

# KANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD TRANSITION TASK FORCE

Meeting 1 | March 31, 2023



During Meeting 1, the Kansas Early Childhood Transition Task Force convened to assess the state's existing early childhood landscape. Welcoming remarks were given by Governor Laura Kelly and the Task Force Co-Chairs; Cornelia Stevens (Executive Director at TOP Early Learning Centers) and Sam Huenergardt (President/CEO for AdventHealth's Mid-America Region). The Task Force heard presentations from the state agencies currently housing early childhood programs. These include The Kansas Department of Education (which also houses the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund), the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and the Kansas Department for Children and Families. A group discussion around next steps concluded the session.

## CREATION OF THE TASK FORCE

- Governor Laura Kelly issued [Executive Order 23-01](#) on January 10, 2023 establishing the Early Childhood Transition Task Force. The task force will come together and create a plan for a single, consolidated early childhood cabinet agency.

## KANSAS' EARLY CHILDHOOD LANDSCAPE

*Presentations from the Kansas Department of Education, Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund, the Department for Children and Families, and the Department of Health and Environment*

### KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

- The Kansas State Department of Education provides the following early childhood services:
  - State Funded Pre-Kindergarten
  - Preschool for Students with Disabilities: authorized annually by the US Department of Education and federally funded through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B, Section 619
  - Kansas Parents as Teachers
  - State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) and Local Interagency Coordinating Councils
  - Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- Early childhood at the Kansas State Department of Education is a team of four.

### KANSAS CHILDREN'S CABINET AND TRUST FUND

- The Kansas Children's Cabinet funding is funded by the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement
- Kansas Children's Cabinet has been the lead on the PDG B-5 Implementation Grant, while the state's original Preschool Development Grant (focused on prekindergarten expansion) was managed by the Kansas Department of Education.
- Without a single entity overseeing early childhood, there is no single charge or direction on the matter.
- More unified governance would help eliminate the challenges associated with having multiple agencies involved in funding and monitoring programs.

### KANSAS DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- The Kansas Department for Children and Families oversees multiple early childhood services including:
  - Child Care Assistance: includes managing the federal Child Care Development fund which is the primary source of direct assistance to low-income families in accessing child care.
  - Child Care Quality
  - Kansas Head Start Collaboration Office
  - Kansas Early Head Start Child Care Partnership and Early Head Start Home Visitation
  - Parent Skill-Building – Family First Prevention Services Act

### KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

- Early Childhood Programs within the Bureau of Family Health include:
  - Child Care Licensing

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- Infant-Toddler Services
- Nutrition & WIC Services
- Kansas Home Visiting
- 20 programs are under the Bureau of Family Health, including Child Care Licensing.
- About 95% of staffing for child care licensing department are contracted

## THOUGHTS AND QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- A common monitoring and evaluation system would be one benefit of a unified system.
- In Kansas, Parents as Teachers is spread (to some degree) across all four early childhood entities, leading to duplicative reporting and measurement.
- Consolidating early childhood programs within one agency would allow for easier distribution of funding and decrease duplication of effort.
- What barriers exist in executing the mission of the Task Force?
- Where is there duplication of effort/administration and where can services be collapsed into one versus four separate entities?
- Which states are leading in this space, making it easy for families to identify and access these services?