

A publication of Child Care Aware® of Kansas

KansasChild

Fall 2020 Volume 19, Issue 4

When Little People are
Overwhelmed
by
Big Emotions

IN THIS ISSUE

Navigating the
Unexpected

MEANINGFUL
VIRTUAL
CONNECTION

*Weaving a
Stronger Future*

Hello, Kansas!

Stepping into a snow globe in the summer.

I like to think that I'm a reasonably adventurous spirit – up for anything, as long as I have a road map and a plan in place! Exploring the opportunity to lead Child Care Aware of Kansas – and all of the changes this brings both professionally and personally – has been tremendously exciting (and a little nerve-racking, if I'm being completely honest). Stepping into this new role means a move for my husband and our two sons – a new community, new schools, and a new career path for me. Oh, and we're doing all of this in the middle of a pandemic (for which road maps and plans are either nonexistent or completely impractical!).

In short, my family and I are shaking up everything, all at once, and at a time when the world is also rapidly changing. It feels a little like standing in the middle of a snow globe – there's a period of unsettling, where life is tipped upside down and tossed side to side. Then comes a period of relative calm, where the snowflakes gently drift to the ground, landing in new places. In my experience, the new landscape is often more magnificent than the old.

In many ways, there's no better time than this moment to undertake this opportunity. Early childhood systems across the country are standing in the middle of a snow globe, just as I am. We've had to completely shake up things in order to quickly and effectively respond to changing health and safety concerns – all while still meeting the needs of providers, children, and their families. We've accomplished policy and practice changes in a matter of months that might have taken years prepandemic.



While the initial wave of quick-response change might have passed, we now find ourselves in a calmer space where reflection, thoughtfulness, and imagination can take root. We can consider what we've accomplished, and what remains to be done. We can reimagine an early childhood system that centers and prioritizes equitable, high-quality early care and education.

I know I have enormous shoes to fill, and count myself lucky to step into this position with the support of Leadell Ediger, a first-class team of seasoned professionals, and an outstanding Board of Directors. I'm excited to be a part of Child Care Aware of Kansas and the broader Kansas early childhood system, and I can't wait to see what we can accomplish together.



KELLY DAVYDOV

NEW Executive Director, Child Care Aware® of Kansas

Kelly Davydov joins Child Care Aware of Kansas as Executive Director. Kelly's professional background includes leadership for two key initiatives in Iowa: a statewide early childhood system-building effort, Early Childhood Iowa, and the 2-Gen anti-poverty initiative. Kelly, her husband, Dmitry, and their two sons (Ethan, 12, and Henry, 10) are making Kansas City their new home. The family enjoys exploring state and national parks, farmers markets, and spends their winter weekends pool side at swim meets. They look forward to taking advantage of everything Kansas has to offer.

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Founding Director
Leadell Ediger

Executive Director
Kelly Davydov

Editors
BWearing Consulting
Angie Saenger, Deputy Director

Publication Design
Michael Freeland,
Mr. Freeland Design

On the Cover
Riley Sprecker, 4 (at time of photo)
Parents: Doug and Hayley
Sprecker, of Salina

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KANSAS CREATIVITY SHINES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

A COMPILATION OF GOOD DEEDS

BY MARCI PENNER

For some there have been new routines that push people to exhaustion, others have found time to clean the dust-caked regions of the attic. Some are finding new things to do outside, others are cramped in housing that isn't conducive to a stay-at-home order.

Everything is a first time with the coronavirus. We didn't expect it, weren't ready for it. Reactions haven't been practiced. There is no playbook or strategic family plan sitting on the shelf. Unless we lived in 1918 when the Spanish Flu pandemic killed more than 20 million (and maybe up to 50 million), including 675,000 Americans, we really couldn't, and can't, imagine what we need to do.

Yet people are stepping up. Communities, through local government, businesses or the citizenry are trying all sorts of things to help the most vulnerable, and to perform acts of kindness. Libraries, community foundations, child care centers, schools, churches, banks, grocery stores, health care centers, chambers of commerce, and economic development groups are just a few entities trying to figure out what they can do and how they should do it. It's pretty apparent that we're a society with a need for human interaction, especially now when our movements are somewhat restricted.

Cruise nights took place soon after the initial shelter-in-place order. People just needed to feel the presence of others, even if it was car to car. Horns and shouts were expressions of exuberant reconnection. People waved and laughed. From Lakin and Norton to Seneca and Columbus, and many other cities in between, the vehicle parades up and down main streets provided a needed release.

Many schools found unique ways to celebrate their graduates. In Hodgeman County, faces of high school graduates were put on individual banners placed on

Main Street, and a giant slide show was shown on the side of the Pride Ag Resources grain elevator.

When restrictions were lessened, the Ellsworth County Economic Development office went from business to business making a video set to Pharrell Williams' song "Happy." The business community and customers were glad to see each other again—and the peppy video gave a needed lift to those who watched it.

In Sharon Springs, the Towns End Tavern transformed their menu and became a full-service drive-in. When customers generously donated to help keep the lights on, owner Erin Wright used the money to deliver meals to locals 65 years of age and older who weren't able to leave their homes.

**"A problem is a chance
for you to do your best."
~ Duke Ellington**

Ladybird Diner in Lawrence closed the diner and instead provided free sack lunches to anyone who needed them. With the help of community donations, free pantry boxes filled with grocery staples were distributed for laid-off downtown employees and families in need.

Within the first few weeks of the pandemic, Marty Hotes at the St. Joe Store in the tiny town of St. Joe provided more than 500 free meals to people throughout Cloud County and the area. He said he was just trying to pay it forward after people helped him through tough times earlier in his life.

A "You Buy One, We Donate One" campaign was initiated out of the Meridian Center in Newton by Chef Katie Doornbos, but it ended up being much more. Many of the food donations were

going to SafeHope Shelter for women. People started asking what else they could donate, and soon clothing, furniture, and a large gift card went to the shelter. The Meridian also hosted a comedy show (starring Chef Katie) with the proceeds going to “health care heroes.”

The City of Jetmore sent out two \$10 coupons in the utility bills of every household in town. The coupons were to be spent in Jetmore businesses and were reimbursed by the city.

In Abilene, the city received a call from a citizen who wanted to pay past due water bills. This gift of \$2,000 helped 41 local residents get caught up with their bills and, for some, to keep the water on.

The City of Gardner, which owns its own utilities, paid electric bills for every resident in March and gave rebates for small businesses up to a certain level. The city spent about \$790,000 to do this.

Eighteen nurses and staff members at a nursing home in Westmoreland moved in to the facility for two weeks in April. The staff knew that family members were not allowed to come see their loved ones so they stepped up to show residents they were loved and cared for.

Lots of families visited their loved ones through windows at long-term care facilities and even played tic-tac-toe with dry erase markers on the windows, but at the Menno-nite Friendship Manor in South Hutchinson, Rosasharen Shelton, a hospice aide with Kindred Hospice, took things a step further and brought a horse to the window to visit residents.

Many, many grocery stores made deliveries or took groceries out to the curb. Some developed online order forms. Carly Whorton, of Cecil K’s Hometown Market in Holton, did a daily Facebook Live to update customers on availability of items, safety precautions, all those things people needed to know.

At Crome’s Market in Greenleaf, owners Jason and Sarah Crome decided to do a \$100 giveaway of groceries. A customer asked if she could chip in \$50 so a second name could be drawn. Soon almost one hundred donors had chipped in a total of \$10,000. More than 80 people-in-need in Greenleaf and the surrounding area benefited from this generosity.

In towns without grocery stores, restaurants that were closed sold ingredients in bulk (approved by regulators). Two places this happened were in Cottonwood Falls and McCune.

Hunter Eilrich, a fifth-grade student in McPherson, donated all the money in his piggy bank (\$24.25) to the McPherson County Community Foundation to support those in need from Covid.

Community foundations and chambers of commerce across the state worked extra hours to figure out how to match money spent in local businesses and give to local causes. Some communities gave gift cards to local businesses to help keep them open. There were many variations of how these two entities supported their communities.

**I ask not for a lighter
burden. But for broader
shoulders.
~ Jewish Proverb**

The Jackson County Sheriff’s Office provided services for older adults and people with disabilities who were unable to leave their homes to get medications and groceries. Law enforcement in Ness, Ellsworth, Hodgeman, Greeley and many other counties also did this.

Lindsborg Police Chief Michael Davis and officer Terry Reed bought cupcakes and a card and took them to Aleda Penn to check on her and offer a little cheer on her 96th birthday.

Teachers and students in communities of every size found ways to thank each other. Some left signs in yards, others drew murals on school walls. Sometimes it was just a parade of cars with signs. The sentiment was clear that these relationships meant more than ever.

Individuals and families from Weskan to Clyde hosted concerts online.

A youth garden section was created in the Coffeyville community garden for the use by the Boys and Girls Club to grow produce for community members in need.

Deanna Farmer of the Cake Batter Batter, in Eureka, came up with a “virtual hug” system of conveying good deeds on her social media page. People donated money (one man gave his entire stimulus check) for baked goods to be delivered to those who needed a pat on the back. Two young boys were among the delivery people, getting to

experience the joys of spreading good cheer.

In Olsburg, photographer Bailee Roberts offered to do porch portraits for anyone in the community. The pictures were then posted in a special section of the Olsburg PRIDE newsletter.

In Erie, the senior citizen center delivered delicious lunches prepared by Bridget Becker, of the Sidewalk Cafe. This free delivery service went to 20 seniors daily.

Newton Masonic Lodge members became community delivery drivers taking prescriptions or groceries to those in nearby towns. The Kingman community started a group called “porch angels” to help deliver groceries all over the county.

At some child care centers, parents kept their kids at home but paid anyway to help keep the center open.

The Lindsborg Convention & Visitors Bureau provided Lindsborg post cards to people who would write notes and send them to those unable to get out.

Cities such as Abilene and Norton developed bingo cards filled with good deeds and simple things to do during the stay-at-home days. Sweet reminders to be checked off they are accomplished!

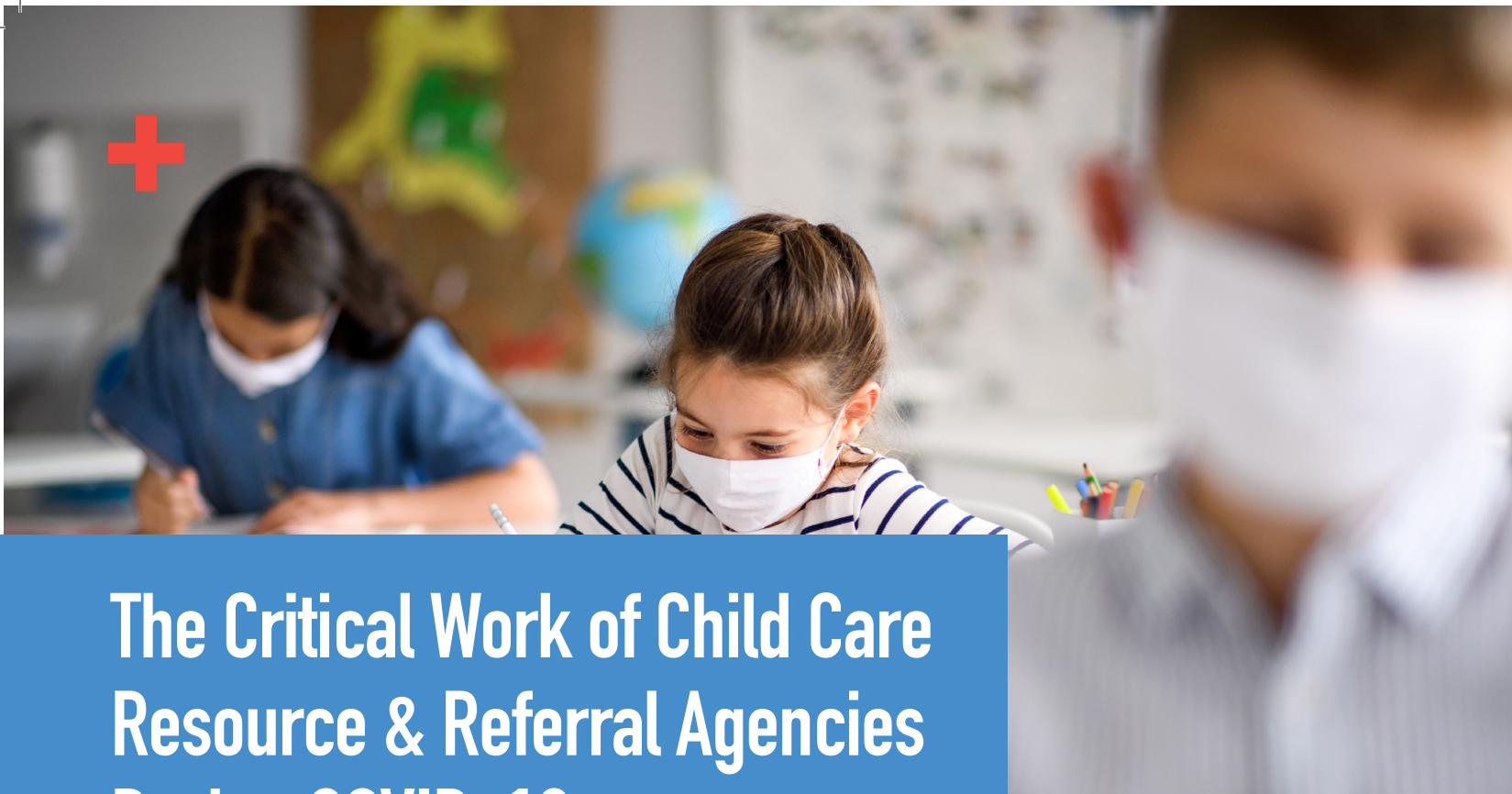
These good deeds are just the tip of the iceberg of efforts that have been made statewide to help get us all through the pandemic. Lots of good lessons have been learned, and one thing is clear: Lots of people are doing their best. ●



MARCI PENNER

Director of Kansas
Sampler Foundation

Marci Penner is the Director of the Inman-based Kansas Sampler Foundation, a nonprofit she started with her father, Milferd Penner, in 1993. The mission is to preserve and sustain rural culture. The KSF educates Kansans about Kansas through their Kansas guidebooks, the Kansas Explorers Club, and the Big Kansas Road Trip, and networks and supports rural communities through the We Kan! Conference, awards, and Tidbits; the Big Rural Brainstorm, and the PowerUp Movement.



The Critical Work of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies During COVID-19



BY LYNETTE M. FRAGA, PH.D & LAURIE RACKAS

Our child care system could not function without Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies. For more than 30 years, they have helped families find quality child care and information on where to get help paying for care. They have also offered training and support to providers to open and operate their businesses and to continually improve the quality of their care. In addition, CCR&Rs have gathered data on child care needs and trends – information that is helpful to families, providers and policymakers.

The COVID-19 crisis has underscored the immense value of CCR&Rs. Throughout the pandemic, these agencies have listened to the concerns of families, providers and communities, have advocated on their behalf and – to the degree possible – have stepped up to meet their needs for supplies and information.

To better understand the work CCR&Rs are undertaking right now, Child Care Aware® of America (CCAoA) developed a survey to collect information on how CCR&Rs are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and record the concerns they are hearing from parents and families. Staff

members from 163 CCR&Rs representing 41 states responded to the survey, including 35 CCR&Rs from 12 Midwestern states. Here are some of the top findings.

Top Concerns of Providers

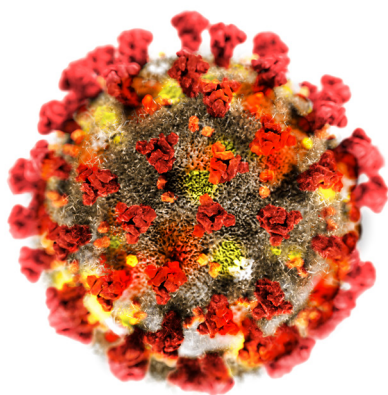
The top 5 issues that CCR&R staff are hearing about from providers are:

1. When and how to reopen child care facilities – 71%
2. Whether to close or remain open after the pandemic – 70%
3. How to locate and purchase Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (*e.g., face masks, gloves, hand sanitizers*) – 69%
4. Help needed to apply for federal assistance – 63%
5. How to support the child care needs of essential workers – 56%

How the CCR&R Community is Responding to the Needs of Providers

CCR&Rs are addressing the financial needs of providers who are struggling to stay open:

- 42% have helped child care programs apply for federal assistance (*e.g., the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)*)



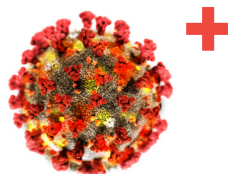
and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program)

- 37% have administered federal funding to providers
- The top three types of funding administered were monies from: the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act; the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG); and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- The top three ways those federal funds were used:
 - To provide supplies to child care providers
 - To provide direct financial assistance to providers
 - To provide training and technical assistance
- 23% are helping providers find financial assistance outside of federal funding resources. These include state and local government grants and funding from private foundations and organizations such as the United Way.

In addition, the majority of CCR&Rs that responded are prepared to train child care providers on topics pertinent to the current public health crisis: providing social-emotional support and resources to children and families, self-care and self-management, and cleaning and disinfecting facilities. Forty-four percent are prepared to train providers on new policies and procedures based on the latest CDC recommendations.

In Midwestern states, 26 CCR&Rs (76%) have plans to help child care providers reopen when it is safe to do so:

- 24 will provide information on maintaining physical distance
- 20 plan to have recruitment efforts to repopulate the supply of child care providers
- 17 will help providers secure an ongoing supply of health and safety products (e.g. PPE)
- 15 plan to provide PPE and other health/safety supplies



The Top Concerns of Families

The top 3 issues that parents are asking CCR&Rs to provide information and resources about are:

1. The safety of child care environments
2. Financial assistance to cover the cost of child care
3. How to find child care programs that are open

How the CCR&R Community is Responding to the Needs of Families

CCR&Rs are providing critical support to families concerned about their child care situations:

- 67% are supporting the emotional needs of families by answering their questions, validating their concerns and customizing responses based on the needs of each family
- 64% are helping parents who are essential workers find child care
- 38% are providing parents with consumer education and resources to help them understand the complicated policies related to reopening
- 37% are helping parents secure financial assistance for child care

These are just some of the survey findings. For more comprehensive results, download our PDF at <https://info.childcareaware.org/hubfs/ccrr-survey-pdf.pdf>

Child Care Aware® of America is calling on Congress to provide \$50 billion in dedicated child care funding to ensure our child care system survives this crisis. Part of that money should be used to fund CCR&Rs to continue their essential work with providers and families and to support their efforts to rebuild the infrastructure of the child care system.

(continued on next page)



CCR&RS AND COVID-19

In May 2020, Child Care Aware® of America heard from

163 agencies

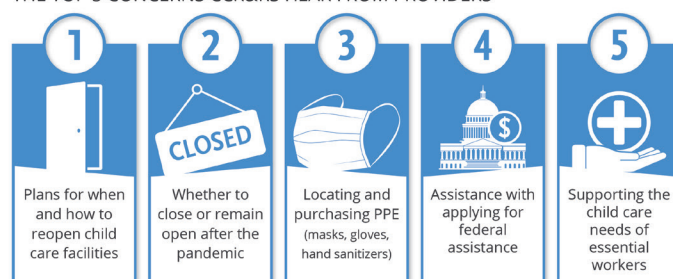
representing

41 states

about how they're responding to the coronavirus pandemic.

Emergency Child Care & Technical Assistance Center™

THE TOP 5 CONCERNS CCR&RS HEAR FROM PROVIDERS



WHAT IS A CHILD CARE RESOURCE & REFERRAL AGENCY?

Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) agencies, located in almost every state, focus on increasing access to high-quality, affordable care by serving as a resource hub for families, child care professionals and communities. They connect families to child care assistance, help build the supply of quality care, and provide training and technical assistance to enhance the quality of child care.

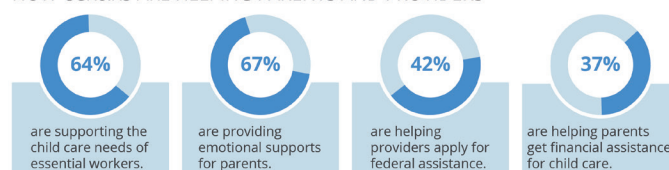
THE TOP 3 ISSUES PARENTS ARE SEEKING INFORMATION AND RESOURCES ON

- 1. The safety of child care environments
- 2. Financial assistance
- 3. Access to open child care programs



67% of CCR&Rs feel prepared to provide training and TA on topics related to cleaning and disinfecting facilities.

HOW CCR&RS ARE HELPING PARENTS AND PROVIDERS



LYNETTE M. FRAGA, PH.D

Chief Executive Officer,
Child Care Aware® of America

LAURIE RACKAS

Content Developer,
Child Care Aware® of America

CCR&Rs Step Up During COVID-19 Crisis



In Kansas, important work is being done by some creative groups of individuals. Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies have been working hard to support the needs of child care programs around the State. **Check out some highlights.**

The Family Conservancy's Early Education COVID-19 Task Force

On March 25, the Family Conservancy, a Child Care Aware of Kansas Child Care Resource & Referral partner, launched the Early Education COVID-19 Task Force. The task force was established because early education stakeholders decided they needed to provide a unified effort to support child care providers through COVID-19. When child care programs can safely remain open, providers have economic stability and parents can more easily maintain employment.

Immediate COVID-19 Response

- Reported weekly data about programs opened/closed
- Coordinated with local chambers of commerce to survey working parents about their child care needs
- Coordinated with the Community Disaster Resiliency Network to survey child care providers about their immediate needs
- Coordinated with AmeriCorps and Heart to Heart International to create a donation management system
- Created a web page for child care providers to access resources, donations, and guidance for reopening
- Convened child care providers regularly to inform them of the Task Force's work

Ongoing COVID-19 Recovery and Rebuilding

- Ensure child care providers can access necessary personal safety, cleaning, and food supplies
- Facilitate networking, technical assistance, and policy engagement for child care providers
- Prepare for possible second wave of COVID-19

Early Education COVID-19 Task Force Members

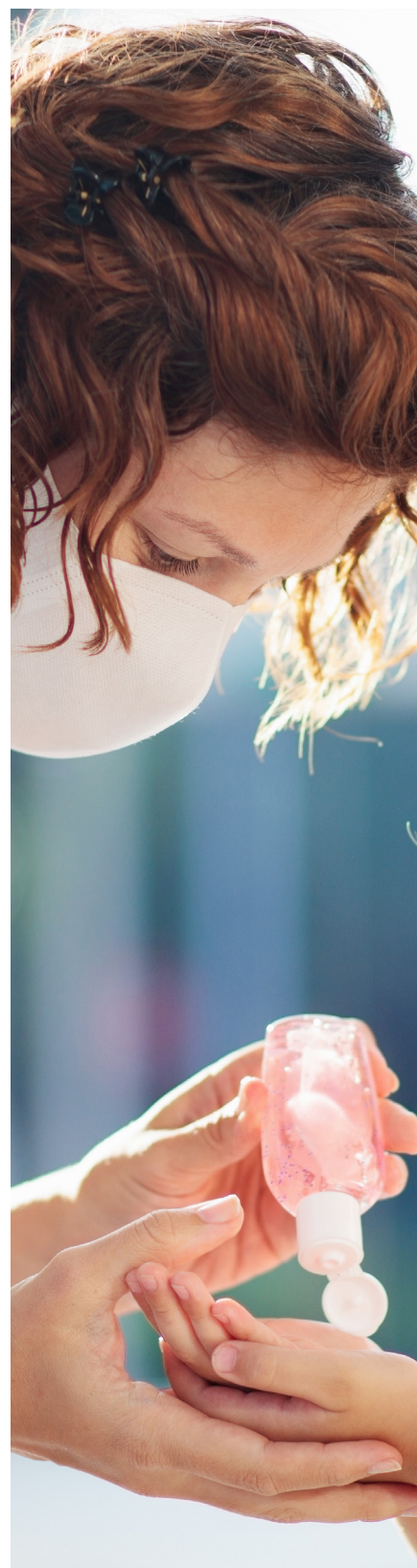
- The Family Conservancy
- Mid-America Regional Council
- Emergency Management Services
- Mid America Head Start
- Kansas Early Head Start
- Child Care Licensing Representatives
- United Way of Greater Kansas City
- AmeriCorps
- Child care providers representing center-based and family child care

Child Care Aware of Eastern Kansas

Child Care Aware of Eastern Kansas, a Child Care Aware of Kansas Child Care Resource & Referral partner, shared the snapshot of feedback from child care programs in Douglas County regarding their supply needs with Lawrence Chamber of Commerce officials. KU School of Pharmacy donated hand sanitizer. Staff were able to contact all child care programs in Douglas County to gather additional information about their need for hand sanitizer; 45 bottles were distributed by KU School of Pharmacy staff to meet this emerging need. One provider shared this: "Thank you so much! I really appreciate it! It's been crazy trying to get what we need."

Child Start, Inc.

Child Start, Inc., a Child Care Aware of Kansas Child Care Resource & Referral partner, provided staff to chair the Wichita Child Care Workgroup. The workgroup stems from the Wichita Coalition of Child Abuse Prevention. Their role is to share the needs of child care providers during COVID-19, and work across the area to bridge the gap of child care supply and demand (especially for ages 0-3), share important data, deliver presentations, and elevate child care solutions that involve and are influenced by workforce boards. They are dedicated to helping parents find quality child care in order to help prevent child abuse cases from rising. ●



Weaving a Stronger Future

BY JEVAN BREMBY

Kansas is on the cusp of a truly transformative moment for all things early childhood. This moment of great transformation, however, comes at a time when communities across Kansas and the world have been shaken. The pandemic has highlighted and, in many cases, worsened already significant disparities felt in the early childhood field.

Now, more than ever, early childhood leaders are asking, how do we better support those who are charged with the essential task of caring for our children? It is natural in times of great uncertainty to seek answers in the gaps we perceive. What is missing? What is broken? What needs fixing? But history has shown, and continues to show, that the people we are looking to serve often have the most insight.

In recent years, many in the early childhood field have shifted to strengths-based approaches to problem-solving and professional development. Strengths-based coaching and improvement models, such as Appreciative Inquiry and Simple Interactions, suggest that understanding what is already working, and then building upon those successes, leads to greater outcomes. These approaches empower individuals and organizations to promote safer, healthier, and happier environments for children regardless of their zip code or skin color.

Early childhood professionals use these and similar approaches in their programs every day. And every day, they experience success, fashioning creative solutions to problems big and small—often with very limited resources. They look to each child's strengths for insight on how best to support that child's growth and development.

At the heart of these approaches is a simple truth: while every provider and every child has unique strengths that might look, feel, and sound different, the strengths were already there. These strengths, and these differences, should be celebrated and understood as elements upon which to build.

While there is still much work to be done to support and strengthen our early childhood system, each of us can apply strengths-based approaches with our families, our friends, and our neighbors. Challenging one another to recognize and build upon what it is within ourselves that is successful will have lasting impacts throughout our communities—impacts that can outlast a pandemic.

**It is natural in times
of great uncertainty to
seek answers in the gaps
we perceive.**

I often have heard communities likened to tapestries. Tapestries are composed of multicolored strands and patterns woven together to create intricate, unique designs. Each design tells the story of the skill, care, and labor that went into its creation. Communities are no different. A community is a reflection of the skill, care, and labor that went into building it. Strengthening communities comes from honoring, highlighting, and increasing the connections between people and their diverse strengths. The wisdom and connectedness we gain from confronting and overcoming the challenges of today will help us build toward an even stronger tapestry tomorrow.

I look forward to the day when we can reflect on this time and be able to say that we chose to uplift one another when it mattered most, and built a stronger tapestry in Kansas. ●



JEVAN BREMBY

Research Project
Coordinator, University of
Kansas Center for Public
Partnerships & Research

Jevan Bremby is a Research Project Coordinator at the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research. His work includes supporting the Kansas Department for Children and Families in the development of Links to Quality, Kansas' Quality Recognition and Improvement System, and the Kansas Quality Network resource website. He is currently working toward his Ph.D. in Behavioral Psychology through the University of Kansas Department for Applied Behavioral Science.



MEANINGFUL VIRTUAL CONNECTION



HILARY KOEHN

Early Childhood
Professional

Hilary Koehn, BA in elementary education with specialization in early childhood, is an early childhood professional who believes strongly in providing high-quality, intentional support to early childhood staff, students, and families. In her former role as Early Childhood Lead for Wichita Public Schools, she provided leadership in program development and implementation of early childhood programs, especially Parents as Teachers and At-Risk PreK. Hilary is currently working for Kansas Parents as Teachers Association as the Quality Implementation Director.



CALLIE PEACE

Executive Director,
Kansas Parents as
Teachers Association
(KPATA)

Callie has been with Parents as Teachers for 19 years – first as a parent, then as a parent educator, and currently as the Executive Director. KPATA is a statewide nonprofit organization that supports early childhood education programs in Kansas. Callie is also a member of the USD 368 District Site Council, Linn County Children's Coalition and Miami County Connect Kansas and the class of 2018 Sunflower Advocacy Fellowship. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Family Life and Community Service from Kansas State University.

BY HILARY KOEHN & CALLIE PEACE

The current COVID-19 pandemic conditions have left us all feeling uncertain and overwhelmed. As professionals in the field of home-visiting, many of us have found ourselves questioning how we can successfully support the families that we serve as we struggle to feel a sense of control in our lives. A pivotal point for me was an encouraging social media post that simply stated — **NOT EVERYTHING IS CANCELED**. It was a gentle reminder that during a time of international crisis, we could find comfort in the fact that relationships, kindness and conversations were **NOT** being canceled. The answers to supporting families during this crisis could be found in what we already know to be best practice in our work with families every day.

- **Tailor services to meet the needs of individual families, based on feedback and goal-setting practices.**
- **Offer information, guidance, and support directly related to the home environment.**
- **Focus on the strengths of the family as a whole.**

As home visitors, we stopped physically visiting homes and turned on a live video feed into our own homes while we worked to continue supporting families. Full force ahead, with our vulnerability prevalent, we strived to build even stronger meaningful connections with the parents that we serve. We learned quickly the vulnerability and bravery it takes to allow a home visitor into our homes. We apologized for barking dogs, messy sinks and sometimes poor Internet connection. When the Internet connection is weak, the strength in the relationship between parents and home visitors shines. We gracefully accept that we have to meet at another time or we find a way to connect over the phone or text message.

The Parents as Teachers mantra that “parents are their child’s first and most important teacher” has been stated for decades... and it couldn’t be any truer during this time. Many parents have landed in the difficult position of simultaneously juggling parenting, their career, and the education of their children in the home environment.

In order to support the continuation of meaningful connections and advocate for our families, it was essential for us to develop a plan that balanced what we have done to this point with what we would need to do moving forward with virtual delivery. This included thinking about using common language with families, such as, “It was good to see you today,” and, “I noticed or observed you doing that with your child, and it was great to see,” while we were watching them through the window of a computer screen. We focused on family well-being factors with plenty of time allotted for discussion about struggles, fears and resources that are needed for support.

Parents were reminded frequently about the need for self-care while their parent educator was working to find time for self-care for themselves. Home visitors ensured that parents had access before, during and after the visit to Parents as Teachers parenting handouts and other materials that they needed to be successful. To guide the visit, we utilized multiple methods for engaging young children and parents through the computer screen, such as creating a virtual book that was complete with handouts, stories, and songs. Most importantly, we kept the need for authenticity and supportive relationships at the forefront of every visit plan. After all, the key to reaching families is, and will always be, meaningful connections. ●

Without Missing a Beat:

Meeting the Needs of Families in Southwest Kansas

BY KATRINA LOWRY

On March 16, Russell Child Development Center's offices closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All staff began working from home. Team members who typically traveled to see children and families in their homes across a 19-county service area were suddenly tasked with providing the same quality of services from their own living rooms.

They did this without missing a beat. Massive, wide-scale changes in service delivery were taken in stride; staff's focus was on the families they served and how to best support them as the world changed rapidly around everyone.

"Home visits" continued through virtual Zoom appointments, phone calls, text messages, and no-contact delivery of paperwork and other items. Team members worked with each family to identify the system of communication and interaction that worked best for them and solved countless technical issues, from no Internet to unreliable phone service, to lack of cell phone data. None of these things became a reason to discontinue services; if a family wanted to continue visits, staff found innovative ways to make that possible.

This is a partial list of service adaptations:

- Early Interventionists remotely observed and coached parents and children through screenings, helping parents put therapeutic routines into practice.
- Parent coaches used phone calls and texts to talk parents through tantrums, difficult meal times, and the emotional tolls of COVID-19.
- Home visitors discussed and observed developmental milestones remotely and completed developmental screenings.
- Early Interventionists completed full developmental assessments with young children and their families through computer monitors and speakers.
- Case managers assisted individuals and families with accessing resources necessary for health and well-being.



- Learn & Play Facilitators offered parent-child play groups via Zoom and provided materials through "porch drops."
- Food Program staff supported child care providers navigating during a pandemic while continuing to do socially distanced home visits when necessary.
- Administrative staff kept everything and everyone functioning by processing mail, phone calls, emails, faxes, and paperwork.
- Teams met weekly via Zoom to encourage connection and communication and problem-solve together.
- Supervisors worked with 19 county health departments, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services, the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund, and other agencies to ensure health regulations were followed and service outcomes continued to be met, despite changes in delivery.
- Staff educated parents on safe sleep through videos and online demonstrations, and babies continued to sleep safely and soundly.
- Online parenting groups were offered through Facebook Live; parents could ask questions, tag friends who were interested, and get connected to other parents.
- Families were provided with wireless ear buds and small tripods so communication with ABC Coaches could happen without disrupting parent-child interactions.

In addition to adapting the structure of services, staff also adapted to the ever-changing emotions of the children and families they served. They provided support as parents

recounted losing jobs, getting sick, children being hospitalized, the inability to provide food and medically necessary nutrition because of a lack of availability, fears about going outside, trepidation about COVID-19, and a myriad of complex, dynamic emotions and thoughts. Yes, staff connected families to resources and information; most importantly, staff connected to families and gave families the opportunity to connect with someone in the midst of isolation.

Describing things that were done to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic is relatively simple, but communicating the level of humanity and empathy embraced by RCDC staff is indescribable. During a worldwide crisis, staff "kept the main thing the main thing." And the main thing at RCDC is the children and families of Southwest Kansas – pandemic or not, we are here to make good things happen for them. ●



KATRINA LOWRY

Early Childhood Programs Director

Katrina Lowry is the Early Childhood Programs Director at Russell Child Development Center, overseeing the Triple P Positive Parenting Program, Learn & Play Program, Growing Together Program, and ABC Program in 19 Southwest Kansas counties. She lives in Garden City with her husband and their three dogs.

YOU ARE VALUED,
YOU ARE NEEDED,
YOU ARE
ESSENTIAL

Child Care Aware® of Kansas would like to extend a gracious **THANK YOU** to all child care programs across the state of Kansas. The past few months have been anything but easy on child care programs. Some have chosen to keep their programs open to continue loving and caring for Kansas children, and some had to make the very tough decision to close their doors temporarily and ride the COVID-19 wave in hopes of being able to reopen later. Whichever you chose, we are certain your decision did not come easy, and we know that your choice was made for the best interest of the children in your care.

The long hours, the tough decisions, the adversity that you have gone through and what you will go through due to the pandemic have not been overlooked. At Child Care Aware, we see you and we are cheering you on.

In learning and adapting to whatever your “normal” is, please know that you play a vital role in the early care, education and development needs of children. The work that you do on a daily basis has a ripple effect all over Kansas.

You are valued, you are needed, you are essential.

Child Care Aware of Kansas strives to create a lasting relationship with child care programs and providers all over the state. If you have used our services in the past or are currently using our services, we are extremely grateful you have chosen us to support you along your child care journey.

**You can find all of our resources for child care programs on our website:
www.ks.childcareaware.org**

Thank you for being flexible.

Thank you for adjusting your hours.

Thank you for pushing through with a smile and an encouraging attitude.

Thank you for continuing to put the children first.

Thank you for staying positive in a time surrounded by negativity.

Thank you for being a place of familiarity for children in a time of complete uncertainty.

Thank you for keeping the children in your care safe, loved, and healthy.

Thank you for all the work you have done outside of business hours.

Thank you for being resilient.

Thank you for being patient.



The Reason Behind the Behavior

BY CHILD CARE AWARE® OF KANSAS

Nothing makes a parent feel more like a failure than getting that dreaded behavior report from child care or preschool saying that their child bit or hit someone today. Suddenly they become 'biter's Mom' or 'the Mom of the bad kid.' Most parents are embarrassed and at a total loss of what to do when they are notified their kid is hurting others. The possibility of expulsion, from a child care or preschool setting, is the reality that many parents experience when their child presents these types of unwanted behavior.

As that parent, you may first ask yourself why your child is acting this way and what you can do to immediately make it stop. There are many reasons why children bite and/or hit. It is critically important to recognize the REASON behind the behavior. Our children often act like little cavemen, but they don't often set out to intentionally hurt others. Discovering the reason for their aggressive behavior is the first step in prevention.

Young children bite and hit for many reasons. Overstimulation, teething, hunger, lack of rest, frustration, and lagging language skills can all lead to biting. Some children only bite or hit at home while others only use aggressive behavior in group settings.

Know the W's to this behavior: Who? What? Where? Why?

- **WHO?** Is the child under 2 years of age? Though still developmentally expected, the behavior will most likely quit on its own. If the child is older than 2, watch for patterns and environmental clues.
- **WHAT?** Is the child fighting over particular toys? Gather as much information as possible to try to prevent future aggression. Help children with their lacking language skills. "I know you are mad because Johnny has your toy. Let's ask if we can have a turn." Or, "I know you are frustrated, let me help you with this problem." Remove toys that commonly cause issues and stay close to intervene.
- **WHERE?** Does your child bite/hit only at home, child care, or preschool? Look for clues that might lead up to the behavior.
- **WHY?** This is tough, but rule out the obvious, such as, the child is tired, teething, etc. Remind him/her it is never OK to hurt someone. Provide other things for your child to chew on.

How we react to this behavior is like walking a tight rope on roller skates. Too much negative attention to the aggressor can backfire, reinforcing the unwanted behavior. The behavior cannot be ignored, either. Simple responses delivered in a calm, but assertive voice is key. "No biting/hitting. That hurts. I know you are mad/tired/frustrated, but biting/hitting is not allowed. You hurt your friend."

Keep it short and simple then turn your attention on the victim and away from the guilty party. Comfort while restating that biting hurts, hitting is not allowed, and I am sorry you are hurt. Focusing on the child who was hurt will model empathy and reinforce that hurting others will not result in positive or negative attention. In instances of biting, you might get advice to bite the child back to show them it hurts. Children this age are not cognitively equipped to understand this and this will send mixed messages. The behavior will not decrease.

Once you believe you have uncovered the W's of your child's chomping, build strategies for preventing future incidents. If your child bites, they need some type of consequence. For younger children, redirect them to a different area. Keep your responses concise with a firm tone. Continue to model social skills and use appropriate language to avoid situations that might lead to biting. ●

THANKFULNESS & GRATITUDE



BY REVA WYWADIS

I recently saw a post on Facebook that read: “Can we all agree that in 2015 not a single person got the answer correct to ‘Where do you see yourself five years from now?’” The irony of this truly made me laugh out loud! Most of us (or perhaps all of us) never expected to experience a pandemic in our lifetimes, and the lessons we have learned from the past several months will forever influence our thoughts and actions.

I don’t know how to begin to express my heartfelt thanks to the early childhood professionals.

During this season, I have been continually reminded of the importance of expressing thanks and gratitude to the people I encounter. From the person in the drive-through lane, to the police officer directing traffic, to the stocker at the grocery store I frequent ... each deserves acknowledgment for the work they have done, and continue to do, during this unprecedented time. As a nation, we have celebrated many of the people deemed “essential workers” during a time when many businesses closed operations. Yet many in the early childhood field continued to go to work, day after day, with little or no special accolades — doing what they do so that others can go to work. They

rose to the challenge of navigating health guidance and regulations that changed, literally, by the day. They did their very best to meet the needs of the children and families who relied on them while keeping both the children and their staff healthy and safe. They celebrated both the big and small victories in their world, including finding the necessities for basic operations such as soap, paper towels, and the coveted toilet paper! And now they are being challenged to find ways to support the fragile emotional needs of both children and their parents who are experiencing the aftermath and ramifications of this virus on their families and our society as a whole.

It feels overwhelming to think about how to express gratitude to the people around me for the sacrifices they have made over the past few months. As a leader, I have tried to model calm and confidence, even during those times when things seemed chaotic and uncertain. I have strived to stay positive and present — to think ahead and plan ahead while not losing sight of today and my own “here and now” needs as well as the needs of my work family. Quite frankly, I haven’t always been successful in expressing the deep thanks I feel for each and every act of kindness I have witnessed by my co-workers, my friends, my family, or by complete strangers. I don’t know how to begin to express my heartfelt thanks to the early childhood professionals who provide a

safe, stable and loving environment for the young children in their care. I am deeply humbled to think about the sacrifices, large and small, that have been made to make the world a better place for others.

Although I look forward to putting this “season” behind me, I know that it has forever changed me. It has helped me realize what’s really important in my life, as I strive to slow things down a bit so that I can stay present and savor the moments and relationships that I have been blessed with! I’d like to think that I see myself calmer, healthier and more thankful five years from now, if I can continue to live with thankfulness and gratitude. ●



REVA WYWADIS

Executive Director,
Child Care Aware®
of Eastern Kansas

Reva Wywadis is the Executive Director of Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas. She began her career in the early care and education field as a family child care provider and has spent the past 20 years advocating for high-quality child care through various roles in the child care resource and referral network. Reva has a Bachelor’s degree in Organizational Management & Leadership and a Master’s degree in Management. Reva loves hanging out with her family at the ballpark or on their backyard patio, and spending time with her husband, Walt. Reva says there is nothing better than taking in the beautiful Kansas scenery from the back of their Harley!



The **Our Tomorrows** Project:

Kansas Voices During COVID-19

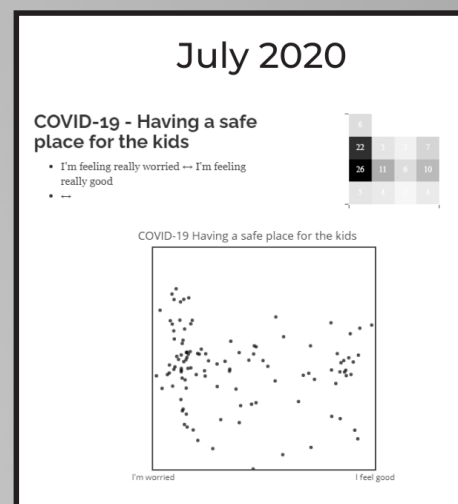
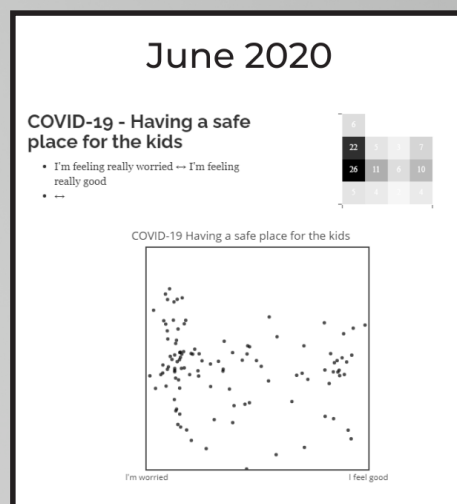
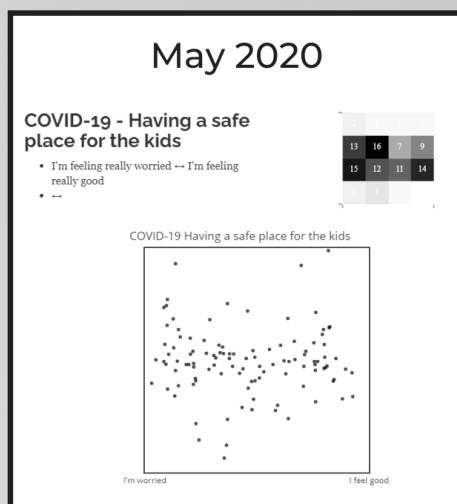
BY ARIANA NASRAZADANI & KEIL EGGERS

Our Tomorrows was established in 2019 to help move the needle in a complex early childhood system by using stories to help people make better decisions. A network of community organizations, state agencies, and citizen journalists collect stories on a continuous basis and contributed to a statewide story bank hosted by the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund. Since the launch of Our Tomorrows 2.0 in March, more than 1,500 stories have been shared by Kansans to shape the government's response to the challenges of the pandemic.

During the COVID-19 crisis, the Story Bank has become an important tool to monitor how families' experiences are changing over time, pick up on early warnings that indicated larger trends to come, and to provide inspiration for changes based on how people are naturally adapting to the current challenges. These capabilities are an example of anticipatory innovation, where policymakers test policies based on real-time feedback on how Kansas families are experiencing change and quickly adapting to shocks like COVID-19. The success of the Our Tomorrows approach to aiding decision-making at the state level was featured in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Global Trends 2020 report on Innovative Responses to the COVID-19 Crisis (Page 27).

Our Tomorrows responded to the spread of the novel coronavirus by creating the COVID-19 Module to track Kansans' concern about the virus' impact on their lives. The module allows respondents to report on how they are feeling about meeting their families' basic needs like paying for their rent/mortgage, getting tested for COVID-19, having a safe place for children to play, getting treated for COVID-19, and maintaining their job/steady income. The module has allowed Our Tomorrows to track how Kansans' needs are shifting over time. For example, at the beginning of the crisis, many people were wor-





ried about getting tested for COVID-19, but over time, as the disease has spread and overburdened healthcare systems, Kansans have become more concerned with maintaining their incomes, paying rent, and getting treated.

Core Concerns: Child Care & Education

In addition to the many other stressors of the pandemic, parents are now having to grapple with how to create a safe place for children to learn and play. As the state takes measures to rebuild the economy and reopen, many respondents shared stories about their concerns regarding returning to work and the availability of child care. The charts above illustrate how the concern about ensuring the availability of a safe space for kids of parents and caregivers shifted from May to July. In May, respondents' concern fell across the spectrum somewhat evenly. However, as the summer progressed and the impact of the virus mounted on the school system, more respondents began to express worry over the availability of care and safe spaces for their children.

The concern parents and caregivers have does not stop at whether schools and child care settings are open and available; many respondents shared stories about their concerns regarding the facilitation of their children's education, specifically the general lack of technology and personal capacity to fulfill distance learning requirements. In rural areas especially, gaps in technological infrastructure persist, and current infrastructure is unable to meet the demands of increased Internet use. Many families lack the devices needed for quality distance learning, particularly in homes with multiple children.

Harnessing the Power of Stories for Change

The experiences shared by Kansas families are important and have the power to create meaningful change. Stories shared with Our Tomorrows have already informed policy and funding allocations as decisionmakers have reviewed bi-weekly scans provided by Our Tomorrows. Some highlights of emerging needs and state responses include:

- Recommendation for SPARKS funding to provide health care for child care providers who have suffered loss of enrollment due to the virus
- Sensemaking workshops with several Kansas counties to help allocate CARES act funding in domains such as education, health and family services, business stabilization, housing, and much more
- The Child Care Community Action Labs provided small grants to child care providers in need and gathered stories on the early needs of child care providers during the pandemic
- Focus on expanding broadband and Internet connectivity across the state to better facilitate distance learning

If you'd like to contribute to this innovative effort, share your experience on the Our Tomorrows SenseMaker survey here: <https://ourtomorro.ws/KCCTF>

Charts provided by Jenny Flinders



ARIANA NASRAZADANI

Research Project Coordinator, University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships & Research

Ariana Nasrazadani is a Research Project Coordinator at the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research. She works on multiple projects including Our Tomorrows, and is dedicated to social justice and establishing equity for underrepresented voices. She received her MA in Global and International Studies from the University of Kansas in 2017.



KEIL EGGERS

SenseMaker Practitioner

Keil Eggers is a SenseMaker Practitioner who works with stories to navigate complex problems and develop creative solutions. He worked at the Center for Public Partnerships and Research (CPR) at the University of Kansas, where he led several SenseMaker projects, including the Our Tomorrows project.

When Little People are Overwhelmed by Big Emotions



BY KIM LAWSON

Children are not born with the skills to self-regulate. We instinctively help babies soothe by rocking, bouncing, back rubs, and singing. As children grow into toddlers, we assume they can “calm down,” “quit throwing a fit,” or “knock it off” by simply being told to do so. Just like we did when they were babies, we need to continue to help them soothe themselves.

Children lack language and techniques to properly express their emotions. Perhaps the simplest strategy you can teach a child is how to label their feelings. A great way to introduce labeling emotions is through the use of children’s literature.

In almost every one of a child’s favorite books, the main character has some type of problem. Take this opportunity to talk to a child about the character’s feelings. Have children empathize with the character. If the character is scared, have children show their scared face and ask them how this situation would make them feel. While reading, talk about feelings and how children can express their feelings appropriately. Ask them what they would do if they were faced with the same problem. Children will eagerly tell you what the character is doing wrong, then you can use this teachable moment to talk about emotions.

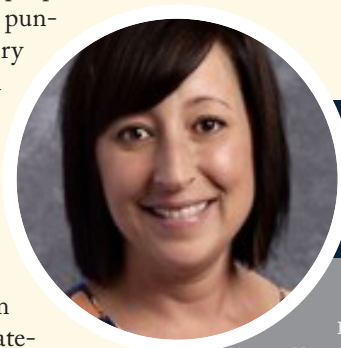
Once they are better equipped to label their feelings, how do we begin to help them cope with these big emotions? First and most importantly we must remain calm ourselves. You have probably heard the quote by L. R. Knost “When little people are overwhelmed by big emotions, it’s our job to share our calm, not join their chaos.” We cannot help children learn to self-regulate if we add our emotions to the mix.

Validate children feelings. Say “I understand you are frustrated,” or “I know that you must feel sad.” Create a safe space for children to go to process their emotions. Set up a ‘calm-down’ or ‘peace corner’ in your home or child care setting. Design an area that has the specific purpose of self-regulating. This is not a punishment, but instead their very own spot where they can get themselves to a state where they can make better choices.

Give children a choice of things that might help get them learn to cope with their strong feelings and calm themselves down. Provide materials such as: sensory bottles, figits, playdough, stress balls, weighted lap pads, books, or stuffed animals. Model how to

use each item before children need a visit to the calm down area.

Once a child learns this is a helpful place, turn and leave them be. Give them a chance to work through big emotions before you talk to them. When they initially go to the peace corner, they are not in the right mind frame to talk. Be patient. This safe space, calm-down center, peace corner, whatever you might end up calling it, will probably not be successful after one visit. It may work one day and not the other. However, with practice and repeated use, children will be able to go find their safe space to self-regulate and eventually get to a point where they can talk about their feelings. ●



KIM LAWSON

Preschool Teacher,
Bennington Grade School

Kim Lawson has a degree in Elementary Education from Fort Hays State University. She is currently the Preschool teacher at Bennington Grade School.

Kansas Public Libraries Get Creative

BY ANNE FOOTE

When the coronavirus came to Kansas in the Spring of 2020, public libraries were unsettled, just as were other businesses and organizations. But, recognizing their key role in providing information and services to Kansans, library staff members swiftly pivoted to use virtual means to provide as much information and as many activities as possible.

Of immediate concern was continuing services to families with young children. Librarians began to offer online activities for families, emphasizing activities that whole families could enjoy together. After all, toddlers aren't logging on by themselves! Many families got to know their librarians in new ways as library staff were streaming storytimes from their living rooms, their porches, their backyards — and their farms. Some great storyteller-farmers include Susan Meuller at Herington, Linda Clay at Lawrence and Amy Bayes at Newton.

Libraries also offered online preschool dance parties and simple STEM/STEAM activities using household materials. Some libraries were able to adjust contracts with presenters to reschedule large group presentations online. In Plainville, librarian Cheryl Hageman was inspired to make behind-the-scenes videos about local businesses. Children loved seeing “their” librarian go behind the swinging doors at the grocery store and watching her explore the stockroom of the town's hardware store.

Libraries shifted toward outdoor events, too, offering socially distanced storytimes, shows and concerts on their lawns, in parks, and at local band shells. Families were encouraged to bring—and appropriately space-blankets. Libraries also offered story strolls, where books were deconstructed and placed on stands in parks or in shop windows—families follow the walk and read at each stop. In Hays, public library staff created chalk obstacle courses at parks around town.

As soon as it was safely possible to do so, library staff returned to their buildings to prepare to reopen. They began to brainstorm how they could further serve families. Many libraries offered take-home packets with crafts, math and STEM activities that families could pick up or have delivered. Some libraries followed this up with sessions where librarians and families worked on the activities as a group.

When the pandemic hit, one looming concern was summer reading programs—the highlight of youth services for nearly every public library. Due to the virus, libraries needed to pivot towards providing online reading logs and rewards. Some libraries had already been doing this, but the State Library of Kansas recognized that most libraries would need some assistance and contracted with Reader Zone, an online reading program, making it available to any library in the state to use with their patrons. The State Library intends to offer the online program again in summer 2021.

Most Kansas libraries plan to continue their increased level of online and take-home activities, recognizing the difficulty of maintaining safe social distance with young children—but also recognizing the success they've had in providing information, activities and a social connection for families through these uncertain times. ●



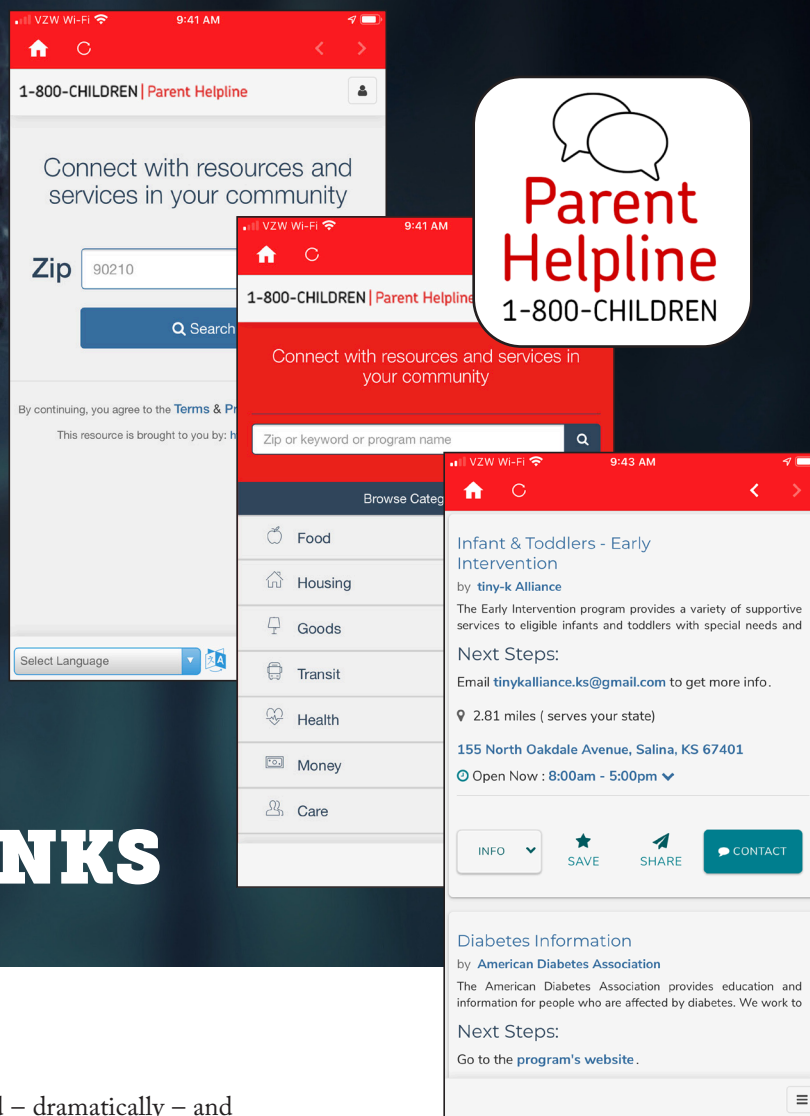
ANNA FOOTE, MLIS

Youth & School Services
Consultant for the NE
Kansas Library System

Anna Foote, MLIS, is Youth and School Services Consultant for the Northeast Kansas Library System, an agency that supports public, school and college libraries in 14 counties. A professional librarian with more than 10 years' experience, she has worked in the field of youth, teen and family development since 1994. Anna is passionate about serving families' educational, social and economic needs through libraries.



New Resource Highlight: 1-800-CHILDRENKS



BY VICKY ROPER

The outbreak of the coronavirus has changed our world – dramatically – and rapidly. Although the risk to the physical health of young children appears to be low, their risk of experiencing child abuse and neglect in times of extreme stress and uncertainty is quite high.

Measures taken to decrease the spread of the virus have the unintended consequences of social isolation, loss of income and increased parenting stress – all of which are risk factors for occurrences of child abuse and neglect.

Families need to be connected to resources in times of stress. The Kansas Children's Service League, which serves as the Kansas chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America, can help with resources by phone or online.

Through the 1-800-CHILDREN phone line, parents can speak to a trained specialist to get help, resources and support without judgment. The phone line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and calls can be received in hundreds of languages.

Please note this is NOT a crisis line or a suicide line. The suicide helpline can be reached at 1-800-273-8255.

Families also can email questions to 1800children@kcs.org, or download the free 1800CHILDRENKS app. This new app connects Kansas families and professionals to helpful resources in their local communities in all 105 counties.

The app was developed with funding from the Preschool Development Grant, and can be downloaded from the Apple store or from the Google Play store

To learn more about the roles you can play in support of children and families in Kansas, visit the Kansas Children's Service League website at www.kcs.org or call 1-800-CHILDREN. ●

Download the App

Apple store:

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/id1526331280>

Google Play store:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.auntbertha.webapp.kcs>



VICKY ROPER

Prevent Child Abuse
Kansas Director

Vicky Roper is the Prevent Child Abuse Kansas Director for the Kansas Children's Service League, which serves as the Kansas chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America.

Thank you! ♥

Thank you to the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies that serve all 105 Kansas counties.

Thanks for being a listening ear to families looking for child care in the chaos of a global pandemic.

Thanks for reaching out to check on child care providers who needed your support and a little kindness.

Thanks for being a steady, committed presence for early education partners as they process equipment and supply requests and rise to the everchanging challenges.

Every day, CCR&Rs work to maintain and increase the supply of high-quality child care in Kansas. CCR&Rs collect, analyze, and report on important child care data; improve the quality and safety of child care programs through technical assistance and professional development; deliver free child care referrals and education so families can make informed child care choices; and support businesses with tips on how to accommodate the needs of employees with young families.

Well done, Kansas CCR&Rs!



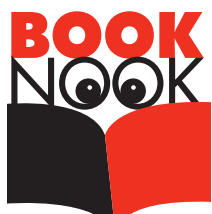
**CHILD
START**



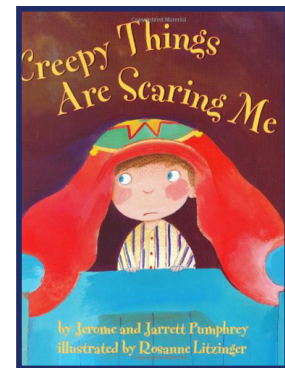
the *family* conservancy

TURNING THE WORLD ON ITS SIDE

BY ALICE EBERHART-WRIGHT



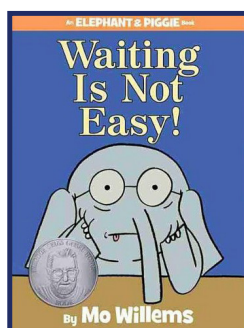
Stop the world! I want to get off! That's what it feels like this year when people all over the world are being shaken up in our glass globe. Everyone feels it, so what can we do? Read! Reading is a healing tool for every age. We even begin reading to babies prenatally because we know they can hear voices and it soothes them.



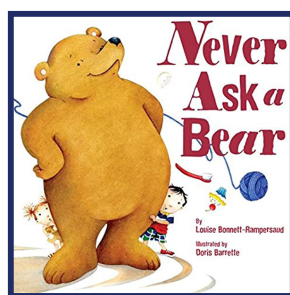
I went into the library after the lockdown period for the pandemic and immediately saw the sculpture of a little girl reading to a dog. The child was wearing a mask. *Carl's Masquerade*, by Alexandra Day. That's the book where everyone wears masks, except the baby and Carl, the big black dog. It's fun in this book. It's not fun in real life. But now we see people in masks all over the place. Talk to children about when masks are fun and now, how they are protective. Allow yourselves and your children to talk about what is happening and get them to share their thoughts and observations. For an art activity, make masks. And be sure to spend some time talking about the tunnel of love that the baby and Carl have come through during this time of masquerades.

For some children, Halloween masks are scary. Face painting takes the place of masks when that happens. *Creepy Things Are Scaring Me*, by Jerome and Jarrett Pumphrey, and illustrated by Roseanne Litzinger, deals with a child's nighttime fears, but I would use it to talk about the creepy scary things that are happening right now. Schedules that change all the time because of the pandemic; different people taking care of children; parents out of work and worried about money. Child abuse can go up because of the stresses felt by the adults. Children's feelings might be ignored. This book is good for the stressed-out adults because it illustrates how important it is to continue to reassure children about the simplest things, to make up stories that show finding a way to comfort and kiss away the worries for a moment will be healing for everyone.





Waiting Is Not Easy!, by Mo Willems, resonates with all of us, big and small. There are so many things we can't do that we love to do, that we are used to doing, that repeatedly make us groan longer and louder. Elephant knocks Piggy over with his groans before patiently pulling himself together to say in a normal voice, "I am waiting." But too much patience is called for, and both adults and children reading this book together will be given the opportunity to shriek after they are sick of just groaning. At the end of the day that has grown darker and darker, there is a burst of starlight in a dark sky, and they can say, "This was worth the wait." What a great book to elicit specific stories of what children have had a hard time waiting for.



Finally let's end with a little humor. *Never Ask a Bear*, by Louise Bonnett-Rampersaud, and illustrated by Doris Barrette, is the perfect book that lets us take a break from following all the rules that are out there to try to keep us alive and kicking during a pandemic. We just need a big bear to make a few huge messes and not get in trouble. He's not an angry bear and he doesn't even get punished. He just does all the things people aren't allowed to do while we watch amazed, then tell him to take his ball and go home. This would be a wonderful book with which to share stories about rules that individuals don't like.

So, my advice is to cut your own stress by reading books and then read books to all those around you who can't read. And as the child care provider in the library replied to me when I asked her how she and her children were doing, "I just love to listen. They all have stories to tell." ●



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Kansas Reads to Preschoolers Week

Kansas Reads to Preschoolers committee
is pleased to announce that the 2020 title is:

Groovy Joe: Ice Cream & Dinosaurs ***by Eric Litwin***

Because we are unsure what story times will look like in November due to COVID-19, one of the factors for choosing this year's Kansas Reads to Preschoolers Month title is that it is available digitally on Bookflix, which all Kansas residents can access for free through the State Library's website.

Source: Kansas State Library

For more information, visit <https://kslib.info/1017/Kansas-Reads-to-Preschoolers>

