

A publication of Child Care Aware® of Kansas

KansasChild

Winter 2020 Volume 18, Issue 5

Parent Involvement

The Backbone of Head Start

**BRIGHT
FUTURE**
FOR KANSAS KIDS

**LINKED
TOGETHER**



**Big Emotions,
Supermarket
Meltdowns!**

IN THIS ISSUE

Connecting
with Families

The needs of families are complex. They need support at home, in the community, at work, and in schools. The importance of a well coordinated, comprehensive structure that is integral in meeting family needs is critical to the future of the more than 160,000 children needing child care in Kansas. Clearly, we must pay attention to the needs of the entire family for these children to be successful.

Recently, Child Care Aware has had detailed conversations with local and regional businesses, asking them about their employees' child care needs. These business and industry leaders understand the direct correlation between their profits, employees' satisfaction, and child care capacity in communities. Many could benefit from adding intentional workplace policies to meet the needs of working families, especially when it comes to child care.

This is not a concern just for Kansas companies. The US Chamber of Commerce Foundation recently began tackling this weighty issue. The chamber is using its voice to draw attention to the lack of child care in our nation -- a challenge that is crippling parents in the workforce. The chamber is working toward solution-driven ideas. If you listen to the news, you will hear (probably almost daily) stories about the lack of child care and the problems it is creating for our nation.



LEADELL EDIGER

Executive Director
Child Care Aware® of Kansas

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Leadell".



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On the Cover
Kiya Green, age 2, daughter
of Kristi and Daniel Green of
Salina, enjoys some outdoor
time while at child care.
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Kansas Child is intended to provide a forum for the discussion of child care and early education issues and ideas. We hope to provoke thoughtful discussions within the field and to help those outside the field gain a better understanding of priorities and concerns. The views expressed by the authors are not necessarily those of Child Care Aware® of Kansas or its sponsors.

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The Kansas Family Engagement and Partnership Standards for Early Childhood:

A Framework for Building Family Engagement Capacity

BY BARBARA GANNAWAY

The Kansas Family Engagement and Partnership Standards for Early Childhood were developed in 2015. They were designed to promote the implementation of family engagement policies and practices at the state level and local levels. The standards were built on the belief that developing meaningful relationships with families is the cornerstone to engaging families.

Five standards were carefully chosen to provide the framework for family engagement in early childhood:

FAMILIES AS...

Foundation

Communicators

Advocates

Partners

Community Members

After the standards were developed, 10 counties were selected to develop plans to implement them. The project, titled, The Kansas Coalition for Effective Family Engagement, was funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

At the conclusion of the grant all counties reported an increase in building family engagement capacity. While any of the projects could have been made newsworthy, one was selected to be summarized in the recent W.K. Kellogg Foundation's publication: "Cultivating a Community of Champions for Children Through Transformative Family Engagement: Unleashing the Power of Anywhere, Anytime Learning."

"Family Engagement also can take place at the kitchen table, or while a parent unwinds on the sofa with a phone or laptop in hand. In Topeka, KS, the Parent Power program enables parents to connect online to the Pine Ridge Prep Preschool. Pine Ridge Prep isn't your average preschool. It's located in a public housing complex, where it offers Head Start and early education to children who might not otherwise have access to either. With Parent Power, families log into Google Docs to record how they've connected with their kids. They can keep a reading log, watch instructional videos and post pictures in Facebook fashion of what they've done with their family.

Parent Power offers an easy way to document new activities and recognize the favorite things that families have done all along. Families can earn points and are honored with a Parent Power party at the semester's end. For such an inexpensive program, the return on



investment has been impressive. Pine Ridge Prep teachers report increases in student attendance, parent-teacher conference participation and parent volunteerism – all indicators of stronger relationships between home and school.”

In 2019, Kansas was given the opportunity through new federal grant funding to engage in a collaborative effort to shape the state’s direction for early childhood. Funding was provided to support activities to maximize parent choice and knowledge of early care and education options, share best practices among early childhood providers, and improve the overall quality of early childhood services. The Kansas Family Engagement and Partnership Standards provide the framework to support these efforts. As a result, the opportunity to revise them and add best practices was made available. During the spring and summer, a group of early childhood professionals gathered to complete the work. Each standard now includes a definition followed by a set of best practices described as, “What it looks like in practice.”

The following provides an overview of the standards and best practices.



FAMILIES AS FOUNDATION:

All families are recognized and promoted as their child’s first and most influential teacher.

- Families provide stability in daily experiences for their children.
- Families provide nurturing environments for their children.
- Families promote learning for their children.
- Children have good physical health as appropriate for their growth.

What does it look like in practice?

- Families provide a safe environment in which children experience continuity of care.
 - Connect families with resources that enable basic necessities in a consistent home.
 - Encourage development of strong caregiver-child bonds that lead to consistent nurturing relationships with primary caregivers and other adults.
- Families ensure that the health care and nutritional needs of children are met.
 - Promote the family’s well-being to ensure children’s health care and social-emotional needs are met.



BARBARA GANNAWAY

Assistant Director, Kansas Parent Information Resource Center

Barbara has been an educator for 34 years serving as a teacher, school counselor, administrator and educational consultant in both public and independent schools. Barbara received her Bachelor’s Degree in elementary education from Centre College in Danville, KY, and her Master’s in school counseling from Kansas State University.





FAMILIES AS COMMUNICATORS:

Early childhood providers and families have effective and ongoing communication.

- Programs and families consistently initiate communication and share knowledge that is timely and facilitated through multiple methods.
- Practices, supports and resources are responsive

to the cultural, ethnic, racial, language and socioeconomic characteristics and preference of families and their communities.

What does it look like in practice?

- Families, educators, practitioners and the community engage in consistent, two-way communication.
 - Establish multiple modes of communication to share information.
 - Ensure communication between families, educators, practitioners and the community is continuous and fluid.
 - Engage parents in conversations where child assessment data are shared, and parents learn about children's progress.
- Families are able to comfortably and confidently communicate with educators, practitioners and the community.
 - Introduce families to those who will be working with the family and child.
 - Provide families with interpreters for effective communication.
 - Make written documents available in multiple languages.
 - Communicate with families and their children in the context of their language, culture and traditions.
- Families have a shared understanding of desired program outcomes.
 - Have procedures in place to communicate with all families.
 - Provide orientation to the program for families.
 - Encourage family participation by including an open-door policy, family volunteers, and participation opportunities.
 - Integrate families' traditions and culture into instructional practices, events and activities.



FAMILIES AS ADVOCATES:

Families actively engage as an advocate and decision-maker for their child.

- Families have opportunities that promote informed options and decision-making.
- Programs and communities engage families by providing opportunities to be involved in program

leadership and decision-making.

- Programs and communities empower families to be advocates.
- Families are aware of resources for selecting and accessing needed services.

What does it look like in practice?

- Families have access to community supports and resources.
 - Utilize a needs assessment to determine supports and resources that will benefit families.
 - Connect families with relevant supports and resources.
 - Support families in navigating services.
- Families are supported by community collaborations.
 - Provide networks of support.
 - Facilitate referrals to additional health or educational services.
 - Identify and address gaps in services and unmet needs in the community.
- Families are involved within the community based on their interests and goals.
 - Create safe and respectful communities that foster engagement and participation.
 - Encourage families to participate in volunteer opportunities and community service projects based on their interests and goals.



FAMILIES AS PARTNERS:

Successful partnerships exist between families and professionals based upon mutual trust and respect.

- Early childhood professionals use child and family strengths as a basis for engaging families.

- Families promote learning for their children.

What does it look like in practice?

- Families have strong partnerships and trusting relationships among educators, practitioners and the community.
 - Initiate relationships with families that are receptive, responsive and respectful.
 - Offer formal and informal opportunities for families to build an agreed-upon and collaborative relationship.
- Families, educators, practitioners and the community are equal partners in decision-making that affects children and families.
 - Involve families through the use of feedback tools to inform procedures and strategic planning.
 - Include families in the creation of policies, practices and programs.



FAMILIES AS COMMUNITY MEMBERS:

Families are active participants in their communities and connect to resources and services.

- Comprehensive services are available, affordable and accessible.
- Communities provide broad supports for families.

- Families live in safe and stable environments.

What does it look like in practice?

- Families have access to community supports and resources.
 - Utilize a needs assessment to determine supports and resources that will benefit families.
 - Connect families with relevant supports and resources.
 - Support families in navigating services.
- Families are supported by community collaborations.
 - Provide networks of support.
 - Facilitate referrals to needed additional health or educational services.
 - Identify and address gaps in services and unmet needs in the community.
- Families are involved within the community based on their interests and goals.
 - Create safe and respectful communities that foster engagement and participation.
 - Encourage families to participate in volunteer opportunities and community service projects based on their interests and goals. ●



In the fall of 2019 a resource was created and can be accessed online at <http://bit.ly/388pjrV>.

Printed copies may be ordered by calling the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center at 1-866-711-6711.

BUILDING TRUST & ENGAGING DADS

BY KATRINA MINTER

The Family Conservancy is focused on helping children take advantage of the amazing opportunities that exist early in life. For the past 20 years, The Family Conservancy (TFC) has offered parenting education at two Kansas City, Kan., public housing authority sites. While the population of these communities has experienced dramatic transformation, the parents' need for support has remained.

The families who attend these classes experience unique and wide-ranging disadvantages. Many distrust social service providers, having been disappointed or frustrated by programs that didn't live up to their promises. Additionally, with an influx of refugees in recent years, language-related challenges have become more prevalent.

In many ways, the program's success and staying power can be credited to the constant presence of Sabrina Boyd. Boyd's ability to relate to families and her unrelenting commitment to improvement have allowed her to establish trust with the often isolated communities at the housing authority site. Despite participants speaking more than 10 different languages, Boyd has managed to build bonds with the diverse families that attend her classes.

One of the most significant program improvements happened in 2009. After years of noticing that fathers were much less engaged and often allowed women to ask all the questions, Boyd and the team at The Family Conservancy decided to pilot a class specifically designed to help fathers understand their role.

The new class aimed to teach new fathers things most of them needed to learn. Classes covered topics such as providing infant care, understanding child development, safe sleep, bonding with children, psychological trauma, and the importance of father involvement.

For Milton, an early participant, these lessons proved to be a lifesaver. Milton attended parenting classes for about a year before moving out of the area. Shortly after the move, Milton's wife tragically died. In a new community, Milton was all his two boys had.

Visiting family for the holiday's last winter, Milton stopped by Boyd's classroom. With him were his kids, now 10 and 7. Milton gushed as he told Boyd about all the amazing things his kids were doing. He also said that he didn't like to think about where his family would be without the information she had taught him.

In addition to teaching fathers about child development, these classes have evolved to expose participants to potential career opportunities and a support system for each other, especially in a community where violence is prevalent and families often say, "This is just the way it is."

For the past several years, The Family Conservancy has partnered with Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL), which has been able to provide a male facilitator to assist the class. "Having a male teacher has been a big advantage," said Boyd. "He is able to offer invaluable, male perspective."

These classes are always evolving and improving, but the value of this effort to engage fathers is apparent. Dads who attend the parenting classes have become more involved, not just in class, but in their child's life. ●



KATRINA MINTER

Manager of Community Programs, The Family Conservancy

Katrina Minter holds a Bachelor's degree in social work from Missouri Western State College. Her experience includes 10 years directing child care programs and the last 22 years in the nonprofit sector with The Family Conservancy in Kansas City, Kan., where she is the manager of Community Programs. Katrina is the mother to 2 stepdaughters and Nana to 4 beautiful grandchildren. She enjoys spending time with her husband, family and friends. Her passion is making a difference in the lives and children and families.

Creating Workplace Environments that Support Kansas Families

BY VICKY ROPER

In September, 2019, the unemployment rate in Kansas was 3.2 percent, and the national rate was 3 percent. Those are amongst the lowest rates in our history. Yet there are nearly 50,000 jobs still open in our state.

Our state's future depends on the success of our workforce. Workforce and talent are currently considered to be the primary threat to our ability to grow. We need to keep the workers we have and find more. It's an economic development issue. Kansans throughout our history have valued hard work, family and the dream of economic mobility. But as our latest workers are moving into the workplace to fill jobs, they need support in order to be successful.

In our state, we have a long tradition of working together to solve tough problems. And if we hope to have a prosperous future, we need to apply that innovative thinking to these challenges to our workforce. Creating an economy that works for all means supporting economy-boosting jobs.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) believes it is just good business to prioritize actions that can increase competitive advantage and improve the bottom line. It encourages the development of family-friendly workplace policies and practices. Potential benefits to the employer would be to help recruit and retain the best possible employees, reduce employee absenteeism, turnover, health care costs and on-the-job injuries, and increase employee satisfaction, productivity, commitment to the company, and performance. This strategy also will contribute to developing the future workforce and improving the company's public image.

Examples of CDC-researched and -recommended family-friendly workplace policies and practices include:

- Support nursing mothers by allowing adequate break time and providing a lactation room (a clean, quiet nonrestroom space).
- A flexible work schedule to allow time for family issues (doctors appointments, parent/teacher conferences)
- Paid family leave so that new parents can experience early bonding with their child and so that employees can serve as caregivers to older or ailing relatives
- Workplace access to parenting education and support
- Access to high-quality child care and back-up care (on site or through subsidizing the cost)

For more information, please go to www.kansaspowerofthepositive.org, a webpage on the Kansas Department of Health and Environment website.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention "Boost Your Competitive Edge: Actions for a Healthy, Productive Workforce"

Examples of return on investment for family-friendly work policies from the CDC:

- Arapahoe Douglas Works! adopted flexible scheduling. Absenteeism dropped nearly 42% over 2 years. Employees rated flexible schedule as one of their most important benefits.
- Google increased maternity leave from 12 to 18 weeks at full pay and attrition decreased by 50%.
- JP Morgan Chase estimated a return of 115% for its child care program.
- Patagonia has offered an onsite child development center for 33 years. They have 100% of mothers returning to work after maternity leave. The turnover rate for parents with children in the child care center runs 25% less than for their general employee populations. Patagonia estimates it recovers 91% of calculable costs annually for operating a child development center.

On September 1, 2018, CDC announced funding for Kansas and six other states to implement its framework, the Essentials for Childhood, to prevent Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) through building

Safe, Stable and Nurturing Relationships and Environments (SSNRs). The leadership team consists of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment Bureau of Health Promotion (KDHE), in coordination with the Bureaus of Family Health and Community Health Systems, the Kansas Children's Service League Prevent Child Abuse Kansas Chapter (KCSL), and Wichita State University Community Engagement Institute (WSU).

The approaches Kansas selected to focus on the next five years include family-friendly work policies and public engagement and education campaigns that involve creating public will for family friendly work environments. The Kansas Power of the Positive (K-PoP) is a coalition of more than 30 agencies working to ensure that Kansas is the best place to raise healthy children who are safe, stable, and nurtured in their relationships and in their communities. Members support family-friendly policy change. When families are successful, children are successful. When children are successful, it's positive for everyone. They are working hard to help create workplace environments that support Kansas families.

K-PoP has been working with the CDC for the previous five years leading up to this new CDC funding with private funding from the Health Care Foundation of Greater KC,

REACH Healthcare Foundation, Christie Development Associates, Norton Community Foundation, and an anonymous family foundation. They created a toolkit for awareness and an automated employee survey and resource guide with the conditions the CDC says create family-friendly workplaces.

They implemented the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Module (BRFSS), which compiled reports about Kansas, Wyandotte, Sedgwick, Johnson, Shawnee, and Douglas counties ACE data. Their project was published in the International Journal of Child Maltreatment. They have just completed a draft of their strategic plan to implement these two, new approaches in Kansas. Priority areas are:

1. Identify and leverage resources/programs/policies that bolster efforts to create family friendly workplaces in Kansas.
2. Partner with employers to create family friendly workplaces in Kansas.
3. Build commitment to creating conditions that lead to safe, stable, and nurturing relationships.
4. Increase use of state-level data related to CAN prevention. ●



VICKY ROPER

Prevent Child Abuse Kansas
Director, Kansas Children's
Service League

Vicky Roper is the Prevent Child Abuse Kansas Director for the Kansas Children's Service League. She is the chair of the Kansas Power of the Positive and on the leadership team for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Kansas Essentials for Childhood Project, a grant to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Wichita State University's Community Engagement Institute is the backbone agency.



Building a Participation Culture

BY JENNIFER PISHNY

EMPORIA — Emporia Child Care Centers have formed a partnership with Mobilizing Literacy, a local organization that supports kindergarten readiness and family engagement. Their most recent collaboration will make developmental screenings a regular part of their program for all children. With funds provided by Mobilizing Literacy, the staff at the center has acquired training and materials to perform the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) developmental screening for all children in their care. ASQ can be completed by parents and/or child care providers or teachers.

Emporia Child Care Center 1 invited families to “Meet the Teachers Night” at the preschool and introduced them to the ASQ. Families were asked to use the online questionnaire system to complete their child’s screening. The preschool program director, Cathy Wright, was excited to see that almost all parents completed the screenings in a short amount of time, without additional reminders.

How did she get all families to participate without the usual reminders? Possibly because family participation is part of the culture at the center. Cathy and her team provide a variety of opportunities for families to participate throughout the year. Some require little preparation, such as a potluck picnic in the park, while others, such as the holiday events, are larger productions. They also participate in community activities,

such as a recent early childhood STEM event at the local mall or partner with the library for a fun activity.

The team has learned from successful and challenging events. Adjustments are made to ensure staff are involved but not overwhelmed. They want the families to feel valued and see the events as an integral part of their child’s education. When families feel like these opportunities are part of the big picture, they are more likely to make time to attend.

Some families attend nearly every event they’re invited to, while others never attend. If we reframe our approach, we can reach families who are reluctant to participate in the way we have traditionally expected. For example, some parents might be much more comfortable in the park, while others might prefer a quiet Saturday morning at the library.

The first reframing step is to be optimistic. This is difficult when you have put in time and effort (and usually some money) to create a fantastic opportunity for families to participate and some (or many) don’t attend. It hurts and makes you want to give up. Why try again if no one appreciates the effort? Try again because someone does appreciate the effort. It will take consistent effort to build the participation culture that you want to see, but once it is established other families will join!

Next, make a list of all the barriers that might make it difficult or uncomfortable for families to attend an event. How can you alleviate these concerns?

- Vary the times of day and the time commitment for gatherings.
- Offer a variety of active and less active opportunities.
- Invite families to community events (parades, carnivals, etc.).

Finally, remember that all interactions are family engagements. If a parent spends a few minutes telling you about their weekend plans, that is family engagement. They might not be able to share a Saturday afternoon with you, but they are sharing a part of their lives. Embrace it and build on these opportunities when you can! ●



JENNIFER PISHNY

Community Consultant

Jennifer Pishny has a diverse history with Resource and Referral and currently works for Child Care Aware of Kansas. She works on the Links to Quality project as a community consultant. She has a degree in Psychology from Kansas State University and is working on her Master’s in Early Childhood from Emporia State University.

Big Emotions, Supermarket Meltdowns!



BY KIM LAWSON

We have all been there or witnessed that terrible scene at our local grocery store: the total, nuclear meltdown of a child. You know “that child” that you can hear loud and clear from across the store. “That mom” who literally looks as if she is frozen by her child’s tantrum.

All children have emotions. Kids experience all the same emotions we have as adults but often they are not able to communicate what they are feeling. They can choose other ways to express themselves and this can result in unwanted behavior.

One of the best things we can do for our children is to teach them how to manage their big emotions in a way that does not hurt themselves or others. The hardest part of all: to help them do all of this while keeping our cool.

We all know our children often choose the worst times possible to express themselves. We are usually already running late, tired, overwhelmed, or embarrassed (if we are “that mom” in the store). Our kids are constantly watching us and how we react to situations. As hard as it might seem at the time, we must try to remain calm and find acceptable ways to deal with big emotions.

Remind children it is never OK to hurt others or destroy property. This includes any type of verbal abuse. Our role is to keep children safe. Children must recognize any type of destructive behavior is unwanted.

Every behavior has an underlying emotion (emotions and behaviors go hand in hand). Children often lack the vocabulary needed to label their feelings. Validate their feelings with phrases such as, “I can see you are frustrated,” or, “I understand you are sad.” Label emotions of others. While reading or watching their favorite show, recognize the feelings of the characters in the story. Take the time to label your own feelings. This is a huge, teachable moment when you can model to your children how you handle your emotions when you are tired or frustrated.

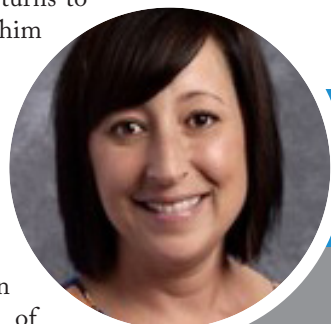
Try to calm big emotions by using regulation strategies. Deep breathing or counting to 10 are tried and true techniques that can work to diffuse the situation. Visit “Sesame Street” for help. When Elmo finds himself with big emotions that make him feel out of control, he turns to belly breathing to help him through.

Encourage children to ask for help. There will be times when our children will melt down. Teach your child that it is OK to ask for help. When their emotions are out of control, they may find it impossible

to calm themselves. We need to be their calm in the chaos. It is so important to lay the foundation of this type of open communication. Children must believe they can turn to us when their problems become bigger than they can handle themselves.

Big emotions are hard to handle no matter what age. Self-regulation is something that must remain a focus throughout childhood. The goal is to teach children how to handle their big emotions through expression, communication, and calming techniques. Small steps now encouraging self-regulation will help promote resilience, problem-solving skills, and solid values as they grow.

For more information on handling big emotions, visit <http://bit.ly/BIGemotion>. •



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.



The trust that is formed between providers and families is another important component of forming this strong connection. To help achieve trust, providers ask for feedback from parents, which allows parents to feel valued and heard. This valuable information helps providers guide and shape their program planning and policy decisions.

Often, providers are the “go to” for parents when seeking help or resources. They can be the first to see when a family is in need of assistance, and supply their homes and facilities with many community resources. Program providers have many events that encourage families to come together and connect with one another, and also to learn about and connect with any needed community resources for their child and family.

Having events to educate families about parenting, dental programs, car seat safety, kindergarten readiness, and wellness are just a few of the variety of ways providers are linking families with community support. Establishing, maintaining, and improving these family and community connections allows providers and families to grow and expand their support systems, which is crucial in helping children in their development.

Just as a parent and child’s hands link together when they cross the street, child care providers show that linking with families to form and keep a strong connection and partnership is so vital to help children learn and develop. ●

BY MEG ROGGERO

To keep something linked requires a strong connection. Child care providers who are part of the Links to Quality pilot program are demonstrating the value and importance of having a strong connection with their families to form a partnership. A child has many relationships in his or her life, and having a strong one between the child care provider and parents is one of the most beneficial.



Links to Quality, a 17-county pilot program launched by The Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) in April 2018, was designed to promote the strengths that child care providers show every day in their work with children. In this system, they can earn Quality Recognition Links to highlight all the good work they are doing to help children in their care thrive.

“Child care providers participating in our Links to Quality pilot recently finished their work on the second link within the L2Q system,” said Karen Beckerman, Strengthening Family Services director with DCF.

“Participants will now share their experiences and offer feedback to us to assist us in our preparation to offer L2Q to other providers. Input gathered is instrumental to the successful roll-out of L2Q statewide.”

The most recent link providers completed was Family Partnership, which involves evaluating their programs to see how they engage with and improve their partnership with families. This engagement is not only between providers and their families, but also with community agencies that can provide services and resources to families.

As with any partnership, open communication plays an essential role in creating a strong connection. Providers use multiple modes of communication, such as social media, remind apps, newsletters, and bulletin boards to keep families informed.

In order to make their partnership stronger, families are encouraged to participate in a variety of the program’s activities. Involvement can be anything from helping with a classroom activity to being part of back-to-school events, holiday gatherings, or a simple pizza get-together.

“The providers really thought outside of the box to provide activities specific to the families that they serve and their interests,” said Sarah Minshull, Child Care Aware of Kansas Community Consultant for Links to Quality.



MEG ROGGERO

Development Specialist,
Links to Quality (L2Q),
Kansas Department for
Children and Families

Meg holds degrees in Education and Social Work and has worked for more than twenty years in the areas of children and family services. Through her work as a social worker, teacher, and in research at the university level, she has always been an advocate for children. Currently, she is the Development Specialist for Links to Quality (L2Q).

Supporting Your Children and Grandchildren

Lessons Learned by First-Time Grandparents

BY JANE WEILER

Within a 2½-year period (January 2016 through June 2018), our two children and spouses made the decision to become parents, and our family expanded to include 4 grandchildren. Our son had two daughters, and our daughter had two sons. These 4 cousins are very close in age, which makes for great fun when they are together.

All four parents are working or in school full time, so they were ready to find child care after their three months of maternity leave. It was not realistic for me as a grandparent to think I could provide child care for two infants, and the parents were quick to say that was not their expectation. But we learned there are many other ways we can support our children and grandchildren.

Here are lessons learned, at least up to now!

- Have your own car seat for transporting the children. It is much easier than moving car seats between cars. It is important they are installed correctly, too.
- Practice how to fasten those car seat belts, how to loosen and tighten them. It is not as easy as when watching the parents do it. They do it daily!
- Allow extra time for getting anywhere, for getting them in a car seat, getting them out, and getting all their things.
- Expect early morning calls, when the child is sick and they can't go to child care.
- Expect calls during the day when the child has gotten sick and mom and dad cannot pick them up.
- Be sure the child care center has you designated for emergency pick-up; be familiar with the security procedures at their childcare facility.
- Have healthy snacks on hand at home.
- Learn how to use the new thermometers.
- When invited to attend special events at their childcare facility, GO!
- For overnights at your home, it is very helpful to have a crib or Pak 'n Play.

- A high chair is extremely helpful.
- For overnights, when they are very young, if parents have a camera monitor, borrow it for the bedroom, and then TRY to get some sleep.
- Have your own supply of sippy cups/ cups with lids.
- Plan on meals with them to be busy for you ... and messy.
- Have a designated drawer, low enough for them to reach, that is theirs. My grandchildren loved a drawer with Tupperware, measuring cups and pan lids.
- Remind parents to bring a bag with extra diapers and a change of clothes when dropping off children for a stay. Sometimes a favorite toy is a good idea.
- Have a supply of wipes on hand at all times.
- Text pictures of children to parents when you have them during the day so they know they are doing OK.
- Have your phone or camera ready at all times. There will be MANY wonderful photo ops, but you have to be quick.

Since my husband and I are both retired, it is great having two of us available when the grandchildren are here. It takes both of us to keep up with them! And we are tired when they go...

As our grandchildren continue to grow, I am sure our "lessons learned" will continue to grow, too. But one thing that will not change is the value of the one-on-one time we get with them every time we are together. They enrich our lives with every visit, every activity. We can provide them with another generation's perspective and experiences, and unconditional love. It's a WIN-WIN!! ●

JANE WEILER

Retired

Jane Weiler is retired but still commits her time to helping improve early childhood for young children in Kansas. This passion was developed early in her career as a teacher and later as a key employee in state government. She retired from the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund, where she worked with numerous grantees around the state.



Engaging Families in Advocacy

BY DR. KIM ENGELMAN

The representation of families in advocacy is critical to regulatory and policy advancements as well as to the health of systems and programs that work alongside families, such as early childhood care and education. Consider the perspective of an artist creating a beautiful image on canvas.

In the studio, the artist begins to make a plan to pencil her piece of work through a series of carefully placed lines. The artist then fills in the lines with beautiful color to depict the image that might be enjoyed for years to come.

Like artists, we begin envisioning changes to our agency or programs by sketching out thoughtful ideas that have the propensity to help children, families, and our community. These ideas take life when the stories of families are woven in as illustration. The experiences of families paint the picture of the effect of policies/systems on families and how they influence their ability to thrive. The voices of families accentuate needed policy updates, system enhancements and program updates. Families essentially add color, definition, and meaning to an otherwise bland line drawing.

There are numerous examples of how the advocacy actions of families have pro-

pelled change. The national reauthorization of the Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG) at the tail end of 2014 is one example. Families, including parents, grandparents and extended family members, raised a collective voice on the Hill that, after 18 years, made reauthorization possible. From this effort, we now enjoy a stronger child care system that elevates the health, safety and development of all children in child care across the nation.

**These ideas take life when
the stories of families are
woven as illustrations.**

We also have an active network of family advocates at work across our home state of Kansas. These advocates have brought about much change through their hard work and determination. The 2010 enactment of Lexie's Law is one example that still is viewed across the country as an exemplary advancement of state policy.

In 2017, Kansas family advocates also worked collectively on a letter to the state



secretary of Health and Environment in which they advocated for increased annual continuing education requirements for child care providers. Child Care Aware of Kansas collaborated with family advocates and placed the letter on their digital advocacy webpage. Advocates went to work to secure sign-ons to the letter from other families across the State. In less than a month, family advocates garnered more than 300 signatures and 102 comments.

Not without opposition, the letter campaign was effective at changing the regulatory landscape. Today, because they raised their voices and took action, families can have more peace of mind that the workforce caring for their children is better equipped to support their children.

Regulatory and policy advancements often first come to mind when we think of advocacy. Advocacy is not limited to policy advancement, however. Advocacy occurs across a continuum that begins in the home with one's own children and can stretch into the community, reach to the state level, and even can have national impact, as illustrated in the CCDBG example.

Each day, families advocate for their children to ensure that the most stable, enriching home environment is possible. In the community, families advocate for their children when they access early childhood care and education and as they navigate ongoing relationships with early education providers and administrators. Also, they advocate for their children and family in the workplace when they vie for work schedules that flex with their family needs or support the advancement of family-friendly workplace policies.

I encourage you to think about ways you can intentionally engage families and partner with them in advocacy. As you engage with families, consider the following:

1. **Authentically engage families over time — cultivate lasting relationships.**
2. **Embrace diversity in opinions and perspectives of families — seize positive disruptors as opportunities to catalyze changes that benefit all.**
3. **Take time to listen to families to hear about their experiences, perspectives, and aspirations — learn from them and honor their role as the experts of their family and children.**
4. **Identify and build upon family strengths.**
5. **Partner with families to advance their own advocacy goals, not just advocacy actions on your organization's agenda.**

While it takes some planning and effort, the rewards are great when you engage families in advocacy for themselves, their community or for the benefit of children and families across the nation. Advocate along with families to paint a beautiful, lasting, and impactful picture. ●

Get Involved and Take Action

GETTING INVOLVED

Lifting up family voices in early childhood is important work. We value family's feedback about successes at child care, the strong relationships formed, and the actions that they believe have helped get their children ready for school. We also want to hear about the challenging things that happen in child care, helping to support solutions. Advocacy wraps both pieces together to form a picture of what is happening from all angles. Reach out to a Child Care Resource and Referral Agency or Child Care Aware of Kansas to share about your child care experiences.

STAYING CONNECTED

At Child Care Aware of Kansas, we have a valuable resource to stay connected to information about legislation that impacts young children in the state and nationally. The Action & Information Center (www.ks.childcareaware.org) is where readers can learn more about local, state and federal legislation, regulation and policies that may affect children and families and the child care and educational programs that serve them. Readers have the opportunity to sign up for regular notifications on changes that may impact child care and get the latest information on child care issues pending in state legislature.



DR. KIM ENGELMAN

Senior Advisor,
Child Care Aware® of
America

Dr. Kim Engelman is a Senior Adviser at Child Care Aware® of America. Engelman has 20+ years of experience in public health outreach, research, ECE systems and education as well as more than 10 years as a local and national family advocate for high-quality child care.



Parent Involvement

The Backbone of Head Start

BY LAURA J. FISHER

In 2020, Head Start Programs across the United States, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam will celebrate a unique achievement and a partnership of 55 years with families and members of the community at large.

Governed by regulations and policies set forth by law, the Head Start Performance Standards decree that the Policy Council has the responsibility for the direction of an agency's Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

Head Start is always looking for ways to increase participation at every level of the primary caregivers and those all-important father figures. That could include using simple eye-to-eye contact, combined with a sincere smile and a warm handshake — yet being mindful of cultural norms. They can go a long way in breaking the ice.



Showing consideration and extending

personal invitations and meeting parents where they are in their life's journey help to reap huge rewards for all.

In Head Start, Parent Committees and Policy Councils are two of many exciting parent involvement opportunities.* The primary caregiver of a child enrolled in the program is an automatic voting member of the Parent Committee at their site. Serving a one-year term, elected Parent Committee officers and staff undertake such tasks as planning and facilitating parent meetings. Parents vote to spend program funds for group activities and special speakers.

Policy Council members, who also serve a one-year term, develop specific skillsets as they work alongside staff to learn about administrative, fiscal, and program issues. They have opportunities to apply for scholarships to become parent ambassadors to learn about the importance of advocacy.

It is a satisfying feeling to watch parents as they take their roles and positions seriously and develop the confidence to ask questions, to speak up and to share their opinions with local, state or national legislators. Learning about new opportunities bolsters parents' confidence and increases parent involvement, which is the backbone of the Head Start program.

"If someone had not taken the first step and invited me to a class, an event or a parent meeting, I would have never run for an office." I have heard these types of comments throughout my 30-plus years of working with parents. ●

** Governed by regulations and policies set forth by Public Law 110-134, and in accordance with the Head Start Act (sec. 642[42 U.S.C.] Powers and Functions of Head Start Agencies all go hand-in-hand with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS). The Head Start Performance Standards, Part 1301—Program Governance and §1301.3 Policy Council and Policy Committee—decree that the Policy Council has the responsibility for the direction of an agency's Head Start and Early Head Start programs.*



LAURA J. FISHER

Family and Community Engagement Specialist

Laura holds a Bachelor's Degree in General Studies in Criminal Justice from Wichita State University and a Home Visitor CDA (Child Development Associate). Laura has 30-plus years of experience in the early childhood field. She is the proud "Grami" of eight grandchildren.

A Library Leads the Way for Early Literacy

BY MEAGAN ZAMPIERI

HAYS — Sitting in the center of downtown Hays, the Hays Public Library (HPL) has served Ellis County and the surrounding area for 108 years. The Youth Services department alone provides at least three classes each weekday for those ages birth to 18. This past summer, the library was the city's summer meal site, collaborating with USD 489 Nutrition Services to provide more than 11,000 meals throughout the summer. In the summer reading challenge, the library had 519 early literacy participants, about 20% of whom participated through their child care providers. More than 1,600 children registered for the program overall.

HPL Early Literacy Librarian, Sara Schoenthaler, continued Traveling Storytime over the summer, a program that invites Hays child care programs and preschools to host a storytime. This is available to any group with five or more children under 5. In October of this year, Ms. Schoenthaler taught 23 storytimes outside the library, reaching 254 children. The library also offers early literacy classes Monday through Friday throughout the year and recently added a monthly Saturday storytime (the last Saturday each month at 10 a.m.) to reach parents who work during the week.

Due to recent research regarding the way children learn to read in the key, early years of skill development, HPL also revamped the Early Reader collection. In some teaching circles, phonics methods have been pushed aside in favor of something called "whole language" reading. This is detrimental to development, and HPL eliminated as many of the identifiable books as they were able, replacing them with multiple, well-rated phonics series for parents to read with their children.

Unfortunately, not every child is frequently read to. Working parents are often strapped for time. According to the National Institute for Family Literacy, 62% of families of high socioeconomic status read to their children at least three times a week; only 36% of families in low socioeconomic status can do the same. In Kansas, 282,164 children live in low-income families, the

majority of which include parents who are working full-time and/or part-time, according to the National Center for Children in Poverty. This is why continuing to reach children in child care centers is so important and why HPL continues to look for ways to reach families who have little time to visit the library. The November calendar is another example of this effort.

On Saturday, November 9, 2019, Hays Public Library hosted the launch party for 1000 Books Before Kindergarten. This program rewards pre-K children for every 100 books they read, followed by a wonderful graduation experience when they reach 1000! A study cited by United for Libraries (the American Library Association research and training arm) discovered that if children are read to at least three times a week, 3-to-5-year-olds are more likely to recognize all the letters, to have some sight word recognition, and to understand words in context. Any child who cannot come to the launch party can be signed up at any time during their pre-K years.

In November, libraries celebrated Kansas Reads to Preschoolers week, where they all read the same book to as many children as possible. This year's book is "I Like Myself," by Karen Beaumont. On the evening of November 11, the book was featured in a family storytime. It also was read throughout the week at traveling events and used as a prize in the drawing for the 1000 Books launch party.

As HPL continues to advance the mission of the Youth Services department, the focus will remain on developing skills children need in order to succeed in life — the first of which is learning to read. The vision for the department is that every child in Hays will be ready to read and succeed. By creating spaces, collections, classes, and projects and putting people in place to facilitate development of early literacy skills in all the children of Hays, HPL will provide a model for libraries in Kansas that can focus on this area where the effect can be the greatest. ●



MEAGAN ZAMPIERI

1st Vice President,
Kansas Library Association

Meagan Zampieri has an MLS from Emporia State University and has worked as a consultant for the NorthWest Kansas Library System. She is the 1st VP of the Kansas Library Association and has presented on early literacy, poverty, library best practices, advocacy, pop culture, and library innovation at local, regional, state, and national levels.



BRIGHT FUTURE FOR KANSAS KIDS

BY CALLIE PEACE

Kansas Parents as Teachers Association (KPATA) is excited to announce our new partnership with Kansas Department of Children and Families through the Family First Prevention Services Grant. KPATA's Bright Futures Program will provide high-quality, evidence-based Kansas PAT services to families in all Kansas counties for FY 2019.

This grant will allow us to broaden our collaborative relationships with statewide community partners, Child Care Aware of Kansas and Kansas Head Start Association.

The Bright Futures Program will utilize PAT programs across the state to create strong partnerships with local Prevention and Protection Services staff to build a robust network to improve the health and wellbeing of Kansas children and families. Prevention and Protection Services will make a referral to the program



Parent Cafés Get Families Involved in Child Care Programs



BY KRIS NICHOLSON

Families are children's first and most important teachers, advocates, and nurturers. Strong family engagement in child care is essential to promoting children's healthy development and wellness, which includes social-emotional and behavioral development. Research shows that when children have involved parents, results are positive, especially over the long term. They are more likely to:

- Earn higher grades
- Attend school regularly
- Demonstrate good social skills and behavior
- Adapt well to the school environment

Family engagement can be promoted by child care programs in a variety of ways, including:

- Establishing ways to be in constant communication
- Providing opportunities for parent education
- Encouraging parents to volunteer in the program



KRIS NICHOLSON

Special Project Coordinator, Child Care Aware® of Kansas

Kris Nicholson has been with Child Care Aware® of Kansas for almost 20 years. Before working at CCAKS, she worked as a center director at the Resource and Referral Center in Wichita, Kan. Kris holds a Bachelor's Degree in Family Life and Human Development with an Early Childhood Education Certificate from Kansas State University.

consistent with the family's needs, such as when a child is at imminent risk of entering foster care, or after a family has been reunified. Services will be provided to children ages prenatal to 36 months through local PAT programs.

The goals of the KPATA Bright Futures Program are to improve child health and development; reduce rates of child abuse and neglect; increase school readiness; and increase parent involvement in children's care and education. The long-term goal is to build strong communities, thriving families and healthy, safe children who are ready to learn.

The four components of the PAT model include personal visits, screening, group connections, and resource network. While each component is presented individually to families, they are closely interrelated and integrated. Together, the implementation of all four components results in desired outcomes for families.

At the heart of PATs work with families is the personal visit. During personal visits, connections between the home visitor and the family gradually develop into a partnership. The goals and structure of the personal visit

are based on three areas of emphasis: parent-child interaction, development-centered parenting, and family wellbeing.

In most communities in Kansas, there is an array of programs designed to nurture and help families. When a specific service isn't available, PAT programs do their best to partner with other local programs to seek or develop needed services through collaborative grants and/or networking. The PAT child development-focused approach to family support makes it a valuable part of the community's network of human services programs. When local Kansas PAT programs connect with organizations, agencies, coalitions, government-supported programs, schools, and faith-based communities, they provide a powerful network of support for families.

A home visitor's role is to help provide a bridge between families and needed services. PAT is a community-building and primary-prevention program model. We know that parents are a child's first and

best teacher ... it's up to us to create an environment where they can thrive. KPATA is delighted to have the opportunity to serve Kansas families in partnership with the Kansas Department of Children and Families and several community-based organizations. ●



CALLIE C. PEACE

Executive Director,
Kansas Parents as
Teachers Association

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 of Kansas Parents As Teachers, a statewide, nonprofit organization that supports early childhood education programs in Kansas with a parent education component. Callie is also a member 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. Callie lives in Lawrence with her daughters, life partner and her dog, Barn Barn.

When providers participate in the Child Care Quality Initiative (CCQI) through Child Care Aware® of Kansas, they are introduced to Parent Cafés. Parent Cafés provide opportunities for the provider, parents and the children to come together, typically outside of the normal hours of child care.

Just as Parent Cafés might be new to providers, they also can be new to parents. As one stated, "Before the café, I was dreading attending because I don't talk much, but after the café I loved it and was glad we went. We had such a great time getting to meet the other parents and spending a longer time with our provider."

Just as this parent discovered, Parent Cafés provide an opportunity to connect, bond, and build relationships that might not happen in the busy day-to-day activities of dropping off and picking up children.

Parent Cafés also provide parents a chance to do something they normally don't have the opportunity to do — see their child interact with their child care friends. As one provider shared, "I had one parent tell me how much she loved

seeing her child interact with the other children. She is always the last parent to pick up, and he doesn't interact with children outside of child care. She was surprised at how much different a child he was at child care than at home."

For many families with young children, it is very difficult to find the time to connect with other adults, to find support through those who also have young children. Parent Cafés provide a comfortable, non-judgmental environment to meet one another and bond over their common interest — their children. One parent said after attending a Parent Café: "It was a great event for all the children to spend playtime together and for the parents to engage in conversation that normally isn't able to occur."

Encouraging families to play an active role in the lives of their children and establishing effective home, child care community partnerships have shown to greatly benefit the children in school success. Child care programs have an opportunity and a responsibility to make this happen. ●



Parent Café events provide a meeting time for parents to focus on relationship building, sharing parenting strategies and exchanging child development information.

Searching for Child Care?

We Can Help!



BY SAMANTHA SULSAR

Choosing a child care program is one of the most important decisions you will make for your child, but how do you know you are choosing the right one? Families searching for child care programs might already have identified a few criteria that are necessary in meeting their needs. They might need child care during specific hours or a program that is near their home, child's school, or place of employment.

This is a great place to start, but what about all those things that are unique to your child and family? Do you need a child care program that supports breastfeeding? Does your child have special needs? Is a structured or relaxed setting best suited to your child's personality? Are you looking for a program that teaches from a curriculum? Lastly, "How and where do I start my child care search?"

Families might ask their friends and coworkers or even search online for child care, but families, and their children, need so much more than just the name of a child care program. Families need an ally that can provide information, resources, and tools. Where can families access all these services? The answer to that question is easy: the Child Care Aware® of Kansas Resource Center.

The center provides free referral services to families searching for child care. The services include customized lists of child care programs; access to informative, educational, and developmental materials; and contact information for other community supports.

When families call the Resource Center, they are greeted by a knowledgeable resource counselor. The resource counselor's first role is to get to know the family and their child care needs. They assist the family in creating a parent account, including language spoken by the family, age of the child, and desired hours/days child care is needed. Families also will be able to select additional filters that identify needs for a particular child, programs that accept children receiving Department of Children and Family child care subsidies, or that list a program's years of experience.

In addition to the customized list of child care programs, families also will receive informative materials. All families will receive materials that explain license types and requirements; prepare them for interviewing potential programs, including questions to ask and a Choosing Quality Child Care checklist; Community Sheets specific to their county; and child development charts. Moreover, families will have access to a library of materials with topics specific to child development, infants, toddlers, health, nutrition, family engagement, physical activity, safety, school readiness and many more.

Families may also log in to the online database any time to access these referral services and materials. Once families have created a parent account, they will be able to perform program searches and view all the available referral and informative materials. ●

To begin your child care search,
please call 1-877-678-2548 to speak
with a Resource Center Counselor or
visit www.ks.childcareaware.org.



SAMANTHA SULSAR

Family Engagement and Data
Coordinator, Child Care
Aware® of Kansas

Samantha Sulsar graduated
from Fort Hays State University
and has worked for Child Care
Aware® of Kansas for 9 years.

COMMUNICATION THAT IS INTENTIONAL AND PURPOSEFUL



BY KELSEY TROWER

Young children thrive in an environment where there is a strong partnership between their family and child care provider. One of most important steps in building that relationship is positive, frequent communication. Positive communication fosters trust and understanding and allows opportunities for support and collaboration. Frequent communication ensures parents and providers are able to share important information about events in the child's life, development and milestones.

It is essential to consider family schedules, access to technology and communication styles when deciding the best plan for staying connected. Every family is going to have unique needs and it is important to find out their preferences and priorities. Often the most effective communication route is going to include a variety of strategies. Easy strategies to keep families engaged throughout the week include:

Family Newsletters / Emails:

Highlight upcoming learning activities, add important reminders, provide education activity ideas for families to do at home, share monthly schedules, and include special announcements.

Journals: Keep a daily log of activities the child participated in and details on meals, naps and toileting.

Family Board: Display upcoming community events for children and families, menus, weekly schedules, family pictures and community resource information

Texting: Take a few minutes a day to send a picture, share stories and touch base with families.

Social Media: Create a private Facebook page to post photos and information for the families in your program. Remember to keep the list of people who can see your posts up to date.

Apps: Use an app that allows you to post digital newsletters, post pictures, record videos of milestone moments, and creates the opportunity for families to comment and reply.

Check in: Make a point to connect with families at pick up and drop off to gather and share information on events in the child's day, offer guidance or support, and set the tone for the next day.

Portfolios: Keep a folder or binder with the child's artwork, pictures, items they collect and other special pieces to share with their family.

Busy lives can impact how much time families and child care providers have to connect, which can be a challenge for communicating important information. To make the most impact in a limited amount of time, communication efforts need be intentional and purposeful! ●



KELSEY TROWER

Family Engagement Specialist

Kelsey Trower joined the Child Care Aware of Kansas team in 2019. Throughout her career she has enjoyed many years working at a Head Start program. Kelsey has also operated her own family child care business for 2 years in a small, rural Kansas community.

NEW CONNECTIONS

AS WE REACH OUT TO FAMILIES



BY ALICE EBERHART-WRIGHT



I headed for the new bookshelves in the children's department of Topeka Shawnee County Public Library. For years I have collected children's books, many about families, but never had I seen the kind of books that I found today.

For years I have collected children's books ... but never had I seen the kind of books that I found today.

I have visited countless preschool story times and listened to stories about families while looking at the children who were listening. It seemed that nearly all books featured Caucasian children in intact families who lived happy lives with clearly defined parenting roles for their mommies and daddies.

The children in those listening circles included a palette of amazing skin colors, some well-dressed and some who needed different clothes for the season. I listened to conversations: some articulate and advanced, some with no speech, or a language that wasn't English. I looked at bodies: some that were not considered typical and some that would qualify for a beauty contest for children.

I came away from the library with 6 amazing books: all emphasizing love, kindness, and acceptance. A rainbow of choices for today's issues and living styles.

1. **Baby Play**, one of a series of Barefoot board books, shows a lovely collection of black-and-white photos of different kinds of babies with different kinds of caregivers. The message: all babies love to play and relate. See and experience their cuteness.
2. **Jing's Family** by Eliot Riley, illustrated by Srmimalie Bassani
Jing is an Asian child adopted by a Caucasian family. She has a cousin who has two dads. They all play and celebrate life the way children always have, through activities planned for children.
3. **A Plan for Pops**, by Heather Smith and Brooke Kerrigan
I can scarcely believe that there now are books written for three-generational families where children learn how to have fun with a grandpa and great-grandpa, and encounter aging issues that might include someone with dementia and/or physical handicaps. Grandad helps little Lou learn how to love and care for someone who requires new types of caring: walking slowly and holding hands, going to the library where each generation can experience their own kind of delight, doing different things with tools and art materials, inventing new games with just a few things that invite creativity, and catering to individual food requirements at mealtimes.
4. **A Place to Stay: A Shelter Story** by Erin Gunti & illustrated by Esteli Meza
Sometimes parents must respond to a crisis that might mean homelessness for them and their children. Parents might protect their children from toxic stress by storytelling and finding creative ways of normalizing life without a home. In larger cities there might be shelters. There might be air mattresses and shared or tiny rooms. Meal times might be in big rooms with lots of tables. "A banquet hall," Mama says. (This is another
5. **Common Threads: Adam's Day at the Market** by Huda Essa and illustrated by Merce Tous
This is a delightful, colorful book about a little boy getting lost at a culturally diverse marketplace. As he looks for his Mama, the clothes he grabs might not be her tunic but instead a nun's habit. He runs into the same dilemma with a man who has something on his head that looks a lot like what his dad wears, but is called something else. No matter what each wears, they share compassion and kindness. And when a child is lost, the village comes together to see that the parents are found and new friendships grow.
6. **A Church for All** by Gayle E. Pitman and illustrations by Laure Rournier
Because my own church is struggling with some Christian issues, I originally checked out this book to take and share with the church. It's a book about how all can become "open, affirming, and accepting." It's a tough issue and we struggle, but we all basically want to have faith, love, and kindness as a core focus. I include it for Kansas Child because spirituality is an important issue for many. Some of you might want to look at this book, which was written to help us raise kind, loving, accepting children under your chosen spiritual roof. ●

Barefoot Books product that combines the best of the present with the best of the past to educate our children as the caretakers of tomorrow.)

Introducing Literacy to Children



BY CHILD CARE AWARE® OF KANSAS

Literacy is so much more than reading and writing when it comes to early childhood. Introducing literacy to children in your child care should include sharing and reading books (along with talking about the illustrations), being aware of print in your environment, and encouraging pre-writing skills.

When sharing a book together, ask questions! With young children, talk about what you see in the pictures. Point out and name characters you see on the pages. Follow the words with your finger so they can get the

feel for left to right reading progression. Share books that rhyme, repeat the rhymes and make your own silly combinations.

Environmental print creates a unique opportunity to support literacy. Our world is full of signs. Point out signs in your neighborhood. Talk about labels on products. Ask children to identify logos. You may be surprised how many they know! Encouraging print awareness will help children make the connection between letters and it builds pre-reading skills.

It is OKAY to scribble! Children learning to write will first learn with scribbles.

This early writing will build fine motor skills necessary for writing. Scribbling is also important in building hand-eye coordination. Encourage children to draw a picture, write a letter, or make a list.

One of the most important things you can do for children in your child care is to - READ! Reading exposes children to words in turn enriching their own vocabulary and preparing them to pick up reading skills more easily and quickly. Simple habits you form today will help their future success in school. ●

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The 2019 Child Care Supply Demand report explores the shortage of child care openings for infants and toddlers, children with special needs and care during non-traditional hours. Dive in and read more about how the supply and demand of child care is impacting Kansas families and communities.

The full report is available for download on our website: www.ks.childcareaware.org



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