Kansas Children’s Service League (KCSL) is a statewide private, non-profit, 501(c)3 serving children and their families. We are the Kansas Chapter for Prevent Child Abuse America. KCSL works to create, repair, and restore healthy parent-child relationships which are the foundation of a strong family. This work fosters long term positive impacts on all Kansans, not just those we serve directly. Our work with children and families improves school readiness now so that graduation rates improve in the future. We help families succeed now to be better parents and better employees. We are creating a stronger, more resilient and educated workforce for the future of Kansas.

A growing body of research shows that economic and concrete supports for families are an effective strategy in preventing child abuse and prevention children from being placed in foster care, a much costlier intervention. Concrete supports include access to rent and utility assistance, food, and clothing as well as access to economic assistance programs like TANF. Financial supports for families are effective in improving economic mobility. As we recover from the pandemic in Kansas it is important to remember that some of the hardest hit families were families who are paid low wages.

Family Resource Centers (FRC’s) have been proven to be effective in supporting families who are struggling financially. These are readily accessible in local neighborhoods, schools, and communities and serve as a hub for support, information and opportunities to support families. Currently KCSL is working with the National Family Support Network, and we serve as the Kansas Family Support Network. In that role we can provide training and technical assistance to Family Resource Centers’ in KS. The national network allows Kansas to take advantage of peer learning, mentors from other states, webinars, and access to training. Many communities in KS have expressed interest or are in the process of establishing FRC’s. Most frequently FRC’s provide services in the areas of parenting support, access to resources, child development activities, and parent leadership development.

At FRC’s families have access to a professional who can help access and navigate the resources in the community which will best support them in achieving their goals as a family. An investment into local communities interested in establishing these centers has potential to have long-term benefits for KS communities. States which have implemented a network of FRC’s have achieved:

- 63% reduction of child abuse cases
- 50% reduction in out of home placements
- Gains in economic self-sufficiency, health, social support, and family functioning

Kansas is in our early stages of developing FRC’s, but our goal is to achieve similar outcomes here. The Kansas network of Family Resource Centers is attached, for your reference. Additionally, one of our current members has provided additional information for you. We hope as you continue to look at ways to improve the child welfare system, you remember prevention is a key to decreasing the strain on the foster care system and improving overall outcomes for children and their families.

Thank you for your time today.

Gail Cozadd, CEO
785-215-6401
gcozadd@kcsl.org
**Network FRC Members:**

- KCSL Wichita FRC
- Pony Express Partnership for Children, Inc.
- Riley County Health Department/ Raising Riley
- Kansas Family Advisory Network
- Pittsburg Family Resource Center, Inc.
- Community Children's Center
- USD 253 - Emporia School District
- USD 252 - Southern Lyon County
- SENT Topeka, Inc.
- Turner USD 202 Parents As Teachers
- Urban League of Kansas
- LiveWell Northwest Kansas
- KU Project Eagle

**Supporting Partners:**

- AmeriCorps
- Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Center - Dodge City
- CALM
- Care Source
- CASA of the Fourth Judicial District
- Child Care Aware
- Community Health Center/SEK
- Family First Family Advisory Council
- Gil Carter Initiative, Inc.
- Head Start
- IBSA, Inc.
- Impact Avenues Topeka
- Kansas Department of Health & Environment - Systems of Support
- Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities (KCCTO)
- KU School of Social Welfare
- Lighthouse TCO
- Mental Health Association of South-Central Kansas (MHASCK)
- Parents as Teachers
- Reno County Child Care Coalition (RCCCC)
- Sistahs Can We Talk
- The Center
- The Treehouse Inc
- United Way of Reno County
- USD 308 - Hutchinson Public Schools
- Valeo Behavioral Health
August 15, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

Pony Express Partnership for Children, Inc., has been operating a Family Resource Center in rural Marshall County since 2014. In 2018, we expanded to serve Washington County to our West. Both counties are rural areas with minimal resources. It has always been our goal to increase resources for families, and to serve as a one-stop-shop to help families access those services. Our organization currently owns a 100-year-old building and the city block that it sits on in Marysville, KS. Resources in our building and on our campus include PEPC, Parents as Teachers, Infant Toddler Services (TinyK), NEK-CAP Early Head Start, KVC, Marshall County Lifelong Learning (GED Program), The Good Witch, Kitchen ReStore, a household/toiletry pantry, Pawnee Mental Health Services, DCF, the Marshall County Helping Hands Food Pantry, and our PEPC Bright Beginnings childcare center.

Families receive services unique to their situation including, but not limited to, one-time emergency assistance, education, long-term housing assistance, case management, and support. The following is a testimony shared with me from a former client who participated in our Family Support Program who received services throughout a five-year period. She titled her statement as “Things I’ve Conquered Since I’ve Met You.” The client stated that because of the services that were offered to her through our Family Resource Center, she was able to conquer addiction and noted that she has been sober for three years on August 29, 2023. She also stated that she has overcome multiple hurdles in her life with the support she received, such as: having her license reinstated, paying off $5000 in fines, becoming her own payee and now paying all her bills independently, completing inpatient treatment as well as one year of outpatient treatment, starting her own business, managing another business, and opening her first bank account to name a few! This client did all this while being a single parent and proudly stated that she was able to take her kids on their first vacation to an island! To give back to the community that gave her the support she needed when she was facing challenges, she started a support group for women. She notes that one of her greatest accomplishments was learning to set boundaries in her life and breaking generational cycles that were unhealthy while helping her children to heal from trauma. She recently paid her son’s tuition to a private elementary school on her own with no assistance, which was a great milestone for her personally as well.

Transforming lives is something that takes time and families need somewhere to go in the community that is consistent and where they feel safe. Family Resource Centers can be the solution to this need for Kansas families. Family Resource Centers can help to prevent abuse and/or neglect, as well as mitigate the impact of trauma that has already occurred. As you think about how to further support families in Kansas, consider funding Family Resource Centers as they ensure the well-being of the entire family.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

April Todd
Director

Page 3 of 3