



## PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Kansas has made progress toward establishing public-private partnerships (PPP) to meet the needs of young children and their families, with most efforts focused on increasing the availability and affordability of child care.

These efforts vary in terms of the role the private entities play, the scale or reach of the effort, and the funding model. They also range in how effective or impactful they are in meeting their goals to increase child care capacity. All are regionally- or locally-driven.

The examples here illustrate the diversity of PPP approaches already in play in Kansas, and offer both lessons learned and opportunities to invest and scale.

### PPP Approaches

- Forming child care-focused coalitions that bring private entities to the planning table
- Filling gaps with private and blended investments
  - To increase provider compensation (both one-time and endowed)
  - To cover the cost of new slots (both employer-only and community-wide), build facilities, and make capital improvements

## FORMING COALITIONS TO ENGAGE NEW PARTNERS

Developing a stronger early childhood ecosystem begins in communities. Many small-scale solutions are already working in locations across Kansas because the families and providers in each community know what they need. They are coming together in coalitions and through “Communities in Action,” to address their capacity and financial needs together, in creative ways. Communities in Action is a program of Child Care Aware of Kansas that helps Kansans identify solutions to local child care challenges, and many of the participating communities are forming successful public-private partnerships. Child care coalitions around the state are captured [on this map](#).

### Example Coalitions

The **Advancing Barton County Children** partners with Superior Essex, the University of Kansas Health System, Fuller Industries, Kansas Brick and Tile, Barton Community College, City of Great Bend, Barton County, and MPire Realty.

The **Childcare Coalition of Dodge City** actively works with Cargill, National Beef, and Hilmar Cheese.

The **Cloud County Kids** coalition is currently planning how to approach larger businesses, such as the new hospital in Concordia, to encourage them to offer child care and employee incentives.

The **Geary County Child Care Coalition** held a summit in March 2024 for community businesses to learn about Geary County’s child care crisis and begin working on solutions. As a result of this summit, Michelin Tires now participates in the coalition and has committed to being a financial partner for new slots.

The **Pottawatomie County Child Care Task Force** is working with Dymax INC, to create a plan to subsidize child care slots for employees; they are currently contributing to their staff child dependent flex spending accounts.

Communities are increasingly turning to private and blended investments to address gaps in child care, recognizing that public funding alone is often insufficient to meet demand and ensure high-quality care. Partnerships that include private businesses and philanthropic organizations are creating more robust and sustainable financing for child care workers and programs, while also leveraging partners’ unique resources and expertise.

PPP Investments to Increase Compensation

**Baby Steps** targets providers currently operating under the licensing ratio caps for infant and toddler slots. The program offers providers financial incentives to open up these slots to families in their community. Providers receive an amount to cover salaries in serving additional infants or toddlers, plus an increase of 23% to approach a living wage. For example, if the child care program is licensed as a Group Home and has two FTE staff providing care (40 hrs./week), the incentive amount brings both individuals to a wage of \$15 per hour. In addition to the financial incentive, participating child care programs also receive coaching to maintain program quality. Providers must agree to accept additional infants/toddlers for a full 12 months from enrollment.

**147** New infant-toddler child care slots opened in Kansas since Baby Steps began in 2023

With funding from the Patterson Family Foundation, Child Care Aware launched the Baby Steps infant/toddler incentive model. As of July 2024, this program has opened 147 infant-toddler slots in 17 rural counties. Four urban counties have been added using using federal Preschool Development Grant funds.

**Regional Child Care Endowment.** The Dane G. Hansen Foundation is establishing a Regional Childcare Endowment to support locally-driven child care solutions across 26 Northwest Kansas counties. They aim to raise \$25 million, with the foundation pledging the initial \$5 million. In 2024, the Kansas Legislature allocated an additional \$5 million via the Children’s Initiative Fund. This creates a permanent source of funds specifically for child care. In June 2024, the Patterson Family Foundation approved a gift of \$1 million and promised to revisit in 2025.

Applications from child care providers will be accepted and reviewed monthly, with up to 5% of the total endowment distributed annually. Eligible applicants are licensed child care facilities who accept infants and who also welcomes families receiving the DCF child care subsidy. The endowment follows several years of investment in early childhood by the Dane G. Hansen Foundation, and the model has excellent potential for replication in other regions of the state.

PPP Investments to Build and Sustain New Child Care Spaces

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Fifty-three **Child Care Capacity Accelerator (CCCA)** grantees (of the 63 total) secured over **\$31 million in match funding from private sources** in 2023, including philanthropy, local businesses, health care organizations, individual donors, and faith-based communities. The support was a combination of in-kind and direct financial investment to match the braided funding from state and federal sources, and is being used for **new construction, major renovation, and operations.**

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Ten **Capital Projects Fund Accelerator (CPF)** grantees secured nearly **\$16 million in match funding from private sources** in 2023 and 2024 for **construction-only projects.** Leaders from business, education, and health sectors joined with early childhood champions to meet the multi-layered needs of employees, patients, and families by building **multi-purpose community facilities.**

GRANTEE	PARTNER TYPES
Grow Hays, Inc. Ellis County	● ■ ★ ★
Dickinson County Child Care Accelerator Dickinson County	★
Open Minds Infant & Toddler Center Johnson County	●
E9 Properties LLC Butler County	● ●
USD 270 Plainville Rooks County	■ ●
USD 252 Childcare Capacity Accelerator Lyon County	★ ● ●
Sonshine Childcare Crawford	* *
Coffeyville Area Childcare Coalition Montgomery County	● ● ★ *
Erie Church of the Nazarene Neosho County	● ▲ *
Greater Manhattan Community Foundation Riley County	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Dickinson County Child Care Accelerator Dickinson County	● ● ●
USD 461 Neodesha Early Learning Center Wilson County	★ ★ ▲ ●
Salina Area United Way Child Care Initiative Saline County	● ■ ★ * * * ●
Sheridan County Community Foundation Sheridan County	★ ★
LIFT Minneola Inc. Clark County	● ★ ★
Reno County Task Force Reno	■ ■ * * ●
Shelby Bruckerhoff Pottawatomie County	★
Overland Park Learning Services, LLC Johnson County	*
McPherson County Child Care Expansion McPherson County	● ● ● ★
Advancing Barton County Children, Inc. Barton County	● ●
USD 294 Community Daycare Project Decatur County	■ ● ●

GRANTEE	PARTNER TYPES
Success By 6 Coalition of Douglas County Douglas County	●
Kids World Childcare Learning Center LLC Sedgwick County	● ●
Legacy Regional Community Foundation Cowley County	● ● ■ ★ ★ ★ ★ *
Creekstone Farms Premium Beef LLC Cowley County	●
Alford Kids Academy Grant Application Sedgwick County	●
Integrated Behavioral Technologies, Inc. Jefferson	● ★ ★
Bethany Lutheran Early Childhood Center Sedgwick	*
Flint Hills Child Care Coalition Inc. Marion County	● ★
An Early Childhood Community Center Douglas County	● ●
Humboldt Daycare and Preschool, Inc Allen County	●
Doniphan Darlings, Inc. Doniphan County	● ▲
Grow & Learn Childcare Center, Inc. Wichita County	● ● ● ● ●
Mindful Minis Sedgwick County	● ● ● ● ●
Rawlins County Economic Development Rawlins County	● ● ● ★ ★
Hope Chapel, Inc. Wyandotte County	* *

PARTNER TYPES	
●	Local Business
■	Health Care Provider
★	Private Philanthropy
▲	Individual Donor
*	Faith Community
●	Other Community Organization

GRANTEE	PARTNER TYPES
USD 331 Daycare Center Kingman County	■ ■ ● ●
Cloud County Community College Foundation Cloud	★ ●
West Elk USD #282 Elk County	★
Phillipsburg Child Care Center Phillips County	● ★ ★ ★ ★
Family Resource Center Inc. Crawford County	★ ★ ●
Greater Topeka Partnership Shawnee County	● ● ■ ★ ★ ▲
USD 367 & United Way of Miami County Miami County	● ●
KidZone Learning Center of Overland Park Johnson County	* * ●

GRANTEE	PARTNER TYPES
Jays Nest Daycare Clark County	▲
SugarCreek Child Care Center Crawford County	●
Hillsboro Community Child Care Center Marion County	★
Finney County Childcare and Early Learning Network Finney	● ■ ★ ★ ●
Delight Ahead Child and Family Village Sedgwick County	● ★ ★ ●
Parkwood Day School Eudora Douglas and Johnson Counties	● *
Tri County Child Care Coalition Barber, Harper, and Kiowa	★ ★ ▲ ▲
Erin Steele Wabaunsee County	▲
Parkwood Day School KCK Wyandotte County	★

CPF Accelerator Public-Private Partnerships

GRANTEE	PARTNER TYPES
The Grove Community Center Ellis County	■ ★ ★ ★ ●
Community Children’s Center, Inc. Douglas County	● ● ● ● ▲
Little Lyons of Emporia Lyon County	● ▲ ●
Storytime Village, Inc. Sedgwick	●
KidZone Learning Center Johnson County	● * *

GRANTEE	PARTNER TYPES
Clay County Growth Alliance, Inc. Clay County	▲
Greater Manhattan Community Foundation Riley County	● ● ▲ ▲
Advancing Barton County Children, Inc. and Great Bend Economic Development Barton County	● ● ● ● ● ▲
USD 258 Allen County	■
St. Benedict’s Abbey Atchison County	● ●

PARTNER TYPES	
●	Local Business
■	Health Care Provider
★	Private Philanthropy
▲	Individual Donor
*	Faith Community
●	Other Community Organization

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Sixteen CCCA grantees were part of an Innovation Communities cohort that explored **innovative solutions to child care challenges**, including establishment of public-private partnerships, such as:

- An effort to replicate the Michigan Tri-Share model for child care with costs shared equally among families, employers, and the state;
- An effort to establish a local child care endowment; and,
- Strategies to engage local employers in child care investment through direct payments to employees and donations to child care businesses for construction, materials, programming, etc.

Grantees participated in the Innovation Communities cohort for one year. Despite support from coaches and cohort peers, each of the three grantees specifically exploring new public-private partnership models struggled to implement their approaches as hoped due to hesitancy and barriers shared by prospective partners. However, they learned valuable lessons to consider for future state-supported initiatives promoting public-private partnerships.

### Lesson 1: Decide who should lead the charge.

All three grantees aiming to establish public-private partnerships faced challenges securing commitments from local businesses. One grantee expressed, "philanthropy doesn't have leverage over businesses." Another grantee mentioned that in her community, "you have to get an invitation to participate." She explained that it required significant time and effort to earn an invite to discuss community needs and the role of public-private partnerships in addressing those needs.

### Lesson 2: Determine who the right partners are.

After a year of exploration, each grantee concluded that there is no ideal mix of partners to approach. The right mix depends on the specific needs of a community and their top priorities. One grantee described the advantage of involving unlikely or a unique mix of partners. For instance, working with a local financial advisor was much more valuable than anticipated because they received access to potential new donors. They learned "the secret is to have the right people do the ask."

### Lesson 3: Describe the need and prepare "the Ask."

Communities must identify clear needs and be prepared to make direct requests to potential partners. All three communities faced significant challenges, and two are still considering whether their public-private partnership models are feasible. The third community is implementing its model, and they describe a moment of realization that, "child care providers are small business owners and entrepreneurs." Embracing this mindset helped them find common language, and they secured their first partnership to develop a shared food distribution model to reduce food costs.