarding zoning and HOA issues, the group recommends discontinuing this tactic work group, because they believe they have achieved their initial goals. However, they suggest that the childcare and early learning community remain sensitive to these concerns. If these issues resurface, they proposed a flexible and responsive approach, potentially involving the Go Team rather than reinstating the recommendation panel. The group recommends moving away from a dedicated tactic work group that focused on the past two terms' efforts. Instead, they propose advancing through actions like advertising and promotion. This concludes their recommendation.

### Tactic 6.1.5: Recruitment and Retention

Amy Gottschamer presented on behalf of Tactic 7.1.2's Recruitment and Retention. This group studies documents and address recruitment and retention challenges for ECE professionals.

- Group researched several articles and websites on the topics.
- Created a document with dozens of ideas posted in no particular order.

#### Summary:

- We organized a template of ideas (solutions addressing recruitment and retention) aligned by audience (Direct Care Providers, State Agencies/ Organizations, Advocacy Groups, Local Coalitions/Communities)
- Created a toolkit that would be available online. (All in for Kansas Kids (AIFKK) or Registry?)
- KCCTO members on our group were able to provide details regarding putting the information online with the registry.
- Met with Lindsay Orion, Sara Gardner, and Rachel Sisson (KU-CPPR) to discuss putting information on AIFKK website.

#### Decisions:

- Currently, AIFKK is ready and available.
- The first step might be working with Rachel to get the content to her and then getting it uploaded onto the AIFKK's website for now.
- The Registry is the final desirable home for the online toolkit when it is available.
  - The AIFKK's website would become a link back to where The Registry is hosted.
- In addition, it was suggested we encourage feedback from the workforce/ communities to share back successes or lessons learned from the content of the

toolkit. This will ensure the website is dynamic and the data can be fresh and updated regularly.

**Next Steps:**

- Overall, the group doesn't believe it is necessary to continue 6.1.5 as a monthly meeting group. They have completed extensive research, developed the toolkit, and identified where it will be housed.
- Ongoing upkeep of the toolkit can be managed by the staff associated with AIFKK or the Registry.
- However, the group sees an opportunity to merge 6.1.5 under 6.1.1 as a unified group.

**Tactic 4.2: Family-friendly Workplaces**

Dana Book presented on behalf of Tactic 4.2: Family-friendly Workplaces. This group promotes family-friendly workplaces throughout the public and private sectors.

**Recommendation:**

- The Kansas Children's Cabinet identified in the [2024 Needs Assessment](#) the "Need for broader reach of family-friendly workplace policies" to improve the lives of Kansas families, especially when raising young children.
- The Cabinet encourages Kansas employers to implement family-friendly workplace practices to strengthen families, businesses, and the Kansas economy. Employers can use the [Guide to Family Forward Workplaces](#) and the [Family Friendly Workplace Survey](#) to select and implement family-friendly policies best suited to their workplace.
  - Survey was conducted at no charge. The focus of this survey was to engage directly with those being served, aiming to understand their needs firsthand rather than having decisions made by others.
- The Cabinet will:
  - Include the [Guide to Family Forward Workplaces](#) and the [Family Friendly Workplace Survey](#) on the [All in for Kansas Kids](#) website.
  - Encourage partners and state agencies, such as Labor and Commerce, to help Kansas employers implement family-friendly policies using existing resources.

**Next Steps:**

- Considering the transformational nature of this work and the time required, it is suggested that the Workgroup remain in place for the next year to continue refining the 'Family-Friendly Workplace' designation and social media campaign.

**Tactic 6.1.1: Compensation and Benefits**

Heather Schrotberger presented on behalf of Tactic 6.1.1: Compensation and Benefits. This group studies and develop recommendations to increase compensation and benefits for early childhood care and education professionals.

### **Focus: July 2023- June 2024**

- Finalize a working definition of quality compensation and benefits.
- Identify a benchmark for early childhood compensation.
- Explore ideas for increased access to health care coverage for early childhood care and education professionals.

### **Focus: Work Definition**

The group picked up from what was recommended during last year's panel cycle.

Definition from 2022-2023 6.1.1 Workgroup:

- Quality workforce compensation and benefits in early childhood education (ECE) refer to a competitive pay and benefits package that meets the needs of educators, aligns with other professional fields, and ensures continual growth through quality-based metrics and incentivizing professional development.

### **Focus: Work Definition – Refined**

With the recommendation that was provided, they were able to refine and create a structured definition moving forward, as follows: Competitive compensation and benefits for Kansas early childhood professionals includes direct compensation and financial relief strategies\* reflective of both experience and credentials, aligned with the broader educational system, tied to a clear career pathway with opportunities for advancement, and backed by robust and sustainable public and private revenue streams.

- \*Direct compensation could include pay/benefits such as: wages and salaries; legally required benefits; unemployment insurance; social security contributions; workers' compensation; bonuses and stipends; paid time off (vacation and sick leave); health insurance; retirement contributions; company shares; paid planning time; professional development. Financial relief strategies could include paid family leave; child care benefits; tax credits; loan forgiveness; tuition assistance; and student loan repayment

### **Focus: Benchmark For Early Childhood Compensation**

- The group explored resources for existing benchmarks.
- Additionally, the group reviewed and provided feedback to the Watershed compensation study.
  - Watershed was engaged by KU-CPPR to conduct a study of compensation strategies.
  - Maps high-effort, low-effort, high-impact, low-impact strategies to increase compensation.
  - Identified "big bets": compensation base, bonuses, tax credits.
    - Includes a benchmark compensation base recommendation of \$18/hour.

### **Focus: Increased Health Care Coverage For ECE Professionals**

Identified potential strategies to investigate further as possible strategies for increasing access.

- Local chamber of commerce group plans.
- Groups plans offered by associations in other fields.
- State plans.

### **Next Steps:**

- No formal recommendations for the Cabinet.
  - However, we do recommend sharing the Watershed Report on the All in for Kansas Kids website as a resource. Further breakdown/explanation under next bullet point.
- Recommend sharing Watershed report with the benchmark compensation figure of \$18/hour as a RESOURCE for consideration.
  - Informs local and state conversations.
  - Guide decision-making for those who can direct resources to compensation.
  - Not intended as an expectation for the early childhood field to meet without additional public resources to be able to do so.
- The group thinks they've wrapped up the discussion around compensation, so they do not see a need for 6.1.1 to continue their focus solely on compensation.
  - If continuing work group 6.1.1, explore and share additional strategies and resources, plus move ahead a recommendation related to health insurance.

*Note: For further insights into the breakdown of all group presentations and the list of work group members who were part of putting this recommendation together, please refer to the [June Early Childhood Recommendation Panel PowerPoint](#) slides.*

### **Bright Spots:**

- Dana Book: Recently learned that he will be going to Atlanta at the National Fatherhood Summit in August.
- Melissa Martin: Excited to start the new school year, they will be implementing two new early childhood programs in the state: one in Neodesha and another in southeast Kansas.
- Amy Gottschamer: They shared that they had their 'Superman Supper' at Googols of Learning, which was a nod to Father's Day but more inclusive. They have about 100 children enrolled and invited all the important men in their lives, including not just dads but also grandfathers, uncles, and others. Overall, a nice and wonderful event.
- Karen MacCrory: Excited to announce that those in their area can apply for the Patterson Family Foundation grant. They are launching a new funding stream aimed at serving child care needs, specifically targeting workforce capacity-building training and certification funding.
- Brenda Bandy: Shared that they would be hosting a roundtable on July 3rd centered around Paid Family and Medical Leave. Anyone is welcome to join this 45-minute

allocated time discussion featuring national and state experts. To sign up for the [First 1,000 Days KS 2024 Roundtable Series](#).

- Kristina Cullison: Shared that their school district received a preschool development grant a few years ago for kindergarten transition. With this funding, they organized a Future Raiders camp, inviting all students aged three to five who would be entering the program in the next few years to become familiar with their school. The school district found value in the camp and allowed them to continue even without funding. They recently completed their third camp with 40 children enrolled and several on the waitlist.

### Upcoming Meetings: (all via Zoom)

- Early Childhood Recommendations Panel meeting – Friday, July 19, 9:00 a.m. -11:30 a.m.
- Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund meeting – Friday, August 2, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

### Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 10:05 a.m.