

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

# Kansas**Child**

Winter 2023 Volume 22, Issue 1

## **IN THIS ISSUE**

Child Care &  
the Workforce

- The Cost of the Child Care Gap
- The Child Care Tax Credit
- Solutions for Employers & Communities
- How to Find Quality Child Care



# CHILD CARE & THE WORKFORCE

Child care matters to everyone in our state. It matters to families with young children, to employers that depend on a reliable workforce, and to communities — both rural and urban — hoping to achieve and sustain a high quality of life for residents.

Imagine what our state would be like if we had an early care and education system that truly worked. If families had the ability not just to find quality child care, but to actually choose the child care program that best meets their specific needs. If employers didn't have to deal with worker absences related to child care, and employees could be fully present and focused rather than worrying about the well-being of their young children. Imagine how vibrant our communities could be with plenty of early care and education options to attract young families.

This is the future we want for our state. We're able to sustain a dependable public education system, so we should be able to figure out how to provide care and education during the early years of a child's life — the most important stage of development. It will take bold thinking from all sectors of our economy — public and private — to solve the challenges we face. We must begin by seeking direct input from families, communities, and current child care providers.

While the past few years have been challenging on so many fronts, they've also shown Kansans how crucial child care is to our state. Kansas child care providers are quite literally the workforce behind our workforce. More than ever before, communities are coming together to seek outside-the-box, local solutions to child care challenges. This gives me incredible hope for our shared future.

I'm thrilled to bring you this issue of *Kansas Child*. We've gathered thought leaders from across the state to offer insight into child care and what it means for the Kansans who serve as the bedrock of our workforce. I hope you enjoy this issue as much as I do. ●

**"IT WILL TAKE BOLD THINKING FROM ALL SECTORS OF OUR ECONOMY ... TO SOLVE THE CHALLENGES WE FACE."**



**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, 12) 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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*Kansas Child* is intended to provide a forum for the discussion of child care and early education issues and ideas. We hope to provoke thoughtful discussions within the field and to help those outside the field gain a better understanding of priorities and concerns. The views expressed by the authors are not necessarily those of Child Care Aware® of Kansas or its sponsors.

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# IN THIS ISSUE



The Child Care Gap Costs Kansas Billions of Dollars . . . . . 4

An Employer-led Solution to Child Care Challenges . . . . . 5


How to Use the Child Care Tax Credit for Your Business . . . . . 6

**Grants for Communities Working on Child Care . . . . . 7**

How Family Child Care Providers Can Become Advocates . . . . . 8

Providing Quality Child Care in Kansas . . . . . 9

How Program Administration Makes Providers' Jobs Easier . . . . . 10

 How to Become a Child Care Provider . . . . . 12

**Change is Possible: Expanding Access to Child Care . . . . . 14**

How Two Kansas Counties Expanded Child Care Access . . . . . 16

**How Parents Can Help Solve the Child Care Crisis . . . . . 18**

How To Find Quality Care for Your Child . . . . . 19





# THE CHILD CARE GAP COSTS KANSAS BILLIONS OF DOLLARS

**BY ERIC L. BROWN**

Quality, accessible, affordable child care contributes to the prosperity of Kansas today and tomorrow. This statement has never been more true than it is today — a conclusion supported by the significant economic and social disruptions related to child care that the Kansas business community experienced during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

You can probably think of a family or two in your community who has struggled to access child care. This problem affects tens of thousands of Kansans — and limits their ability to participate in the workforce. In many cases, a parent chooses to exit the workforce to care for their child. Some parents move to part-time work. Others simply don't have the option to quit or reduce their hours, which results in rising absenteeism, lost productivity, and high turnover rates for employers.

In fact, the Bipartisan Policy Center estimates that Kansas faces a long-term economic loss of \$2.2 to 3.3 billion dollars due to the lack of child care options in our state.

Child care is a two-generation workforce issue. It's crucial for our current workforce and economic recovery. And, since the release of the recent post-

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**The Bipartisan Policy Center estimates that Kansas faces a long-term economic loss of \$2.2 to 3.3 billion dollars due to the lack of child care options in our state.**

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COVID standardized test scores across the nation, we've seen that the issue is also critical for the workforce of tomorrow. That future is less than two decades away, since the majority of today's young children will enter the workforce in their late teens or early 20s.

Numerous studies over the past four decades have proven that the first five years of a child's life are crucial to their literacy, numeracy, communication, and social-emotional skills; all are building blocks for their K-12 educational journey and key indicators of their ability to become engaged citizens who are prepared for their future jobs.

At the heart of this issue is access to quality child care, where safety and learning are priorities. Child Care Aware® of Kansas estimates that the desired capacity of child care providers in the state meets only 49% of the potential demand. That boils down to a need for more than 85,000 additional child care slots to meet the demands of families across the state. Unfortunately, we're trending in the wrong direction. Since 2020, Kansas has lost 344 licensed child care facilities.

As you can imagine, the gap between capacity and demand has a big impact on working parents, especially mothers. According to a recent U.S. Chamber of Commerce study, women are participating in the labor force at the lowest rate since the 1970s. In the spring of 2020, 3.5 million mothers left their jobs, driving the labor force participation rate for working moms down from around 70% to 55% nationally.

The future economic prosperity of our state and its citizens is tied to the success

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**The future economic prosperity of our state and its citizens is tied to the success of early childhood education.**

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of early childhood education. Now, more than ever, we need to continue to work toward unique solutions, mitigate burdensome regulations, and invest in private/public partnerships geared toward strengthening the future success of our children and our state. ●



**ERIC L. BROWN**

Former President and CEO,  
Salina Area Chamber  
of Commerce

Eric was the president and CEO of the Salina Area Chamber of Commerce from 2019 through 2022 and serves on numerous boards and committees, including the Child Care Aware of Kansas board. Eric had been with the chamber since 2011 and has experience with projects and programs related to entrepreneurship, workforce development, housing, and business expansion and retention efforts. He works closely with local, state, and federal organizations and governmental partners to support business and industry in Saline County. Eric grew up in Brewster, Kansas. He received his undergraduate degree from Fort Hays State University and a master's in business administration from Kansas Wesleyan University. He and his wife Danielle have two kids, who were lucky enough to have access to quality in-home child care.





# AN EMPLOYER-LED SOLUTION TO CHILD CARE CHALLENGES

*Creekstone, a large employer in Cowley County, created a child care center to improve workforce retention.*

**BY ALEX MUÑOZ**

Everywhere you go these days, you hear a version of the same question: where is the workforce? In coffee shops, around kitchen tables, and in boardrooms across the country, people are astounded by how difficult it is to fill vacant positions. What’s more, in this age of The Great Resignation, companies are seeing record turnover. It was in this environment that Creekstone Farms Premium Beef LLC, located in Cowley County, Kansas, decided to offer an exceptional employee benefit.

There are approximately 35,000 residents in Cowley County, and Creekstone boasts an employee base of over 1,200 (77% of whom reside in the county). Currently, the county has only four child care centers and 54 licensed in-home child care providers — with a total combined care capacity of 749. This means that nearly 70% of the children in the county who may need child care (kids under age 6 with working parents) do not have access to licensed care.

Creekstone has recently received more requests for modified schedules than in the past three years combined, due to employees cobbling together child care coverage. An internal survey found that 71% of respondents have a spouse or

family member who would be able to work for Creekstone if child care were provided. Simply put, the need is substantial, and the opportunity for innovation is great.

Recognizing this major need in the community and among Creekstone’s workforce, the company is opening an on-site child care center — adding another 116 spots to the county’s licensed child care capacity. This 20,000-square-foot facility will sit on 3.5 acres of land, adjacent to Creekstone’s sprawling campus. The new center will serve children of Creekstone employees, from infants to kids of preschool age, without duplicating the robust preschool programs in the community. By creating additional child care capacity for Creekstone employees, the company will help alleviate pressure on the already-overtaxed child care system in Cowley County.

Child care services at Creekstone’s facility will be offered to employees at a competitive cost, alleviating some of their financial burden. The company’s return on investment will come from a stable workforce with low turnover, resulting in more productivity.

At Creekstone, we believe that the company benefits when the employee benefits. Private industry has the capital power to enact these kinds of social infrastructure solutions, and, as a major part of our community, Creekstone has elected to do just that. ●



**PREMIUM BLACK ANGUS BEEF™**



**ALEX MUÑOZ**

Human Resources Manager,  
Creekstone Farms  
Premium Beef LLC

Alex has worked in both the private and nonprofit sectors, as well as in higher education. At Creekstone, he oversees a team of 22 Human Resources professionals and works on special projects for the C-Suite.

# How to Use the Child Care Tax Credit for Your Business

## BY DANIEL KLAASSEN

The most common challenge parents face when searching for child care is cost. In Kansas, the average monthly cost for infant care is \$680 per child in a home care environment and \$1,259 in a child care center.

The 2022 Kansas Legislature took a great first step to help make child care more affordable. As of July 1, 2022, all Kansas businesses can apply to receive a state income tax credit for providing child care for employees or helping employees pay for other child care. This expanded tax credit allows businesses — small and large alike — to provide an additional benefit to employees, easing the child care burden for working parents and guardians.

The expansion of the tax credit helps employers support their employees, even if they are not big enough to create a child care program on their own. It also helps support children's need for a stable early learning environment during the most essential phase of brain development.

The credit amounts are:

- 30% of the total amount spent by an organization to help an employee pay for child care. The credit for this qualifying expense is capped at \$30,000.

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**All Kansas businesses can apply to receive a state income tax credit for providing child care for employees or helping employees pay for child care.**

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- 30% of the total amount spent by an organization to help employees locate child care. For example, this covers contributions to a child care resource and referral agency such as Child Start, The Family Conservancy, Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas, or Child Care Aware® of Kansas. The credit for this qualifying expense is capped at \$30,000.
- 30% of the total amount spent operating a child care facility primarily used by dependents of the organization's employees, after excluding the amount of money received to provide child care services (i.e., tuition from parents). The credit for this qualifying expense is capped at \$30,000.
- 50% of the total amount spent establishing a child care facility primarily used by dependents of the organization's employees (i.e., employer-based or on-site child care). The credit is capped at \$45,000.
- 50% of the total amount spent establishing and operating a child care facility, in conjunction with other businesses/organizations, that is primarily used by dependents of the organizations' employees. The credit is capped at \$45,000.

As your business begins planning and applying for this credit, you should consult your accounting and tax professionals to confirm your understanding of the credit and ensure that all allowable costs are claimed.

To claim the credit, your business must complete Schedule K-56, which is filed with the state income tax return. With only

\$3 million available to be claimed each year, businesses receive the credit on a first-come, first-served basis when they file their tax returns in the spring.

We hope that this financial incentive will help more Kansas businesses recognize how they benefit from their employees having reliable, high-quality child care — and lead them to support child care financially.

For years, parents and providers have been holding the child care system together with minimal resources and good intentions. It's long past time for the rest of us to prioritize this investment in the next generations of Kansans. ●

## FOR PARENTS

Consider talking to your employer about the credit. Even if they can't use this particular credit, perhaps it will spark an idea to support their employees in a way that makes sense for their business.



### DANIEL KLAASSEN

Education Policy Advisor,  
Kansas Action for Children

Daniel joined Kansas Action for Children after 11 years working with students. As a teacher, he saw firsthand the impact that policy decisions have on children. Daniel has a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's in instructional technology. He lives in Topeka with his wife Megan and their two children, Eliza and Jack.





# Grants for Communities Working on Child Care

**BY TANYA KOEHN**

Is your community interested in working to build child care capacity? We can help with funding and technical assistance.

Child Care Aware® of Kansas, in partnership with the Kansas Department for Children and Families, can help you create and implement community-driven solutions and unique strategies to ensure that young children and families in your community thrive. We work alongside your child care community task force to provide technical assistance and funding opportunities.

Two grants are available to Kansas communities working to expand access to affordable, high-quality child care. The grants are based on the needs of your community and your level of readiness. To apply, your community must have an existing child care community task force or be in the process of creating one.

How you define the geographic area of your community is up to you. For example, it could be based on your region, county, or census tract.

## **Initial Child Care Coalition-Building Grant**

- Assists communities whose child care community task force is in the early stages.
- Helps establish the task force and supports initial coalition-building activities.
- Funds may be used by the task force to cover expenses such as:
  - A rental space to hold meetings
  - Staff time to coordinate logistics or host a community meeting to elicit feedback
  - Travel support to visit other communities or attend a Child Care Aware of Kansas Community in Action Workshop
- Communities may request up to \$2,000. Funds are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis until all available funds have been assigned.

## **Implementing Child Care Capacity-Building Plans Grant**

- Helps communities with an established child care community task force to implement plans that expand access to affordable, high-quality child care in the community.
- The child care community task force must have attended a Community in Action Workshop and have set corresponding short- and long-term goals.
- Communities should apply for funds that are outlined in their goal plan (excluding major renovations).
- Coalitions may request up to \$45,000. Funds are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis until all available funds have been assigned. ●

## **HOW TO GET STARTED**

If your child care community task force is ready to apply for a grant:

1. Visit [ks.childcareaware.org](https://ks.childcareaware.org).
2. Hover over the Communities tab in the navigation, and select Community Grants from the drop-down menu.
3. Complete the Inquiry Form. First-time users will need to create an account.
4. A Community Grant team member will contact you to determine your eligibility for the grant.
5. After your consultation, we'll help you determine the next steps and walk you through the application process.

For questions, email [communitysupport@ks.childcareaware.org](mailto:communitysupport@ks.childcareaware.org).



# How Family Child Care Providers Can Become Advocates

## BY ANGIE CARNES

As providers, we are often encouraged to advocate and become involved in issues that affect the children and families we serve. For a busy family child care provider, what does that look like exactly?

When I started working in the early childhood field many years ago, I had no idea what advocacy meant. All I knew was that I needed a support system. So I set out to find one. It started small. I reached out to a local Facebook group and asked local providers to meet me for coffee. We started meeting monthly, and the group slowly grew. Before we knew it, we had over 40 providers networking on Facebook and supporting one another.

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**You need to stand up,  
speak out, and let your  
voice be heard.**

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Today, our small group has grown to over 150 members. Our vision is still the same as it was when we started: family child care providers supporting and networking daily to help one another through this crazy career.

This work was the beginning of my advocacy journey, though I didn't realize it at the time. While growing the group, I met a member of the Child Care Providers

Coalition of Kansas (CCPC), and she encouraged me to join. This lit a fire under me. As part of CCPC, I began collaborating with strong and educated women who were all working toward the same goal: supporting family child care providers.

Over the years, I learned how family providers can become advocates. That role looks different for each of us, depending on our particular strengths and backgrounds. In all honesty, I will never be the kind of person to stand up in Topeka to talk to my representatives. I am not that brave. But I will lead the charge and gather the troops. I will attend the meetings, organize the Zoom chats, share information on social media, and educate my family and friends on the importance of family child care.

We need to raise our voices on behalf of the children in our care, the families we support, our profession, and ourselves. We need to support causes that have a personal meaning to us, provide input toward solutions, and promote change.

What does that mean for you? You need to become involved. You can't sit back and let things happen. You need to stand up, speak out, and let your voice be heard.

- Join local and state organizations like CCPC or NAFCC. They will help you stay informed on the current issues facing our profession.

- Attend child care events at the local and state levels. This will help you network with providers in your area and help build a support system.
- Make sure to stay connected: check your emails, answer surveys, and connect with Child Care Aware® of Kansas through their website to stay informed about advocacy issues and grant opportunities.
- Become involved at the state and local levels by reaching out to your representatives and attending events in your area or across the state.

There are so many ways you can become involved. Advocacy is not one-size-fits-all. You can use your talents and your experience to make a difference! ●



## ANGIE CARNES

President,  
Child Care Providers  
Coalition of Kansas (CCPC)

Angie has a B.S. in elementary education/early childhood with a minor in business. She has worked in the early childhood field for more than 25 years in many capacities, including teacher, center director, and family child care provider. In addition to her role as president of CCPC, Angie currently operates her own family child care in Olathe.



# Providing QUALITY CHILD CARE in Kansas



**BY KIM MCGINN AND HEIDI CHANCE**

## What is quality child care?

Child care professionals often define quality child care as offering a safe, educational, nurturing atmosphere in a language-rich environment that helps children develop socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively.

When it comes to specifics, however, quality child care can look different for a family in a rural area than it does for a family in a larger community. Families in rural areas often don't have as many choices as those in larger cities. With more options available in cities, these families might want more from their day care providers.

Despite these differences, all families are looking for a provider they can trust to care for and love their child.

## Why is quality child care important?

Many studies have shown that, from 0 to 5 years of age, children develop physical, motor, language, literacy, cognitive, and social-emotional skills that they will use throughout their whole lives. Children in this age range are creating the building blocks of their brains.

Quality child care prepares children to flourish in school and in everyday life. Research has proven that high-quality child care — regardless of any inequities that the children or their families might experience — leads to tremendous school success. Unfortunately, low-quality child care can produce lower development in all areas.

## How does Child Care Aware of Kansas work to improve quality?

We have several initiatives that focus on quality child care. Hundreds of early childhood professionals have received services to help them provide a higher quality of service and education. It doesn't matter if providers are brand-new to child care or have been doing it for years; everyone can benefit from the services we offer.

Providers can even participate in more than one initiative at a time. For example, Heidi Chance simultaneously worked with the Child Care Health Consultants and Links to Quality, and she also recently completed the Child Care Quality Initiative in June.

Building more than one relationship with the Child Care Aware of Kansas team is valuable. Every initiative offers different benefits, but all the services help improve the quality of your child care. ●



**KIM MCGINN**

Early Care and  
Education Specialist,  
Child Care Aware of Kansas

Kim has worked with children most of her life, starting at a young age with babysitting, then teaching kindergarten, physical education, preschool, and infants. Now she works with adults who work with young children at Child Care Aware of Kansas.

**HEIDI CHANCE**

Home Day Care Provider

Heidi has worked in the early childhood field for 27 years. She has worked at a day care center and Head Start, run her own preschool, worked with kids in the criminal justice system, and currently runs a home day care. Even with all her years of experience, she believes there is always room to better her program and the care she gives to kids.

# HOW PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION MAKES PROVIDERS' JOBS EASIER

## BY THE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT TEAM

Everyone needs support from other people, including child care providers. You likely get support from your community, your family and friends, the families you provide care for, and extended services.

Now there's another service available to support you. Program Administration Support is designed to help improve the quality of your business practices.

A partnership between Child Care Aware® of Kansas and Links to Quality — with funding provided by the Kansas Department of Children and Families — Program Administration Support is a free service available to all licensed child care providers in the state of Kansas. Focused on promoting solid business practices in child care environments, one-on-one coaching and planning sessions help support your child care business needs.

When you participate, you can also receive a small award to purchase tools, like a computer or printer, to help you reach the business goals you've set.

Here's what two Kansas providers had to say about their experience with Program Administration Support. ●

“Now that I have a computer and printer, I am able to print out documents. It's so much easier to do work for my business now than it was to do on my phone. Having the printer/scanner has made it easier to print things off right away. Before, I had to go off premises to print or scan documents for my business.”

**Maria Villagran, Child Care Provider, Garden City**

“Having a scanner at the day care is of the utmost importance. It helps me keep everything organized. I will no longer have the risk of receipts being deleted when they are needed for an audit.

At this time, my business continues to grow, and it has a presentable image for those who come in search of a place to care for their children. Once again, I thank this organization for taking the time to advise and help us, so our dreams continue to grow and come true.

Thanks to this help, my area now has a different view of my program. It's not just a day care, but literally a presentable business. All of this can be done with the help of organizations like Child Care Aware of Kansas and others that are promoting this type of help to improve our day care as a business and to help it grow.”

**Yanita Ramirez, Child Care Provider, Liberal**

## HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Learn more and schedule an introductory meeting at  
[ks.childcareaware.org/program-administration-support](https://ks.childcareaware.org/program-administration-support).





# COMO EL PROGRAMA DE ADMINISTRACIÓN ESTÁ AYUDANDO A FACILITAR EL TRABAJO DE LOS PROVEEDORES

## BY THE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT TEAM

Recibir apoyo de otros es esencial para la mayoría de las personas. Los proveedores de cuidado infantil también requieren apoyo de muchas maneras. Ellos reciben apoyo de su comunidad, amigos, y de las familias a las cuales ellos le brindan el servicio de cuidado extendido. Recientemente, a los proveedores de cuidado infantil han tenido la oportunidad de recibir apoyo para mejorar la calidad de sus prácticas comerciales. Con el Programa de Apoyo Administrativo, los proveedores han podido trabajar individualmente con un consultor de Links to Quality para ayudarlos con sus necesidades comerciales de su cuidado infantil.

Al participar en el Programa de Apoyo Administrativo, los proveedores trabajan en sus objetivos para alcanzar sus metas comerciales, en la cual se les brinda una pequeña recompensa económica para obtener las herramientas necesarias. ●

“Ahora que tengo una computadora y una impresora puedo imprimir documentos. Además de poder hacer cosas para mi negocio, ahora es más fácil que antes que usaba el teléfono. Tener impresora/escáner ha sido más fácil para poder imprimir documentos de inmediato y también para poder escanear artículos para mi negocio. Antes tenía que salir de las instalaciones para imprimir o escanear documentos para mi negocio.”

**Maria Villagran, Child Care Provider, Garden City**

“Tener un escáner en el centro de cuidado infantil (daycare) es de suma importancia, puesto que este ayuda a mantener todo organizado y le da a mi negocio una mejor vista. Ya no tendré el riesgo de que se me pierdan los recibos cuando sean necesarios para una auditoria.

En este momento mi negocio sigue creciendo y tiene una imagen presentable para quienes vienen en busca de un lugar para cuidar a sus hijos. Una vez más agradezco a esta organización por tomarse el tiempo para asesorarnos y ayudarnos para que nuestros sueños continúen creciendo y haciéndose realidad.

Gracias a esta ayuda, esta área ahora tiene una vista diferente, no es solo un centro de cuidado infantil (daycare), sino que es literalmente un negocio presentable. Todo esto es posible gracias a las organizaciones como Child Care Aware of Kansas y otras entidades que están promoviendo este tipo de ayuda para mejorar la calidad de los centros de cuidado infantil (daycare) y a la misma vez ayuda incrementar el negocio.”

**Yanita Ramirez, Child Care Provider, Liberal**

## COMO PARTICIPAR

Para más información, programa una reunión de introducción en [ks.childcareaware.org/program-administration-support](https://ks.childcareaware.org/program-administration-support).



# How to Become a Child Care Provider

**BY LISA JOHNSON**

Considering child care as a career opportunity can be overwhelming, but never fear! Child Care Aware® of Kansas has you covered! Our child care health consultants are ready to help you tackle your child care start-up worries.

Across the state of Kansas, the lack of child care continues to be a big concern. Communities, businesses, and individuals have all taken notice and are asking questions, making suggestions, and looking for solutions to the growing need for quality child care across our state. If you're one of them, you may want to consider getting involved with child care as a career.

**The Child Care Health Consultant Network has many opportunities for new providers to learn, get start-up funding, and receive step-by-step assistance.**

As a child care health consultant that focuses on recruitment and start-up, I have thoroughly enjoyed assisting potential providers as they consider child care as a career, complete the Kansas child care licensing requirements, and get their business up and running.

The Child Care Health Consultant Network has many opportunities for

new providers to learn, get start-up funding, and receive step-by-step assistance during the licensure process. Our Start-Up Grant offers new providers the ability to purchase items for their child care business, including outdoor play equipment, cots for napping, toys,

**Our Start-Up Grant offers new providers the ability to purchase items for their child care business.**

educational items, and other supplies.

Our consultants understand what new providers are going through. If you choose to work with a child care health consultant, you'll receive:

- 1:1 coaching at your convenience
- Assistance applying for the Start Up Grant (\$2,500)
- Encouragement and guidance while navigating the licensure process
- Assistance preparing for the initial survey inspection
- Referrals to other helpful resources
- Connections to other providers in your area for support and networking
- Training opportunities

Opening a child care business is a task that takes a team. The Child Care Health Consultant Network is here to offer resources and help new providers complete each step, so that being a child care professional becomes as enjoyable and rewarding as it is meant to be! ●

**GET STARTED TODAY**

Are you ready to become a child care professional? Visit our website for more information and learn how you can begin working with a child care health consultant in your area.

[ks.childcareaware.org/health-consultants-network](https://ks.childcareaware.org/health-consultants-network)



**LISA JOHNSON**

Recruitment & Start Up Support  
Child Care Health Consultant,  
Child Care Aware of Kansas

Lisa resides in Sterling, Kansas, with her husband, children, and little dog Buster. She has over 11 years of experience in the early childhood field as a state-licensed preschool owner/teacher, Head Start lead teacher, and child care center director. Lisa is passionate about early childhood education and enjoys assisting potential providers.



# Cómo Convertirse en un Proveedor de Cuidado Infantil

## **POR LISA JOHNSON**

Considerar el cuidado infantil como una oportunidad profesional puede ser abrumador, ¡pero no temas! ¡Child Care Aware of Kansas lo tiene cubierto! Nuestros consultores de salud de cuidado infantil están listos para ayudarlo a abordar sus preocupaciones iniciales de cuidado infantil.

En todo el estado de Kansas, la falta de cuidado infantil sigue siendo un tema de preocupación. Las comunidades, las empresas y las personas se han dado cuenta y están haciendo preguntas, sugerencias y buscando soluciones a la creciente necesidad de cuidado infantil de calidad en todo nuestro estado. Si usted es uno de ellos, es posible que desee considerar involucrarse con el cuidado infantil como una carrera.

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**La Red de Consultores de Salud de Cuidado Infantil tiene muchas oportunidades para que los nuevos proveedores aprendan, obtengan fondos iniciales y reciban asistencia paso a paso.**

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Como consultora de salud de cuidado infantil que se enfoca en el reclutamiento y la puesta en marcha, he disfrutado mucho ayudando a los proveedores potenciales a considerar el cuidado infantil como una

carrera, completar los requisitos de licencia de cuidado infantil de Kansas y poner en marcha su negocio.

La Red de Consultores de Salud de cuidado infantil tiene muchas oportunidades para que los nuevos proveedores aprendan, obtengan fondos iniciales y reciban asistencia paso a paso durante el proceso de licencia. Nuestra subvención inicial ofrece a los nuevos proveedores la posibilidad de comprar artículos para su negocio de cuidado infantil, incluyendo equipos de juego al aire libre, catres para dormir siestas, juguetes, artículos educativos y otros suministros.

Nuestros consultores entienden por lo que están pasando los nuevos proveedores. Si elige trabajar con un consultor de salud de cuidado infantil, usted recibirá:

- Entrenamiento 1;1 a su conveniencia
- Asistencia para solicitar la subvención inicial (\$2,500)
- Estimulo y orientación mientras navega por el proceso de obtención de la licencia.
- Asistencia para la preparación de la inspección inicial
- Referencias a otros recursos útiles
- Conexiones con otros proveedores en su área para apoyo y conexiones en redes
- Oportunidades de entrenamientos

Abrir un negocio de cuidado infantil es una tarea de equipo. La Red de Consultores de Salud de Cuidado Infantil está aquí para ofrecer recursos y ayudar a los nuevos

proveedores a completar cada paso, para que pueda ser un profesional de cuidado infantil placentero y gratificante como debe ser. ●

## **COMIENZE HOY MISMO**

¿Estas listo para convertirse en un profesional de cuidado infantil? Visite nuestra página de web para obtener más información y aprender cómo puede comenzar a trabajar con un consultor de salud de cuidado infantil en su área.

<https://ks.childcareaware.org/health-consultants-network/>



### **LISA JOHNSON**

Reclutamiento y Apoyo a la puesta en marcha Consultora de Salud de Cuidado Infantil Child Care Aware of Kansas

Lisa reside en Sterling, Kansas con su esposo, hijos y su pequeño perro Buster. Ella tiene más de 11 años de experiencia en el campo de la educación infantil como propietaria/maestra preescolar con licencia estatal, maestra líder de Head Start y directora de un centro de cuidado infantil. Lisa es una apasionada de la educación infantil y disfruta ayudar a los posibles proveedores.

# CHANGE IS POSSIBLE



## HOW KANSAS COMMUNITIES ARE EXPANDING ACCESS TO CHILD CARE

### BY JENNIFER BURGARDT

Many think the child care system is too broken to fix. Kansas communities are proving the naysayers wrong.

Small incremental changes on the local level are paving the way for larger shifts, and those advances are starting to add up across the state. For the past few years, Kansas communities have been collectively coming together to improve access to high-quality, accessible, and affordable early care and education. They have recognized that child care is essential to the economic well-being of both families and child care providers, who in turn are fundamental for robust and resilient state and national economies.

For decades, many have dismissed child care as simply a family issue. But now, more than ever, people are recognizing its significant economic implications. Communities and businesses are learning how the availability of quality child care directly impacts, not only their workforce

today, but also the workforce of the future.

Quality child care provides opportunities for children to develop skills that set the foundation for healthy outcomes and successful participation in the labor force of tomorrow.

### A look into the capacity-building process

In response to these developments, the Child Care Aware® of Kansas Community Outreach and Engagement team has partnered with community stakeholders, providers, and families to build child care capacity in communities. By establishing and supporting local early childhood coalitions, we help communities build a creative space for innovative ideas, collaborations, and solutions for their local child care challenges. We've had the privilege to partner with members of various communities across the state to work through this four-pronged process of building child care capacity.

### Step 1: Pre-planning & support

In the first step of the capacity-building process, our Community Outreach and Engagement coaches work alongside community coalitions to determine action steps. Our shared goal is to expand upon and enhance existing systems in communities.

Community coalitions are composed of members of chambers of commerce; county and city officials; representatives from school districts, health care, and businesses; faith-based partners; child care providers; and families — all of whom are dedicated to prioritizing child care in their respective communities.

Often, communities begin the process by seeking information on the child care landscape in their community, which can be found using our Point-In-Time data.

As local, grassroots efforts have grown, so too has the involvement of state and local early childhood advocates, members of commerce, and administrators. This

## COMMUNITY CHILD CARE CAPACITY BUILDING

From planning to execution, we are here every step of the way!



### Pre-Planning & Support

Initial coalition-forming, a preliminary needs assessment, or other key activities to build initial readiness are provided.



### Communities in Action Workshop

A tailored workshop experience is designed to meet the unique needs of individual communities.



### Funding

Funding resources are provided for communities interested in increasing efforts to expand child care capacity.



### Follow-Up Support

Ongoing support is tailored to the readiness, pace, and scale of each community to support successful execution of the action plan.



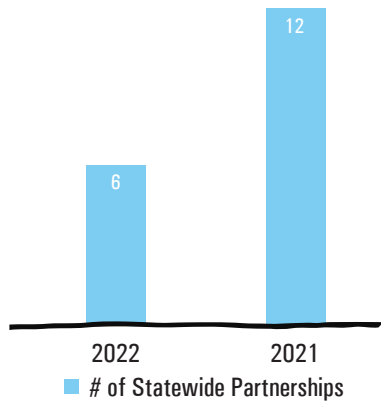
### Child Care Go Team

Expanding access to affordable, high-quality child care throughout Kansas by providing state level guidance and resources to implement locally-driven solutions.

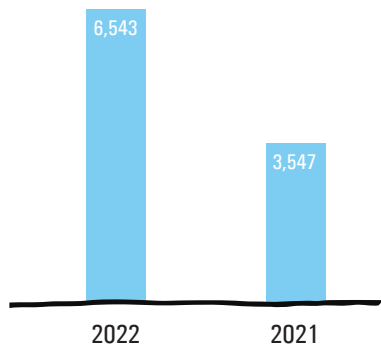


coordination between the state and local levels has led to data-informed decision making, collaborative efforts, and authentic partnerships — which often result in ingenious, experimental solutions to a complex and evolving issue.

### NEW STATEWIDE PARTNERSHIPS



### COMMUNITIES ACCESSING POINT-IN-TIME DATA



# of communities accessing Point-in-Time Data about the supply and demand for child care

### Step 2: Communities in Action

Once communities understand the challenges within their local child care landscape, they can begin setting goals and making detailed plans. To assist communities in this work, Child Care Aware of Kansas has developed the Communities In Action Workshop, which provides opportunities for community teams to:

- Learn from early childhood experts and other content experts from across the state’s early childhood system
- Receive customized child care supply/demand data
- Identify and develop short- and long-term goals during structured planning time with an expert community coach
- Receive a child care capacity toolkit

### Step 3: Funding

In partnership with the Kansas Department for Children and Families, Child Care Aware of Kansas provides technical assistance and funding opportunities for communities working to address access to affordable, high-quality child care. We offer two different funding opportunities based on the community’s progress: Initial Child Care Coalition Building and Implementing Child Care Capacity-Building Plans.

You can learn more about the Child Care Community Partnership Grants on page 7 of this issue. Find other funding opportunities for communities at [ks.childcareaware.org/building-capacity](https://ks.childcareaware.org/building-capacity).

### Step 4: Follow-up support

After completing the workshop, communities receive ongoing support tailored to their particular readiness level, pace, and scale. While the experience is customized for each community, our ongoing follow-up support focuses on coalition-building and the strategic implementation of community plans — ensuring that communities reach the goals they set during their workshop.

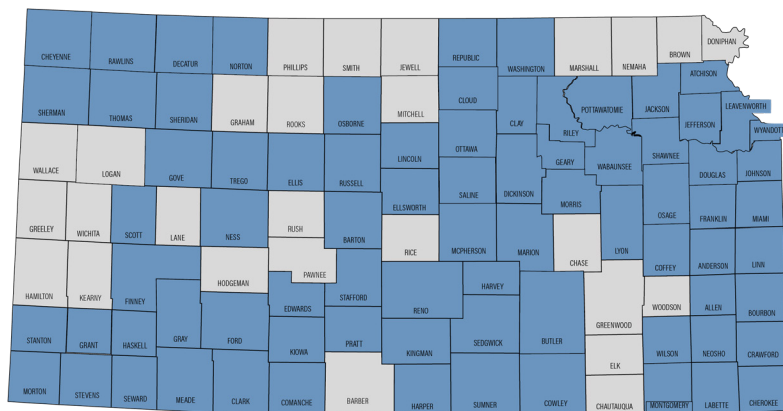
As these communities make progress, our Community Outreach and Engagement team captures the lessons learned to share with other communities working to build child care capacity.

The child care challenges in communities across Kansas may seem overwhelming, but small incremental steps can make — and already have made — an impact. As a state, we are progressing toward more equitable outcomes for all.

Expanding access to quality, affordable child care is not impossible. We must challenge pernicious narratives about child care and imagine solutions beyond what we thought was possible. We must try to experiment, put something into play, and take note of the brilliance of the communities who know what they care about most. ●

### IS YOUR COMMUNITY READY TO TAKE ACTION?

Visit [ks.childcareaware.org/how-you-can-help](https://ks.childcareaware.org/how-you-can-help)  
Contact [communitysupport@ks.childcareaware.org](mailto:communitysupport@ks.childcareaware.org)



Child Care Aware of Kansas is developing authentic partnerships with a variety of Kansas communities to co-design solutions that increase the availability and quality of child care. By enhancing community access to child care data for improved decision-making, we are helping communities find and implement solutions to their challenges. As shown in the map above, we are currently engaged with and working alongside 77 communities across the state of Kansas.

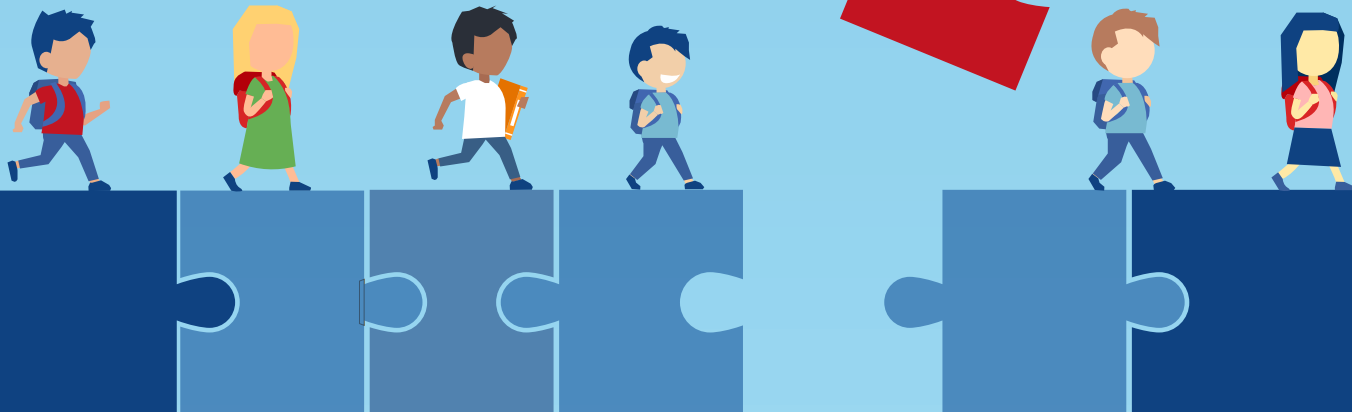


### JENNIFER BURGARDT

Lead Community Outreach and Engagement Coordinator, Child Care Aware of Kansas

Jennifer, originally from Western Kansas, resides in Central Kansas, where she and her family find joy in embarking on adventures both big and small. She graduated from Wichita State University with a master’s in early childhood special education, Kansas Wesleyan University with a bachelor’s degree in elementary education and an associate degree in early childhood education. Jennifer’s work encompasses 30 years of learning and growing alongside children, families, colleagues, and communities, inspiring lifelong learning while building connections to others and the community.

# HOW TWO KANSAS COUNTIES EXPANDED CHILD CARE ACCESS



## BY TRISTEN COPE AND JULIE TURNIPSEED

When we ensure that all families have access to quality child care options — regardless of their income level or where they live — we build the critical infrastructure necessary for our businesses to succeed, our communities to flourish, and our children to grow into happy, healthy, productive Kansans. Below are the stories of two communities whose dedicated efforts are bringing the state closer to this goal.

### Building the future of Marion County

Marion County is a rural community nestled on the edge of the Flint Hills. Like other communities across the nation, Marion County has felt the rippling effects of the child care crisis.

A quick look into Marion County's data (provided by Child Care Aware® of Kansas) shows that only 32% of the demand for child care is being met. This means that — of the 507 children under the age of six with both parents in the workforce — there are 346 children that potentially need child care. Additionally, within the largest populated town in the county, there are only two infant spots.

### Community with a cause

The need for additional child care was identified in 2019 after a discussion with the City of Hillsboro, the Hillsboro Community Foundation, and business leaders across the county. The lack of available child care was presented as a workforce challenge. This discussion prompted the formation of a task force charged with analyzing data and researching initiatives to address our child care crisis.

Since that time, the task force has grown from a group of 20 passionate community members to an official 501(c)3 not-for-profit governing board. The Hillsboro Community Child Care (H4C) Board represents various sectors of our community, including representatives from the civic, education, public health, religious, and business sectors; parents; the Hillsboro Community Foundation; and a child care provider.

In July 2021, H4C completed a community needs assessment in partnership with K-State Research and Extension. The findings indicated a need for infant care and more child care availability overall. H4C used the findings as a guide to address the child care shortage in Marion County.

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**We start by contacting employers and getting feedback about their employee's child care needs.**

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### Established effort

A plan was established to create a child care center that would serve up to 99 children from birth through 5 years of age. In January 2022, the plan came to life, as H4C was gifted a building from Trinity Mennonite Church. In addition to the child care center, the facility will include office space for community entities that support families and youth.

The cost for renovating the 11,000-square-foot space is estimated at \$2 million. The H4C Board is currently in the process of seeking external funding and managing a pledge campaign to cover the cost of renovation.

The Hillsboro Community Child Care Center has truly been a community-led initiative. Our community has been there with us every step of the way. H4C is beyond



thankful for our community's support to help build the future of Marion County.

### Joining forces in Anderson County

In April 2021, with the help of Rebecca McFarland of K-State Research and Extension, we formed the Anderson County Child Care Task Force. Realizing that we needed to consult professionals, we recruited the Anderson County surveyor, an in-home child care provider, the Anderson County clerk, the youth librarian from Garnett Library, a representative from First United Methodist Church, a representative from USD 365, and representatives from Head Start and Child Care Aware of Eastern Kansas, as well as parents from the county. These task force members brought a wealth of knowledge and support as we launched our mission to provide quality child care in our county.

### Gathering feedback from the professionals

We started by contacting employers and getting feedback about their employee's child care needs. We then created a survey that went to as many families as we could reach. Gathering this information gave us valuable insight into existing needs.

After our first meeting, we decided to bring together another group of professionals that would be vital to our mission. The Anderson County Child Care Providers began meeting in May 2021. We gathered around pizza and chocolate to learn what they needed and how we could work alongside them to provide for those needs. They collaborated with us on our first recruitment event, which brought two new providers to our county. Since then, Anderson County has hosted two more recruiting events with the much-appreciated help of Child Care Aware of Kansas.

### Location, location, location

Next, we set up a meeting with the First United Methodist Church in Garnett to explore the possibility of using their facility, which was once the home of Little Peoples Child Care Center. While they showed an interest, they did not want to operate the child care center themselves, as they had in the past. They put together a child care committee and began exploring the idea of using their church for a center once again.

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Since we started the task force, Anderson County will have created approximately 100 spaces to care for children.

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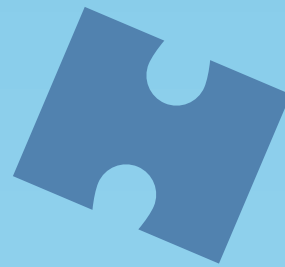
Child Care Aware of Eastern Kansas then connected us with an experienced child care center that had opened two locations in Methodist churches and one in a standalone building.

The result: Garnett Parkwood Day School will open very soon. This center wouldn't exist in our county if it wasn't for the vision of the First United Methodist Church. Since we started the task force, Anderson County will have created approximately 100 spaces to care for children.

### Appreciating our providers

Our task force has also sent thank-you cards, which included \$25 in Chamber Bucks, to all our child care providers during Child Care Appreciation Week. Our Library has access to learning totes that providers can check out and use for in-home care. Through a grant from Child Care Aware of Kansas, we also have educational information to help potential new providers, which can be checked out at our Garnett and Colony Libraries.

The Anderson County Child Care Task Force is just getting started. We hope to find funding for a needs-assessment study. We are also hoping to host more recruitment events and offer grants for technology for all our in-home providers and centers. ●



#### TRISTEN COPE

Board President,  
Hillsboro Community  
Child Care Center

Tristen works as the family and youth development agent at K-State Research and Extension for the Chisholm Trail District. She received her bachelor's degree in early childhood education - unified from Kansas State University and is currently studying for her master's in family and community services. Her areas of focus include family and child development.



#### JULIE TURNIPSEED

Director,  
Anderson County  
Economic Development

Before becoming director of Anderson County Economic Development in 2018, Julie spent more than 30 years working on downtown revitalization in Kentucky and Missouri.

# How Parents Can Help Solve CHILD CARE CRISIS

## BY TASHA EICHMAN

At 1:30 a.m., I wake up to my phone buzzing with a new text message. Day care will be closed tomorrow due to illness. I spend the next several hours tossing and turning, wondering what we are going to do. I have a day packed full of meetings, and my husband is scheduled to be out of town for work. Now what?

I'm sure every family has encountered a scenario like this at least once. As the years pass, affordable, quality child care only seems to grow more rare. Not only is it a challenge to find regular, full-time child care, but locating available drop-in spots requires a small miracle. How did we get here? What can we do as parents to help alleviate the child care crisis?

I've spent countless hours on the phone with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), state representatives, and various economic prosperity groups to try to figure out how I can affect change. Unfortunately, I've left most of these conversations feeling hopeless; it is what it is, and change would be a monumental task. Through further research and conversations with family and friends, I've found that this struggle is not unique to my family, community, or even the state of Kansas. As a manager, I've seen my own employees and co-workers struggle to find child care and be forced to make difficult choices between their family and career.

While at a Chamber event in Hays, I overheard a conversation about a potential child care task force. I immediately stepped in and said I would love to be involved. I've had the opportunity to serve on the Child Care Task Force of Ellis County since its inception in 2021. Many communities across the state have formed similar groups to help address the issues related to child care.

I've learned that, for these committees to be successful, the group must include dedicated community members, parents, educators, business and nonprofit leaders, and child care providers who come together to express concerns and align needs with the

resources that are available. It takes all of us to work towards a resolution for a problem that affects every single member of our community and state.

Employers, employees, retirees, those without children, and especially families: are all being affected by the lack of available child care. I encourage you to speak up; talk with your employer, and contact your local Chamber, civic organizations, and economic development groups. Chances are that these conversations are already happening or soon will be. Your feedback is vital to determining how the needs of the community can be met.

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**I encourage you to speak up, talk with your employer, and contact your local Chamber, civic organizations, and economic development groups.**

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My definition of a thriving community is one where each member is in a position that is personally fulfilling and suited to their skill set. It takes all of us — health care providers, food services, first responders, educators, retail businesses, public services, and child care providers — to make sure our communities thrive. ●



**TASHA EICHMAN**

Child Care Task Force  
of Ellis County

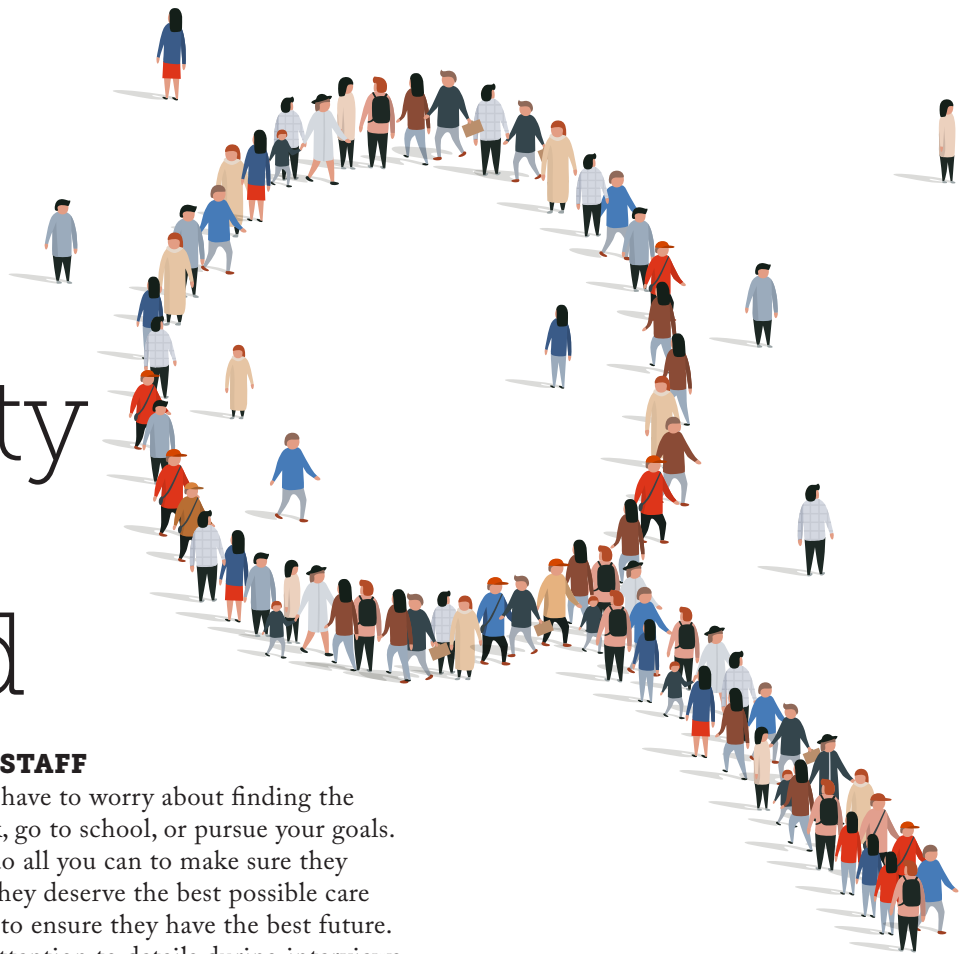
Tasha is a wife, a mother to an 8-year-old daughter and 5-year-old son, FHSU graduate, and Hays native. She has spent the past 14 years working for local wireless provider Nex-Tech Wireless and currently serves as the brand manager. As a rural Rooks County resident, Tasha loves to spend her free time outdoors with her family at their farm, riding four-wheelers, and running.







# How to find quality care for your child



## BY CHILD CARE AWARE® OF KANSAS STAFF

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.

Your child means the world to you, and you do all you can to make sure they have what they need to be healthy and happy. They deserve the best possible care — not just to prepare them for school, but also to ensure they have the best future.

By asking meaningful questions and paying attention to details during interviews with child care providers, you can decide if the program is a good fit for your family. Below are some things to consider when searching for quality child care.

### When you visit a child care program, look at the facility through your child's eyes:

- Are there activities I will like?
- Is everyone having fun?
- Is there a special place for my things?

### One indicator of quality child care is the relationships the providers have with the children. Ask yourself:

- Are the providers involved and friendly?
- Do they interact well with the children?
- Do they listen to the children and to me?

### While talking with the provider, ask these questions:

- How many children are cared for, and are they supervised at all times?
- Have all providers completed a background check?
- How often is the program inspected?
- Are staff trained to care for children?
- Does the staff participate in ongoing training?
- Does the staff know first aid and CPR?
- What is a typical day like?
- What fun, age-appropriate activities are offered?
- Is playground equipment inspected often for safety?
- Is there an emergency plan?

Finally, check the state licensing and compliance history of the child care program on the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) website. ●

## START YOUR CHILD CARE SEARCH WITH US

Quality early care and education should be available at an affordable price for all working parents. Child Care Aware of Kansas is here to help you find it. Visit our Family Resource Center to find the resources and support you need!

If you are just beginning your child care search, call our Resource Center to learn how to get started or use our online Child Care Search database.

877-678-2548

[ks.childcareaware.org/childcaresearch](https://ks.childcareaware.org/childcaresearch)



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MODULE 7

### Understanding Child Development

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MODULE 8

### Health and Education Partnerships

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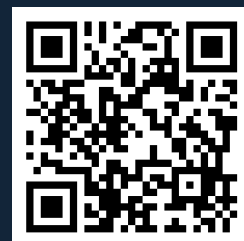
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## For more information:

Dawn Flores  
Project Manager  
dawn.flores@greenbush.org  
1-800-554-3412



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Available through efforts of the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund, the magic of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is open to any child from birth to their 5th birthday where there is a local community program. Our goal is to nurture every child's love for reading, promoting literacy to enrich their lives throughout school and beyond!



# DOES YOUR COUNTY HAVE A CHILD CARE SHORTAGE?

All families deserve equitable and consistent access to high-quality early care and learning opportunities. Unfortunately, child care availability varies widely across Kansas.

Our comprehensive point-in-time data, organized by county, is meant to assist local communities — including families, employers, and other community leaders — as they work to address critical child care shortages.

Using our interactive map, select your county to retrieve information about the status of child care supply and demand in your area. You'll also find:

- Information about the different types of child care available
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- Census data

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**Visit our website to find out more: [ks.childcareaware.org](https://ks.childcareaware.org)**



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