

KANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD RECOMMENDATIONS PANEL

Promote Family-Friendly Workplaces Recommendation



TO: Kansas Children's Cabinet
FROM: Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel
DATE: August 2, 2024
SUBJECT: Promote Family-Friendly Workplaces

Recommendation

The Kansas Children's Cabinet, in its role as the state Early Childhood Advisory Council, recommends adoption of the [Family Friendly Workplace Survey](#) and the [Guide to Family Forward Workplaces](#) as tools employers can use to select and implement family-friendly policies best suited to their workplace and encourages Kansas employers to implement family-friendly workplace practices, as appropriate for their business, to strengthen families, businesses, and the Kansas economy.

The Cabinet will 1) include the [Family Friendly Workplace Survey](#) and the [Guide to Family Forward Workplaces](#) on the [All in for Kansas Kids website](#) and 2) encourage partners and state agencies, such as Labor and Commerce, to help Kansas employers implement family-friendly policies using existing resources.

Background

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.¹²

These findings recognize the interconnectedness between a family's well-being, workplace support, and children's development. By establishing family-friendly workplaces, Kansas employers can facilitate the participation of parents in the workforce while providing them with the necessary resources and support to ensure their children's healthy development. This approach promotes economic stability, employment stability and opportunities for families. This approach also contributes to positive outcomes for children, creating a strong foundation for their future success.

Employers will also be positively impacted. Research shows family-friendly policies lead to higher employee retention and recruitment, increased productivity, lower healthcare costs, and a more satisfied and motivated workforce. The broader community also gains economic growth and stability from increased workforce participation and improved early childhood outcomes.

The aim is to create an environment that supports all employees by recognizing the broad range of needs and circumstances families must cope with. While no employer is likely to adopt all of the strategies, every employer should be able to find some ideas they can implement among the range of options included in the guide. This ensures more employees have access to opportunities for work-life balance and supportive policies such as parental leave, flexible scheduling, and more.

Promoting family-friendly workplaces impacts a wide range of individuals and groups in Kansas. Policies that allow for greater work-life balance will benefit working parents, including single parents and dual-income households. Children will experience the positive effects of having parents who are more present and engaged and have fewer stressors in their lives.

Implementing family-friendly workplaces in Kansas requires consideration of additional connections within the early childhood care, education, employment system, policymakers, and other organizations or agencies. It is crucial to review and address potential barriers, such as affordability, accessibility, and quality of child care, to ensure that families can access the support they need. Ongoing evaluation and feedback from partners, including families and employers, should inform any adjustments or enhancements to the recommendations to ensure their effectiveness.

From the U.S. Department of Labor: "If there is one thing that the pandemic has highlighted, it's that family-friendly work policies are essential for all workers. The unequal distribution of family-friendly policies – which is likely correlated with disparities in wages, leave and other benefits – creates yet another dimension of work inequality. While working from home or learning your work schedule ahead of time are not panaceas, they are all policies that may help some employees better manage their obligations. The U.S. needs to maintain and expand access to policies such as these, and to ensure that these benefits accrue not only to the pre-existing "haves," but across the board, so that this dimension of labor market inequality can no longer exacerbate other forms of inequity."³

Available resources:

- Family-Friendly Workplace Survey - www.familyfriendlyks.org (technical assistance)
- Guide to Family Forward Workplaces - <https://first1000daysks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/FamilyForward-WorkplaceGuideWeb-1.pdf> (education campaign)
- <https://1800CHILDRENKS.org>
- www.childcareinkansas.com

Describe how the recommendation addresses a specific goal, strategy, or tactic of the [All in for Kansas Kids strategic plan](#):

Strategy 4.2 - Promote family-friendly workplaces throughout the public and private sectors.

The recommendation addresses the Outcome Statement of Strategy 4.2 as stated in the All in for Kansas Strategic plan.

Outcome Statement – Kansas is a champion of public-private collaboration and creates opportunities to invest in the future of Kansas kids and families.

We recognize that our shared future prosperity is rooted in early childhood. We envision a state where businesses, philanthropies, and nonprofits alike understand the importance of investing early to build healthy, thriving communities. As employers of parents and caregivers, private sector partners will maintain a competitive edge by committing to innovative, family-friendly practices.

While implementation of these resources is entirely voluntary, by implementing family-friendly practices can help create a supportive environment that prioritizes work-life balance and well-being, ensuring employees can effectively manage their work and family responsibilities and employers can benefit from greater stability in their workforce.

¹ [Background and case for family-friendly workplaces](#) (2024 Needs Assessment Pages 91-93)

² [Need for broader reach of family-friendly workplace policies](#) (Gap Analysis 2024 Needs Assessment Page 101)

³ [US Department of Labor Blog](#) (accessed 5/31/24)

The Kansas Early Childhood Recommendations Panel advises the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund, as outlined in [Kansas Executive Order 20-02](#). Visit the [Children's Cabinet Website](#) for more information, and contact Lindsay Orion (lindsayorion@ku.edu) with questions.