

A publication of **Child Care Aware®** of Kansas

# Kansas Child

Summer 2021 Volume 20, Issue 3

## IN THIS ISSUE

Data-Driven  
Decision-Making

- A More Responsive System for Parents/Providers
- Data as a Tool for Racial Equity
- Assessing Your Child Care Environment
- Get Connected to Employers in Your Community



# Data-Driven Decisions

On any given day, I make hundreds of decisions — some large, some small — encompassing everything from whether to let my son try out for football to how Child Care Aware® of Kansas can navigate the challenges of operating safely in a pandemic. Regardless of the scale and complexity of the decision (and whether I know it or not), I use data from the world around me to decide.

The decisions we face as parents, child care providers, and communities — and as an early childhood system — are no different. We want high-quality early care and education for our children. We want child care providers to be able to safely provide care while earning a living wage. We want communities to be able to bring in new jobs. We want employees to have choices that meet their child care needs.

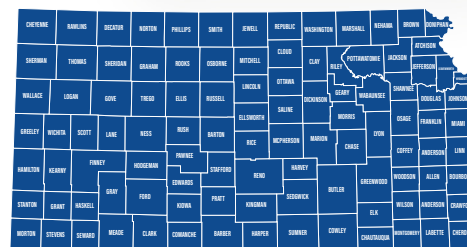
To accomplish this shared vision together, we need good data. Without it, we run the risk of making decisions in the dark.

The Child Care Aware of Kansas team spends countless hours collecting information about child care openings, the type of child care available in communities, and the needs of families and young children. We believe that data — much like child care itself — is a public good that should be made available to everyone, especially decision-makers.

With that in mind, I'm proud to share that Child Care Aware of Kansas has created a common place for communities, parents, and child care providers to access relevant, up-to-date information about the supply and demand of child care. Visit [ks.childcareaware.org/reports](https://ks.childcareaware.org/reports).

As you use this resource, we want to hear from you about what's helpful (and what's not). The story behind the data — the story of Kansas families, child care providers, and communities — is what truly gives meaning to the work we do.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Kansas Child*. You'll hear from experts across the state (and from across the country too!) about how they use data to make decisions that lead to better partnerships, services, and systems — all in support of high-quality early care and education. Working together, we can achieve our shared vision for Kansas' youngest citizens. Using data effectively will help us get there faster.



## KELLY DAVYDOV

Executive Director,  
Child Care Aware® of Kansas

Kelly Davydov joined Child Care Aware of Kansas as executive director in September 2020. Kelly's professional background includes leadership for two key initiatives in Iowa: the state's early childhood system-building effort, Early Childhood Iowa, and its 2-Gen anti-poverty initiative. Kelly, her husband Dmitry, and their two sons (Ethan, 13, and Henry, 10) have made Kansas City their new home. Together, they enjoy exploring state and national parks and farmers markets and spending their weekends poolside at swim meets.

*Kansas Child* is a publication of Child Care Aware® of Kansas

**Executive Director**  
Kelly Davydov

### Editors

Rachel Vogel Quinn,  
RVQ Communications  
Angie Saenger & Hannah Doll,  
Child Care Aware® of Kansas Staff

### Publication Design

Michael Freeland,  
Mr. Freeland Design

### On the Cover

Celeste Gellings, Daughter of Dustin & Breanna Gellings, Topeka, Kan.  
Age at time of photo: 1 week  
Photography: Jess Stitt Photography

Child Care Aware® of Kansas, 1508 East Iron, Salina, KS 67401, publishes *Kansas Child* quarterly, which is made possible through the financial support from our corporate, private, and foundation partners.

*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.

Copyright© 2021 by Child Care Aware® of Kansas, unless otherwise noted. No permission is required to excerpt or make copies of articles, provided that they are distributed at no cost. For other uses, send written permission requests to: Child Care Aware® of Kansas, 1508 East Iron, Salina, KS 67401

*Kansas Child* is distributed at no cost.



# IN THIS ISSUE

Tomando decisiones ..... 4  
informadas sobre el cuidado  
infantil y el acceso al idioma

## Data is the Future.....5

Child Care Data Counts!.....6

Staying on Task .....7

A More Responsive System.....8  
for Parents and Providers

Proveedoras de cuidado infantil.....10

Partner Up: Finding a Provider .....11  
for Children with Special  
Health Care Needs

## Building a Community .....12 of Leaders

Data as a Tool for Creating .....14  
Racial Equity

Supporting Family Choice..... 17

Get Connected to Employers .....18  
in Your Community

Pathways for New Providers.....19  
in Southwest Kansas

## Assessing Your Child Care ..... 20 Environment

Book Nook: ..... 22  
Books to Beat the Blues







# Tomando decisiones informadas sobre el cuidado infantil y el acceso al idioma

**BY JESSICA SOTO-BOTELLO**

La espera de un bebé trae mucha alegría a nuestra vida. Somos muy afortunados por el apoyo que nuestros seres queridos nos brindan en esta etapa. Los nueve meses de espera para tener a un bebé en los brazos puede ser una eternidad para los padres, pero en realidad nueve meses pasan rápido, especialmente cuando hay mucho que preparar para la llegada de el/la bebé.

Algo que todos sabemos es que tenemos que preparar la alcancía para los pañales, ya que no son muy baratos y se usan bastante. Claro, el apoyo familiar nunca falta, las sugerencias de nombres al final, es una gran lista. Al igual, gracias al apoyo de nuestros seres queridos se aseguran de organizar un “baby shower” para que los papás no se preocupen y obtengan todo lo necesario que el/la bebé ocupe y no le falte nada en su llegada. Las emociones de los papás y seres queridos crecen día a día esperando ansiosamente que llegue el gran día de su bebé.

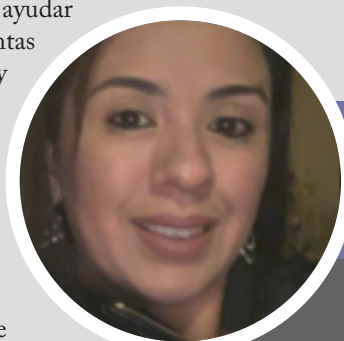
Pero, en qué momento nos tomamos el tiempo de pensar en el cuidado del bebé, ya que sea tiempo de regresar a nuestra rutina laboral? Si, ¿obviamente le preguntamos a los amigos y familiares donde llevan a sus niños? y la pregunta

millonaria ¿cuánto pagan? Cuando pensamos en la llegada de un bebé sabemos que vendrán muchos gastos. Por lo tanto, la mayoría de las veces corremos a buscar a un pariente o conocido para cuidar a nuestros hijos porque cobrarían menos. ¿Pero, nos hemos puesto a pensar en la diferencia de una guardería con licencia del Estado y una que no la tenga? ¿La diferencia de cuidado infantil que cada una ofrece? ¿Nos tomamos el tiempo en investigar la calidad educativa que ofrecen y si tienen licencia para el cuidado infantil? Muchas preguntas, ¿verdad? ¿Y se preguntaran quien me puede ayudar a contestar todas estas preguntas o ayudar a determinar si estoy haciendo la mejor elección para el cuidado de mis hijos?

Si nos basamos en las preguntas que ofrece Child Care Aware of Kansas como guía para ayudar con su selección, podemos ver que debemos tener en consideración varios factores. Al igual hacer preguntas para determinar si nuestra selección para el cuidado de nuestros hijos es una guardería de calidad. Child Care Aware of

Kansas tiene el departamento de recursos y referencias en la que los especialistas le ayudarán a obtener información de guarderías con licencia en su área y con información personalizada de acuerdo con sus necesidades. Recuerde que en Child Care Aware of Kansas se habla español y ofrecen recursos en Español.

Hay que invertir para nuestros hijos para un futuro mejor. Para mas información, visite la página de Child Care Aware of Kansas. ●




**JESSICA SOTO-BOTELLO**

Child Care Health Consultant,  
Child Care Aware® of Kansas

Jessica resides in Garden City, Kansas, and graduated from Fort Hays State University with a bachelor's in general studies with an emphasis in social services. Jessica's passion has always been helping others and being a helping hand in moments of need.





# DATA IS THE FUTURE

## BY TERI GARSTKA

It's an exciting time to be a data enthusiast in Kansas!

We all want Kansas to be the best state for families to raise a child. To get there, we need the best possible information guiding our collective work.

Reliable, high-quality data — thoughtfully connected across services, agencies, and systems — can tell us what's working for children and families in Kansas, sharpen our focus, and expand our perspective of what's possible.

Fortunately, Kansas is rich in early childhood data. Now we must turn that wealth of data into action for all Kansas children, families, providers, and communities. The "All in For Kansas Kids Strategic Plan," published by the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund, maps out the path ahead.

If you've heard of the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS), you may have imagined a complicated data system with application programming interfaces (APIs) and data warehouses and IT programmers working day and night. The reality is much simpler.

The Kansas ECIDS is built upon responsible data governance among agencies and partners through the Kansas Early Childhood Data Trust. This structure outlines the legal requirements and ethical framework guiding data-sharing between members.

Varied funding sources for targeted data-sharing projects result in a more sustainable and nimble infrastructure footprint. This allows Kansas to prioritize what matters most — meaningful insights that enrich our children's first five years and beyond.

"Kansas has an important opportunity now to share information across our agencies to better serve children and families in our state," says Melissa Rooker, executive director of the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund. "We're proud to help lead these efforts."

In my role at the KU Center for Public Partnerships and Research, I'll be spending the next few years making integrated early childhood data a reality here in Kansas. I hope you'll join me on the data journey ahead. ●



### TERI GARSTKA

Associate Director,  
KU Center for Public  
Partnerships & Research

Teri leads the shared measurement system DAISEY, which she developed with her team in 2013 to fill a need for good data and thoughtful design for early childhood and social service providers. The work is guided by two fundamental principles:

Connecting the first five years to a lifetime of success and measuring what matters for kids and families. Teri received her Ph.D. in social psychology in 1997 from the University of Kansas and has built a career that blends research, evaluation, and data science in the service of social good for all.



# Child Care Data Counts!

BY TANYA KOEHN

Why is updating your child care data information with your local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agency important? Because it's used to inform parents about child care programs with openings that meet their needs. This referral service is an efficient and informative way for parents to begin their child care search.

**In fact, over 13,000 families looking for child care connect with us each year.**

To keep information about child care current, CCR&R agencies make quarterly phone calls to child care programs. They collect information on the number of openings available, the number of children currently enrolled, the cost of care for each age group, and whether the program offers care during nontraditional hours (evening, weekend, or overnight).

Taken together, this data helps educate our partners about the state of child care in Kansas. It also illustrates how funding and support for early childhood programs can positively impact children's futures.

The data provided by child care programs is also used to create comprehensive reports that spotlight the challenges faced by hardworking child care professionals. Recent reports include the 2020 Child Care Supply Demand Report and the Point in Time data available on the Child Care Aware® of Kansas website. These reports would not be possible without child care professionals taking the time to update their program information regularly.

So next time your local CCR&R calls, take a few minutes to update your information. It benefits all of us! ●



## Point in Time Data Available

Child Care Aware® of Kansas launched Point in Time data to help communities address critical child care shortages. Just click your county on the state map to view up-to-date information on child care supply and demand. County-level data includes information about the different types of child care available, rates for part-time and full-time care, census data, and more.

View the map at  
[ks.childcareaware.org/point-in-time-data](https://ks.childcareaware.org/point-in-time-data)



**TANYA KOEHN**

Director of Workforce Support, Child Care Aware® of Kansas

Tanya has 17 years of experience working with the child care resource and referral network.



# Staying on Task



## Report from the Pottawatomie Child Care Task Force

### BY ERIN TYNON

In my conversations with Pottawatomie residents, child care just keeps coming up. I often run into people who are passionate about child care — or those who have suffered from a lack of child care or a poor child care experience. I always try to remain curious about people's child care experiences. I want them to feel heard and validated.

Listening to residents is critical to the work of the Pottawatomie Child Care Task Force, which began in 2015 as a conversation after a local workforce meeting. After I described the scarcity of child care in our county to Jack Allston, director of the Pottawatomie County Economic Development Corporation, he explained the negative effects this shortage has on employers.

Within a few weeks, Jack and I decided to put together a team to address the county's child care challenges. I reached out to Bradford Wiles, associate director and extension specialist with K-State,

for guidance. Many more partners then got involved, including local child care providers, K-State Extension, the Economic Development Corporation, representatives from Washburn Small Business Center, local school districts, child care surveyors, Pottawatomie County Infant/Toddler Services, Head Start, and more.

With the task force's input, we applied for and received a North Central Region Center for Rural Development grant for \$35,000, which allowed us to complete a needs assessment. The data from this assessment has been used in a variety of ways, including informing the direction of the task force.

None of this work would have been possible without the insight and efforts of our members and champions. I'm amazed at the consistent attendance at our meetings. We have some passionate

and caring child care providers in Pottawatomie, and we are always looking to add more to that list.

All this goes to show: If you give people a platform to share their perspectives, you can accomplish any task, no matter the issue involved. ●



### ERIN TYNON

Family and Consumer Science Agent, K-State Research and Extension, Pottawatomie County

Erin earned her B.S. in human ecology and a master's in family studies and human services with a minor in early childhood education from Kansas State University. Since college, she has worked in the early childhood realm, either in teaching or advocacy roles. She believes strongly in the importance of early childhood education. Erin and her husband Jayson have three children: Colson (7), Cannon (3), and Braylee (18 months).



# **A More Responsive System for Parents and Providers**



## BY TIM PENNELL AND JEFF LAMBERT

Selecting a child care provider is an intensely personal decision. Yet government officials are too often ignorant of the needs of individual children and families, even as they decide how to fund the early care and education system. As a result, many families, especially those who use public subsidies to access early care and education, lack suitable options and are forced to make sacrifices — a longer commute, less culturally competent care, passing up a new degree or credential.

---

**We advocate for giving providers more flexibility to meet the needs of the individuals they serve.**

---

At Third Sector, we encourage governments to reorient their funding of social services around outcomes, not compliance. We advocate for giving providers more flexibility to meet the needs of the individuals they serve. This requires seeking feedback from providers — the ultimate beneficiaries — and ensuring that they have an ongoing role in the future.

Over the past few years, we have brought this approach to partnerships with early care and education agencies in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and North Carolina. In Connecticut, Third Sector has been working with the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) since 2017 to build an early care and education system that is more responsive to the needs of children and families, equitably expands access to high quality care, and supports provider stability.

In the planning process, Third Sector and OEC staff surveyed parents, worked with parent leaders to plan and facilitate a statewide family-engagement session, and invited parents to working sessions with providers and public servants to devise

reforms. As a result, the agency proposed legislation, currently under consideration, that would elevate parents' voices in funding decisions and give local communities more flexibility in spending public funds.

This legislation would require local governance bodies to include parents of children eligible for state-funded care and encourage them to hold meetings at times that are convenient for these parents. The legislation would also allow these local governance bodies to allocate state funds to family child care providers. OEC is also forming a Parent Cabinet to give parents of young children another way to directly impact policymaking.

In addition to centering family and provider voices, governments must use data to prioritize public investments in the early care and education system. Recently, Third Sector supported OEC in developing a data-driven approach for distributing American Rescue Plan funds to child care providers. The amount of funding a provider is eligible for is determined in part by the CDC Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) of the community where the program is located. SVI takes into account 15 data points that collectively reflect the systemic barriers facing a neighborhood. In this way, OEC prioritized providers serving historically marginalized communities that are disproportionately likely to be child care deserts.

Over the past year, many parents had to find new employment, navigate new working conditions, or move to a new town. The early care and education system — already fragile before the pandemic — has not been able to adapt quickly enough to these changing needs. An analysis from the Center for American Progress found that job disruptions related to child care more than doubled in the fall of 2020, compared to the year before.

Governments now face critical decisions about how to spend federal funds allocated for child care. This is the moment to rethink how we fund early care and education. To make the system more responsive to the needs of children and families, governments must focus on the ultimate outcomes of the children and families served, create new models of governance that include the voices of families, and offer greater flexibility to communities and providers. ●



**TIM PENNELL**

Managing Director,  
Third Sector, Boston

At Third Sector, Tim leads advisory service teams collaborating with communities to rewrite how they contract for social services, realigning vast amounts of public resources to improve outcomes for historically underserved communities. Since joining Third Sector in 2012, Tim has led projects with state and local governments in a variety of areas, including child welfare, early childhood, juvenile justice, and workforce development.

Tim has led work with the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, and the North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education.



**JEFF LAMBERT**

Manager,  
Third Sector, Boston

At Third Sector, Jeff has worked closely with the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood and the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care to develop new approaches to the financing and governance of the early care and education system to deliver better results for children and families.



# Proveedoras de cuidado infantil

BY JESSICA SOTO-BOTELLO

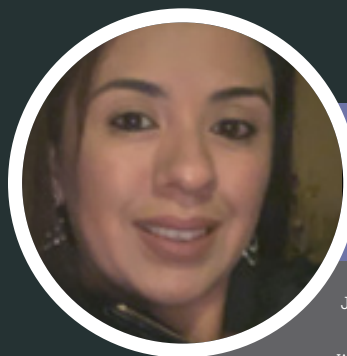
Cuando somos pequeños admiramos todas las profesiones que vemos en la televisión y a los héroes de nuestra comunidad. Comúnmente decimos, cuando sea grande voy a hacer policía, doctor, bombero, maestro, cantante o actor y voy a ayudar a mucha gente.

Tendré mucho dinero para comprarme un carro y una casa. Incluso tal vez oímos lo mismo diariamente con nuestros pequeños. Soñamos en ser la persona más poderosa y famosa del mundo. Nos imaginamos un futuro lleno de diversión, paz, risas, lujos y un ambiente feliz y de repente pasa algo negativo o aparece el malo de la película y venimos como héroes a salvar el mundo. Muy imaginario, ¿verdad? ¿Cierto o no, así mirábamos nuestro futuro cuando éramos pequeños? ¿Qué tan cierto fue nuestra imaginación con lo que ahora hacemos?

Cuando nos referimos a una proveedora de cuidado infantil, normalmente describimos a alguien quien nos cuida nuestros niños mientras que vamos a trabajar o estudiar. Nos imaginamos el cambio de pañales, los alimentos, de que ande atrás de ellos para que no se golpeen, de que recoja todo lo que tiran para prevenir accidentes, etc. Pero en realidad, como proveedora de cuidado infantil sabemos que eso no es todo lo que se hace durante un día. Muchos proveedores lo hacen en su casa como negocio propio, teniendo la oportunidad de formar un futuro para ellos como proveedores igual para los pequeños que cuidan. Como proveedor de cuidado infantil aprende algo nuevo cada día sintiéndose como un estudiante diariamente. Aparte de ser un ejemplo para los pequeños con sus creativities, en varias ocasiones son testigos de los primeros aprendizajes de nuestros pequeños. Como proveedor tiene la oportunidad de sacar la niñez que todos tenemos dentro y disfrutar de esa felicidad de niño que todos extrañamos cuando nos convertimos en adultos. Su profesión de proveedor le permite ser un héroe no solo en darles cuidado diariamente sino también al estar pendiente de cualquier maltrato que tal vez puedan estar

sufriendo fuera de su cuidado. Hay tantos roles en esta profesión que describen al héroe que soñé ser de pequeño. Sin darse cuenta usted se ha convertido en ese héroe de televisión para nuestra comunidad. No solo por compartir su tiempo y cuidado con nuestros pequeños, pero por ser la persona que los enseña a cómo tratar a otras personas ser un apoyo para las familias de sus pequeños brindándoles materiales educativos, darles un ambiente divertido al cual cada día llegan con alegría, usar su creatividad para ayudarles en su desarrollo e igual aprender junto con ellos y ser un estudiante de por vida.

Tal vez la riqueza que soñaba tener no es suficiente con el ingreso que le da su negocio, pero se queda con la riqueza que todo niño quisiera tener y esa es la atención, amor y alegría. E igual usted puede tener el lujo de aprender a disfrutar su niñez que lleva dentro con sus pequeños cuidándose a sí mismo. Recuerde que su profesión es única y una de las profesiones más afortunadas en obtener la felicidad y el privilegio de decir yo fui la proveedora de ese niño/niña quien ahora tiene el poder de cambiar el mundo gracias a mis enseñanzas. ●



**JESSICA SOTO-BOTELLO**

Child Care Health Consultant,  
Child Care Aware® of Kansas

Jessica resides in Garden City, Kansas, and graduated from Fort Hays State University with a bachelor's in general studies with an emphasis in social services. Jessica's passion has always been helping others and being a helping hand in moments of need.





# Partner Up

## Finding a Provider for Children with Special Health Care Needs

**BY JANELLE DEAN**

As parents, we're looking for child care providers who can offer compassion and understanding not just to our children, but to ourselves as well. We need to feel that we are heard and recognized as the experts on our child. This is especially true for parents of children with special health care needs or differing abilities.

If you are one of those parents, finding the right child care provider can be difficult. But putting in the effort is worth it.

First, look for a child care provider who is willing to partner with you. Ask whether the provider is willing to adjust to the differing abilities of your child and offer some individualization of care.

Once you've chosen a provider, focus on building a positive relationship. This will help reduce your fear and frustration and increase your satisfaction levels. Positive and consistent communication is key to helping the provider understand your child, their unique needs, and your entire family.

It's important to educate the provider about your child's differing abilities or their special health care needs. The more knowledge you give the provider, the better their care will be.

Share your Individual Family Support Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Plan (IEP) with your provider so that they can support the goals you've laid out in the plan. When everyone on your child's team is working toward the same goals in the same way, your child will have a better chance at success. Because providers spend a great deal of time with your child, they may also have input that's relevant to your IFSP or IEP.

Don't be afraid to talk openly about your fears or worries. Your provider might feel the same way. Let them know it's OK to experience these emotions. Acknowledging these fears and worries can

create an open line of communication and enable both of you to speak honestly with one another.

It's never easy to put a child with special health care needs or differing abilities into child care, but partnering closely with your provider will build the best possible support system. As the saying goes: "It takes a village to raise a child." Your provider is a key member of that village. ●



**JANELLE DEAN**

Child Care Health  
Consultant, Child Care  
Aware® of Kansas

Janelle has worked in the early childhood field for nearly 15 years. She has served in various roles within child care programs, including as a center director. Janelle's most important role is being a mom to two children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.



# BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF LEADERS



## Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity through Communities of Practice

**BY GEORGIA THOMPSON & REBEKAH DUCHETTE**

Just as young children need supportive relationships as they grow and develop, adults also benefit from positive interactions with their peers. Communities of practice offer a model for connecting diverse leaders across organizations. The term refers to groups of people who share a concern or passion and who interact on a regular basis to learn from one another.

In March 2021, Nemours Children's Health System launched two communities of practice with leaders from 11 states, including Kansas, through the Healthy Kids, Healthy Future Technical Assistance Program. These leaders are coming together to ensure that all children have access to early care and education (ECE) programs that promote healthy eating and physical activity.

This community approach is powerful because it provides participants an opportunity to build meaningful relationships with a network of peers and gain new insights into common challenges. These communities provide a space for learning, exploring, and surfacing new ideas.



## What are the communities of practice doing?

Nemours hosts two virtual communities of practice with 15 leaders from state ECE and public health agencies. One community focuses on expanding ECE program participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), the federal program that provides reimbursements for nutritious meals and snacks to eligible children. The other community focuses on advancing equity in state efforts to improve healthy eating and physical activity in ECE systems. Members commit to collaborating and supporting each other around these topics.

First, the community members share their own experiences within each focus area. For example, many states want to increase ECE program participation in CACFP. Some states have looked at participation data and created maps highlighting underserved communities. Others have conducted surveys or focus groups to understand why some providers do not participate. These efforts can inform initiatives to engage more ECE programs in CACFP and increase the number of nutritious meals reaching young children.

Second, the communities come together to generate new ideas. For instance, members of the equity community of practice are committed to ensuring quality ECE programs are available for all children in their states. We know that some organizations struggle to make their initiatives more inclusive. With support from Nemours, several states received training on equity, diversity, and inclusion. These leaders are now attempting to apply what they learned to their state's initiatives, including assessing the impact of policies and programs on equity and expanding their stakeholder committees to include underrepresented groups.

## How can the communities contribute to healthier early childhood education?

While the model is simple and low-cost, communities of practice effectively spread information across states, build peer connections, and generate innovations that directly benefit children. Although the Nemours communities of practice are in their early stages, the power of community is needed now more than ever. ●



**GEORGIA THOMPSON**

Senior Program & Policy Analyst, Nemours

Georgia holds a Bachelor of Science degree in family and child sciences and a master's degree in human services.



**REBEKAH DUCHETTE**

Senior State Systems Specialist, Nemours

Rebekah holds a Bachelor of Art degree and a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing.



# NEMOURS CHILDREN'S HEALTH SYSTEM

Nemours Children's Health is one of the nation's largest multistate pediatric health systems, including two free-standing children's hospitals and a network of nearly 80 primary and specialty care practices across five states. Nemours seeks to transform the health of children by adopting a holistic health model that utilizes innovative, safe, and high-quality care, while also caring for the health of the whole child beyond medicine. Nemours also powers the world's most-visited website for information on the health of children and teens, KidsHealth.org.

The Nemours Foundation, established through the legacy and philanthropy of Alfred I. duPont, provides pediatric clinical care, research, education, advocacy, and prevention programs to the children, families, and communities it serves.

Nemours is currently funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) under a five-year Cooperative Agreement (6NU38OT000304) to support statewide early care and education (ECE) organizations to integrate best practices and standards for healthy eating, physical activity, breastfeeding support, and reducing screen time in ECE systems and settings. The views expressed in written materials or publications, or by speakers and moderators do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

# Data as a Tool for Creating Racial Equity



**BY MICHELLE STOVER WRIGHT,  
AISHA RAY, & SHERRI KILLINS  
STEWART**

High-quality early childhood education has lifelong impacts on achievement, health, and economic outcomes for individuals, as well as a return on investment for local communities, according to research done by James Heckman of the University of Chicago. However, these benefits do not reach every child, every family, or every community. Research shows that there are current and long-standing racial disparities in access to and benefits from early care and education programs and supports, as well as in health coverage and outcomes, economic disparities among families with children, and other clear inequities in measures of child, family, and community well-being.

As leaders in early childhood programs and systems — including but not limited to early learning, health, housing, economic support, mental health, and family support — we need to ask ourselves important questions: Who is and who is not benefitting from our early childhood programs and systems? And what must we do to erase those differences?

Leaders recognize that racial inequities are a combination of intentional and unintentional

actions that result in institutional practices (such as institutional arrangements, policies, regulations, rules, and work culture) that disproportionately disadvantage racially or ethnically marginalized children, families, and communities. While working to dismantle these institutional policies and practices, leaders must also understand and advocate for structural challenges to the uneven distribution of power and economic resources and in access to opportunities.

Leaders must work to create change in early childhood systems, reduce disparities, and support children, families, and communities marginalized by structural racialization.

## **We Cannot Change What We Do Not See**

Data-driven decision-making is foundational to dismantling inequities. Leaders must understand the early childhood programs, policies, initiatives, and systems in their neighborhoods, communities, states, or nation, as well as their reach and impact. We should work to understand:

- Who is benefitting and who is not?
- Why there are differences?
- What causes these disparities?
- What we can do with our authority

and influence to change these systems and ensure that disparities due to race, class, and other forms of oppression are targeted and dismantled?

As we work to build equitable early childhood systems, data that offers insights into child well-being can be used to inform our decisions, such as where and how to invest resources, where to change or maintain policies or practices, how to develop eligibility criteria, and more.

No single data point or set of data points can begin to describe the complex experiences of children, families, or communities. That means leaders should search for multiple sources of data from multiple angles. Data is available from early childhood programs, state departments, and the U.S. Census Bureau, as well as within the reflections and experiences of families, early childhood workers, and communities.

Racial equity leaders must:

- Use a broad assortment of available data, such as state, county, population-level, program, or community data, related to:
  - Demographics
  - Child and family outcomes
  - Child and family access to programs



and systems (e.g., economic, health, child care, housing, family support, nutrition)

- Community conditions or opportunities
- Workforce data
- Continually monitor and analyze data to advance racial equity by identifying utilization, gaps, barriers, availability, and other key access-focused factors — including awareness, affordability, accessibility, and accommodation or acceptability — that may influence racial equity outcomes for children, families, and communities.
- Use disaggregated data to set benchmarks and drive assessments to ensure that programs, services, and initiatives lead to reductions in disparities due to race and place for children, families, and communities in early childhood systems.

### Disaggregating the Data in Kansas

Data supports our understanding of how Kansas children are doing and what is needed to improve child well-being in the state. To that end, it is essential to disaggregate data and make inequities visible.

According to the 2017 Annie E. Casey Foundation's Kids Count Initiative, Kansas ranked 15th out of the 50 states in child well-being across four domains: economic well-being, education, health, and family and community indicators. This ranking placed Kansas well above the average rating for child well-being in the U.S. But that ranking is based on aggregated data, in which all Kansas children (regardless of race or ethnicity) are compared to the other 49 states.

That same year, the Annie E. Casey Foundation also released their Race for Results Index, which disaggregates data by race and

ethnicity and offers more complete information about child and family well-being, including who has access to opportunity and who does not. These data points paint a far grimmer picture of how Kansas' children of color are doing compared to their white peers.

- African American children ranked 23rd out of 44 ranked states.
- Latino children ranked 25th out of 49 ranked states.
- Asian and Pacific Islander ranked 18th out of 43 ranked states.
- American Indian children ranked 2nd out of 26 ranked states.
- White children ranked 26th out of 50 ranked states.

If we use this information to guide decision-making, how might we change our policies or resource distribution? By disaggregating the data by race and ethnicity, a different story emerges about who is benefiting and who is not — and who has access to opportunity and who does not.

Data must be disaggregated with sufficient detail to understand varying groups' circumstances. For example, if we collect and use data that does not only describe "Asian Americans" but disaggregates it further (i.e., Bangladeshi, Burmese, Cambodian, Hmong, Indonesian), access and outcomes can guide decisions that address the actual and differing needs and circumstances of children, families, and communities.

### The Importance of Family and Community Voices

As James James Charlton said about individuals with disabilities: "Nothing about us without us."

One of the main reasons federal and state policies fail to address systemic inequities is that they are designed and drafted without input from those they are supposed to support.

Family and community voices offer a necessary perspective — feedback that must be put front and center as leaders work to develop equitable programs, practices, and systems.

Numerical data on its own presents an incomplete picture. Perspectives from specific groups of people — especially from Latinx, Black, Native American, non-English speaking, and immigrant communities, as well as ability-diverse individuals and others who are historically or currently marginalized — need to be incorporated in data collection and analysis strategies.

---

**Nothing about us  
without us.**

---

Communities of color experience poverty and racial and economic injustice. They have historically fought and are currently fighting against structural and institutional barriers and oppression. Listening to their voices promotes an understanding of what state programs, services, or initiatives can do to encourage enduring positive outcomes for children, families, and communities. How might our strategies, perspectives, or policy decisions shift when family or community voices are central to the decision-making and assessment process?

For a variety of reasons, early childhood leaders may not be able to hear family and community voices or understand the value of listening to the perspectives and experiences of those they serve. But this work cannot be done without intentional and consistent actions to elevate the voices of communities of color and recognize the importance of listening to and learning from





# FAMILY VALUES

These quotes are based on multiple conversations BUILD had with families and parents from across the country:

"It took me 1½ years to get all the kids into child care. I already reserved a spot even before having my next child."

"I get job offers, but I don't have child care that works."

"Finding jobs that pay enough to pay for child care and all the other family living costs. A family has to have at least two incomes."

"We had a bus in the beginning of the year, then something happened to the bus driver, and it stopped. They never rehired the bus driver. My daughter's class dropped five students. In the rain, it's a lot on parents. I see parents taking taxis."

"I can't work. There was some summer day care. I asked how I could sign up. I work 30 hours and they said it wasn't enough. Needed 32 hours. Same thing over at the child care network."

those individuals furthest from opportunity. Focus groups, interviews, site visits, ongoing feedback loops, and other strategies for listening to, interacting with, and responding to individuals who use our services and programs reinforces the importance of addressing inequities.

This is as at least as important, if not more so, than the spreadsheets and numbers that provide only one way of understanding the impact of our early childhood systems. If we want to work toward equitable access and outcomes for all children and families in our state, we must center shared leadership with communities of color, underserved and underrepresented groups, and those impacted by poverty.

Racial equity leaders must seek to achieve the following four goals through site visits and engagement with families and communities:

1. Listen, understand, and learn about families' goals for their young children and providers' goals for their work with young children. Learn where services do or do not work well, where service gaps exist, and where opportunities for service and program development opportunities may be present.
2. Develop relationships with populations and groups that experience racial inequities and disparities, increasing the focus on institutional and structural barriers that need to be removed to achieve equitable outcomes for children and their families.
3. Support the exploration of how individuals and communities have fought back, resisted, and organized for self-determination, inclusion, and fairness, both historically and in the present day.
4. Apply lessons learned to the design, development, and implementation of programs, services, and initiatives that target the needs of children, families, and workforce members furthest from opportunity.

## Adding Data to the Toolkit

Data is a tool for racial equity that helps leaders identify disparities, as well as opportunities to dismantle those disparities. Data also helps early childhood leaders understand the programs, initiatives, and services that make up a comprehensive early childhood system and determine whether the systems are supporting families or reproducing inequities.

**Data includes numbers and population-level statistics.**

**But data is also the voices of Kansas families and communities.**

Data includes numbers and population-level statistics. But data is also the voices of Kansas families and communities. As a tool for equity, data is necessary to the development of racially equitable early childhood systems, programs, and services so that race and place no longer determine child outcomes and family well-being. ●



**MICHELLE STOVER WRIGHT, M.S.**

Evaluation and Research,  
BUILD Initiative



**AISHA RAY, Ph.D.**

Distinguished Fellow,  
BUILD Initiative



**SHERRI KILLINS STEWART, Ed.D.**

Director of State Systems  
Alignment and Integration,  
Co-Director of State Services,  
BUILD Initiative

Drs. Ray and Killins Stewart co-lead the Equity Leaders Action Network (ELAN), a national leadership program at BUILD supporting the racial equity work of state early childhood system leaders.

Michelle Stover Wright oversees evaluation and research at the BUILD Initiative and is on the ELAN faculty.



# Supporting Family Choice

## A MESSAGE FROM CHILD CARE AWARE® OF KANSAS

Selecting a child care provider is an important decision for a family to make, and it's often a stressful one, no matter the family's situation. The good news is that Child Care Aware of Kansas offers a free resource for families to help them with the decision.

The Child Care Aware of Kansas Resource Center helps families take the guesswork out of the decision-making process. Assistance is available by phone, in person, and through the online search option.

First, a knowledgeable resource center specialist visits with the family to identify their specific child care needs, such as the age of their child, the days and times they need child care, and any special health care needs. Each referral is customized to the family's particular circumstances. It also includes additional data and information on topics such as:

- State licensing requirements
- Financial assistance options
- Quality child care
- Child development
- Types of child care programs
- School readiness
- County resources

Two weeks after the referral, the family receives a follow-up call to confirm that they've found child care that meets their needs. A month after the referral, they start to receive our Family Connection e-newsletter with a highlighted child care article, links to additional family child care resources, and instructions to sign up for the free family texting service.

Families who sign up for our texting service continue to receive information from us on a monthly basis, keeping them connected to child development information. ●

## Family Resources Texting Service

Text **KSKIDS** to **59925**



# Get Connected to Employers in Your Community

BY ANDREW WIENS

Child care is increasingly becoming a necessity for employees to remain active participants in the Kansas workforce, particularly for families with two working adults.

A survey of working-age adults conducted last summer in the midst of the pandemic by the American Enterprise Institute found that 45% of parents with children ages 0 to 5 who used child care before the pandemic reported that it was very or somewhat difficult to meet their child care needs at the time of the survey.

---

## What can we do now to make progress on this issue?

---

The survey also revealed that “child care challenges and school closures have had a tremendous negative effect on the employment of mothers.”

While child care difficulties were prevalent before COVID, the pandemic and associated business and school closures only exacerbated these challenges. What can we do to make progress on this issue?

The policy side of my brain points to a few easier-said-than-done ideas: increasing the number of child care providers, expanding the employer child care tax credit, and creating a business-friendly regulatory environment for child

care providers and for employers who want to provide on-site care.

But these are long-term ideas, so let's ask a different question: What can we do *now* to make progress on this issue?

As communities emerge from the COVID-induced economic recession and bring back in-person events, try to get plugged in with employers in your community. Here are some ideas to consider:

- Join a civic organization, such as a Rotary or Kiwanis Club.
- Attend a networking event hosted by your local chamber of commerce, economic development organization, or young professionals group.
- Reach out to your local workforce center staff or board and meet with them to discuss the needs they see in your community.
- Get to know business leaders and learn about their particular circumstances, challenges, priorities, and ideas.

After you build trust and gain a few contacts, you can become a collaborative partner and offer ideas for child care options for their business, employees, or friends. Making these connections won't solve all of our child care issues, but becoming more aware of employers' child care needs or challenges can only help. Take advantage of this transition and get plugged into local, in-person networking opportunities! ●



### ANDREW WIENS

Vice President of  
Government Relations,  
Wichita Regional Chamber  
of Commerce

Andrew worked for the State of Kansas in various positions from 2011 – 2018 prior to starting at the Chamber, including as chief policy officer for Kansas Governor Jeff Colyer, director of policy & legislative affairs at the Kansas Department for Children and Families, and policy analyst for Kansas Governor Sam Brownback. He was born and raised in Topeka, Kan., and now lives in Bel Aire, Kan., with his wife and two children. He earned his MBA from the Washburn University School of Business in Topeka and completed his undergraduate education at Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kan., in the fields of philosophy, history, religious studies, and business management.





# Pathways

## for New Providers in Southwest Kansas

**BY DEANNA BERRY**

In the 19 rural and frontier counties in southwest Kansas, encompassing more than 15,000 square miles, there are nearly 12,000 children under the age of 5. But there are only 12 licensed child care centers and 210 licensed family child care homes in the region. Child care supply is clearly inadequate. One county faces an unmet need of 84%, with infant and special needs care especially difficult to find.

Those interested in opening a family child care business in the region face multiple barriers. These include inadequate knowledge of Kansas child care licensing requirements, an inability to cover start-up costs, and limited access to technology. Language barriers and low education levels also make it difficult for potential providers to successfully navigate the system.

Based in Garden City, Russell Child Development Center (RCDC) serves 19 counties in southwest Kansas. Through our new Preschool Development Grant, we hope to simplify the process for qualified individuals to enter the world of family child care by directly addressing upfront barriers.

The barriers we hope to address include:

- A lack of public awareness about business opportunities in child care
- Insufficient resources for meeting initial licensing requirements
- Inadequate funding for meeting quality care standards and sustaining a new child care business in its early months

- Limited awareness about the available supports for providers serving children in foster care or families experiencing significant challenges
- The need to offset income lost when caring for infants and children with special needs, due to ratio considerations
- Inadequate access to the internet, computers, and accounting software
- Limited opportunities for professional development geared toward:
  - Caring for infants and children with special needs
  - Understanding and meeting the needs of children who are experiencing a high number of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
  - Providing quality early learning experiences for all children

Proposed strategies to address these barriers include:

- Community outreach across the service area to connect with a wide range of potential providers
- Use of qualified interpreters to work with individuals from different cultures and backgrounds
- Collaboration with partners to leverage targeted professional development opportunities

around business management and responsive care

- A computer loan library and matching grants for purchases of business computers and software
- Mini-grants to assist with start-up costs, including the purchase of high-quality care and play materials and equipment
- Stipends for the addition of infant and special needs slots ●



**DEANNA BERRY**

Executive Director,  
Russell Child  
Development Center

Deanna is a native of northwest Kansas with a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's degree and education specialist degree in school psychology. She has earned licensure in Elementary and Secondary Building Leadership, District Leadership, Special Education Supervisor/Coordinator, and Special Education Director. Before joining Russell Child Development Center, Deanna worked as a teacher, school psychologist, and special education supervisor/coordinator. She has served as a board member and president of the Kansas Division for Early Childhood (KDEC), as well as a board member for the tiny-k Alliance and the Finney County Community Health Coalition. Deanna lives in Garden City with her husband Milan, a retired farmer.





# Assessing Your Child Care Environment

**BY SUSAN OWENS**

Environment plays a crucial role in supporting child development. But how can you tell if the changes you make to the child care environment have positive impacts on the children you serve?

The term “environment” includes many aspects that influence a child’s learning experiences throughout the day. A research-based assessment, such as the Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS), can determine what impact the environment is having on child development and confirm whether any changes you’ve made have been beneficial.

Before you begin an assessment, you first need to identify the components of your child care environment. The physical space can include the structure of the building, the organization of supplies, the number of people in the space, and even the number of wall hangings. But don’t overlook less tangible components like the level of family involvement, daily schedules and routines, the comfort level of the room, and child-teacher interactions. All of these factors can affect child development in positive or negative ways.

You’ll also need to determine a baseline before making changes to your child care program. Complete the same assessment before and after the changes are made to measure their impact. For example, the CLASS assessment involves a prescribed observation of the classroom.





If you want to make positive changes to your classroom environment, there are many areas to consider. One of the most important is the relationships between teachers and children. Relationships are just as important for infants as they are for school-age children. A classroom with strong personal connections encourages learning and helps everyone feel supported. Conflicts may still arise, but they will be handled in a more respectful manner.

Another aspect of the environment to consider is the sharing of ideas. Examples include teachers asking open-ended questions about a topic or teachers holding lively conversations with children at the lunch table about what they will be doing that weekend.

Another component to consider is the use of language in the classroom. Communication doesn't always involve verbal language. In a positive classroom environment, teachers should be communicating with children of all ages. The CLASS tool can assess how often teachers are supporting infants' attempts at expressing themselves through gestures or partial sounds. With older children, teachers might explore new words and talk about what they are doing throughout the day. This type of self-talk helps make solid language impressions with the children.

The CLASS tool also looks at physical aspects of the environment to see

how they are affecting the children. Think about what happens if the expectations in a classroom aren't clear. Children may start to wander or feel tired or bored. They may start using materials inappropriately. Assess the organization of the classroom to determine if the environment is supporting child development.

The information you gain from your assessment can help the adults in your program make simple changes to continue giving the children in your care the best possible experiences. ●



#### **SUSAN OWENS**

Early Care and  
Education Specialist,  
The Family Conservancy

Susan has a M.Ed. in instructional design and a teaching certificate in early childhood education and early childhood special education. She is certified as a CLASS observer for the Infant, Toddler, and Pre-K CLASS tool. She enjoys coaching and training early childhood professionals and promotes the idea that all experiences have an impact on children.



### **Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS)**

Learn more about CLASS  
at [teachstone.com/class](https://teachstone.com/class)

# BOOKS TO BEAT THE BLUES

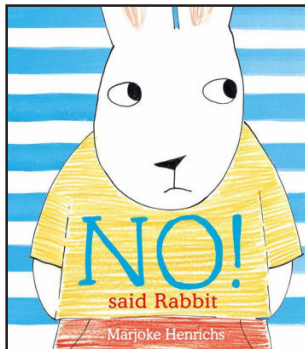
BY ALICE EBERHART-WRIGHT



Many times throughout our lives, we need something to make us feel better. So we train therapy dogs. We focus on our own

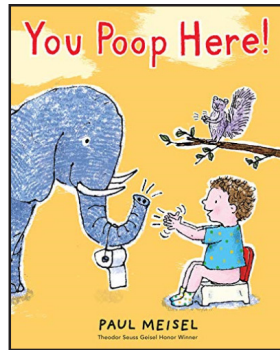
hobbies and design activities for children to uplift their moods and inspire smiles.

Books can bring us out of the gloom too. If we have therapy pets, why can't we have therapy books? After all, we've just been through a global pandemic.



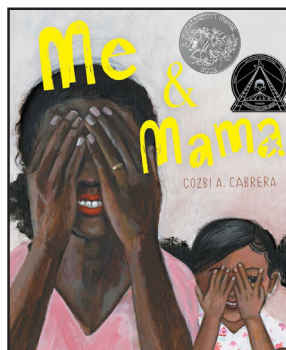
**"No! Said Rabbit"** by Marjoke Henrichs

About the time that adults are getting toddlers out of diapers and breathing a sigh of relief, the word "no" becomes the newest challenge. Everything the adult suggests is met with a loud "NO!" This children's picture book is a kind of therapy for both children and adults. How empowering it feels to small children to say "NO!" How empowering it is for adults and older children to read "NO!" While the children giggle at Rabbit's repeated denials, the adults welcome the chance to say the word loudly before reflecting on how the patient Mama Rabbit finds ways to get little Rabbit to do what she suggests. We love the giant picture of Mama Rabbit's face as she explains that it's not easy, but then ends the challenging experience with cuddles.



**"You Poop Here"** by Paul Meisel

"Poop" is a favorite word of small children. And adults are always looking for a magic wand to get kids through the challenging toilet-training stage. Why not try a new book about potties and pooping by all kinds of people and critters? The two-year-olds in your care will love it. Early readers will pronounce the words with relish. Caregivers may get the chance to say "poop" as often as the kids. And it could even help some toilet-avoiders make the switch. As a bonus, the back of the book includes "fun facts about poop."



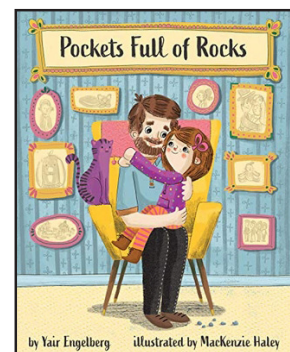
**"Me & Mama"** by Cozbi A. Cabrera

The days of books with only white-faced children and nuclear families are gone. Look at the books you own or check out of the library. Do you have diversity in skin color and family makeup, books that model loving relationships and consistent rituals and rules for daily living?

This story of a young Black child and her mother provides good checklists for simple everyday events that can supply a child with the tools to begin a happy day. Smiles, conversation, choices, healthy foods, appropriate clothes, caring for others (in this case, a cat), enough time to explore indoor and outdoor environments, the magic of singing songs. What ideas will this book generate in your little listeners? Read it slowly and ask what they're thinking about.

For older children, ask for personal memories, what they like about the rituals in their family, and what they would like to change. For children living through chaos or challenging times, this book may be a great comfort. It would also be good for a parent discussion group.

For children in foster care or who are experiencing grief or loss, be careful with this book. Use it individually and allow them to leave the room if it triggers thoughts they don't want to talk about.



**"Pockets Full of Rocks: Daddy Talks about Depression"** by Yair Engelberg, illustrated by MacKenzie Haley

This therapeutic book can help families dealing with depression. Published by the American Psychological Association, it explores the deep dark secrets of depression within a family.

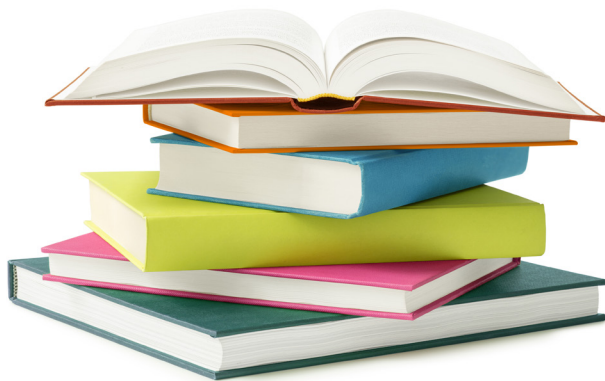
We often talk about children's emotions. Are they happy, mad, or sad? But what



about their parents? Children often recognize when there is something wrong with their parents. They notice when parents look sad, aren't able to play, or don't react to gifts or jokes.

In this book, Ella's daddy talks to her about his feelings. He explains that he loves her and that his feelings are not her fault. He gives her the term "depression," describing it as big rocks that he can't get rid of. He tells her about his therapist and how he takes medicine to help. When Ella worries that she will get depression too, he tells her she can't catch depression like she catches a cold. He can smile when she hugs him, but she can't make the depression go away. He encourages her to talk to him and to her mama any time she is sad or worried.

This may be a good book to have on hand to help all caregiving adults recognize how important it is to get help for depression and find ways to talk to their children as soon as they are old enough to understand. For more children's books on mental health topics, visit [maginationpress.org](http://maginationpress.org). ●



always low prices  
always 110% guaranteed



arts & crafts

20% off everything

orders over \$250

plus free shipping

use code 21CC20 expires 1/2/22



STEM products



infant & toddler



**Robert Redmond**

Account Manager

913-707-5756 Phone

831-333-5658 Fax

RRedmond@DiscountSchoolSupply.com



©2021 Excelligence Learning Corporation

Allen's Early Childhood Education program provides you quality instruction and student services that meet educational and professional needs to thrive after a pandemic.



*Contact Us*

Burlingame, Zoom & Online Courses

[ece@allencc.edu](mailto:ece@allencc.edu)

[www.allencc.edu](http://www.allencc.edu)

620.901.6304



# POINT IN TIME DATA IS HERE!

Point in Time Data was created to assist communities – including families, employers, and other community leaders – across Kansas as they work to address critical child care shortages.

You are now able to select your county and retrieve information about the status of child care supply and demand that's as up-to-date as the moment you click. You will also find county-level data that includes:

- Different types of child care available
- Rates for part-time and full-time care
- Census data

Visit our website today to find out more!

***ks.childcareware.org***



PO Box 2294 • Salina, KS 67402-2294

ks.childcareaware.org

Call Toll-Free 1-855-750-3343

Make sure you are following us on

