



Child Care Supply Demand Action Plan

Making Child Care a Priority in Your Community



Developed in 2018

Kansas is a vast state, covering 105 counties, 82,277 square miles and is home to more than 332,000 families with young children. The population from county to county can range from 1,200 to 591,000. While some communities are experiencing growth in business, others are facing a decline in population (<http://www.kansaseconomy.org/local-forecasts>).

In the 2017 *Child Care Supply Demand Report* an analysis of child care availability was completed. Child Care Aware® of Kansas researched the extent the desired capacity of child care programs met the potential demand. Unfortunately, 47% of counties in Kansas met less than 50% of the potential demand for working families.

In the 2018 *Child Care Supply Demand Report* we took a closer look at some factors that influence child care in communities. Child Care Aware® of Kansas looked at the current supply of child care and some aspects that impact rural and urban communities. Unfortunately, the age of child care providers continues to increase and fewer workers are entering the profession. Some might speculate that child care options in Kansas might become even more challenging for working families.

The 2018 update to the *Who Cares for Kansas Children: An Early Childhood Study* (available at www.ks.childcareaware.org) looks at the makeup of the early childhood workforce and reviews data points to identify trends occurring in the field.

More can be done to move towards a solution, if communities come together.

Developing an Action Plan

Conversations, coalitions, meetings...it takes intentional effort and focus for communities to support working families and improve access to high-quality child care. **It is an important community conversation.** Included are some key areas to focus on.



The sections described throughout the *Child Care Supply Demand Action Plan* are interchangeable, pick any section to get started.

Evaluate Community Needs

Community leaders can help assess local child care needs and resources. Mayors, city council members, public-school officials and other leaders play a key role in improving outcomes for young children in their community.

What are some positive outcomes and/or missed opportunities related to child care in my community?

- Collect Information About Community Needs

To better understand how young children and their families' child care needs are being met, partner with organizations that have a stake in early childhood development within the community. They will most likely have an experience, a story or a need that will help drive the conversation and increase awareness (or they will know whom to connect with).

- Key organizations can help evaluate how current child care programs are addressing the needs of children and families in your community. Organizations to partner with include child care programs, child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs), elementary schools and preschools, local health departments, and employers. You can find Community Resource Sheets on our website, <http://www.ks.childcareaware.org/for-businesses-and-the-community/data-reports/>.

- Seek Feedback from Families to Learn

Interview families, work with faith-based or neighborhood groups, visit with child care providers - hold community dialogues to learn more about where working parents with young children find child care. Seek to understand and identify barriers that prevent them from using community resources, including child care. The larger the sampling of families and others in your community that you visit with, the better the picture you will have for your discussions. Sample interview questions are included on page 7.

- Collect and Analyze Data

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) have a wide range of data about the child care landscape. Data reports can be provided for a variety of areas - statewide, regionally, by county and even by zip code! Work with your local CCR&R to gather data about the early childhood landscape in your community.



**Establish Early
Childhood as a
Priority**

Cultivate relationships that help to make early childhood a priority in your community. Encourage city leaders to focus more attention on early childhood issues and help to build systems that promote high-quality early childhood programs.

How can I raise awareness, coordinate efforts and generate support for early childhood in my community?

- **Spearhead an Early Childhood Coalition**
Bring key stakeholders together to increase community collaboration. Look for partners such as public-school officials, child care and early learning professionals, child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs), employers, local interagency coordinating council, faith-based organizations, health care providers, community-based organizations, and parents. Also, invite city officials to join the meeting - police officers, elected officials, etc. Connect with your regional CCR&R for assistance in connecting with child care professionals.
- **Designate an Early Childhood Advisor or Coordinator**
An advisor to the Mayor or city leader can grow support and promote a focus on early childhood; this key supporter can streamline information, make connections more quickly and help to increase the community's capacity in support of child care.
- **Raise Awareness and Build Support**
Use the connections and relationships that you have in the community to spread the importance of early childhood/child care and how high-quality child care can grow a community. Find opportunities to highlight early childhood successes. For example, maximize opportunities to ensure that child care is included in speeches at public events and during media interviews.
- **Augment Early Childhood Funding**
Work with community leaders to propose and explore public and private funding to be earmarked for early childhood/child care. These additional resources can be used for recruitment and retention of child care workers. Connect with your regional Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (CCR&R) for more information.



Enhancing Early Learning

Children who have access to high-quality early childhood opportunities, that promote social and cognitive skills, are more likely to enter kindergarten ready to learn.

What are ways that I can help children thrive in early childhood settings and be ready for school?

- Support Family Activities
Family activities are a great way to increase support for working families. These community events can connect families, via exhibit tables/booths, with local organizations that are available to assist them. Engage in reading programs at the library, expand parks and recreation programs for children, and support non-profit organizations that focus on young children.
- Build Support for Child Care Providers
Child care professionals work long hours with low pay (for more information about the early childhood field, check out the *Who Cares for Kansas Kids: An Early Childhood Workforce Study*. You can find the report on our website, www.ks.childcareaware.org). Support networks or associations of child care providers. Increase resources that can help relieve stress and provide opportunities for child care providers to learn from one another. Oftentimes, members can coordinate opportunities for low cost trainings and/or shared purchasing of supplies. Buying in bulk lowers operating costs for child care programs on common supplies.
- Develop Wage Supplements and Retention Grants
Publicly funded wage supplement programs can provide support to early childhood workers and child care programs by increasing wages. Supplements vary in amounts and can be based on the child care workers position, level of education/training and child care experience. Contact Child Care Aware® of Kansas for more information.
- Support Professional Development
Professional development ensures that providers have the resources and information needed to provide high-quality care for young children. Support a wide variety of professional development options that reflect current research and best practices. View and add any early childhood focused trainings to the Child Care Aware® of Kansas Training Calendar, www.ks.childcareaware.org, and Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities, www.kccto.org.
- Support Preschools and Head Start Programs
Work with local preschools and Head Start programs to secure state or federal resources for these programs or other early intervention services.

- Model Best Practices for Employers

Communicate the importance of the early years by offering employers lunch and learn presentations about high-quality child care. Assist employers in establishing parental leave policies and offering dependent care flexible spending accounts when possible. Contact your regional Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (CCR&R) for support. Community education materials can be viewed/downloaded from our website, www.ks.childcareaware.org.

**Expand Access
to Child Care**

For parents to work, they need high-quality and affordable child care. If parents have difficulties finding and paying for high-quality child care, it hinders their ability to work.

What can I do in my community to ensure child care options are available for working parents?

- Share Child Care Resources

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) play a vital role in collecting information about child care around Kansas. These non-profit organizations also help parents find child care that meets their needs. Work with community leaders, businesses, and local organizations to promote the Child Care Aware® of Kansas Child Care Resource Center and Kansas Quality Network. For more information, checkout www.ks.childcareaware.org and www.ksqualitynetwork.org.

- Build the Supply of Child Care

Visit with community leaders about resources that are available for increasing child care capacity in your community. Perhaps public housing funds, local tax revenue, direct grants, or even a donation of an appropriate space can be a good starting place. Work with real estate developers to provide incentives that include child care facilities in their plans.

- Address Zoning Regulations for Family Child Care

Investigate local zoning regulations, focusing on the regulations that might make it challenging to operate a family child care business. Work with community leaders to modify zoning requirements to support the development of new child care programs.

- Develop Creative Partnerships

If nontraditional child care (evenings, weekends, or overnight) is a barrier in your community; initiate a dialogue with employers (those who employ second or third shift workers). If they want to investigate child care challenges for their workforce, help them determine a starting point. If they have already gathered feedback, help to expand on their thoughts and plans.

If transportation is a barrier for working parents, partner with the transportation department to help make getting to and from child care for families less of a challenge.

- Help to Make Child Care Affordable
Develop a general fund, establish guidelines and application criteria, and designate a fiscal agent to process child care stipends for families needing extra financial assistance.

Possible Survey Questions

Family Questions

1. What is your need for child care? What are the details of your need (i.e., location, age of child, time of day that care is needed)?
2. What child care programs have you interviewed that met your needs?
 - a. Define the child care program characteristics that you felt were needed for your family (e.g., location, child care slots availability, child care program, ability to demonstrate program quality, etc.)?

Community Questions

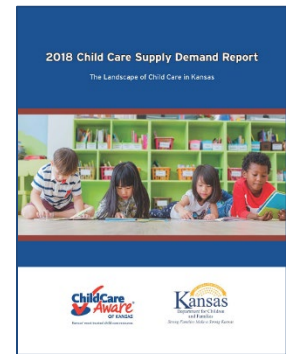
1. How might projected changes in households and employment affect future child care demands in your community?
2. What are the perspectives of parents when searching for child care? How many child care programs have opened in your community within the last six months?
3. What do you feel are the perspectives employers have regarding their employees' child care needs? Define any barriers you have learned.



For more information...

For more information and data check out the following reports.

2017 Child Care Supply Demand Report & County Sheets



2018 Child Care Supply Demand Report

Produced by Child Care Aware® of Kansas, August 2018

Source: Supporting Early Childhood Success, Action Kit for Municipal Leaders



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