



KANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD TRANSITION TASK FORCE

Legislative Budget Committee
December 14, 2023

Cornelia Stevens, Co-Chair—Early Childhood Transition Task Force

Introductions and Materials

- **Cornelia Stevens, Co-Chair—Early Childhood Transition Task Force**
 - **Executive Director—TOP Early Learning Centers**

Meeting materials can be found at:
<https://governor.kansas.gov/newsroom/kansas-early-childhood-transition-task-force/>

Task Force Final Report can be found [HERE](#)

Other Materials include:

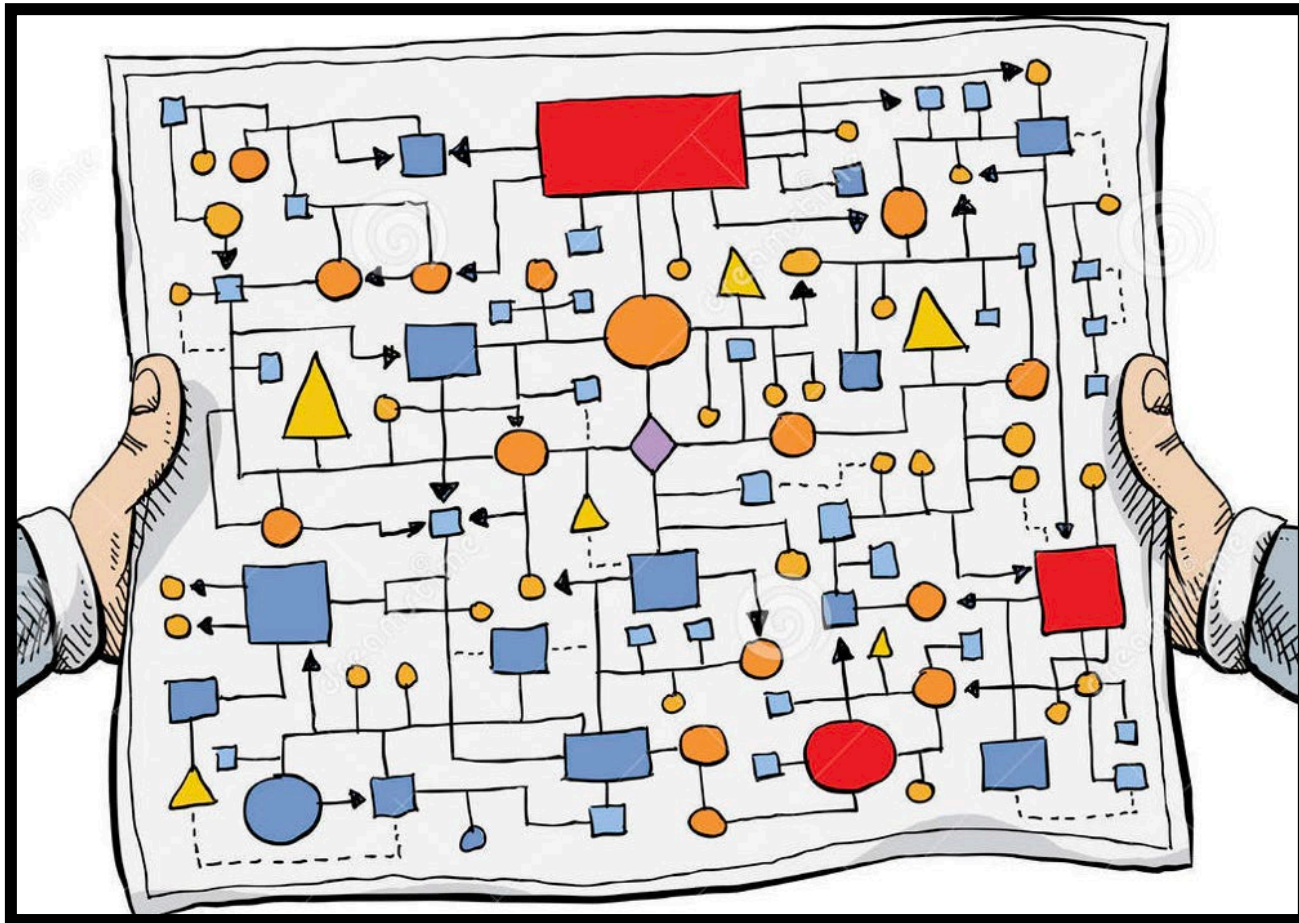
- **Meeting Agendas**
- **Issue Briefs**
- **Early Childhood Program Inventory**
- **Other State Governance Models**
- **Task Force Interim Report**
- **Community Engagement Tour Results**

THE NATION'S EARLY CHILDHOOD GOVERNANCE LANDSCAPE



- **The federal government is the nation's largest funder of early childhood programs, across an array of separate funding streams.**
- **At the state level these federal funds are routinely supplemented by both additional state funds and programs.**
- **As a rule of thumb, federal dollars typically follow the path of least resistance... health dollars to health agencies, education dollars to education agencies, etc.**

THE NATION'S EARLY CHILDHOOD GOVERNANCE LANDSCAPE



- **Bureaucratic maze for families seeking services**
- **Duplication of effort and administrative costs**
- **Suboptimal coordination and collaboration across programs**
- **BPC: Kansas 48th in nation**

KANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD TRANSITION TASK FORCE



Executive Order 23-01 (January 10, 2023)

Creates Task Force and charges it with:

- **Examining KS' existing early childhood landscape and systems**
- **Exploring lessons learned from other states**
- **Eliciting stakeholder feedback**
- **Bringing forward recommendations for the creation of a consolidated entity**

Early Childhood Transition Task Force Membership

Executive Order 23-01 outlined the membership of the Task Force. The Task Force is led by two co-chairs, appointed from the members outline below.

- **The Task Force will consist of the following members:**
 - The Secretary for Children and Families, or a designee
 - The Secretary of Health and Environment, or a designee
 - The Executive Director of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet, or a designee
 - The Secretary of Commerce, or a designee
 - The Commissioner of Education, or a designee
 - Two representatives of business or chambers of commerce
 - Two representatives from partner or philanthropic organizations
 - Two representatives of early childhood service providers or industry organizations
 - Two representatives of advocacy organizations
 - Members of the Kansas Senate and Kansas House of Representatives

Early Childhood Transition Task Force Members

- **Cornelia Stevens, Co-Chair**—Executive Director, TOP Early Learning Centers
- **Sam Huenergardt, Co-Chair**—CEO Mid-American Region, AdventHealth
- **Secretary Laura Howard**—Kansas Department for Children and Families
- **Secretary Janet Stanek**—Kansas Department of Health and Environment
- **Melissa Rooker**—Executive Director, Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund
- **Amanda Petersen**—Director of Early Childhood, Kansas Department of Education
- **Sara Bloom**—Community Development Specialist, Kansas Department of Commerce
- **Lona Duvall**—President, Finney County Economic Development Corporation
- **Heather Schrotberger**—Executive Director, Kansas Head Start Association
- **David Jordan**—President and CEO, United Methodist Health Ministry Fund
- **Betsy Wearing**—Coordinator of Communications, Programs and New Initiatives, Dane G. Hansen Foundation
- **Kelly Davydov**—Executive Director, Child Care Aware of Kansas
- **Monica Murnan**—Director of Community Support Services, Greenbush/Chair, Kansas Action for Children
- **Sen. Molly Baumgardner**
- **Sen. Brenda Dietrich**
- **Sen. Pat Pettey**
- **Rep. Susan Ruiz**
- **Rep. Troy Waymaster**
- Honorary Chair: **Barry Downing**, President—Northrock Inc.

Task Force Vision and Mission Statement

The Task Force’s work will be guided by the following vision statement:

“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.”

The Task Force will work towards a 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.”

Task Force Process



Meeting One (March 31): The Kansas Landscape

Meeting Two (May 16): Process Lessons from Other States

Regional Stakeholder Feedback Sessions (Week of June 26-30)

Meeting Three (August 17): Work Session and Review of Stakeholder Feedback

Meeting Four (October 18): Review and Refinement of Draft Report

Meeting Five (December 11): Adoption/Presentation of Final Report

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- **5 in-person Task Force meetings**
- **3 virtual work sessions**
- **9 regional community listening sessions (+1 online), including nearly 500 Kansans**
- **FINAL REPORT**

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TRANSITION LOGISTICS:

1.1 Kansas should streamline its early childhood governance structure by unifying early childhood care and education services into a single state entity—reforming our coordinated system into a consolidation or creation model.

1.1.1 Governor Kelly should consider both unifying services into an existing agency or creating a new agency/entity. Both options should be considered, as realignment is needed, regardless of the form it takes.

New entity to be established during the upcoming legislative session, transition director hired, agency launch July 1, 2025 under permanent director.

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PROGRAMMATIC MOVEMENTS:

2.1 A unified early childhood entity should co-locate a variety of programs encompassing child care, early childhood grants and services, and home visiting.

- **Child Care Programs**
- **Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund**
- **Home visiting programs**
- **Head Start Collaboration Office & EHS Child Care Partnerships**

NOT recommended for movement:

- **Preschool programs currently within the KS State Department of ED**
- **Health programs**
- **Child welfare programs**

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METRICS AND DATA

The Task Force's final report delineates a wide variety of metrics recommended for use in establishing both:

- **The effectiveness of the consolidated entity itself**
- **Kansas' progress writ large.**

This section, in particular, sets Kansas apart from national peers. It is recommended that work to capture baseline data, on an inter-agency basis, begin as soon as possible.

Recommendations Impacting State Funding

1.3 Transition Seed Funding in FY24 or FY25—the Task Force recommended securing a small amount of funding to begin the processes of transitioning services to a new, unified entity beginning in FY25. This funding would be intended to cover the costs of hiring a Transition Director and any other contractual or service costs that would come with preparing for the transition.

Reorganization of the state budget to account for the transition would not come until the FY26 budget, as the timeline for transition does not have the new entity coming online until July 2025.

These timelines could change depending on what legislative action occurs in 2024.

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Questions?