



GOVERNOR LAURA KELLY

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 23-01

Establishing the Early Childhood Transition Task Force

WHEREAS, the earliest years of a child's life are most critical in preparation for lifelong academic, health, and social success because of the rapid proliferation of neural connectivity throughout those early months and years;

WHEREAS, constant exposure to safe and supportive environments strengthen the development of those neural connections—determining the child's sensory, language, and cognitive functions upon which all subsequent brain development is built;

WHEREAS, investments in early childhood care and education pay dividends for the state by lowering costs down the line and creating our greatest return on investment through improving future educational, health, and economic outcomes;

WHEREAS, Kansas is committed to ensuring that all children have access to the critical services and programs needed for healthy development and that all families in need of services are supported;

WHEREAS, to improve access and increase the quantity of high-quality early childhood services, Kansas must center the needs of children and families while moving at the speed of business through its efforts to deliver these services;

WHEREAS, Kansas currently utilizes an inadequately-coordinated system of governance to deliver early childhood services—resulting in inefficiencies, redundancies, and structural barriers for families, communities, and businesses that obstruct access to state-level support;

WHEREAS, to improve access to high-quality services and streamline regulatory, procedural, and fiscal management of programs, the Kelly Administration is committed to ensuring all Kansas children—especially those between zero and five years of age—have healthy childhoods that are

supported by a robust early childhood system which improves outcomes and effectively provides high-quality early care and education, adapts to the needs of families and communities, and is equitably accessible to all communities across the state.

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Kansas, I hereby establish the Early Childhood Transition Task Force (“Task Force”) and order the following:

1. The Governor shall appoint the following to serve as members of the Task Force:
 - a. The Secretary for Children and Families, or a designee
 - b. The Secretary of Health and Environment, or a designee
 - c. The Executive Director of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund, or a designee
 - d. The Secretary of Commerce, or a designee
 - e. The Commissioner of Education, or a designee
 - f. Two representatives of business or state or local chambers of commerce
 - g. Two representatives of partner or philanthropic organizations
 - h. Two representatives of early childhood service providers or industry organizations
 - i. Two representatives of advocacy organizations
2. The Governor may invite two members of the Kansas State Senate and two members of the Kansas House of Representatives to participate as full voting members of the Task Force.
3. The Governor shall select a chair and vice-chair, or co-chairs, from the Task Force’s membership, and the chair or co-chairs may establish rules for the Task Force’s meetings and conduct of business.
 - a. Upon the absence or vacancy of the chair, the vice-chair shall serve as chair in an acting capacity.
4. The Governor may appoint an honorary chair to serve in a ceremonial capacity.
 - a. The honorary chair shall not serve as a voting member of the Task Force but may engage with the work of the Task Force in an advisory role or in a manner deemed appropriate by the chair or co-chairs.
5. All members shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

6. Members shall receive no compensation or reimbursement for expenses and shall serve voluntarily. Officers or employees of state agencies who are appointed to the Task Force as part of their duties shall be authorized to participate on the Task Force and may claim subsistence, allowance, mileage, or associated expenses from their respective agency budgets as permitted by law.
7. The Task Force shall be subject to the Kansas Open Records Act and the Kansas Open Meetings Act.
8. Plans, reports, or recommendations of any nature adopted by the Task Force shall be considered advice to the Governor, and shall not be construed as official policies, positions, or interpretations of laws, rules, or regulations by any department or agency of state government, nor shall any such department or agency be bound in any manner to consider such advice when conducting their advisory and regulatory affairs.
9. The Task Force shall be guided by the following vision statement:
 - a. All Kansas children—especially those between zero and five years of age—deserve healthy childhoods that are supported by a robust early childhood system which improves outcomes and effectively provides high-quality early care and education, adapts to the needs of families and communities, and is equitably accessible to all communities across the state.
10. The Task Force shall work towards the mission of creating a framework for a model single-agency governance structure for early childhood programming that consolidates initiatives and funding under the leadership of a new-cabinet level position.
11. The Task Force's work shall be guided by a commitment to the following principles:
 - a. Children, family, and community well-being shall be centered throughout the Task Force's work;
 - b. Efforts shall be focused on maximizing efficiencies to reduce administrative burdens on families and improve access to early childhood services through the creation of a new executive agency;
 - c. The consolidation of early childhood services shall be informed by what families and communities say they want and need;
 - d. Access to programs and services shall be equitable and available to all children and families—regardless of socio-economic status or geographic location;

- e. Intentional focus shall be placed on developing strategies to reach families and young children in care deserts or furthest from opportunity and existing resources;
- f. Access to health, nutrition, mental health, home visiting, early intervention, supports for families, early learning, and other services in the critical prenatal to five age period will critically impact academic success, economic opportunities, and the prosperity of Kansas;
- g. Efforts shall be made using data-informed approaches and explore better ways to develop shared data systems;
- h. Work shall focus on strengthening and expanding the mixed childcare delivery system already in use in Kansas;
- i. Alignment across sectors and state agencies will increase capacity, maximize funding, and create a more streamlined delivery of services;
- j. The importance of growing a diverse and well-supported early childhood workforce shall remain at the forefront and be informed by the Task Force's work;
- k. While focusing on advancing our delivery system, work shall highlight the importance of defining quality care and expanding capacity and access to create a greater quantity of quality services;
- l. To incentivize innovation and respond to family need, communities must be empowered to develop local, community-based solutions that take a whole-child and whole-family approach in responding to need;
- m. To ensure holistic childhood well-being and improve health outcomes, there must be alignment between state efforts to improve early learning and care and existing prenatal and maternal health initiatives; and
- n. Strengthening early childhood developmental health is vital to ensuring that children are prepared to achieve academic success and are setup for lifelong learning.

12. The Task Force shall be tasked with:

- a. Conducting an analysis of the current early childhood delivery system in Kansas and how it is financed—with specific focus on gaps, inefficiencies, and redundancies. This work should focus on how creating a single-agency governance structure for early childhood services could overcome these challenges and improve

how care is delivered, accessed, and funded. This analysis must specifically include:

- i. A review of current early childhood programs and policies dispersed between the Kansas Department for Children and Families, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund, and the Kansas Department of Education. The review should pay special attention to where current statutory authority over certain operations exists and where possible areas of redundancy occur;
- ii. A review of how current funding systems blend and braid various funding opportunities, with special attention to how funding streams are currently utilized for early childhood programs that are housed across departments. This fiscal review should map the routes all private, public, federal, and state funding streams take from funding authority to program application;
- iii. A review of how Kansas might integrate existing programming into a consolidated delivery system and what need might exist for new programming that the state currently lacks;
- iv. Recommendations on how cross-agency collaboration and partnerships can be fostered to develop a whole-of-government approach to strengthening the delivery of early childhood services—in a single-agency model;
 1. Specifically, ensuring that data infrastructure is integrated across agencies, account for both qualitative and quantitative methods, and can be widely utilized by multiple state agencies.
- v. Recommendations on how an executive agency might maximize efficiencies for early childhood providers and their workforce. This work should determine how licensing, workforce development and support, and facility review can be improved to eliminate barriers to entry for providers and professionals. This should also include a review of current regulatory structures that complicate the process of entering the early childhood sector; and
- vi. Recommendations on how executive agencies can strengthen the existing healthcare workforce to better support the development of young children

and wellbeing of mothers through improved access to comprehensive care. This should also include a review of how to secure improved health outcomes for children, financial sustainability of delivery models, and cultivating workforce pipelines.

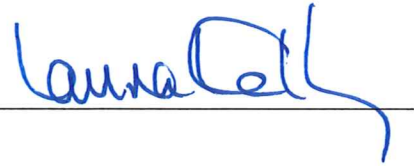
- vii. An analysis of key lessons learned from states already advancing consolidated systems of early childhood governance to inform Kansas's own process.
- b. Conducting a series of stakeholder engagement opportunities to elicit feedback on the current early childhood governance structure and better understand the needs of parents, families, providers, and businesses.
 - i. Following the engagement of stakeholders, the Task Force should conduct a review that synthesizes feedback received from families, providers, community leaders, and the business sector. This review should include recommendations on how the state delivery system and governance model can be improved to respond to family and community need. It should also include recommendations for how the state can better engage with parents, families, and communities on a regular basis to ensure family-voice is centered in the work of state agencies.
- c. Drafting a transition plan to ensure the continuous operation of state services upon the creation of a new state agency for early childhood.
 - i. This plan should include detailed recommendations for what programs and services should remain in their current place or transition into a new agency. Each recommendation should consider the challenges and benefits of moving programs from one agency to another.
 - ii. This plan should focus on movement between agencies and how collaboration can be strengthened with non-executive agencies. It should also include recommendations for any necessary interagency agreements.
 - iii. This plan should include a review of what additional funding and resources might be needed to transition to a single-agency governance model effectively and efficiently.

- iv. This plan should also provide recommended goals and metrics for the agency to strive towards once operational.
 - d. Drafting proposed legislation that creates a new cabinet-level, single state agency that oversees Kansas's early childhood education and care programs.
13. The Task Force shall develop and submit an interim report to the Governor by July 1, 2023, and a final report to the Governor by January 1, 2024.

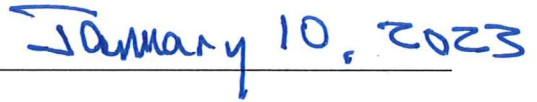
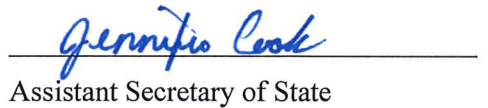
This document shall be filed with the Secretary of State as Executive Order No. 23-01. It shall become effective immediately and remain in force until rescinded.

THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

BY THE GOVERNOR



DATED


Secretary of State
Assistant Secretary of State