



Annual Report

➤ 2023

Don Hineman, Chair
Melissa Rooker, Executive Director

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**Improving the health
and well-being of Kansas
children and families.**

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Introduction

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- Our Work

Letter from the Director

When I stepped into the position of executive director in early 2019, the Kansas Children's Cabinet was already deeply engaged in the important work of relationship building and collaborating across systems and sectors—fueled by the federal Preschool Development Grant B-5 grant award. In the years since, we have weathered a global pandemic while grappling with longstanding systemic challenges to family well-being. By engaging with families, community leaders, and early childhood care and education professionals while implementing our current strategic plan, *All In For Kansas Kids*, we've seen progress and celebrated numerous bright spots that continue to inspire and guide us. Lessons learned through these years are behind several exciting new initiatives designed to accelerate access to child care as a driver of economic well-being for Kansas families and businesses alike.

In January of this year, Governor Kelly issued Executive Order 23-01, forming the Early Childhood Transition Task Force. I was honored to serve as an appointed member of the Task Force, which was charged with recommending methods for streamlining early childhood care and education services. In the spring, the Kansas Children's Cabinet opened two new grant programs for communities, totaling an incredible \$92.6 million. With the goal of dramatically increasing child care capacity throughout the state, we blended and braided multiple one-time funding sources to maximize impact. In August, Dolly Parton came to Kansas to celebrate our statewide expansion of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library! In addition to these very special projects, we continued to carry out our core work guiding investments in early childhood through the Children's Initiatives Fund.

Amid this flurry of activity, the Kansas Children's Cabinet experienced a major transition as Kim Moore completed his term as chair in June and

we welcomed Don Hineman into the role. I've had the pleasure of knowing and working with Don for many years. As a farmer/rancher in Western Kansas, he provides an important rural perspective to the Kansas Children's Cabinet. He brings his experience with the Children's Initiatives Fund from his service in the state legislature as well as a deep understanding and appreciation of the importance of early childhood care and education programs. I welcome Don's leadership as chair, and extend my thanks to Kim for his many years of service to Kansas children and families.

This year's annual report captures incredible progress and momentum. I am proud of the tireless efforts of the countless individuals who share my conviction that every child deserves a safe home, quality care, and a top-notch education. However, to achieve the vision of Kansas being the best place to raise a child, we will need to make some structural changes in the way we plan for, fund, and deliver services to children and families because the status quo in Kansas is not as effective as we would like. The problems of the early childhood system are well understood and are exactly the kind of problems that have inspired a unification of early childhood governance in other states. In the coming year, my focus will be working with our partners in the Kansas legislature to embrace the opportunity to reimagine our early childhood care and education system. Together, we can create coherence at the state level by unifying funding sources and services to reduce administrative burdens for providers and families, codifying a strong role for communities, and supporting parent choice.

We are up to the challenge.



Our Commitment to Equity

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet recognizes equitable life outcomes start with an early childhood system that acknowledges the fact children and families experience disproportionate access and opportunity across race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical and developmental abilities, home language, and geography. Equity is an organizing principle of the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan.

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet is committed to:

- meeting the diverse and unique needs of all Kansas families by coordinating systems-wide approaches to ensure services are available and accessible
- elevating family voice and choice
- using data in ethical, timely, and responsive ways in partnership with communities and a broad array of experts
- equitably funding programs

Our Work

Manager

Manages grantmaking, fund administration, and strategic planning processes.

Connector

Convenes diverse partners in children’s issues from government, nonprofit, and the private sector.

Champion

Elevates the importance of investing in early childhood and contributes to innovative program approaches.

Strategist

Identifies opportunities for effective collaboration and overcomes barriers to optimal system performance.

Evaluator

Evaluates use of the CIF, contributes to data-informed decision making, and offers practice and policy recommendations.

Our People

Kansas Children's Cabinet Members

FIVE VOTING MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR

Don Hineman, Chair

Don Hineman is a western Kansas farmer/rancher who works in partnership with his son Andy. He has served on numerous livestock boards and remains active in both livestock and grain industry organizations. A twelve-year veteran of the Kansas House of Representatives, he served a two-year term as House Majority Leader. His commitment to his local community has included serving on Dighton City Council and Lane County Commission. Don holds a bachelor's degree in business from the University of Kansas and master's degrees in business administration and natural resource management from the University of Michigan. His passion for early childhood education and intervention was ignited by his wife Betsy's forty-year career in early childhood. Don and Betsy reside in Dighton and have two grown children and five grandchildren.

Tyler K. Smith-Howells, MD, MPH, FAAP, was appointed in 2019. She is a board-certified general pediatrician. She is the Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine. She is also fellowship director for the Academic General Pediatrics Fellowship Training Program at Children's Mercy Kansas City. She has a passion for advocacy, leadership, mentorship, sponsorship, coaching, diversity, equity, inclusion, and physician wellness. She is married to James Howells, bonus mother to Anthony and Arianna, and grandmother to Jasmine Elena.

LeEtta Felter was appointed in 2014 by Governor Sam Brownback, reappointed in 2018 by Governor Jeff Colyer, and reappointed in 2022 by Governor Laura Kelly. She's the mom of four, married to her husband of 34 years. She has lived in Olathe since 1997 and is a Councilwoman on the Olathe City Council. LeEtta also served 12 years on the Olathe Public Schools Board of Education (2011-2023). She is Vice President of AAG Investments and will graduate with a Doctorate of Education in Administration and Leadership (Ed.D) from Southern Nazarene University in May 2024.

DiAnne Owen Graham was appointed in 2018. She is President of Graham Advisors, LLC, a nationally recognized consulting firm that specializes in political and issue advocacy fundraising for diverse clientele. She also serves as Co-Founder and Partner at Strategic Advisors, LLC, a comprehensive public and government affairs firm. She served as a political appointee in President George W. Bush's Administration and held various roles with the U.S. Department of State. DiAnne graduated from The University of Mississippi and lives in Wichita, Kansas, with her husband, Chris, and their sons, Owen and Parker, who are students in Andover Public Schools.

Terri Rice was appointed in 2017. She is Senior Marketing Manager for Cox Business and holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Management, Master of Business Administration and is a Doctor of Business Administration Candidate (2025). She serves on various committees and boards, and is heavily involved in nonprofit work, giving back to the community whenever possible. Terri lives in Wichita, Kansas with her husband and has one daughter and two stepchildren.

FOUR VOTING MEMBERS APPOINTED BY LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP

Renee Erickson, Senator, was appointed in 2021 and represents District 30. Her career experience includes working as a teacher, a data and assessment coordinator, a middle school principal, a financial planner, and the director of the USD 259 instructional technology center. She holds undergraduate degrees in both business and education with a master's degree in public school administration from Baker University, and a master's degree in family life education and consultation from Kansas State University.

Deliece Hofen was appointed in 2020. She is a former elementary school teacher turned principal who took what was once the lowest-scoring school in the Blue Valley district and turned it into one of the highest-scoring, even earning the prestigious Blue Ribbon Award from the U.S. Department of Education. She is also mom to Braden, the namesake of the organization she founded in 2010, Braden's Hope for Childhood Cancer.

Monica Murnan was appointed in 2020. She is a licensed teacher and administrator who founded the Family Resource Center in Pittsburg, Kansas. She currently serves as Director of Student Support Services at Greenbush and has served on many nonprofit boards. She also served two terms in the Kansas Legislature representing House District 3 and four years on the Pittsburg City Commission with one year as Mayor. Monica and her husband, Rob, have three daughters and two grandchildren.

John Wilson was appointed in 2019. He is the President and CEO of Kansas Action for Children, a nonpartisan advocacy organization working to make Kansas a place where every child has the opportunity to grow up healthy and thrive. Prior to joining KAC, John served five years in the Kansas House of Representatives. John spent eleven years with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation—a partnership between the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation. During that time he coordinated strategic partnerships with corporations and celebrities, co-developed a national strategy for increasing physical activity and healthy eating in out-of-school time sites, and developed their youth engagement strategy. He is a 2006 graduate of the University of Kansas, where he studied visual communication.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Laura Howard, J.D. Secretary, Kansas Department for Children and Families (Tanya Keys, Designee)

Blake Flanders, Ph.D. President & CEO, Kansas Board of Regents (Karla Wiscombe, Designee)

Janet Stanek Secretary, Kansas Department of Health & Environment (Derik Flerlage, Designee)

Randy Watson, Ed.D. Commissioner of Education, Kansas State Department of Education (Amanda Petersen, Designee)

Keynen J. Wall, J.D. Kansas Supreme Court Justice (Dena Russel-Marino, Designee)

Jeff Zmuda Secretary, Kansas Department of Corrections (Matthew Billinger, Designee)

Kansas Children's Cabinet Staff

Melissa Rooker was named executive director of the Kansas Children's Cabinet in February 2019. Prior to this, Melissa served three terms in the Kansas House of Representatives, focusing on children's issues and public education. Before running for office, Melissa spent 15 years as a development executive at Warner Bros., Malpasco Productions. She holds a BFA from the University of Kansas and lives with her husband, Tom, in Fairway, Kansas. They have two married children and one grandson.

Amy Meek joined the Kansas Children's Cabinet in 2015. Prior to this, Amy spent six years at Community Action, Inc. in Topeka, first as the Early Childhood Education Coordinator and finally as the Director of Head Start and Early Head Start. She has experience in program management, grant writing, policy development, and compliance with local, state, and federal regulation. She holds a BA from the University of Kansas and an MBA from Baker University.

Dyogga Adegboro joined the Kansas Children's Cabinet in 2004 and has worked in state government 38 years. Dyogga handles Accounts Payables, prepares federal financial reports, board minutes, sets up contracts and grants, and makes travel arrangements. She worked with the CEOs of the Kansas Board of Regents, Kansas State Fire Marshal, and Kansas State Bank Commissioner offices. Dyogga is a graduate of Washburn University of Topeka and Platt College. She is married with one son who is in graduate school.

Megan Brohaugh joined the Kansas Children's Cabinet in January 2022. Prior to joining the Cabinet, Megan worked with the Kansas Attorney General's office for six years working with Concealed Carry licensing, Private Detective licensing, and Bail Enforcement licensing. Megan has worked with the state government for over eight years. She attended Washburn university to study business law. When she isn't running to practice or a tournament, she enjoys spending time outside with her two boys.

Hannah White joined the Kansas Children's Cabinet in August 2020. Prior to this, Hannah worked on the behavioral health team at a county jail as the Re-Entry Coordinator. Prior to that, and while pursuing her undergraduate and graduate degrees, Hannah worked for six years as a dispatcher for the Riley County Police Department. Hannah initially joined the team as the Workforce Coordinator and has recently transitioned to the Federal Program Coordinator to support the Child Care Capacity Accelerator and Capital Projects Funds. Hannah holds an Associates from Allen County, and a BS and MPS from Fort Hays State University.

Christie Wyckoff joined the Kansas Children's Cabinet in May 2023. She graduated from Kansas State University in 2008 with a bachelor's in management and marketing. Through college, and 10 years after, Christie worked in the custom apparel industry. Just prior to coming to the cabinet, she worked in School Finance at the Kansas State Department of Education for almost five years. Her family, friends, and their little ones are Christie's motivation for her professional and community work.

Executive Summary

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund is directed by state statute to undertake these four overarching responsibilities:

- Advising the governor and the legislature regarding the use of money credited to the Children’s Initiatives Fund.
- Evaluating programs that use Children’s Initiatives Fund money.
- Assisting the governor in developing and implementing a coordinated, comprehensive delivery system to serve children and families in Kansas.
- Supporting the prevention of child abuse and neglect through the Children’s Trust Fund.

This annual report presents the work of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet to meet these statutory responsibilities and to anticipate and plan for the long-term future of our children. Four sections describe the work, highlight insights, and articulate next steps:

Our Progress



The Kansas Children’s Cabinet distributes and oversees grants for the Children’s Initiatives Fund, Early Childhood Block Grant, and Community Based Child Abuse Prevention programs. “Our Progress” presents details of funded activities and program evaluation results.

In 2023, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet facilitated cross-agency collaborations to address child care shortages and distributed \$92.6 million in grants supporting community-led initiatives and public-private partnerships. This section provides information on this unprecedented effort to expand child care capacity throughout the state.

Data for Impact



Data-driven decision making is core to the Kansas Children's Cabinet's responsibility to advise the governor and legislature on issues relating to children and families. "Data for Impact" presents research projects that inform the Kansas Children's Cabinet strategic direction, including the Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust, Our Tomorrows narrative research, and Young Families' Experiences of Social Connection, a study of Kansas families' experiences with loneliness and social support.

Our Children's Future



Kansas, like all states, faces an uncertain future. Multiple forces such as disruptive technologies, aging populations and declining birthrates, shifting demographics, economic challenges, and climate change, shape our present and will continue to shape our future. "Our Children's Future" describes initiatives that are helping us collectively look beyond today to prepare for the possibilities and take the necessary steps to help us reach our desired future states. Two examples include the Kansas Future Fellows program and the Early Years Climate Action Task Force.

Recommendations



The final section presents the Kansas Children's Cabinet's 2023 recommendations regarding use of the Children's Initiatives Fund.



Our Progress

➤ Overview

➤ CIF

Initiative Spotlight Dolly Parton's
Imagination Library

➤ ECBG

➤ CBCAP

➤ Addressing Child Care

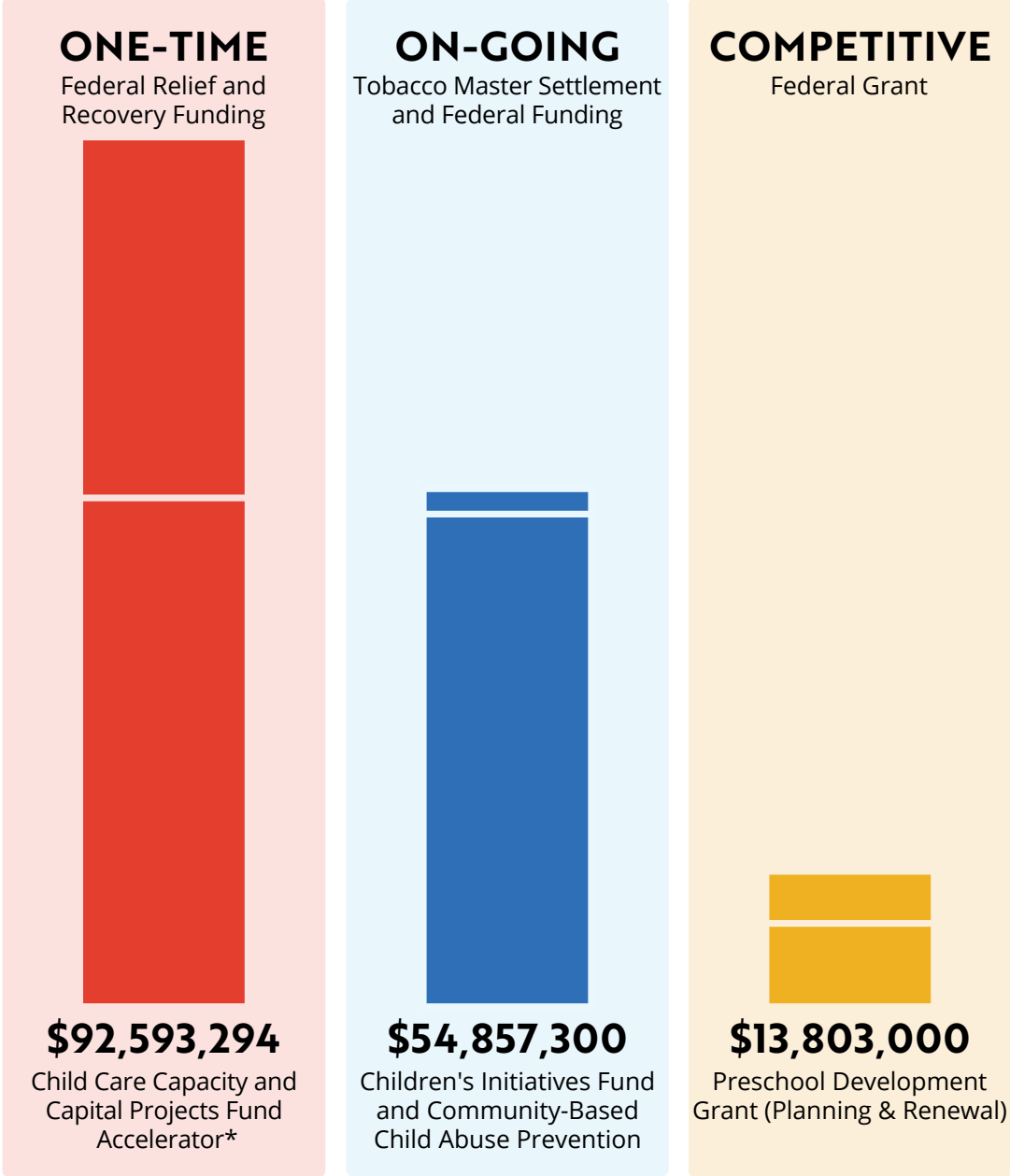


Overview

The Kansas Children's Cabinet is charged by statute to manage and evaluate use of the Children's Initiatives Fund (CIF), which is the recipient of Kansas's share of dollars from the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement. The CIF is one of our state's largest sources of funding dedicated to serving children and families and includes the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG). The Kansas Children's Cabinet is also the state lead for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP), a federal program to prevent child maltreatment before it starts. These key resources for improving the lives of Kansas children are distributed to grantees across the state, maximizing impact and improving outcomes as described on the following pages.

In addition to this array of ongoing funding, the Kansas Children's Cabinet also secured competitive Preschool Development Grant B-5 dollars, federal pandemic relief funding, and private support to enhance the early childhood system and substantially improve access to high-quality child care. The Kansas Children's Cabinet leads cross-agency collaboration to leverage these one-time funds and unify efforts across the early childhood care and education ecosystem. The new Child Care Capacity Accelerator grant represents a significant boon to our state resulting from these collaborative efforts.

Kansas Children’s Cabinet Funding



* The Kansas Children’s Cabinet blended funding from four separate sources (CCDF ARPA, PDG, SPARK, and Patterson Family Foundation) to support these grants.



Children's Initiatives Fund

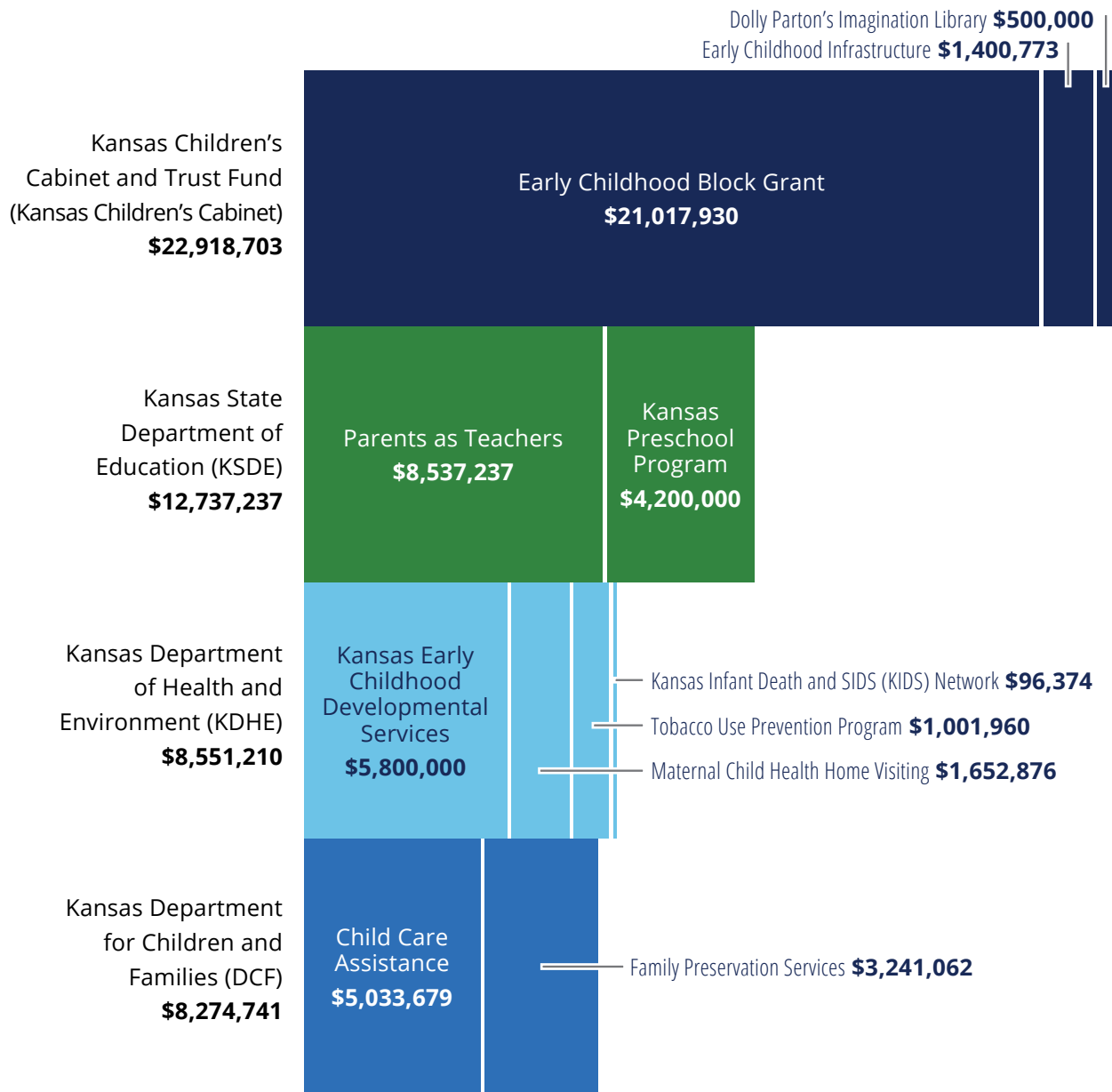
The 1999 Kansas Legislature created the Children's Initiatives Fund (CIF) to focus investment of Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement funds, as directed by the Kansas Children's Cabinet, in programs and services devoted to early childhood care and education.

Kansas statute directs the Kansas Children's Cabinet to conduct an annual assessment of the CIF investments. The **University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research** conducts the annual **Accountability Process** for the CIF funded programs. The **Center for Applied Research and Evaluation at Wichita State University** also provides support and analysis around the **Common Measures Initiative** for participating CIF grantees. The following pages

provide an overview of each program, including the amount awarded from CIF, a brief description of services and their impacts over the past year, and the populations served.

CIF-funded programs continue to report impact data that confirms their essential role in supporting Kansas children and families. However, many programs continue to experience challenges exacerbated by the pandemic, including difficulty recruiting and retaining program staff.

Total FY2023 Funding | \$52,856,891*



*Including \$375,000 allotted to the Kansas Children's Cabinet Accountability Fund.

Child Care Assistance supports families who are initially living at or below 250% of the federal poverty level or who are at or below 85% of the state median income at their annual review. Child Care Assistance provides families with a subsidy to finance child care while parents work, attend school, complete a GED, or fill a temporary emergency need. Child Care Assistance promotes school readiness and financial stability by increasing families' access to high-quality child care environments. The program typically serves families with children under age 13, but some exceptions allow funding for children up to age 18.

Population FY2023	Served
Total Children	18,252
Prenatal to Age 3	8,970
Ages 3-5	4,025
Ages 5-12	5,166
Ages 12-18	91
Ages 18+	0
Caregivers	0
Professional Development	0

Impact

- 57% of families receiving subsidies for a full year saw their household income increase.
- Families continue to report being able to receive care they would not have access to without subsidies.

The Kansas Children's Cabinet serves as the statewide lead for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Kansas. The Imagination Library mails free, age-appropriate books every month to all enrolled children from birth to their fifth birthday. As the state lead of the Imagination Library, the Kansas Children's Cabinet partners with local affiliate programs across the state by providing a 50% financial match and promoting enrollment. Participation in the Imagination Library nurtures early literacy that prepares children for future success in school and beyond.

Population FY2023	Served
Total Children	62,104
Prenatal to Age 3	33,487
Ages 3-5	28,617
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Caregivers	0
Professional Development	0

Impact

- 18,611 newly enrolled children.
- Statewide, 28% of age-eligible children participated in the Imagination Library.
- 518,625 books distributed directly to children.



➤ Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Statewide Celebration

INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

On August 14, 2023, Kansas welcomed American icon Dolly Parton to celebrate the successful statewide expansion of her Imagination Library, and Governor Kelly proclaimed August 14th as Imagination Library of Kansas Day. With the support of Governor Kelly and Representative Troy Waymaster, Kansas was the 15th state to achieve full coverage, giving all Kansas children birth to 5 years old the opportunity to receive free, age-appropriate books monthly.

"The Imagination Library is just one of those things that started out for the right reasons, and it's just continued for the right reasons through people like all of you who are helping with this," Dolly Parton said at the celebration. "And we're hoping someday to be statewide in all of America!"

Leaders across Kansas are focused on developing strategies to promote early literacy and support educators, parents, and families in fostering commitments to reading. Forming an Imagination Library of Kansas is a significant step towards actualizing these goals by placing books directly in a child's home.

By November 2023, more than 70,000 children were enrolled in Kansas. Over 4.1 million books have been gifted to Kansas children since the first local Imagination Library program outside of Tennessee was established in Pratt, Kansas.

➤ Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG)

KANSAS CHILDREN'S CABINET AND TRUST FUND

FY2023

\$21,017,930

Focusing on the critical years between birth and kindergarten, ECBG recipients provide services to at-risk children ages 0-5 and their families. Services include: Pre-K and 0-3 care and education, social emotional consultation, home visiting, literacy activities, and parent education. ECBG-funded programs participate in the Common Measures Initiative, which uses shared measurement tools to collect data and better understand statewide risk and program outcomes. Public-private partnerships are encouraged to maximize resources, foster innovation, and avoid duplication of services.

Population FY2023 Served

Total Children	7,062
Prenatal to Age 3	2,788
Ages 3-5	4,274
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Caregivers	6,143
Professional Development	1,804

Impact

- 77% of classrooms observed to be high quality.
- 80% of birth to 3 year olds on track in early communication skills.
- 75% of Pre-K 3 year olds on track in early literacy.
- 74% of Pre-K 4 year olds on track in language comprehension.
- 73% of Pre-K 3 and 4 year olds on track for early numeracy.

➤ Family Preservation Services

KANSAS DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

FY2023

\$3,241,062

Family Preservation Services equips families with the tools and supports needed to keep children safe and prevent out-of-home placements. Evidence-based assessments and family input help develop a step-by-step plan to achieve family well-being. At Tier 1, Intensive In-Home Family Preservation Services are provided to mitigate immediate child safety concerns, stabilize family crises, and assess the family's needs. At Tier 2, Short-Term Family Preservation Case Management Services are provided by a case manager and a family support worker who assess for existing risk and emergent safety issues and, when identified, initiate services to stabilize and support the family.

Population FY2023 Served

Total Children	2,835
Prenatal to Age 3	462
Ages 3-5	290
Ages 5-12	1,147
Ages 12-18	928
Ages 18+	8
Caregivers	1,791
Professional Development	70

Impact

- 96% (Tier 1) and 87% (Tier 2) of children served are maintained safely at home.
- 93% (Tier 1) and 85% (Tier 2) of children served are maintained safely at home with family.
- 99% (Tier 1) and 99% (Tier 2) of families **did not** experience substantiated abuse or neglect during services.

➤ Kansas Early Childhood Developmental Services

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

FY2023

\$5,800,000

As part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C, Kansas Early Childhood Developmental Services (formerly Infant-Toddler Services) provides early intervention services for children (from birth to age 3) who have a disability or a developmental delay, and their families. Services are delivered to families in their natural environments, and providers work alongside community partners to ensure families have the resources they need to support their child's development.

Population FY2023	Served
Total Children	11,108
Prenatal to Age 3	11,108
Ages 3-5	0
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Caregivers	n/a
Professional Development	600

Impact

- 99% of children with Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) demonstrated improved positive social-emotional skills or had skills comparable to same-aged peers.
- 99% of children with IFSP demonstrated improved acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, including early language skills or had skills comparable to same-aged peers.

➤ Kansas Preschool Program (KPP)

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FY2023

\$4,200,000

KPP funds school districts and community partners to support high-quality preschool programming for children ages 3-5. The program implements evidence-based curricula, instruction, and assessment practices shown to prevent later academic and behavioral challenges. KPP builds community collaboration, fosters family engagement, and provides high-quality early learning experiences to support children to thrive. Each of these elements are known to improve quality in early learning and promote success in school.

Population FY2023	Served
Total Children	5,014
Prenatal to Age 3	0
Ages 3-5	5,014
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Caregivers	0
Professional Development	830

Impact

- 96% of KPP students showed improvement in literacy from the beginning of the program year to the end.
- 96% of KPP students showed improvement in mathematics from the beginning of the program year to the end.
- 95% of KPP students showed improvement in social-emotional development from the beginning of the program year to the end.

➤ Kansas Infant Death and SIDS (KIDS) Network

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

FY2023
\$96,374

The KIDS Network serves individuals touched by the tragedy of infant death or SIDS and connects those working to reduce the risk of infant deaths. The program provides grief support services to parents and family members, and offers community education, professional training, and associated research. Events, such as the KIDS Network Safe Sleep Instructor Certification, Community Baby Showers, and Crib Clinics, promote a statewide infrastructure to educate current and expectant parents, relatives, community members, and health and child care providers on safe sleep practices to eradicate preventable infant deaths.

Population FY2023	Served
Total Children	12,015
Prenatal to Age 3	11,929
Ages 3-5	15
Ages 5-12	36
Ages 12-18	20
Ages 18+	15
Caregivers	13,577
Professional Development	5,175

Impact

- 127 Safe Sleep events were held across 43 Kansas counties.
- 6 delivering hospitals gained Safe Sleep Hospital Certification through Cribs for KIDS Hospital Certification Process and served more than 4,000 infants.
- 7 outpatient clinics (obstetrics, pediatrics and family medicine) achieved a Safe Sleep Star and were certified as KIDS Network Safe Sleep Clinics serving more than 5,550 infants.

➤ Maternal Child Health (MCH) Home Visiting

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

FY2023
\$1,652,876

MCH Home Visiting is a strengths-based model connecting any Kansas family with infants to the resources they need to create a safe, stable, and nurturing home environment. Families receive individualized services before, during, and after pregnancy, with the frequency of visits and duration of services based on each family's needs. Home visitors act as a bridge for families in setting and reaching their parenting goals by sharing information about child development, health and safety, positive parenting behaviors; and by connecting to community-based resources, services, and supports as needed.

Population FY2023	Served
Total Children	2,427
Prenatal to Age 3	2,427
Ages 3-5	0
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Caregivers	3,335
Professional Development	431

Impact

- Reductions in likelihood of child maltreatment and increased positive parenting and child interactions have been reported.
- Over 5,000 visits were made.
- 64% of expectant mothers initiated prenatal care in the first trimester.
- 71% of mothers reported breastfeeding.

Parents as Teachers (PAT)

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

FY2023

\$8,537,237

PAT is an evidence-based parent education and family engagement home visiting model designed to give parents and caregivers the tools they need to support their child's development. In coordination with the Kansas State Department of Education and local school districts, certified parent educators work with families to foster healthy development and promote positive parent-child interactions. Developmental and health screenings are used to identify potential delays or areas of concern, implement interventions, and refer families to additional community resources when needed.

Population FY2023

Served

Total Children	8,323
Prenatal to Age 3	7,407
Ages 3-5	916
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Caregivers	6,178
Professional Development	64

Impact

- 88% retention rate was achieved (excluding families who moved out of the service area or whose child aged out of the program).
- 93% of the families had goals documented and addressed.
- 68% of families that documented goals met at least one of the goals they desired to reach.
- 93% of children had an initial development screening allowing 2,355 potential developmental delays to be identified.

Tobacco Use Prevention Program

KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

FY2023

\$1,001,960

Tobacco Use Prevention Program uses evidence-based strategies and community partnerships to educate the public and increase awareness about the negative health effects of tobacco use. The program aims to prevent children from becoming smokers, reduce tobacco-related deaths and exposure to second-hand smoke, and promote policy change. To support the success of current tobacco users who are trying to quit, the program operates the Kansas Tobacco Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW).

Population FY2023

Served

Total Children	487,768
Prenatal to Age 3	74,663
Ages 3-5	79,187
Ages 5-12	164,588
Ages 12-18	169,330
Ages 18+	1,549,794
Caregivers	n/a
Professional Development	1,118

Impact

- 93% of children were born to smoke-free mothers.
- 47% of adult smokers tried to quit in the past year.
- 22 tobacco control policies were implemented.

➤ Early Childhood Infrastructure

KANSAS CHILDREN'S CABINET AND TRUST FUND

FY2023

\$1,400,773

Infrastructure enhancements and efficiencies created using federal Preschool Development Grant funding will need annual financial support to maintain in future years. Setting aside dedicated funds to support early childhood system infrastructure will help the Kansas Children's Cabinet fulfill its role as a connector and its statutory responsibilities as the coordinating entity for the early childhood system in Kansas.

Impact

- Funded 1-800-CHILDREN
- Funded Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS) Authorized Projects
- One-time expenses for program support
- Additional funds to support Dolly Parton's Imagination Library statewide expansion





CIF Accountability Process

All programs receiving funding from the Children’s Initiatives Fund (CIF) participate in an annual **Accountability Process**. This process, which began in 2006, is responsive to the Kansas statute requiring that the Kansas Children’s Cabinet “review, assess, and evaluate all uses of the monies in the Children’s Initiatives Fund” as part of annual allocations.

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet works with researchers at the **University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research** to interview grantees, complete site visits, compile data, and analyze service delivery and outcomes for each program. Researchers provide ongoing technical assistance in interpreting and using results for program improvement.

Findings from this process are used to inform funding recommendations to the governor and the legislature. The process has also served as an opportunity to provide program staff with technical assistance on data and evaluation. Over the years, programs have improved their data collection and reporting processes as a result of participating in the Accountability Process. We also use the Accountability Process to provide feedback that helps our grantees improve the quality of services and outcomes.

Category

Evaluation Questions

Program Service Provision	What services does each program provide and who is receiving those services?
	Which programs have made changes to their services since the last Accountability Process?
	Do these services help meet the needs of children and families in Kansas?
	How do programs know they are meeting the needs of their communities?
	What barriers are programs and families experiencing?
<hr/>	
Data and Evaluation	What is the data collection capacity for CIF-funded programs?
	At what level are programs collecting data (individual, aggregate)?
	What are the impacts of program services offered and how are these measured?
	How do programs use their data to inform services/practice?
<hr/>	
Early Childhood Care and Education System	How do CIF-funded programs fit into the early childhood care and education system in Kansas and address the goals of the <i>All In For Kansas Kids</i> Strategic Plan?
<hr/>	
COVID-19	How has the pandemic impacted program services?
	What impact are the programs seeing for families?
	What insights have programs and families gained from the pandemic?

Due to the varied nature of service delivery, population served, and program implementation, researchers assess each program independently using three data sources:

- **Program reports** include evaluation reports submitted to federal funding agencies, program annual reports, and/or research reports used internally for programmatic decision making and were collected during the previous reporting year. This information informs both the grantee interviews and guides the analysis of *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan alignment.
- **Online survey responses** provide key information relevant to funding, partnerships, and population served.
- **Program interviews** provide integral information to address each research question, offer additional context for findings, and allow the grantees an opportunity to highlight success from the past year along with areas needing further support.

CIF Program

Evaluation Practices

Child Care Assistance	Quality Control Reviewers evaluate random samples of cases throughout the year to ensure payment and eligibility requirements, identify any training needs of staff, and align with new policies and regulations.
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library	The University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research is conducting an evaluation measuring the program's reach and impact. Programmatic data is provided by the Dollywood Foundation and connected to other early childhood indicators to examine impact.
Early Childhood Block Grant	An external evaluator, the Center for Applied Research and Evaluation at Wichita State University, conducts an annual, standardized evaluation across all ECBG programs.
Early Childhood Infrastructure	Early Childhood Infrastructure budgets and spending are tracked by the Kansas Children's Cabinet to ensure alignment with the <i>All In For Kansas Kids</i> Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan.
Family Prevention Services	The program conducts quarterly case reads to assess quality of standards, improve performance, and meet federal guidelines for in-home services. Data are gathered and reconciled monthly with providers.
Kansas Early Childhood Developmental Services	The annual Child Outcome Summary process measures progress for children with disabilities and developmental delays within early intervention programs. Data is entered into a KDHE data system.
Kansas Preschool Program	The program collects data on evidence-based services offered through each preschool program site, and child level information is entered into the Kansas Individual Data on Students (KIDS) database.
KIDS Network	University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita conducts an annual evaluation to measure knowledge and behavioral changes, service delivery, and outcomes.
Maternal and Child Health Home Visiting	MCH Home Visiting uses a shared measurement system (DAISEY) for data entry and reporting. Evaluations focus on program service and continuous quality improvement to better connect families to existing resources.
Parents as Teachers	The program reports annually on national affiliate requirements for demographics, assessment data, referral outcomes, and retention statistics.
Tobacco Use Prevention	The program's annual evaluation incorporates individual grantee performance measures and data from state-level surveillance systems. Findings are reported annually to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Key Takeaways

The Accountability Process provides detailed information on goals, service delivery types, populations served, and evaluation results for each of the programs supported by CIF. It is also an opportunity to identify trends, commonalities, and emerging issues across programs to support strategic investment decisions and recommendations to the governor and legislature. Researchers identified four key takeaways in their analysis of data collected during the 2023 Accountability Process.

Supporting Families

CIF-funded programs continue to provide essential support for the healthy development of Kansas children and families. Evidence of the benefits and need for this wide array of services comes from both the performance metrics reported by programs and direct feedback shared by families who use these services.

Basic Needs

CIF-funded programs connect families to additional support as needed and reveal that while families are remaining resilient in the face of challenges, many of their basic needs are not being met. These needs include food security, affordable housing, and health services.

Staffing

Programs funded by the CIF face many of the same challenges as those described in the *All In For Kansas Kids* needs assessments. While programs are being innovative in their efforts to address and mitigate challenges exacerbated by the pandemic, they continue struggling to find and retain staff. Programs frequently cited low wages as a main contributor to recruiting and retention concerns.

Mental Health

An emerging need expressed by many CIF-funded programs is additional mental and behavioral health resources and support for children, their families, and program staff. Programs are not adequately prepared to serve the influx of children with behavioral support needs, and both families and staff are requesting additional mental health services.





Early Childhood Block Grant

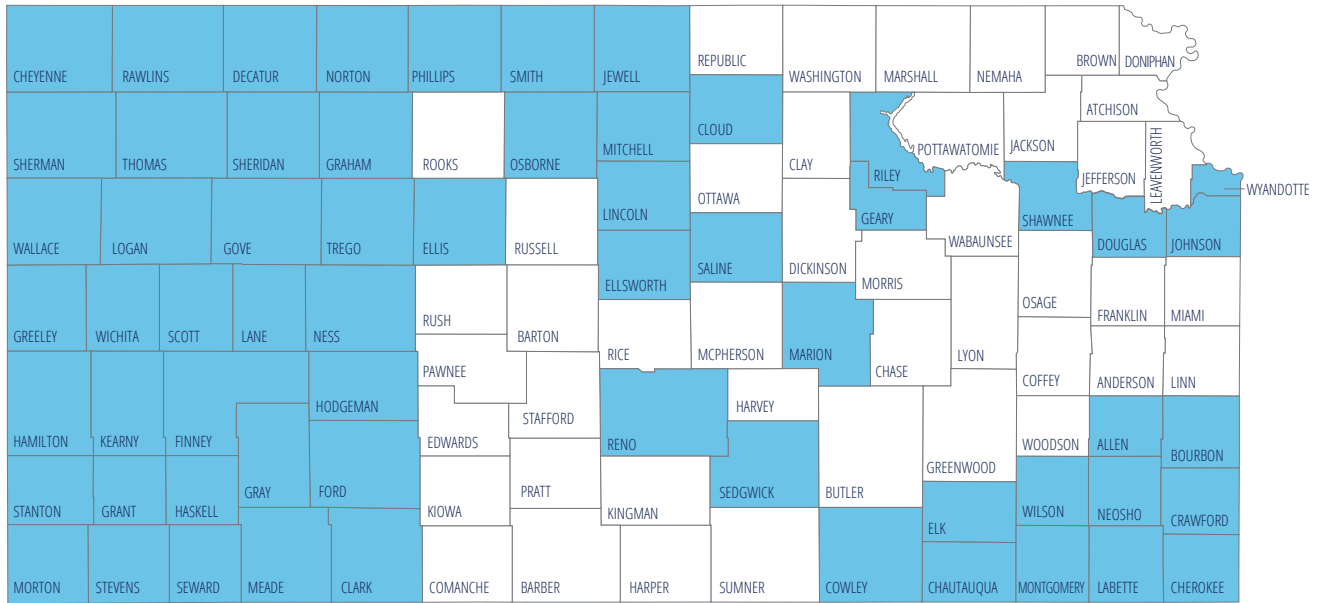
ECBG recipients provide services to at-risk children, ages birth to 5, and their families. Grants from the Kansas Children’s Cabinet are distributed across the state through a competitive process. ECBG programs include care and education for children birth to age 3, Pre-K services, social emotional consultation, home visiting, literacy activities, and parent education. The **Center for Applied Research and Evaluation at Wichita State University (WSU)** conducts an [annual evaluation of these programs](#).

ECBG programs are community directed, and services vary according to local needs. In 2023, 19 grantees were awarded across the state. The table on the following page shows the type of service provided and the number of grantees providing that service. The following pages provide details on each of the grantees, including funding, populations served, and outcomes.

In 2023, ECBG served over 7,000 children and over 6,000 caregivers across 61 counties.

ECBG Reach and Services

Counties Served



<i>Service Types</i>	<i>Grantees</i>
Early Care and Education	17
Parent Education	13
Home Visiting	11
Social-Emotional Consultation	9
Case Management	4
Mental & Behavioral Health Services	4
Family Engagement & Referrals	3



Child Advocacy and Parenting Services, Inc. (CAPS) | \$687,797

339 Children Served | **285** Caregivers Served

75% of 3-year-olds were on track in emergent literacy by the spring.
85% of children were on track in numeracy by the spring.

Families and Communities Together, Inc. | \$188,130

211 Children Served | **211** Caregivers Served

91% of the Pre-K environments met high-quality standards.
92% of 4-year-olds were on track in language comprehension in the spring (49% increase from the fall).

Family Resource Center, Inc. | \$1,821,288

900 Children Served | **793** Caregivers Served

75% of children birth to 3 were on track in early communication by the spring.
91% of classrooms were observed to be of high quality.

Four County Mental Health Center, Inc. | \$410,377

84 Children Served | **64** Caregivers Served

91% of the classrooms observed met high-quality standards.
97% of caregivers displayed positive parenting on the follow-up observation.

Junction City Family YMCA | \$452,992

213 Children Served | **148** Caregivers Served

48% more parents displayed positive parenting after participating in parent education.
Parental stress decreased substantially in parents participating in parent education and home visiting.

LiveWell Northwest Kansas | \$490,220

303 Children Served | **234** Caregivers Served

94% of classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.
88% of 4-year-olds were on track in language comprehension by spring.

Mitchell County Partnership for Children | \$414,500

241 Children Served | **221** Caregivers Served

95% of children, birth to 3, were on track in early communication by the spring (53% increase from the fall).
86% of 3-year-olds were on track in emergent literacy by the spring.

Riley County Health Department | \$835,096

268 Children Served | **248** Caregivers Served

73% of 4-year-old Pre-K children were on track in phonological awareness by the spring.
85% of 4-year-olds were on track in language comprehension by the spring.

Russell Child Development Center | \$2,424,225

995 Children Served | **773** Caregivers Served

85% of caregivers displayed positive parenting by the follow-up observation.
94% of 3-year-olds were on track in emergent literacy by the spring.

Success By 6 Coalition of Douglas County | \$1,009,485

231 Children Served | **196** Caregivers Served

80% of toddler classrooms were observed to be high quality in the spring.
78% of caregivers displayed positive parenting by the spring.

The Family Conservancy | \$1,600,000**734** Children Served | **616** Caregivers Served

91% of children were on track in social-emotional development by the spring.
72% of 3- and 4-year-olds were on track in numeracy by the spring.

The Opportunity Project: Early Learning Centers | \$2,655,973**503** Children Served | **450** Caregivers Served

Parental stress decreased substantially in parents participating in case management.
100% of caregivers demonstrated positive parenting by the end of the parent education program.

United Way of Greater Topeka | \$2,328,512**784** Children Served | **702** Caregivers Served

80% of children, birth to 3, improved in early communication.
79% of toddler classrooms were observed to be high quality.

United Way of Reno County | \$840,703**334** Children Served | **318** Caregivers Served

82% of 3-year-olds were on track in emergent literacy in the spring.
89% of 4-year-olds were on track in language comprehension by the spring.

United Way of the Plains | \$767,315**332** Children Served | **321** Caregivers Served

93% of children, birth to 3, were on track in early communication by the spring.
38% increase in social skills for children in the spring who were at risk in the fall.

USD 233 Olathe | \$630,406**205** Children Served | **200** Caregivers Served

76% of 4-year-old Pre-K children were on track in phonological awareness by the spring.
90% of 3- and 4-year-olds were on track in numeracy by the spring.

USD 445 Coffeyville | \$798,512**180** Children Served | **171** Caregivers Served

81% of 3-year-olds were on track in emergent literacy by the spring.
73% of Pre-K classrooms were observed to meet quality standards.

USD 489 Early Childhood Connections | \$295,093**67** Children Served | **64** Caregivers Served

79% of Pre-K children were on track in numeracy by the spring.
78% of classrooms were observed to be of high quality.

USD 500 Kansas City, KS | \$1,133,376**138** Children Served | **128** Caregivers Served

100% of Pre-K classrooms were observed to be high quality.
96% of children were on track in social-emotional development by the spring.



ECBG Evaluation

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet is required by state statute to direct investments toward programs and services that are data-driven and outcomes-based. The Center for Applied Research at Wichita State University conducts an annual evaluation of Early Childhood Block Grant programs through collection and analysis of common measures.

The **Common Measures Initiative** is a system of shared measurement that fosters continuous quality improvement by monitoring performance, tracking progress toward goals, and learning what is and is not working. While each funded program offers unique expertise and services, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet uses shared measurement to:

- create alignment among grantee goals
- build more collaborative problem solving
- encourage an informal, ongoing learning community that supports quality programming

In addition, programs collect demographic information on the children and families served to help demonstrate the need for services and the level of risk.

Grantees enter common measures data into DAISEY to demonstrate success of their early childhood programming. DAISEY is a secure, HIPAA-compliant, web-based reporting system developed by the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research. DAISEY is licensed to the Kansas Children’s Cabinet to support collection and reporting of child and family outcomes.

Results from the ECBG evaluation inform the Accountability Process and the Kansas Children’s Cabinet’s recommendations to the governor and legislature. Evaluators also conduct site visits and provide ongoing assistance with interpreting and using results for program improvement.

Ages & Stages Questionnaires® , Third Edition (ASQ-3)

- developmental screening tool for ages 1 month to 6½ years
- snapshot of children's development in five areas: communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and personal-social
- parent- or caregiver-completed screener helps identify if further assessment is necessary

Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ:SE-2)

- social-emotional screening tool for ages 1 month to 6½ years
- snapshot of children's behavior and emotions in seven areas: self-regulation, compliance, social-communication, adaptive functioning, autonomy, affect, and interaction with people
- parent- or caregiver-completed screener identifies risk of social-emotional difficulties, behavioral concerns, and further assessment need

Devereux Early Childhood Assessments (DECA)

- behavior rating scales for screening or assessment for ages 4 weeks to 6 years of age
- parent- or caregiver-completed assessment that measures initiative, self-regulation, attachment, and behavior

Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs)

- monitors growth and development measures for ages 6 months to 3 ½ years
- uses child-friendly, play-based assessments to assess communication and problem solving

myIndividual Growth and Development Indicators (myIGDIs)

- progress monitoring measures designed for children 3 years and up
- specific measures concentrating on early literacy and early numeracy

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

- assessment of classroom quality for programs serving ages 15 months to 3 years
- evaluator-completed assessment that measures eight areas: positive climate, negative climate, teacher sensitivity, regard for child perspectives, behavior guidance, facilitation of learning and development, quality feedback, and language modeling

Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME)

- measurement in the quantity of stimulation and support at home for children ages 3 to 6 years
- evaluator-completed assessment that measures eight areas: learning materials, language stimulation, physical environment, parental responsiveness, academic stimulation, modeling of social maturity, variety in experience, and acceptance of child

Protective Factors Survey, 2nd Edition (PFS-2)

- pre-post evaluation tool for use with families receiving child maltreatment prevention services
- parent- or caregiver-completed evaluation that measures five areas: family functioning/resiliency, social support, concrete support, nurturing and attachment, and knowledge of parenting/child development

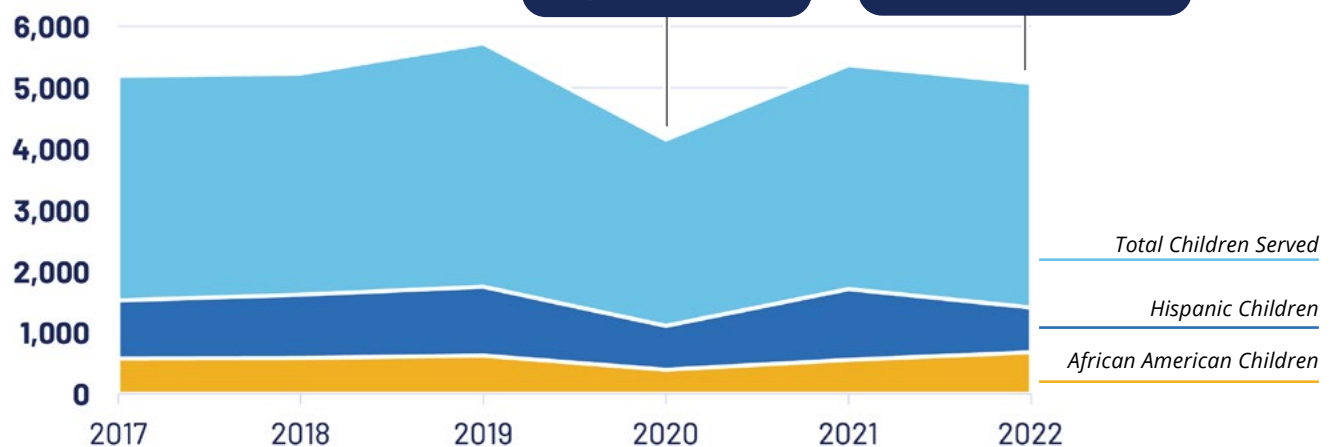
Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS)

- assessment of parenting skills for families with children ages 2 months to 5 years
- evaluator-completed assessment done in a familiar environment - measures twelve facets: sensitivity to responses, supports responses, physical interaction, involvement in activities, openness to child's agenda, engagement, reasonable expectations, adaptability, limits and consequences, supportive directions, encouragement, promotion of exploration and curiosity

ECBG Changes Over Time

While not the primary focus, the first authorized project of the Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust gave researchers at the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research the opportunity to analyze changes over time in the population ECBG serves. This analysis revealed some of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to early childhood services, as well as an overall trend toward serving an increasingly diverse population of children and families.

ECBG has served
30,765 children
since 2017



The pandemic may have been particularly disruptive to children of color accessing early childhood services.

- In 2020, participation of African American children declined to 9% of total kids served while previous years had held fairly steady at 11%.
- Similarly, in pre-pandemic years Hispanic children made up 31% of the kids served while in 2020 this figure dropped to 27%.
- The percentage of African American and Hispanic children served has returned to pre-pandemic levels, and the overall trend shows that ECBG serves an increasingly diverse population of children.

These results contextualize the findings of the ECBG evaluation conducted by WSU, which consistently finds participation in these programs is associated with improved literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional well-being for children, and positive parenting interactions for adults. The drop off in ECBG participation during the pandemic likely exacerbated inequalities for the most vulnerable children during the most critical stage of their development. Interventions addressing child and family well-being should be increased to ameliorate any long-term negative impacts of this period.



Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

The Kansas Children's Cabinet serves as the state lead agency for federally funded Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) grants. CBCAP focuses on strengthening and supporting families to prevent the likelihood of abuse or neglect. CBCAP programs are designed to recognize and respond to families experiencing a life disruption before it becomes a crisis and ensure families have equitable access to services and concrete supports. Through CBCAP funding, the Kansas Children's Cabinet aims to build a system that honors and strengthens families while addressing social determinants of health, reducing disparities, and promoting entire family well-being across the life course. Total funding for Kansas CBCAP was \$2,000,409 in 2023.

In 2023, CBCAP programs served nearly 3,200 children and over 2,300 caregivers in 11 communities.

The following pages provide an overview of each program, including the amount awarded from CBCAP, a brief description of services, and the populations served.

Community Children's Center, Inc.

FY2023
\$194,000

The Community Children's Center, Inc. is creating an Early Childhood Community Center for Douglas County. The purpose of this community-based effort is three-fold: increase accessibility, availability, and affordability of high-quality child care; recruit and retain high-quality, trauma-informed child care providers through a professional pipeline with support services; and direct access to concrete supports for families through the creation of a robust Family Resource Center. Program staff also support the operation of a community clothing closet, responsive caregiving classes, and helping families meet basic needs.

Population FY2023	Served
Total Children	191
Ages 0-1	61
Ages 2-4	122
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Age Unknown	8
Caregivers	180

Circle of Security

ELIZABETH LAYTON CENTER

FY2023
\$49,274

Circle of Security at the Elizabeth Layton Center is a community-based collaboration with the Franklin and Miami County Health and Education Departments. Circle of Security addresses child maltreatment prevention through home visiting, education interventions, and family therapy. The program receives referrals from Head Start, local primary care physicians, schools, domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters, and community mental health workers. Circle of Security parenting education curriculum is used to promote protective factors such as healthy attachment and nurturing.

Population FY2023	Served
Total Children	47
Ages 0-1	13
Ages 2-4	32
Ages 5-12	2
Ages 12-18	0
Age Unknown	0
Caregivers	54

Healthy Parents, Healthy Kids

THE FAMILY CONSERVANCY

FY2023
\$125,300

The Family Conservancy program Healthy Parents, Healthy Kids assists families in Wyandotte County's public housing communities with a high number of refugee families in adopting new, constructive ways of relating as adults within their families and community, and as parents or caregivers of young children. The program uses three well-supported, evidence-based models: The Incredible Years, Child of Mine, and Conscious Fathering. These curricula work in concert to address the five protective factors outlined in the Strengthening Families™ research.

Population FY2023	Served
Total Children	441
Ages 0-1	63
Ages 2-4	198
Ages 5-12	128
Ages 12-18	52
Age Unknown	0
Caregivers	211

Response Advocates

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

FY2023
\$163,191

Response Advocates from the Family Resource Center work alongside law enforcement in the City of Pittsburg to assist families at risk for child maltreatment. This program uses home visiting, parenting education, and comprehensive case management to strengthen family protective factors and prevent child abuse and neglect. Response Advocates also work extensively to educate law enforcement about prevention and to facilitate strong collaborations with Early Head Start, Crawford County Mental Health, and local domestic violence shelters. Response Advocates employ the Protective Factors Survey and the Strengthening Families™ approach.

Population FY2023	Served
Total Children	594
Ages 0-1	59
Ages 2-4	203
Ages 5-12	138
Ages 12-18	160
Age Unknown	34
Caregivers	331

Statewide Grantee

KANSAS CHILDREN'S SERVICE LEAGUE (KCSL)

FY2023
\$400,000

KCSL, the statewide CBCAP grantee, works to prevent child abuse and neglect with a focus on strengthening family protective factors. This work focuses on statewide activities that support systems change and a system of child and family well-being by providing education to professionals across the state (Period of PURPLE Crying and The Governor's Conference for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect); raising public awareness of child maltreatment prevention; promoting parent partnership (Circle of Parents), leadership and engagement, and connecting families to existing local services (1-800-CHILDREN).

Population FY2023	Served
Total Children	0
Ages 0-1	0
Ages 2-4	0
Ages 5-12	0
Ages 12-18	0
Age Unknown	0
Caregivers	558

Preventative Legal Services

KANSAS HOLISTIC DEFENDERS (KHD)

FY2023
\$160,000

KHD serves families with civil legal needs. Preventative legal services focus on supporting families with housing, accessing benefits, and other social determinants of health in order to support and stabilize families with basic needs. One staff attorney and one client advocate support CBCAP programming with legal services and family advocacy. KHD partnered with the Harvard Access to Justice Lab to implement a randomized control trial studying the effects of access to civil legal services on improved educational and financial outcomes for children and families.

Population FY2023	Served
Total Children	98
Ages 0-1	14
Ages 2-4	27
Ages 5-12	29
Ages 12-18	15
Age Unknown	13
Caregivers	94

Preventative Legal Services

KANSAS LEGAL SERVICES (KLS)

FY2023

\$100,000

To strengthen families and prevent a gap in legal needs from turning into a crisis, KLS is implementing a preventive legal services program in Southwest Kansas. KLS uses a dyad approach involving a parent advocate and attorney, which are both free to families. The parent advocate works with families to identify goals and connect them with legal services. Housing and eviction, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and benefit access, and debt collection assistance are among the legal services provided to families.

Population FY2023	Served
Total Children	66
Ages 0-1	5
Ages 2-4	16
Ages 5-12	13
Ages 12-18	13
Age Unknown	19
Caregivers	96

Mi Apoyo Prenatal

LAWRENCE-DOUGLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

FY2023

\$173,135

Mi Apoyo Prenatal, Spanish for “my prenatal support,” provides care coordination/case management, prenatal education and parent support for uninsured pregnant women in Douglas County. Mi Apoyo Prenatal navigates the healthcare system to find low cost/no cost prenatal care, assist with enrollment documents, and provide an interpreter as a trusted companion to accompany parents to their medical appointments. A prenatal education and peer support class, using the Becoming a Mom curriculum is offered.

Population FY2023	Served
Total Children	155
Ages 0-1	139
Ages 2-4	15
Ages 5-12	1
Ages 12-18	0
Age Unknown	0
Caregivers	154

Parent-Child Assistance Program (P-CAP)

KANSAS CHILDREN'S SERVICE LEAGUE

FY2023

\$195,477

P-CAP, a KCSL program, includes early identification of substance using parents and intensive, in-home, weekly support to families facing multiple challenges with objectives to: 1) prevent child maltreatment; 2) engage the parent into substance use assessment and treatment services; 3) provide recovery support and positive social connections; 4) increase positive parenting skills and parent-child interactions; and 5) improve child health and well-being.

Population FY2023	Served
Total Children	210
Ages 0-1	102
Ages 2-4	72
Ages 5-12	21
Ages 12-18	15
Age Unknown	0
Caregivers	168

Family Support Program

PONY EXPRESS PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN (PEPC)

FY2023

\$200,000

The PEPC Family Support Program provides prenatal supports, long-term rental assistance to unhoused families and those at-risk of homelessness, home visiting with comprehensive case management, early intervention screenings, individualized parenting education, resource and referral, and quality child care for second-shift working parents. In January 2023, PEPC opened Bright Beginnings, a child care facility available to families at all income levels.

Population FY2023	Served
Total Children	144
Ages 0-1	21
Ages 2-4	44
Ages 5-12	55
Ages 12-18	24
Age Unknown	0
Caregivers	80

Family Engagement in Public Libraries

SOUTHEAST KANSAS LIBRARY SYSTEM (SEKLS)

FY2023

\$54,000

SEKLS implemented the Family Engagement in Public Libraries model. Elements of the model include monthly playdates to provide in-time parenting information and supports for families; opportunities for social interaction and increased parental resilience; developmentally appropriate story times intentionally planned to model interactions for families, which increased parenting knowledge; completion of the Grow Your Brain play area and completion of the Family Place national certification, which provides sanitary, safe spaces with developmentally appropriate toys and manipulatives as well as parenting information and developmentally appropriate literature to share.

Population FY2023	Served
Total Children	1,166
Ages 0-1	146
Ages 2-4	731
Ages 5-12	46
Ages 12-18	0
Age Unknown	243
Caregivers	402

Wichita Crisis Nursery

KANSAS CHILDREN'S SERVICE LEAGUE

FY2023

\$186,032

Wichita Crisis Nursery, a KCSL program, strengthens families by providing parenting education, respite and emergency child care, and case management. The program partners with licensed child care providers to increase non-traditional hours availability. Wichita Crisis Nursery accepts referrals from mental health centers, substance abuse and public health programs, transitional housing facilities, and domestic violence shelters. Case managers conduct intake assessments and promote family protective factors through the evidence-based Triple P Positive Parenting Program.

Population FY2023	Served
Total Children	81
Ages 0-1	19
Ages 2-4	50
Ages 5-12	12
Ages 12-18	0
Ages 18+	0
Caregivers	65



CBCAP Evaluation

CBCAP programs include preventative legal services, parenting classes, case management, and family support through resource centers. The evaluation of CBCAP programs aims to capture the diversity amongst CBCAP grantees while demonstrating impact across services. As such, a mixed-methods evaluation design combines results from the Protective Factors Survey with qualitative methods that engage both service providers and recipients to illustrate the ways CBCAP programs are strengthening family protective factors.

“We are all human and we all make mistakes. I always try to have a non-judgmental stance.”

-CBCAP service provider

Protective Factors Survey

The Protective Factors Survey, Second Edition (PFS-2), is a questionnaire completed by parents or caregivers receiving family support services. The tool measures protective factors within a family that reduce the risk of child maltreatment across five domains:

- Family Functioning and Resilience
- Nurturing and Attachment
- Concrete Supports
- Social Supports
- Caregiver/Practitioner Relationship

Ripple Effects Mapping

Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) is a participatory approach to program evaluation that engages providers, service recipients, and community partners in discussion and reflection to add meaningful context to the PFS-2 results.

REM Process

1. Participants engage in **peer interviewing** to identify current experiences with the program and explore future possibilities.
2. In a **whole group discussion**, participants share results from peer interviews and reflect on shared understanding, making connections to current experiences or future program implications.
3. Participants co-create a **visual map** of causal factors and themes associated with outcomes.



Results

The PFS-2 results indicated CBCAP programs and services are both **growing** and **sustaining** family protective factors.

CBCAP programs contributed to:

- 55% growth in **family functioning and resilience** across program participants, with family functioning **servicing as a protective factor for 98%** of those served.
- 43% growth in **nurturing and attachment**, with nurturing and attachment **servicing as a protective factor for 87%** of participants.
- 56% growth in **social supports**, with social supports **servicing as a protective factor for 93%** of those served.
- 41% growth in **caregiver/practitioner relationship**, with the caregiver/practitioner relationship **servicing as a protective factor for 98%** of participants.

Data collected through REM showed the growth and maintenance of family protective factors was due to CBCAP programs facilitating a **continuum of care** by:

- Providing community spaces for children and caregivers to learn and play together.
- Teaching parenting and interpersonal skills to cope with challenges and build resilience.
- Offering case management and service navigation.
- Bringing families together to build and strengthen communities of care and support.
- Ensuring families have access to the resources needed to prevent destabilization such as food, housing, utilities, child care, education, skills, and community-based help.
- Providing access to legal support that prevents crisis and ensures family stability.

Taken together, PFS-2 and REM results suggest CBCAP programs provide services that not only prevent involvement with the child welfare system but also promote the well-being of children and families before a crisis ever occurs. Families receive concrete and social supports while their participation in CBCAP programming promotes family protective factors and resilience. These critical services help ensure a disruption does not lead to a crisis. **CBCAP promotes a system of child and family well-being**, aspiring to make the child welfare system obsolete by eliminating abuse, avoiding related medical costs, and preventing removal from the family into foster care.



Addressing Child Care

Child care and early childhood education are foundations for early development, academic achievement, and a lifetime of benefits supporting our youngest learners into adulthood. Yet today, many families in Kansas struggle to access affordable, quality child care where they live and work. The Kansas Children’s Cabinet is taking a multi-pronged approach to increasing access to, and the supply of, high-quality care for all children across the spectrum of child care settings. We are collaborating with a multitude of state-level agencies and organizations, supporting new public-private partnerships, and centering community-driven solutions for boosting capacity and access.

One-time pandemic relief funding offers a unique opportunity to improve child care capacity today while ensuring these investments lead to sustained improvements in workforce supports, training, and infrastructure for the long haul. Because we know a single solution won’t fix what we have come to know as the child care crisis we look to communities for innovative ideas and custom solutions. We are distributing federal relief funding to applicants across the state to build and expand physical spaces. Capital funding is a significant step forward in this work and can be used as a catalyst for fundamentally changing the way Kansans meet their child care needs.

Child Care Capacity Accelerator Grants

The Accelerator blends resources from federal allocations to the state for child care purposes with emergency relief funding administered by the Kansas Office of Recovery SPARK Committee (Strengthening People and Revitalizing Kansas). Grantees were also required to identify at least 25% matching funds from other sources, which resulted in an additional \$67.7 million. These matching funds come from a mix of Kansas businesses, economic development entities, local chambers of commerce, private foundations, and other private sector partners. Child Care Capacity Accelerator projects (Accelerator) are expected to create thousands of new child care seats in Kansas.

\$54,593,294

for an estimated **5,655**
new high-quality child care
seats across Kansas

In a special meeting in June 2023, the Kansas Children's Cabinet approved \$43,593,294 in grant funding awards to 52 Kansas organizations and partnerships. These grants are designed to expediently create new child care seats statewide.

Illustrating the dire need for such support, the grant competition elicited 105 unique applications with a total ask of nearly \$118 million in funds.

In October 2023, an additional \$11 million was made available from DCF through CCDF-ARPA funding for operational expenses, allowing 27 additional grant awards. These grants included 15 newly funded organizations and 12 returning grantees expanding the scope of their original grants. The combined funding from both grant cycles totals \$54,593,294 distributed across 67 communities and providers in Kansas. The estimated number of new high-quality child care seats created from this effort totals 5,655.

Accelerator Goals

- Quickly expand the number of affordable, licensed child care seats (i.e., capacity) through last-mile and/or catalytic funding for shovel-ready projects with a sound sustainability plan.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of capital investments and community-driven innovations to address both immediate child care seat gaps and systemic challenges to sustainability.
- Identify community readiness variables and effective investment strategies for scalable models that result in sustainable, high-quality child care for families, employers, and communities.

The Accelerator approach emphasizes community-driven solutions to child care shortages. Accelerator grants offer communities an opportunity to design custom approaches that include major construction, operational innovations, and sustainability features—three key components of lasting solutions. Accelerator grants are especially notable and needed because they permit capital expenditures unlike most other types of child care funding sources. Large-scale, high-cost construction and major remodeling projects require considerable planning relative to other investments and are typically excluded from most grant programs.

Over the next three years, the expedient work of grant recipients will result in new construction, additions to existing structures, and associated operational funding such as expanded staffing, training, and equipment.

Child Care Innovation Communities

As a competitive, add-on opportunity to the Child Care Capacity Accelerator, sixteen applicants were selected to engage in a one-year cohort called Innovation Communities. This group is using a fast-cycle iteration process to test transformative strategies for meeting unique community needs that leverage community assets. Innovation communities address and solve for such concerns as increasing licensed infant/toddler seats; offering care during non-traditional hours; providing mental health informed child care; and creating substitute provider pools, apprenticeships, and return-to-workforce opportunities. Members of the Innovation Communities cohort participate in peer learning and monthly coaching sessions. As communities reflect on their strategies and goals with their coach, they are supported to identify and overcome potential barriers or with pivoting their strategy if needed. Coaches are also documenting what is working well for communities to share the lessons learned.

Capital Projects Fund Accelerator

Over the fall 2023, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet began a competitive process to distribute an additional \$38 million in Capital Projects Fund Accelerator (CPF Accelerator) grants to eligible applicants. CPF Accelerator funding is intended for communities to leverage public-private partnerships by constructing spaces that co-locate services directly enabling work, education, and health monitoring while creating new licensed child care seats. The CPF Accelerator is made possible through the U.S. Treasury under the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund program of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Leaders from business, education, and health sectors across Kansas joined early childhood champions to strategize how to best meet the multi-layered needs of their employees, patients, and families in the wake of the pandemic. The CPF Accelerator supports these responses by funding multi-purpose community facilities that reduce barriers to employment, education, health, and child care. These community-driven projects are concrete investments and opportunities for Kansas families to ensure the best start for their children.

The request for proposals opened on September 5, 2023 and round 1 awards were approved at a special meeting of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet on October 19, 2023. Round 2 closed December 18, 2023 and the remaining \$28 million will be awarded at the Kansas Children’s Cabinet meeting on February 2, 2024

Elevating the Workforce

Child care professionals have difficult jobs, and it's increasingly hard to recruit and retain a stable, high-quality workforce. As crafters of supportive environments that help children thrive and as key drivers of our state's economic well-being, the Kansas early childhood workforce deserves better. They need clearer pathways for entry, growth, and advancement in the field.

With support from federal Preschool Development Grant B-5 funding, the Kansas Children's Cabinet leads collaboration across agencies, workgroups, and communities to build tools that strengthen and elevate the workforce.

Career Pathway for Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals

A career pathway is a way to represent the career, support, and training options available to professionals working in child care. It is a competency-based framework that guides professionals in the field toward resources and opportunities to support their professional goals. The Professional Development Implementation Team (PDIT) coordinated efforts to develop the pathway and released it in 2023 as the [Career Pathway for Kansas Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals](#).

Workforce Registry

The Kansas Children's Cabinet is collaborating with state agencies, Child Care Aware of Kansas, KCCTO, and others to build a workforce registry that offers early childhood professionals a central location to document goals and accomplishments in professional development, education, and quality improvement. The registry is being designed to help spur professional growth while also capturing data about the field to inform policy makers and partners. The workforce registry is a significant step forward in recognizing child care professionals for their skill and education, elevating their contributions to early childhood brain development, and acknowledging their essential value to both the families and economy of Kansas.



Data for Impact

- Overview
- Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust
- Our Tomorrows
- Young Families' Experiences of Social Connection



Overview

Data-driven decision making is a core component of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet’s statutory responsibility. To that end, all programs the Kansas Children’s Cabinet oversees are held to high standards of evaluation and accountability. In addition to evaluating the programs themselves, we must continue to scan for signals of the changing contexts for children and families and understand their experiences from a holistic perspective. This ability to center the child and the family in our analysis is one of the key benefits of a more unified early childhood system, and one of the major limitations of fragmented service delivery.

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet acts in its roles as connector, evaluator, and strategist to understand what families experience and identify critical next

steps for meeting their needs, drawing on our partnerships and innovative research methods. This anticipatory stance enables us to be proactive and planful.

In this section, we provide an overview and results of three projects: the Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust, Young Families’ Experiences of Social Connection, and Our Tomorrows. While they each represent distinct approaches to data collection and analysis, all three also provide a more encompassing understanding of what Kansas families live and experience, with implications for how we deliver services.

Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust

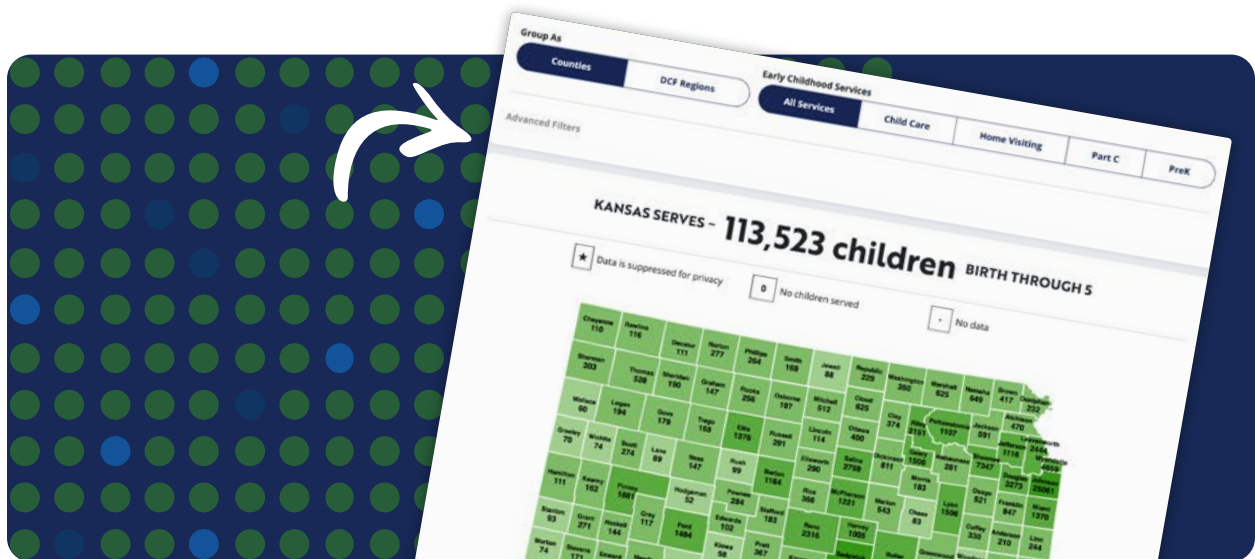
The overarching purpose of the Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust (Data Trust) is to formalize the governance of data sharing across multiple agencies that administer programs for children birth to 5 and their families. This collaborative approach to securely sharing and combining data from each agency on a project-by-project basis is our state's early childhood integrated data system (ECIDS) model. The Data Trust reflects the commitment of five state agencies to share data and information to improve programs for Kansas children and families, facilitate data-informed decision making, and analyze long-term impact.

Distinct Count of Children in Early Care and Education Services

The early childhood ecosystem is rich with the data needed to inform programming, quality, impact, and investments. Drawing on this shared abundance, the second authorized project of the Data Trust is intended to develop an accurate and reliable count of children being served in early childhood care and education programs at the state and local levels.

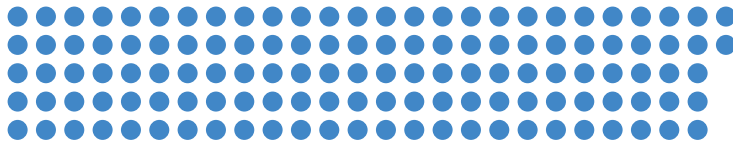
Led by the Kansas Children's Cabinet, four groups (Department for Children and Families, Kansas State Department of Education, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and Child Care Aware of Kansas) came together through a data sharing agreement to aggregate information about children birth to 5 and their families served by child care, home visiting, Part C, and Pre-K programs. Because these services are supported by several funding streams and program initiatives across all partner agencies, Kansas has long operated with an incomplete understanding of the full picture of children and families served within the early childhood ecosystem. The **Kansas Distinct Count Dashboard** addresses this need by combining multiple sources of data into a modern, publicly available, and easy-to-use tool.

The Kansas Distinct Count Dashboard presents a statewide and county-level map of children and families served holistically and in each type of early childhood care and education service, giving Kansans the ability to quickly discover where services are being delivered to children and families. Ultimately, we aim to elevate and increase data literacy, use, and transparency to facilitate data-driven decision making. The dashboard will undergo annual updates to ensure data quality and accuracy. This collaborative Data Trust project is helping build a more responsive early childhood ecosystem in Kansas with accurate and reliable data to evaluate our collective efforts while bringing our state in line with others who have embarked on innovative ECIDS work. The Kansas Distinct Count Dashboard went live to the public in December 2023.



The Kansas Distinct Count Dashboard went live to the public in December 2023.

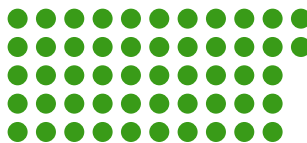
Child Care
63,552 Children



Home Visiting
12,324 Children



Pre-K
26,053 Children



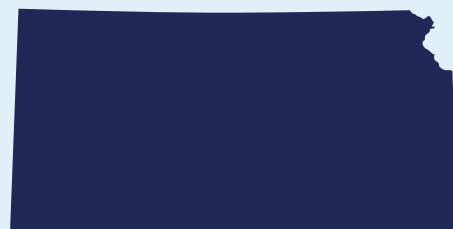
Part C
11,596 Children



The system serves more 3- and 4-year-olds than other ages, with **more than twice** as many children ages 3-4 being served than children ages 1-2.

Programs serve every county in Kansas

Of the three services currently being tracked, only home visiting does not reach every county (Trego, Ness, Kiowa, Kingman, Elk, Chase, Chautauqua).





Our Tomorrows

The Our Tomorrows project is intended to capture family experiences to learn how to better support families across Kansas. Our Tomorrows uses both a data collection tool and a community development approach that invites families, communities, and decision makers into a shared, equitable process for making sense of our daily realities.

In summer 2023, 214 stories—experiences of thriving or just surviving—were collected from Kansans. The prevention framework used for this initiative is the result of a collaboration across several states to improve outcomes for children and families by gathering insights into bridges and barriers that families encounter.

Results

For families seeking services, **trust is the most important factor**. Responding to the prompt “when I need help with something for myself and/or my family, I first turn to...” Kansans tended to prioritize trust over both cost and shared culture, language, and beliefs.

Particularly telling, **many Kansans shared stories of trusting family, friends, and their own intuitions**, but not doctors, agencies, or the news. Responding to the prompt “I usually trust information that comes from...” respondents were far less likely to choose “doctors, community agencies, news outlets, or others” than “my family or friends” and “my own experiences and instincts.”

For young Kansas families, interconnected factors of trust, connection, and community tend to make otherwise unbearable and often unexpected experiences a little more manageable. Results show essential support emerged from authentic social connections amongst Kansans within their local communities. This support was often not sought, but instinctually provided by their community at times when young families needed support the most.

Implications

Young Kansas families value authentic support that naturally emerges within their local communities—neighbors, regular acquaintances, and pillars or peers within their community—because of their shared or similar lived experiences. In contrast, Kansas families are less likely to trust information and support from professionals, experts, and others considered outsiders because they may not have experiences that overlap in meaningful ways.

These findings carry important implications about early childhood ecosystem design, implementation, and evaluation:

- Families’ voices and experiences should be central to identifying and providing needed services, including family-professional partnerships.
- Kansas community life is a strength and source of support for young families that can be built upon. Communities should be given the resources to build on their existing social networks to provide multifaceted and flexible support for families.
- Future research should examine how community-driven approaches to family support affect child and family outcomes.

Young Families' Experiences of Social Connection

Loneliness is increasingly central to American life. This may have consequences for young families, particularly in light of the Our Tomorrows results highlighting the importance of social support naturally and authentically emerging within local communities. Families with young children are often at the point in their life course where they need the most support from their communities. Young children need the most from their parents in terms of time, attention, and care while parents need flexibility and support from their employers, extended family, and other formal and informal supports to meet their children's needs. Yet young families are often the most stretched during this time because parents are earlier in their careers and tend to have fewer resources.

Young Families' Experiences of Social Connection was a study supported by the Preschool Development Grant designed to understand the experiences, attitudes, and behaviors of parents of young children as they relate to social connectedness and support. Researchers fielded a survey with a sample of 1,062 Kansans and an oversample of young parents and families living in rural areas. They analyzed data to understand how young Kansas families experience social support, support from employers, connection to neighborhood, and loneliness. They also looked at how those experiences vary by race and ethnicity.

Results

TRUST AND CONNECTEDNESS

Many respondents reported they lack people in their personal life whom they trust to give them advice. Of the categories offered, respondents were least likely to indicate they had someone they could ask for advice about parenting, and one-fifth of respondents indicated they did not have anyone they could trust to give them advice on any topic.

I have people I trust to ask for advice about (check all that apply):



At a community level, 54% of respondents indicated they had no opportunity or not much opportunity to shape the direction of their communities on the issues that affect them.

CHILD CARE

Parents of young children had positive perceptions of their child care arrangement:

- 58% agree or strongly agree child is safe in child care.
- 66% agree or strongly agree child is learning in child care.

Results confirmed the need for other, more flexible forms of support.

Only 44% of parents of young children agreed with the statement “When I need someone to look after my kids on short notice, I can find someone I trust.”

EMPLOYER SUPPORT

Only 40% of parents of young children reported their employers demonstrated high levels of support for their needs as caregivers, including accommodating family responsibilities and being flexible when there is a family emergency. This figure was 37% for Kansans living in rural areas.

Implications

These results suggest we all have a role to play in meaningfully improving outcomes for children and families at the community level.

- Many families could benefit from flexible, responsive support for caregiving, including access to trustworthy advice and options for accessing child care when unanticipated situations arise.
- It is difficult for families with young children to civically engage and make their needs and desires for their communities known. Organizers of public meetings, town halls, and other modes of public engagement should seek out their participation and anticipate their needs for child-friendly hours and spaces.
- Employers are critical contributors to child well-being through support for their parents. They have multiple opportunities to provide support for their employees’ caregiving responsibilities, including paid leave to care for a sick child, flexible and remote work options, and infants at work policies.



Our Children's Future

- Overview
- Kansas Future Fellows
- Early Childhood and Climate Change
- Kansas Early Childhood Transition Task Force



Overview

Our children represent both our present focus and our future leaders, parents, and citizens. In responding to their needs today, we shape a better future for all.

The needs of Kansas children and families are well-documented here and in our recent *All In For Kansas Kids* needs assessments. These annual reports offer insight into the many programs and services the Kansas Children's Cabinet supports to ensure these needs are being addressed and to support children and families on the path to thriving futures. But we are not just mired in the details of today, we are looking toward the horizon and wondering, "what can we do now to ensure our children's future is bright?"

This section of the 2023 Annual Report presents three efforts the Kansas Children's Cabinet supports to embed a forward-looking mindset in all our work: Kansas Future Fellows, the Early Years Climate Action Task Force, and the Early Childhood Transition Task Force.

Kansas Future Fellows

Community leaders, policymakers, and others devoted to improving outcomes for children and families focus naturally on problems of the present or the recent past. This approach, while rational and direct, also tends to engender short-term and small-scale solutions, and we can end up tinkering with a system that isn't working for most families. To produce transformational early childhood care and education systems-level change today, we must envision further into the future. Strategic foresight and futures thinking methods help us do so.

Applying futures thinking to our work on behalf of children and families helps us identify the big issues that will shape our lives in the future, so we can mentally and physically prepare to respond to concerns such as the effects of climate change; the impact of rapidly changing technologies on our work, family, and civic lives; and shifting patterns in marriage, fertility, and family formation.

"Futures thinking is a set of strategic and creative tools that help you anticipate how the future might be different, and why."

Jake Dunagan, Institute for the Future, Kansas Future Fellows event, 2023

The Kansas Future Fellows program gathers a network of civic entrepreneurs to discuss these and other issues impacting our children's future. Fellows are equipped with proven strategic foresight and innovation methods to focus on creative solutions for today while anticipating and activating on our desired futures. Future Fellows are a cross section of Kansans spanning multiple sectors including early childhood, education, economic development, faith-based communities, mental health, health, community colleges, municipal governments, and tribal communities.

Fellows participate in three labs throughout the year to discuss potential futures in 10-20 years and identify signals in today's world as evidence supporting these potential futures. Signals are concrete observations of how the world is changing, offering a hint of what's to come.

Fellows stay engaged with each other beyond these labs and reported participation in the program changed the way they approach their work. For example, Craig Correll, the 2022 Kansas Superintendent of the Year, said when he now thinks about students in his school, he considers that he has a dual role of educating the students of today and our parents of tomorrow.

Early Childhood and Climate Change

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet Executive Director Melissa Rooker was invited to become a member of the Early Years Climate Action Task Force, a national group of 20 early childhood leaders, climate leaders, researchers, medical professionals, parents, and philanthropists who came together in 2022 to spend a year studying the impacts of climate change on young children. This group held listening sessions for people across the U.S.—child care providers, government officials, children, caregivers, pediatricians, subject matter experts, grassroots advocates, and others. What the Climate Action Task Force learned has been developed into an action plan with recommendations on how the country can support young children, ages birth to 8, to flourish despite facing the impacts of climate disruption.

Because caring for our children and caring for our planet are inextricably linked, the work of the Climate Action Task Force is relevant to Kansas early childhood care and education programs. Extreme weather events are already impacting children and families. We are experiencing more frequent examples of disruption, such as wildfire smoke; excessive heat; and historic flooding damaging homes, child care programs, pediatric health clinics, and other places children live, play, and learn. These events are intensifying, making it much harder to provide the nurturing places and experiences that help young children grow into resilient adults.

Climate change is not a separate issue. It is the context we are all living in today, impacting all aspects of early childhood development and every child- and family-serving system. Child-centered action when addressing these issues will lead to cleaner air and water, more green space and shade, healthier buildings, communities better prepared for extreme weather events, and benefits that ripple out far beyond the individual child and family.

The Climate Action Task Force identified a series of steps and best practices for government, child-serving systems, businesses, not-for-profits, and philanthropy to center children in efforts to mitigate, adapt, and respond to our changing world. These recommendations are documented in the [Flourishing Children, Healthy Communities and a Stronger Nation, The U.S. Early Years Climate Action Plan](#). The Kansas Children’s Cabinet is working to educate and inform providers and professionals across the early childhood care and education ecosystem of this important piece of work, seeking ways to embed the recommendations into programs and practices of CIF-funded grantees and partners.



Kansas Early Childhood Transition Task Force

In January of this year, Governor Kelly issued Executive Order 23-01, forming the Early Childhood Transition Task Force, which is charged with recommending methods for streamlining early childhood care and education services. The Kansas Children’s Cabinet Executive Director Melissa Rooker was an appointed member of the Task Force.

Co-Chairs

<i>Sam Huenergardt</i>	<i>CEO Mid-American Region</i>	<i>AdventHealth</i>
<i>Cornelia Stevens</i>	<i>Executive Director</i>	<i>TOP Early Learning Centers</i>

Honorary Chair

<i>Barry Downing</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>Northrock Inc.</i>
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Members

<i>Molly Baumgardner</i>	<i>Senator</i>	<i>Senate District 37</i>
<i>Sara Bloom</i>	<i>Community Development Specialist</i>	<i>Kansas Department of Commerce</i>
<i>Kelly Davydov</i>	<i>Executive Director</i>	<i>Child Care Aware of Kansas</i>
<i>Brenda Dietrich</i>	<i>Senator</i>	<i>Senate District 20</i>
<i>Lona Duvall</i>	<i>President</i>	<i>Finney County Economic Development Corporation</i>
<i>Laura Howard</i>	<i>Secretary</i>	<i>DCF</i>
<i>David Jordan</i>	<i>President and CEO</i>	<i>United Methodist Health Ministry Fund</i>
<i>Monica Murnan</i>	<i>Director of Community Support Services</i>	<i>Greenbush</i>
	<i>Chair</i>	<i>Kansas Action for Children</i>
<i>Pat Pettey</i>	<i>Senator</i>	<i>Senate District 6</i>
<i>Amanda Petersen</i>	<i>Director of Early Childhood</i>	<i>KSDE</i>
<i>Melissa Rooker</i>	<i>Executive Director</i>	<i>Kansas Children’s Cabinet</i>
<i>Susan Ruiz</i>	<i>Representative</i>	<i>House District 23</i>
<i>Heather Schrotberger</i>	<i>Executive Director</i>	<i>Kansas Head Start Association</i>
<i>Janet Stanek</i>	<i>Secretary</i>	<i>KDHE</i>
<i>Troy Waymaster</i>	<i>Representative</i>	<i>House District 109</i>
<i>Betsy Wearing</i>	<i>Coordinator of Communications, Programs, and New Initiatives</i>	<i>Dane G. Hansen Foundation</i>

Kansas invests in a variety of publicly-funded voluntary early childhood services including child care, home visiting, and Pre-K education. But the ability of providers to deliver those services—and the ability of families to access them—is negatively impacted by the state’s fragmented oversight. With dozens of funding streams and programs spread across multiple agencies, the system is needlessly complex. The Kansas Children’s Cabinet supports the state’s efforts to develop unified governance that will be more efficient and effective.

Almost half the states in the country have unified their governance of early childhood services with the universal goals of increasing accountability and providing more effective service delivery and expertise. State government has multiple responsibilities to the early childhood system:

- Setting expectations for service quality, measuring progress toward those expectations, and providing supports for improvement.
- Managing funds to ensure the system is producing the desired outcomes.
- Determining eligibility for services and programs.
- Ensuring there are enough qualified staff to fill the needed roles—which requires setting up a preparation and training pipeline, providing ongoing professional development, and supporting adequate compensation for essential roles.
- Communicating with the public in a manner that builds awareness and trust.

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet understands families want it to be easier to find the services they need and providers want it to be easier to deliver those services. Simplifying state oversight by unifying the governance of existing services can serve both of those goals, as it has in other states.

A state government that is simple, accountable, and responsive reduces the burden on Kansas families.

States that have successfully transitioned to unified governance have implemented thoughtful plans that gave the state adequate time to put in place strong leadership and efficient oversight systems. Those states have acknowledged governance is an ongoing process and have charged their new agencies with continuous improvement over time—recognizing that some of the changes needed will take longer than others. Moreover, those states have been savvy about the culture of the early childhood system, and how a new approach to oversight can influence—and be influenced by—that culture.

Successful efforts to streamline oversight require good data. The work of the Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust will support successful oversight with information necessary for thoughtful decisions on policy and program implementation.



Recommendations & Conclusion

➤ 2023 Recommendations

➤ Conclusion





Recommendations

Since its inception in 1999, a primary charge of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet as outlined in Kansas statute has been to make recommendations for the Children’s Initiatives Fund (CIF) to the governor and legislature and evaluate its use. The Kansas Children’s Cabinet established an annual accountability process in 2006 in support of this statutory responsibility.

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet focuses on early childhood as the key moment of intervention to have the greatest impact on children’s lives.

Over the past three years, the Kansas Children’s Cabinet has taken an increasingly cohesive approach to CIF fund management by addressing early childhood care and education as a system rather than a collection of individual programs. Recommendations are intended to increase investment in the early childhood care and education system, streamline funding, and create a more sustainable path for the future.

This section presents recommendations the Kansas Children’s Cabinet adopted in 2023.

Budget Recommendations

Several programs received increased funding for fiscal year 2023 or will be receiving an increase for fiscal year 2024. Maintaining funding levels for fiscal year 2025 will allow the impacts of increased funding for those programs to be examined and maintain a balance in the KEY fund to cover expenditures above the revenue generated from the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement.

Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF)

CIF PROGRAM	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025 RECOMMENDATION
Child Care Services*	\$5,033,679	\$5,033,679	\$5,033,679
Family Preservation	\$3,241,062	\$3,241,062	\$3,241,062
DCF Total	\$8,274,741	\$8,274,741	\$8,274,741

Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE)

Healthy Start Home Visitor	\$1,652,876	\$1,652,876	\$1,652,876
Kansas Early Childhood Developmental Services*	\$5,800,000	\$5,800,000	\$5,800,000
Smoking Prevention Grants	\$1,001,960	\$1,001,960	\$1,001,960
SIDS Network Grant	\$96,374	\$122,106	\$122,106
KDHE Total	\$8,551,210	\$8,576,942	\$8,576,942
Human Services Total	\$16,823,075	\$16,851,683	\$16,851,683

Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE)

Kansas Children's Cabinet Accountability Fund	\$375,000	\$375,000	\$375,000
CIF Grants (ECBG)	\$21,017,930	\$23,720,493	\$23,720,493
Parent Education (PAT)	\$8,537,237	\$9,437,635	\$9,437,635
Pre-K Pilot Program**	\$4,200,000	\$4,200,000	\$4,200,000
Early Childhood Infrastructure	\$1,400,773	\$1,408,512	\$1,408,512
Dolly Parton's Imagination Library	\$500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000
KSDE Total	\$36,030,940	\$40,641,640	\$40,641,640
Total Expenditures	\$52,856,891	\$57,493,323	\$57,493,323

*Denotes programs with a Maintenance of Effort requirement

**Denotes programs with a Match requirement

Basic Needs Recommendation

The Kansas Children's Cabinet recommends increasing access to work and family support programs that help children and families meet their basic needs. Research clearly shows that children thrive when their basic needs are met, and that parents and caregivers are better able to support children when their own basic needs are met. The Kansas Children's Cabinet believes current restrictions to child care assistance, cash assistance, nutrition assistance, and health insurance programs undercut the investments made through the CIF and blunt the efficiency and effectiveness of early childhood care and education programs. The comprehensive Statewide 2019 Needs Assessment and 2020 and 2021 Needs Assessment Updates document these concerns.

Child Care Subsidy Recommendation

The Kansas Children's Cabinet recommends contributing State General Funds to fully draw down matching Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds from the federal level.

Data-driven Decision Making Recommendation

The Kansas Children's Cabinet, representing the best interests of children, recommends that the best available data and evidence-based research drive decisions about regulations safeguarding the health and well-being of children.

Enhance State Investment in Early Childhood Recommendation

The Kansas Children's Cabinet recommends enhanced state investment in the early childhood care and education system to better meet the needs of young children and their families, reduce CIF transfers to other agencies, and maximize Master Settlement Agreement dollars toward Kansas Children's Cabinet priorities as outlined in the Blueprint for Early Childhood and the *All In For Kansas Kids* Strategic Plan.

Early Childhood Care and Education Governance Recommendation

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet recommends the Governor and the Kansas Legislature work together to identify the appropriate method for unification of early childhood programs and services and create an implementation plan that recognizes the role of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet, in alignment with the Early Childhood Transition Task Force recommendations.

We support exploring options to:

- fully realize the Kansas Children’s Cabinet’s statutory role as outlined in K.S.A. 38-1901;
- retain the Kansas Children’s Cabinet governing board oversight of the CIF as outlined in K.S.A. 38-2103;
- retain the role of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet governing board as grant maker for any existing or new grant programs that may be developed and administered by the unified entity;
- retain the role of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet as the state’s Early Childhood Advisory Council in accordance with the federal Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (Kansas Executive Order 20-02); and,
- establish methods of collaboration and coordination between the Children’s Cabinet board and the unified entity’s administrative leadership.

Tobacco Vaping Settlement Funds Recommendation

The Kansas Children’s Cabinet recommends the Kansas Legislature direct current and future tobacco vaping settlement funds toward the CIF. While cigarette smoking has declined over the years, there has been an increase in vaping, particularly among youth. This will have negative health consequences for a new generation of nicotine users. The transition from combustible tobacco to non-combustible tobacco could have a negative impact on the size of the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement annual contributions because it does not include e-cigarettes. In 2022, Juul agreed to a \$438 million settlement with 33 states and territories, including Kansas, resolving allegations that the e-cigarette manufacturer engaged in deceptive marketing and sales practices appealing to youth. As part of this settlement, Kansas will receive \$9.9 million over the next 6-10 years.



Conclusion

For the last several years we have been working across programs, agencies, systems, and sectors in every part of the state to improve the early childhood care and education system with the aim of making Kansas the best place to raise a child. This year was no exception. In fact, in 2023 our tireless efforts exceeded expectations. The year was a whirlwind of activity and bright spots that continue to propel us toward the vision that every child thrives.

This year we announced grant awards totaling \$92.6 million in funding to increase our state's child care capacity. The Data Trust unveiled a new dashboard, the culmination of a multi-agency effort yielding valuable data from across the system. Dolly Parton came to town to celebrate the expansion of the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program statewide. And Governor Kelly appointed the Kansas Children's Cabinet executive director to the Early Childhood Transition Task Force, an acknowledgment of our collaborative work to align and unify early childhood efforts.

As we move into 2024, we are seeing more child care funding at work in a greater number of Kansas communities. We are working with more accurate and detailed information from data across the ecosystem and we are getting more books into the hands of our youngest Kansans. We are doing more than ever to improve outcomes for children and families, and we are accomplishing these milestones with an eye toward the future. As we continue to collectively look beyond today and prepare for the possibilities of the future, we are gaining a better understanding of the right mix of investments, structures, and collaborations that make it possible to reach our desired future state. The Kansas Children's Cabinet supports the state's efforts to apply this understanding to the process of simplifying and unifying the governance of early childhood care and education services for even greater impact far into the future.

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