

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

KansasChild

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IN THIS ISSUE

Supporting Kansas
Families

- Where to Start Your Child Care Search
- Two- Generation Approaches
- Authentic Family Engagement Practices

SUPPORTING KANSAS FAMILIES

When I joined Child Care Aware® of Kansas two years ago, the very first thing I did was ask my team about why they love their work — and why they keep at it when the going gets tough.

In response, team members consistently emphasized their commitment to young children, families, and the early care and education professionals who serve them. Supporting these three groups is central to our organization's shared purpose.

We want all young children to grow up in safe, stable, nurturing families who have access to everything they need for success in school and in life. Although all of us are working tirelessly to achieve that goal, we rarely step back to consider the full picture of what young children need to thrive, especially within the broader contexts of their families, caregivers, and communities.

It's hard to think holistically about the needs of entire families. It's harder still to strategically cobble together limited resources in a seamless, equitable way that doesn't put the burden of "figuring it out" right back on families.

Given how quickly the world around us is changing, it's easy to lose sight of the big picture. We can and often do fall into siloed thinking — focusing on one slice of the challenge at a time or getting lost in the nuances of different programs and funding streams. In short, we often get in our own way.

There's no better time than now, however, to step back and truly take stock of what young children and their families need to thrive. We are all active co-creators of our early childhood system — every last one of us. We created this, which means we can uncreate it. We can make it into something that truly sets our entire state up for long-term success.

In this issue of *Kansas Child*, we've gathered thought leaders from across the state and nation to offer strategies for simultaneously supporting children and the adults who care for them. I hope you enjoy their insights as much as I have.



KELLY DAVYDOV

Executive Director,
Child Care Aware® of Kansas

Kelly 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, 14, and Henry, 11) have made Kansas City their new home. Together, they enjoy exploring state and national parks and farmers markets and spending their winter weekends poolside at swim meets.

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In Your Corner: 1-800-CHILDREN

Statewide Resource for Parents' Most Challenging Moments



1-800-CHILDREN
Supporting Parents

FREE & CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT

Powered by Kansas Children's Service League, 1-800-CHILDREN is a statewide resource for parenting's most challenging moments.

1-800-CHILDREN is here to provide 24/7 support without judgment. No question is too big or too small when it comes to parenting.

You can call **1-800-CHILDREN** (1-800-332-6378) or send an email or text to **1800children@kcs.org**. A trained staff person is always available to listen to and support you. We offer free and confidential support in English and Spanish, as well as multiple other languages.

You can also find helpful resources and support near you by visiting **1800childrenks.org** or downloading the free mobile app **1800ChildrenKS**.

BY STEPHANIE BOONE

A child changes your life.

I think we can all agree on that. When a child joins your family or enters your care, they bring more joy to your life. They remind us how to play and have fun. They make us notice the curiosities of the world around us that we often miss in our hectic lives.

Parenting is rewarding, but it isn't easy. It will test the very limits of your patience and keep you up at night.

When you aren't sure what to do or where to even start, guidance from others can unravel the challenges of caring for a child.

Oh, the long nights! The crying can seem endless. Tantrums can make getting anywhere on time nearly impossible. And let's not forget the kids' songs playing on repeat that get stuck in your head and drive you crazy.

New questions pop up daily, and it's impossible to have all the answers. You will doubt yourself — wonder if you're making the right call for your family.

It's a wonder that something as precious, fragile, and complicated as a baby doesn't come with a pretty hefty instruction manual. How do you make sure your toddler is

getting enough to eat when they refuse to eat anything but graham crackers? What is the secret to getting teenagers to think you're cool?

At these times, you turn to others for answers. For encouragement. For confidence.

Reaching out isn't a sign of failure or inadequacy. We implore our friends to reach out when they need us. Not because we think they are weak, but because we know they just need to be reminded of how powerful they really are.

You need support to find the strength that has always been within you.

When you aren't sure what to do or where to even start, guidance from others can unravel the challenges of caring for a child.

The next time you find yourself wishing there was someone in your corner, remember that 1-800-CHILDREN exists for that very reason. Go ahead, give us a call. ●



STEPHANIE BOONE

Statewide Information and Referral Supervisor,
Kansas Children's Service League

Stephanie supervises the 1-800-CHILDREN resource for Kansas Children's Service League. She has worked in the child abuse prevention field for four years and has been a foster parent. Stephanie enjoys playing with her two young daughters and watching movies with her husband.

En Tu Esquina: 1-800-CHILDREN

Recurso Estatal Para Los Padres En
Momentos Difíciles Y Desafiantes



1-800-CHILDREN
Supporting Parents

SOPORTE GRATUITO Y CONFIDENCIAL

Desarrollado por Kansas Children's Service League, 1-800-CHILDREN es un recurso estatal para los padres en momentos desafiantes/difíciles en la crianza de sus hijos. 1-800-CHILDREN está aquí para proporcionar apoyo 24/7 sin juzgar a nadie. Ninguna pregunta es demasiado grande o pequeña cuando se trata de la crianza de nuestros hijos. Puede llamar o enviar mensaje de texto al **1-800-CHILDREN** (1-800-332-6378) o enviar un correo electrónico a **1800children@kcs.org**. Siempre tenemos personal capacitado disponible para escucharlos y apoyarlos. Ofrecemos apoyo gratuito y confidencial en inglés, español y en otros idiomas. Usted puede encontrar mas recursos y centros de apoyo cerca de usted visitando el en lace **1800childrenks.org** o descargando la aplicación móvil gratuita **1800ChildrenKS**.

BY STEPHANIE BOONE

Un niño cambia tu vida.

Creo que todo podemos estar de acuerdo en eso. Cuando un niño se une a su familia o entra en su cuidado les brinda más alegría a sus vidas. Ellos nos recuerdan como jugar y divertimos. Nos hacen notar las curiosidades del mundo que nos rodea y que muchas veces las pasamos por percibidas por estar ocupados. La crianza de nuestros hijos es gratificante, pero no es fácil. Pondrán a prueba sus límites, paciencia y los mantendrán despierto en las noches.

¡Ay, esas noches largas! Los llantos parecen interminables. Los berrinches pueden hacer que llegar a tiempo a un lugar sea casi imposible. No olvidemos las canciones de niños que se repiten y se quedan grabadas en la cabeza hasta que te vuelven loco.

Nuevas preguntas aparecen a diario y es imposible tener todas las respuestas. Dudaras de ti mismo y te preguntaras si estas tomando la decisión correcta para tu familia.

Es una maravilla que algo tan precioso, frágil y complicado como un bebe no venga con un manual de instrucciones.

¿Como se asegura de que su niño a comido lo suficiente cuando este lo único que quiere comer es galletas integrales? ¿Cuál es el secreto para que los adolescentes piensen que eres genial?

En esos momentos recurras a otros en busca de respuestas, como ánimo y confianza.

Pedir ayuda no es signo de debilidad o fracaso. Nosotros imploramos a nuestros amigos que se acerquen y nos busquen cuando nos necesiten. No porque pensemos que son débiles, sino porque hay que recordarles cuan poderosos son.

Cuando no estas seguro de que hacer o por donde comenzar, los consejos y orientaciones de otras personas pueden ayudarlo a resolver los desafíos que conlleva el cuido de un niño.

A veces necesitas apoyo para encontrar la fuerza que siempre ha estado dentro de ti. Cuando no estes seguro que hacer o por donde empezar, los consejos u orientación de otros pueden ayudarlo a resolver los desafíos que conlleva cuidar un niño.

La próxima vez que te encuentres deseando que haya alguien en tu esquina, recuerda que la línea telefónica

1-800-CHILDREN existe por esa misma razón. Adelante, danos una llamada. ●



STEPHANIE BOONE

Supervisora Estatal de
Información y Referidos,
Kansas Children's
Service League

Stephanie supervisa la línea telefónica de recursos 1-800-Children de Kansas Children's Service League. Ella se destacó por cuatro años en la prevención de abuso infantil y también a sido madre adoptiva. Stephanie disfruta jugar con sus dos hijas pequeñas y ver películas con su esposo.

Why Child Care Subsidies Matter

Savings

Toys

Education

BY REANN PARKER AND KATRINA DECLUE

I recently sat down with Reann Parker, director of Oak Grove School in Manhattan, Kansas, to discuss the importance of child care subsidies for families in her program. Our conclusion: With the rising costs of food and other essentials, it's more important than ever for providers to inform families about opportunities to reduce their child care tuition.

What subsidies are currently available for families in your program?

Oak Grove School currently has two subsidy options available to families: Raising Riley scholarships and the Child Care Assistance from the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF).

The Kansas Child Care Assistance is awarded directly to families based on household income.

Raising Riley is a scholarship program for parents and guardians who live, work, or attend school in Riley County. Raising Riley providers are required to be fully licensed by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), and they must meet or exceed high standards for the health and safety of the children in their care.

To receive a Raising Riley scholarship, families must meet at least one of the identified risk factors. Learn more and apply at RaisingRiley.com.

How do the families you serve benefit from these subsidies?

Quality child care gives parents and guardians the ability to work and provide for their families without having to worry about the health and safety of their children. With a subsidy, families can reduce their monthly tuition and allocate income toward other immediate needs.

Subsidy programs have a significant impact on the development of young children and the continuity of care they receive. Quality child care should be a universal right — regardless of ability to pay — but we aren't there yet!

What impact do these subsidies have on families in your program?

Without a subsidy, some families would be forced to choose between paying for child care or paying for groceries. These subsidies help feed qualifying families and keep the electricity on at home.

Do you think families in your community know about the available subsidies?

I do not believe families readily know what subsidies are available. As providers, we need to spread the word about subsidies and help bridge the gap. ●

Without a subsidy, some families would be forced to choose between paying for child care or paying for groceries.



REANN PARKER

Director, Oak Grove School

Reann has worked in the early childhood field for 16 years. She is a military spouse and mother of two (ages 17 and 4). Reann became passionate about quality child care while searching for care for her oldest child.



KATRINA DECLUE

Links to Quality
Community Consultant,
Child Care Aware® of Kansas

Katrina has a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and a master's in education with a specialization in special education. Prior to her current role, she worked in the early childhood field for more than 25 years as a preschool teacher, paraprofessional, and family child care provider.

HOW 2GEN APPROACHES SUPPORT FAMILY WELL-BEING

BY ANNE MOSLE

Over the past few years, the impact of COVID-19 and record inflation rates — combined with systemic inequities and fragmented systems — have exacerbated stress and instability for children, parents, and caregivers. Children and families of color and those with low incomes continue to be the hardest hit. According to a 2020 study, nearly half of families earning less than \$40,000 per year reported that they or someone in their household lost a job or took a pay cut as a result of the pandemic.

We now have a generational opportunity to develop and fund systems and services that leave no one out and meet children and families where they dream. We are witnessing a sea change in early childhood, with providers and systems leaders embracing more holistic approaches to improving the health, learning, and well-being of our youngest children and their families.

To meet this moment, states and communities should apply and accelerate two-generation (2Gen) approaches to build on the resilience of families, including parents' aspirations for themselves and their children.

What is a 2Gen Approach?

Aimed at driving effective, equitable, and sustainable outcomes, 2Gen approaches are rooted in both a mindset shift and new vision for the future of leadership. At Ascend at the Aspen Institute, we've been working with leaders in communities across the country for a decade to spark and spread these approaches.

2Gen approaches help families pursue their goals and thrive, optimizing each individual's potential.

2Gen approaches build family well-being by intentionally and simultaneously working with children and the adults in their lives. Designing health and human services programs to support children and families together improves outcomes for both generations. When everyone achieves their full potential, communities thrive.

As children, parents, and families grow and change across their lifespans, 2Gen approaches help families pursue their goals and thrive, optimizing each individual's potential along the way. Take the example of a father pursuing a licensed practical nurse (LPN) diploma or a mother pursuing an IT credential. If that parent qualifies for a state or federal tuition grant, access to high-quality child care ensures that, while the parent is studying, the child is learning, too.

You can see 2Gen approaches in action at organizations like Jeremiah Program, a Minnesota-based nonprofit that is part of the Ascend Network and that works with single mothers and their children to disrupt the cycle of intergenerational poverty. CEO Chastity Lord believes that “when a mother invests simultaneously in her personal and professional goals and the education of her children, she can re-author her family's outcomes and act as a change agent within her community.”

The Role of Early Childhood Development

A 2Gen approach is especially beneficial for young parents and their children. The earliest months and years of life are a period of incredible brain development. The brains

TWO-GENERATION APPROACHES

#2GEN



THE SIX KEY COMPONENTS OF TWO-GENERATION APPROACHES

Two-generation (2Gen) approaches build family well-being by intentionally and simultaneously working with children and the adults in their lives together to access new resources, solve problems, and sharpen existing skills



POSTSECONDARY & EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

community college
training and credentials
workforce partnerships

K-12

kindergarten ready
3rd grade reading skills
parent engagement
graduation and postsecondary prep

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Head Start
Early Head Start
child care partnerships
preK
home visiting

SOCIAL CAPITAL

peer and family networks
coaching
cohort strategies

#2GEN

HEALTH, INCLUDING MENTAL HEALTH

mental, physical, and behavioral health
coverage and access to care
adverse childhood experiences
toxic stress

ECONOMIC ASSETS

asset building
housing and public supports
financial capacity
transportation

WHOLE FAMILY

of new parents change, too — creating a profound window of opportunity for practice and policy interventions.

Investing in these early years is a key part of 2Gen approaches, and for good reason: One study found a high-quality early education yields a 13% return on investment per year (based on increased school and career achievement, as well as reduced social costs).

In the past decade, we've seen the early childhood field embrace 2Gen approaches, from Georgia's advances in cross-agency child data systems to Colorado's newly minted Department of Early Childhood. States, counties, and municipalities are proving to be crucial incubators for 2Gen approaches that can be scaled to other parts of the country. Kansas can be next to join the movement.

Investing in Early Childhood Leaders

Our 2022 report, "Toward A More Equitable Tomorrow: Landscape Analysis of Early Childhood Leadership," found that — to achieve better outcomes for young children and their families — our definition of leadership needs to expand far beyond positional power. We must prioritize building the capacity of leaders at all levels of the early childhood development field in order to:

- Advance racial equity competency and accelerate racial diversity in early childhood leadership
- Think and work collaboratively across systems
- Redefine the economics of early care and learning, with workforce as a priority

- Authentically include parent and caregiver expertise in policy, practice, and systems
- Act as powerful storytellers, narrators, and advocates
- Create conditions that fuel innovation

We need bold leadership that can chart a new future for the early childhood field, one that is grounded in equity and centered in the expertise of families. By investing in the people who will lead the way, we can catalyze economic prosperity, foster a system of radical collaboration, and create a nation that centers children and their families. ●

DIVE DEEPER INTO 2GEN

Check out these reports from Ascend at the Aspen Institute:

- [Toward A More Equitable Tomorrow: Early Childhood Leadership Landscape Analysis \(2022\)](#)
- [State of the Field: Two-Generation Approaches To Family Well-Being \(2021\)](#)
- [Gateways to Two Generations: The Potential for Early Childhood Programs and Partnerships to Support Children and Parents Together \(2014\)](#)
- [Two Generations, One Future: Moving Parents and Children Beyond Poverty Together \(2012\)](#)



ANNE MOSLE

Vice President,
Aspen Institute

In addition to her role as vice president, Anne serves as the executive director of Ascend at the Aspen Institute and as co-chair of the Aspen Institute Forum on Women and Girls.



WHERE TO START YOUR CHILD CARE SEARCH

BY SAMANTHA SULAR

Choosing a child care program is one of the most important decisions you'll ever make for your child. How do you know you're selecting the right one?

You're probably already searching for programs that are open during specific hours or that are located near your home, school, or workplace. But don't forget to consider other criteria that are specific to your child and family. For example:

- 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?

To find a program that meets your family's particular requirements, you need an ally to equip you with information, resources, and tools. That partner is the **Child Care Aware® of Kansas Resource Center**, which provides free referral services to families searching for child care. The center offers:

- Customized lists of child care programs
- Access to helpful child development resources
- Contact information for other community supports

When you call the Resource Center, you'll be greeted by a knowledgeable resource specialist, whose first task is to get to know your family and your child care needs. They'll help you create a parent account to record information

essential to your search, such as the language spoken by your family, the age of your child, and the hours and days when you need child care.

You can add other filters, too — enabling you to find programs that are equipped to meet your child's special needs, accept the child care subsidy from the Department for Children and Families (DCF), or have many years of experience. From there, you'll receive a customized list of child care programs that fulfill your criteria.

The Resource Center will also provide other helpful materials and tools, such as:

- Information on license types and requirements
- Advice for interviewing potential programs
- A quality child care checklist
- Child development charts
- A list of local community resources

You'll also receive access to a library of materials for parents and families, organized into topics such as child development, health, nutrition, physical activity, safety, school readiness, and more. After you create your parent account, you may log in to the online database any time to access these referral services and materials.

We make finding child care easy. Start your search with Child Care Aware of Kansas. ●

TO BEGIN YOUR
CHILD CARE SEARCH,
CALL 1-877-678-2548
TO SPEAK WITH A
RESOURCE CENTER
SPECIALIST OR VISIT
[KS.CHILDCAREAWARE.ORG.](https://ks.childcareaware.org)



SAMANTHA SULAR

Senior Program Manager,
Child Care Aware® of Kansas

Samantha graduated from
Fort Hays State University and
has worked for Child Care Aware of
Kansas for 12 years.

HOW WE CAN BUILD A BETTER SYSTEM FOR KANSAS PARENTS



BY JESSICA HERRERA RUSSELL

This past spring, the Kansas Legislature took a significant step toward addressing the state's child care crisis by expanding eligibility for the employer child care tax credit to all Kansas businesses. But our leaders can't stop there.

Affordable, reliable child care gives parents the freedom to find and maintain good-paying jobs and provide for their families in the long term. Unfortunately, many parents are struggling right now, just a paycheck away from financial disaster.

Kansas' record low unemployment levels demonstrate that parents are doing their part. But that doesn't mean they're making enough to get by. Nearly 97,000 Kansas kids live in poverty, and 36,000 live in high poverty areas, according to data just released by The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Dashed Hopes

In 2015 and 2016, Kansas lawmakers passed the HOPE Act, the ironically named bill that established a number of extreme restrictions on those who need to access temporary family support programs for food, health care, child care, and financial assistance. These measures help families build a better foundation for success, yet lawmakers have added more obstacles in their path.

This spring, legislators had the chance to remove a few of the barriers enacted by the HOPE Act. HB 2525 would have removed the state's requirement that a custodial parent seek child support in order to be eligible for child care or food assistance. It also would have allowed parents enrolled in school to receive child care assistance and exempt them from working the typically mandated 20 hours a week.

It was frustrating to hear comments from a handful of lawmakers that demonized Kansas parents who are just trying to receive some relief — parents who are working hard to escape the cycle of low pay, long hours, and barriers to education and work opportunities. Even though there was bipartisan support for the bill, it failed to receive enough votes to move forward.

The Freedom to Thrive

The proposed changes would have given thousands of Kansans a bit of breathing room as they work toward household stability and financial security. But advocates aren't giving up. We must continue educating lawmakers about the real challenges that parents in this state are facing. When we help families overcome those challenges, more kids will be fed and cared for in loving, nurturing environments.

Our state should be doing everything it can to help parents improve themselves, allowing them to focus on the growth and success of their children. Instead, Kansas parents are forced to worry about how they'll feed their kids, find reliable child care that allows them to work, and provide other necessities that will enable their kids to thrive.

In the coming months, as you talk with candidates running for office, tell them that all Kansans deserve the freedom to thrive — and that parents shouldn't have to go it alone. It's beyond time that we foster a community that will help parents unlock their children's potential.

When we support all families — regardless of ZIP code, race, or income — we strengthen the next generation of Kansans. ●



JESSICA HERRERA RUSSELL

Sr. Communications Manager,
Kansas Action for Children

A nonprofit advocacy organization working to make Kansas a place where every child has the opportunity to grow up healthy and thrive, Kansas Action for Children gives leaders and advocates the information they need to implement policies that support families.

A Dedicated Committee Expands Child Care in Edwards County

BY TRISHA GREENE

Like many parents across Kansas, I had a hard time finding day care for my child. In my rural community of Kinsley, located in Edwards County, there was only one licensed child care program in May 2021. After visiting with the local economic development director, we decided to take action.

With the help of Bradford Wiles, KSRE extension specialist for early childhood and development, we conducted a needs assessment for Edwards County. We found that 60 to 75 children in the county needed child care — meaning there was a demand for six to eight additional child care programs. Seeing the results, we recognized the severity and urgency of the situation. We needed to form a committee quickly.

To find community members for the Edwards County Child Care Committee, we reached out to parents and employers directly affected by the child care shortage. The selected committee members are a mixture of parents, employers, and key community members.

Three Programs in Three Months

When the committee convened, we agreed on our central purpose: to help new and existing child care programs with space, supplies, and financial needs. The needs assessment found that providers don't want to run their businesses out of their homes. So the committee located vacant buildings and lots in the county that could potentially house child care programs.

Working directly with the school system, we were able to rent a modular building with two classrooms. Each classroom is subleased to a provider as a group day care home for \$250 a month. In addition, a committee member offered to rent a property to a provider at a reduced cost. These actions allowed Kinsley to expand from one licensed child care program to four in just three months.

In addition to offering reduced rent, the committee helped furnish the new

programs with necessities like changing tables, rocking chairs, cabinets, refrigerators, fire extinguishers, first aid kits, and more. Many of these items were donated by members of the community. Others were purchased by the committee using donations. Should a provider decide to leave, the items will stay at the location, allowing a different provider to smoothly take over the space for their program.

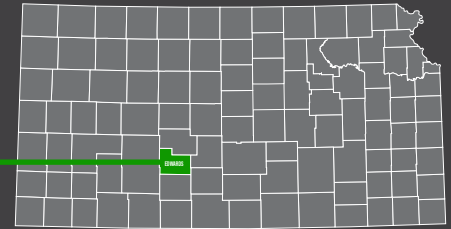


Pictured: Shana Reed, provider; Yescenia Lopez, provider; Kelsey Kliewer Holguin, committee member; Trisha Greene, committee president; and Krystle Sandman, committee secretary. Committee members not pictured are Bradley Venters, Schianne Hornbaker, Linette Miller, and Karen Myers.

Building on Success

Next, the committee worked to bring two new child care programs to Lewis, another town in Edwards County, located 11 miles east of Kinsley. The city of Lewis has agreed to lease the committee a lot on which to place a modular building.

In this building, two providers will be able to run two separate businesses as group day care homes. With the help of the county commissioners and local community members, we've been able to purchase a building and attain the additional funds required to get it up and running. With the building now in place, we're working on installing electrical and plumbing systems, as well as fencing, with the approval of the Kansas State



Fire Marshal. We are anticipating an October opening date for the two new child care businesses.

At that point, the committee will turn toward the third community in our county, Offerle, and continue to provide funding and supplies for all the child care programs in the county. We are focused on supporting both new and existing child care programs, whether they need playground equipment, cots, or a well-stocked first aid kit.

Based on the success we've had in Edwards County, I would recommend that other counties in Kansas gather together like-minded, motivated community members to make change happen. Some days it feels like there's no end in sight, but then we remember how far we've already come. None of this would have been possible without the time, supplies, and funding provided by committed community members and organizations.

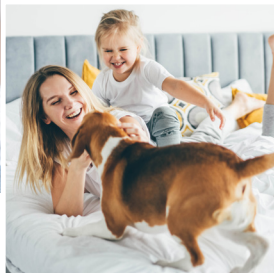
The committee is dedicated to continuing our work, with the goal of finding unique solutions that meet the child care needs of Edwards County. ●



TRISHA GREENE

President, Edwards County
Child Care Committee

Trisha works as a Family and Consumer Science Agent at Kansas State Research and Extension for 21 Central District. She received her bachelor's degree in early childhood unified from Fort Hays State University, and she's currently studying for her master's in family and community services from Kansas State University. Her focus areas are family and child development and food and nutrition education.



Empower and Support Families by Earning Their Trust

Impactful support requires intentional and authentic family engagement practices.

BY CARLA WHITESIDE-HICKS

I recently stopped at a highway service center, where I noticed the couple parked next to me studying a spiral-bound road atlas. My first thought was of childhood summer road trips, when my parents used paper road maps to guide our journeys across the country. I remember highlighted routes on these maps that included stops along the way to make the most of this family time.

My second thought was: “Who uses paper maps in 2022?” With available navigation technology, a spiral-bound road atlas seems archaic and unnecessary. I had no idea why this couple was traveling, where they began their journey, where they were heading, or what resources they had to assist them in reaching their destination. Yet I interpreted their actions through the lens of my experience with road maps, and I marginalized their navigation choice.

How often and to what extent do we marginalize the choices of the families we “support” because we view them through the lens of norms defined by our system of beliefs?

Starting with the Family

A child’s first experience with learning occurs within the family. There is a growing body of research indicating that — when families are actively engaged in their children’s learning — children experience positive, lifelong outcomes. While research results are needed to guide policy decisions, we must ensure that families are the real focus of family

engagement practices. Our personal agendas and the importance we’ve placed on quantitative data cannot become more important than the families we serve.

Supporting families begins with respecting their inherent dignity and their right to chart their own course toward what they define as success. It requires more than developing and implementing a transactional, multistep plan. Impactful support must involve intentional and authentic family engagement practices rooted in a systemic whole-family approach. Offering families a seat at the decision-making table is not enough. Inviting families to simply review engagement plans that our leadership teams have developed is not enough.

Authoritarianism has no place in family support practices. We cannot support families until we prove to them, through our actions, that we can be trusted.

Supporting families is relational work. Families must believe that they are equal partners. We give families reason to believe this when we embrace a whole-family approach to empowerment as fundamentally necessary, not supplemental.

How to Take a Whole-Family Approach

The positive long-term outcomes experienced by children who participate in high-quality child care are well-documented. These outcomes include higher reading levels, increasing high school graduation rates, decreased likelihood of substance use disorders, higher employment rates, higher wages, and positive second-generational effects on health, education, and employment.

Considering the far-reaching, multigenerational impacts of participation in high quality-child care, family engagement is critical. Efforts to support and engage families should, at minimum, include the following:



- Surveying families to determine their needs before you make recommendations for family engagement
- Involving families in decision-making conversations regarding family support programs, and respecting their input
- Engaging in ongoing staff development so that everyone understands the core principles of a whole-family approach
- Identifying barriers to family engagement
- Providing multiple avenues for family participation
- Communicating in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner
- Staying in your lane, which involves educating and empowering families
- Creating a feedback loop for families to share their lived experiences

The needs of families are neither linear nor siloed; they are unique and multifaceted. We best support families when we partner with them and empower them to determine the supports that can address their specific needs. One benefit of this kind of supportive relationship is families' increased capacity to make informed choices regarding high-quality care and to access services that will benefit their children's development.

All children have the right to high-quality child care through programs that support the whole family.

Child Care Subsidies Support the Whole Family

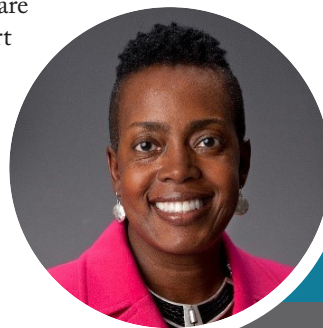
The state-federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program — the primary source of public funding for child care — is a key part of the whole-family approach to helping families meet their child care needs.

The purpose of the Kansas Child Care Subsidy Program is to promote children's healthy development and school success while supporting parents who are working,

training, or pursuing education. Child care subsidies reduce families' out-of-pocket costs while increasing their access to high-quality child care. The specific purposes of the CCDF are:

- To allow each state maximum flexibility in developing child care programs and policies that best suit the needs of children and parents within that state
- To promote parental choice to empower working parents to make their own decisions regarding the child care services that best suit their family's needs
- To encourage states to provide consumer education information to help parents make informed choices about child care services and to promote involvement by parents and family members in the development of their children in child care settings
- To assist states in delivering high-quality, coordinated early childhood care and education services to maximize parents' options and support parents trying to achieve independence from public assistance
- To assist states in improving the overall quality of child care services and programs by implementing health, safety, licensing, training, and oversight standards
- To improve child care and the development of participating children
- To increase the number and percentage of low-income children in high-quality child care settings

Families deserve more than our rhetoric. Regardless of how families fund their child care needs, all children have a right to high-quality child care through programs that support the whole family. Our investment in families today will yield positive results for generations to come. ●



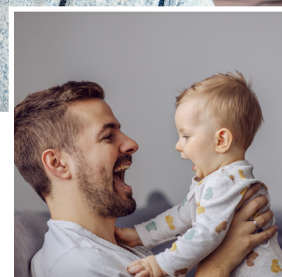
CARLA WHITESIDE-HICKS

Director of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Early Childhood Programs, Kansas Department for Children and Families

Carla is also the Child Care and Development Fund administrator for Kansas. She earned a Ph.D. in public policy and administration.

Visit ksqualitynetwork.org or childcareinkansas.com for more information about quality child care in Kansas. Learn more about what the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) is doing, along with its partners, to make high-quality child care readily available for all.

**Each child.
Every family.
All Kansans.**





MORE PEOPLE NOW QUALIFY FOR CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE

To be initially eligible for child care assistance, a family of four can make nearly 70,000 a year.

BY NICHELLE ADAMS

Many Kansas families would benefit from financial assistance to pay for safe, quality child care, but they don't always know where to turn.

When families hear about the Kansas Child Care Assistance program, or child care subsidy program, they often think that it's designed for low-income families. However, the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) recently increased the initial eligibility income to 250% of the federal poverty level, which is much higher than many people realize.

Eligibility Levels

For a family of three, the initial monthly gross income limit is \$4,798. Gross income includes all wages before taxes, benefits, or other expenses are taken out.

For a family of four, the initial monthly gross income limit is \$5,783. Once a family becomes initially eligible, the income limits increase at the next annual review so that the family may remain eligible.

To be eligible for Kansas Child Care Assistance:

- The family must have an approvable need for child care.

- The child must be a U.S. citizen or qualifying non-citizen.
- The family must use a DCF-enrolled provider or a licensed provider who is willing to become enrolled and completes the process.

Certain adult relatives — such as grandparents, great-grandparents, siblings, or aunts and uncles — may also become DCF-enrolled providers.

The amount of assistance a family is eligible for depends on many factors, including income level, the provider's rates vs. the maximum DCF rates for various types of providers and ages of children, and whether full-time or part-time care is needed.

How to Use Child Care Assistance

More good news: Higher Child Care Assistance rates mean that families can choose from a wider array of providers. The maximum DCF rates have been increased to the 85th percentile for all age groups and provider types, based on the findings from the most recent market rate analysis completed in

Kansas. This means that 85 out of 100 child care providers that were part of the market rate analysis in Kansas charge the maximum rate allowed by DCF or less.

When Child Care Assistance benefits are authorized, they're loaded onto the child care account of an electronic Kansas Benefits card, which is like a debit card. To pay a provider, the family authorizes the transfer of the funds to the provider's account. These benefits may only be used to pay for child care with a DCF-enrolled provider.

Kansas child care professionals can serve as strong advocates for the Child Care Assistance program by letting families know about the program and becoming enrolled themselves. ●



NICHELLE ADAMS

Early Education and Child Care Services Manager, Kansas Department for Children and Families

Nichelle lives and works remotely in Harveyville. She has a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in management information systems. Nichelle has worked at DCF for nearly 20 years and with families and children in various positions for almost 30 years.

For more information about Kansas Child Care Assistance, visit ksqualitynetwork.org and navigate to the Families tab, call 1-888-369-4777, or go to any DCF office across the state.

STRONGER FAMILIES = STRONGER CHILDREN



HEAD START'S HOLISTIC APPROACH TO EARLY EDUCATION

BY JENNIFER ADHIMA

The term “holistic,” according to the Oxford Dictionary, applies when the separate parts of something are understood to be “intimately interconnected.”

Families are most definitely intimately interconnected in the lives of children — and their caregivers.

Since Head Start's inception in 1965, the program has taken a holistic approach to working with the nation's youngest children and their families. Head Start recognized early on that young children exist within the context of larger systems — their families and their communities — and that authentic, positive, goal-orientated relationships between parents and providers are key to both children's and families' success.

Head Start programs work in partnership with families to achieve seven key outcomes, which are fully explained in “[Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework](#).” But simply stated, Head Start wants families to be:

- Healthy and safe
- Developing nurturing, positive relationships with their children
- Lifelong educators for their children
- Active learners themselves
- Engaged in their children's transitions and milestones over their lifespan
- Connected to peers and social supports
- Involved as advocates and leaders in their family, program, and community

Research has shown that these seven specific family outcomes have positive

impacts on the outcomes we all desire for children, such as good health, developing brains, positive relationships, and success in school and life.

Positive parent-child relationships are the foundation for a child's lifelong learning.

The Parent's Role at Head Start

So what does this holistic approach look like in practice?

Parents are respected and valued as their child's first and best teacher. Parents set goals for their child's development, and Head Start staff are there to support those goals throughout their time in the program. Positive parent-child relationships are the foundation for a child's lifelong learning, and this fact is emphasized with parents during home visits, daily interactions, or parent-child events. When parents struggle with a child's challenging behaviors (think toddler temper tantrums), Head Start staff work collaboratively with the parents on strategies to manage their child's behaviors in a positive way.

Parents experiencing poor health are connected to a regular, ongoing source of health

care, so that any immediate health concerns can be addressed and negative health outcomes can be prevented. If a parent is struggling with concerns related to their emotional well-being, the programs' mental health consultant or family support staff can work with the family to recommend resources to address these needs.

Parents develop goals for their family, and staff assist them in navigating the complicated systems of social services, continuing education, and economic mobility programs that can help them achieve their goals.

Parents are encouraged to get involved. They can volunteer in their child's classroom, attend parent-child events, or serve on parent committees or the program's Policy Council. These opportunities give parents a chance to build their existing leadership skills and social support networks.

This holistic approach is what sets Head Start apart from other early education programs. By building stronger families, we build stronger children. We continue to see these impacts on children and families as they leave Head Start and move on to achieve bigger and better dreams! ●



JENNIFER ADHIMA, MSW

Executive Director,
Kansas Head Start Association

The Kansas Head Start Association works to strengthen the Head Start/Early Head Start programs in Kansas through advocacy, professional development, and leadership. Jennifer represents Head Start programs on a variety of state-level workgroups and advocates for Head Start nationally in collaboration with the National Head Start Association.

Want to know more about Head Start in your community?
Visit ksheadstart.org/locations to find your local program.

PARENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

November 4-5, 2022
Hotel Topeka at City Center
Topeka, Kansas
No cost to attend

Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL), in collaboration with other sponsoring agencies, hosts the annual Parent Leadership Conference, a free event designed to help strengthen the voices of Kansas parents.

The annual conference brings national speakers and statewide experts to collaborate with parents on issues that are important to families. This provides a unique opportunity for parents to network with and educate professionals.

The Parent Leadership Conference strives to provide an atmosphere of personal growth, networking, and skills-building. The committee believes strongly in parent/practitioner partnerships and encourages parents to participate as presenters and co-presenters in all workshops.

SESSION TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Health and safety
- Special education services
- Behavior management
- Advocating for your child
- School readiness

MORE DETAILS:

- Registration is limited to 250 parents and 125 children.
- Lunch and dinner on Friday are included, as well as breakfast for hotel guests Saturday morning.
- Child care is provided at no cost for children 6 months to 12 years of age.
- Families living more than 50 miles, one way, from Topeka may qualify for a free hotel room, if they are among the first 100 families to register for one.
- English/Spanish translation services are provided at all sessions.
- Sign language interpretation is available with advance notice.

More information about the 2022 Parent Leadership Conference will be available this fall on the KCSL website.

KANSAS CHILDREN'S SERVICE LEAGUE: PROGRAMS FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

BY PAM NOBLE

Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL) works to prevent childhood abuse and neglect, offer family support, improve school readiness, and provide parent and community education throughout the state of Kansas.

These services are designed to help children and parents develop the skills necessary to be successful in their homes, schools, and workplaces. Our goal is to create, repair, and restore healthy parent-child relationships — the foundation of a strong family.

KCSL serves as the state chapter of **Prevent Child Abuse America**. In this key role, we work to build awareness, educate, organize activities, and lead advocacy efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect. We offer the **Healthy Families Home Visiting** program in 30 counties across the state. This intensive program works alongside families as they navigate pregnancy and the first three years of the child's life.

KCSL also offers a variety of **Parent Engagement and Leadership programs** in eight different counties. Many of these groups are offered in a hybrid format — allowing those who can't attend in person to still reap the benefits of peer support. Topics include parenting, fatherhood, kinship care, special needs, and more — with some groups held in Spanish.

In Sedgwick County, KCSL offers **outpatient mental health services**. Licensed counseling staff work with children and families to help them recover from traumatic experiences.

KCSL also offers two unique case management programs in Sedgwick County. The **Crisis Nursery program** helps families find stable child care during a crisis that threatens to destroy the family. The **Kinship Navigator program** helps caregivers who aren't

For information on any KCSL programs, call **1-800-CHILDREN** or visit 1800childrenks.org.

the child's biological parents gain legal guardianship, seek economic support, and provide a safe, stable home.

In Shawnee County, KCSL offers the **Parent-Child Assistance Program (P-CAP)**, which supports moms suffering from substance use disorder while keeping their children safely in the home. The **Center of Restorative Education, Juvenile Intake and Assessment and Oasis** — a runaway prevention program — is also offered in Shawnee County.

In western Kansas, KCSL is the **Head Start/Early Head Start** contractor. These services can be found in six counties. ●



PAM NOBLE

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

Having spent 17 years at Kansas Children's Service League, Pam currently works on the Prevent Child Abuse Kansas programs, which include case management, 1-800-CHILDREN, and Parent Engagement & Leadership. She also plans the Annual Parent Leadership Conference, which provides empowerment and education opportunities to parents across the state. In addition, Pam oversees the statewide Child Abuse Prevention Month campaign in April. She is also involved in the Hope Innovation Network cohort. Pam is a graduate of the University of Oregon.

LA LIGA DE SERVICIO INFANTIL DE KANSAS: PROGRAMAS PARA PADRES Y FAMILIAS

BY PAM NOBLE

Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL) trabaja para prevenir el abuso y la negligencia infantil, ofrecer apoyo familiar, mejorar la preparación escolar y brindar educación a los padres y la comunidad en comunidades de todo el estado de Kansas. Estos servicios están diseñados para ayudar a los niños y padres a desarrollar las habilidades necesarias para tener éxito en sus hogares, escuelas y lugares de trabajo. Nuestro objetivo es crear, reparar y restaurar relaciones saludables entre padres e hijos, ya que son la base de una familia sólida.

Kansas Children's Service League sirve como el capítulo estatal de Prevent Child Abuse America. En este rol clave, trabajamos para generar conciencia, educar, organizar actividades y liderar esfuerzos de defensa para prevenir el abuso y la negligencia infantil. KCSL ofrece programas de visitas domiciliarias de Healthy Families en 30 condados de todo el estado. Este programa intensivo acompaña a las familias mientras navegan el embarazo y los primeros 3 años de vida del niño.

KCSL ofrece una variedad de programas de Liderazgo y participación de los padres en ocho condados diferentes. Muchos de estos grupos se ofrecen en un formato híbrido, lo que permite que aquellos que no pueden asistir en persona aún obtengan los beneficios del apoyo entre pares. Los temas incluyen la crianza de los

Para obtener información sobre cualquier programa de KCSL, comuníquese con 1-800-CHILDREN.

hijos, la paternidad, el cuidado de parientes, las necesidades especiales y otros, con algunos grupos en español.

En el condado de Sedgwick, KCSL ofrece servicios de salud mental para pacientes ambulatorios. El personal de consejería licenciada trabaja con niños y familias ofreciendo ayuda para recuperarse de experiencias traumáticas.

KCSL también ofrece dos programas únicos de administración de casos en el condado de Sedgwick. El programa Crisis Nursery ayuda a las familias a encontrar cuidado infantil estable durante una crisis que amenaza con destruir a la familia. El programa Kinship Navigator ayuda a quienes cuidan niños que no son suyos a obtener la tutela legal; buscar apoyos económicos; y proporcionar un hogar seguro y estable.

Los programas en el condado de Shawnee incluyen el programa de asistencia para padres e hijos (P-CAP). P-CAP que trabaja con madres que sufren de trastornos por uso de sustancias y encuentran ayuda mientras mantienen a los niños seguros en el hogar. El condado de Shawnee también ofrece el Centro de Educación Restaurativa, Admisión y Evaluación de Menores y Oasis, un programa de prevención de fugas.

En el oeste de Kansas, KCSL es el contratista de Head Start/Early Head Start. Estos servicios se pueden encontrar en seis condados. ●

La conferencia anual de Parent Leadership

La Conferencia Anual de Liderazgo para Padres se llevará a cabo en el Hotel Topeka en City Center en Topeka, KS, del 4 al 5 de noviembre de 2022. La conferencia está abierta a cualquier padre que viva en Kansas que desee obtener más información sobre el fortalecimiento y la participación familiar. La conferencia se esfuerza por brindar oportunidades educativas, de establecimiento de contactos y de reconocimiento para los padres. Los temas de las sesiones incluyen salud y seguridad, servicios de educación especial, manejo de comportamientos, abogacía de su hijo y preparación para la escuela, así como muchos otros. La conferencia se esfuerza por ser dada y dirigida por los padres. Los padres son parte del comité de planificación y sirven como moderadores y presentadores.

Se proporcionan servicios de traducción en inglés/español en todas las sesiones. La interpretación del lenguaje de señas está disponible con previo aviso. Se proporciona cuidado de niños sin costo para niños de 6 meses a 12 años.

La inscripción está limitada a 250 padres y 125 niños. Las familias que viven a más de 50 millas, de ida, de Topeka pueden calificar para una habitación de hotel gratis. Las habitaciones del hotel están limitadas a las primeras 100 familias que se registran y vivan a más de 50 millas, de ida, de Topeka. La conferencia incluye almuerzo y cena el viernes para padres e hijos, así como desayuno para los huéspedes del hotel el sábado por la mañana.



PAM NOBLE

Subdirectora de los programas de Prevención del Abuso Infantil en Kansas, La Liga de Servicio Infantil de Kansas

Pam Noble comenzó a trabajar para la Liga de Servicio Infantil de Kansas en julio de 2005. Actualmente, Pam es la Subdirectora de los programas de Prevención del Abuso Infantil en Kansas en KCSL. Estos programas incluyen administración de casos, 1-800-CHILDREN y Parent Engagement & Leadership. Ella planea la Conferencia Anual de Liderazgo de Padres que brinda oportunidades de empoderamiento y educación a padres de todo el estado. Además de estos, Pam supervisa la campaña estatal del mes de prevención del abuso infantil (abril). También está involucrada en la cohorte de Hope Innovation Network. Pam se graduó de la Universidad de Oregón.

SO YOU'VE BEEN INVITED TO

Family Café...

BY REBECCA QUIGLEY

After a long day at work, while in a hurry to pick up your kids, you suddenly remember that you've agreed to attend a Family Café this evening with your child care provider. You might wonder if you really need to go, if the staff would notice if you just picked up your children and left. You might even be wondering what exactly you've got yourself into.

What is Family Café?

A child care provider hosts a Family Café event in order to bring families in their program together and to share information and resources with them. These events are often held at the start of a new program year so that new families can get to know one another and the provider. But they can also be held throughout the year.

Why should you attend?

It's hard to come up with just one reason. Attending will positively impact you, your child, and your whole family.

Research shows that — when parents take an interest in what their child is doing in school — there are long-term positive effects on the child's education. It reinforces concepts they're learning at school and connects their home lives with their school lives.

Going to events at your child care program shows your child that you are genuinely interested in their education. They get excited about learning, and they want to share that excitement with their family at the end of the day.

Another benefit: Children's behavior has also been shown to improve when they know that their teacher and family are working together. Consistency between home and school helps to reinforce positive behaviors and provide a clear message to children.

Next time you're invited to a Family Café, take them up on the opportunity — no matter how hectic your evening is. Let your children see you engage in conversation with their teacher. Investing in your child's education now will benefit the whole family in the long run. ●



REBECCA QUIGLEY

Early Care &
Education Specialist,
Child Care Aware® of Kansas

Rebecca has a B.S. in child development from Texas Woman's University. She joined Child Care Aware of Kansas in March 2020 after working for Child Care Aware of Eastern Kansas for 2 ½ years. Rebecca also has 12 years of experience working in early childhood classrooms.



PROGRAM UPDATES

Child Care Health Consultant Network

When early educators participate in coaching from Child Care Health Consultants, health and safety outcomes for children improve.

Child Care Health Consultants offer a data-informed, provider-advised continuum of services to child care providers, beginning with recruitment and early support for new professionals as they navigate the licensing process. Structured goal-setting and ongoing consultation are available to all child care providers that have completed the licensing process and established their businesses.

Focused consultation is also available for child care providers that desire additional support to:

- Address licensing compliance issues
- Establish sound emergency preparedness practices
- Build capacity around health equity and inclusion within early care and education settings

Two Child Care Nurse Consultants are also available to provide focused medical consultation throughout the state. Network services are available in English and in Spanish.

Health consultation is aligned with Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs (CFOC) and the Child Care Health Consultant Competencies from the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness.

By stepping up the quality of your child care, more parents will send their kids your way — and recommend your business to their friends and family.



Program Administration Support

Using solid business practices helps providers create financial stability in the ever-changing child care landscape. Program Administration Support provides individualized business coaching and consultation from Links to Quality Community Consultants located throughout the state. The consultants offer a customized, inclusive experience for child care providers of all types.

In essence, the consultants serve as the business partners that child care programs need to thrive. Their role is flexible — shaped by the unique needs of each participant. Consultants may provide several kinds of support, including coaching, consulting, technical assistance, mentoring, and advising.

Child care providers can enroll in Program Administration Support services by completing a brief intake process designed to capture critical information. Network services are available in English and in Spanish.

Learn more and sign up for these programs at
ks.childcareaware.org/provider-support-center



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Questions?
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Family Connect Modules

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This project was made possible by grant number 90TP0078-01-00. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.



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YOUR FAMILY'S SUPPORT CENTER

Being a parent is hard enough. You shouldn't have to worry about finding the right kind of care for your child while you work, go to school, or pursue your goals. We help you find the best child care options for your family, because we know just how important this decision is to you.

Our online Family Support Center has everything you need!

- Explore a list of providers with openings in your area through our online database.
- Find valuable resources, like ideas on how to budget for child care.
- Sign up to receive a monthly email offering information and ideas to support your child's learning and growth.
- Read the latest updates on the work we're leading in early care and education.
- Learn how to get involved in building an early child care and education system that works for Kansas.

We are here to help you find child care that meets your needs. Visit the Family Support Center today!

ks.childcareaware.org/family-support-center



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