

# ADVENTURERS IN EARLY LEARNING

**CREATING  
SUPERHEROS**



**CHILD CARE AWARE® OF EASTERN KANSAS SUPPORTS THE HEALTHY  
DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG CHILDREN BY IMPROVING ACCESS TO  
HIGH-QUALITY CHILD CARE OPTIONS AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
FOR FAMILIES AND EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS.**



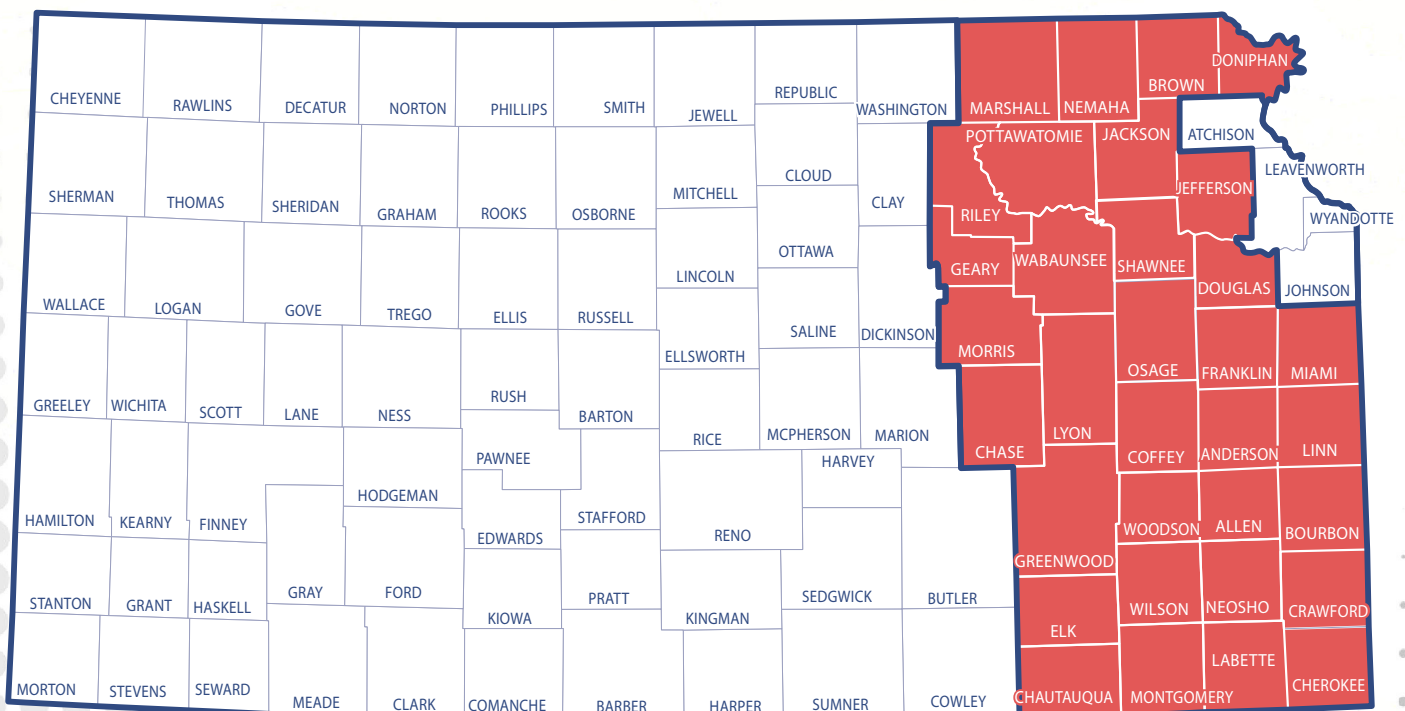
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## WHO WE SERVE



Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas operates the statewide Parent Resource Center, as well as serves child care providers, families, businesses and communities in the 33 counties highlighted in red.

# A Letter From Our EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Hello, friends!

This annual report shares some highlights from 2021. If I could capture the spirit of the year in one word, it would be “reinventing.” At every turn, we had the opportunity to “reinvent” how we fulfill our mission— stepping out boldly to try new approaches while continuing strategies that still provided the needed results. In everything we did, children and families stayed at the forefront. Our mission to support the healthy development of young children by improving access to high-quality child care options and educational resources for families and early childhood professionals drove every decision throughout the year.

The work was hard. Our agency has always been known for providing support and guidance to anyone we serve at just the right point in time, and we continued that commitment to excellence throughout this year. We strived to meet people “where they are” and do our best to provide guidance and support. Families and child care programs were, and continue to be, under tremendous stress. Almost every Kansas community lacked the child care capacity to serve the families seeking care. Business and civic leaders came together to talk about child care and what was needed— something that hadn’t happened at this level in many years. Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas was well-positioned to join those local conversations, bringing industry information and data to help guide strategy implementation. While this work launched in 2021, it will continue for several years as stakeholders join together to address the need.

All that was accomplished in 2021 was through our partnerships with volunteers, donors, local businesses, community agencies, and area foundations. These strong relationships, combined with the agency’s longstanding reputation for high-quality programs and services and solid fiscal oversight, resulted in the organization continuing to remain on solid footing during a very challenging time for many.

As you review this report, please know how grateful we are for how our donors and friends continue to support the agency and the work we do. As always, I invite you to contact me if you would like to hear more about our programming, projects, and needs. We look forward to working with you as we move ahead together, meeting the needs of the children and families we serve!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Reva Wywadis". The script is fluid and cursive.

Reva Wywadis  
Executive Director





# CREATING HEROS WITH...

## CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

In 2021...

**1,388** child care programs through the 33-county region and their staff were served by the agency.

After shifting gears to offer a substantial amount of **professional development** by Zoom in 2020, the agency was able to offer in-person classes again in 2021. By limiting class sizes and using creative room arrangements, we were able to provide a safe learning environment for early childhood professionals. With the return of in-person options, this allowed the agency to offer professional development classes in three formats: in-person, virtual by Zoom, and asynchronous online. Having this variety allowed participants to choose classes that best met their needs and learning styles. In 2021, Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas offered **125** classes by Zoom, **13** classes in-person and **38** online in 2021.

For over 15 years, our agency has offered professional development specifically for child care center directors and administrators. As staffing concerns elevated in 2021, our agency responded by offering the **Director's Toolbox** classes in a blended delivery model. Topics included helping teachers develop powerful interactions with young children, community engagement and marketing, conflict in the workplace, the director's role in supporting positive behavior, and theories of change. The Director's Toolbox had **two** classes held in-person, **two** were held virtually by Zoom and **one** was an online class.

With funding provided by United Way of Greater Topeka, the **Get Set for Success** program in Shawnee County had **nine** early learning classrooms participate. These classrooms received components of the Learning Without Tears curriculum, on-site coaching and professional development. The overall focus was on supporting classrooms serving at-risk preschool-aged children and ensuring they have the skills needed to be successful in kindergarten.

**Capital Area Successful Start (CASS)** is a collaborative that brings together **eight** community partners that make up the Shawnee County Early Childhood Block Grant. This collaborative is funded through the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund. Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas joins with community agencies to serve children prenatally to age five years and their families. Partners included: TARC's Tiny-K and PACT programs, Shawnee County Nurse-Family Partnership, USD 501 Parents as Teachers, Kansas Children's Service League's Healthy Families and Fatherhood Involvement initiatives, Family Service & Guidance Center, Community Action Head Start and Early Head Start, and the United Way of Greater Topeka (serving as the fiscal agent). In 2021, agency staff provided services to **62** early childhood classrooms in Shawnee County through on-site coaching, professional development, and access to resources. All services were focused on supporting at-risk children and their families to prepare them for success in school.

**Child Care Quality Initiative (CCQI)** is funded through Child Care Aware® of Kansas. This year-long quality improvement program's focus is to work with family child care providers to offer high-quality learning environments to children ages 0-5. Participants received professional development and coaching on teaching strategies that support emotional and behavioral growth, classroom organization, and instructional methods to grow children's executive functioning skills. Participants were evaluated with the CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) tool. In 2021 **sixteen** programs participated from Bourbon, Cherokee, Crawford, Douglas, Geary, Lyon, Jefferson and Neosho counties. A total of **135** children were served through this project.

**Conscious Discipline E-Course: Building Resiliency - Returning to School in Uncertain Times.** Thanks to a grant from Child Care Aware® of America, we could offer early educators throughout our service delivery area an

## CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

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opportunity to participate in Conscious Discipline's "Building Resistance in Uncertain Times." This series covered research-based, trauma-informed strategies that are responsive to the unique impact of COVID-19. In this self-paced course, participants received 30 hours of video training, hands-on application activities and monthly group support meetings. Through this series, **56** providers were served, reaching **608** children ages 3-6 years.

**BODs for BODs** - Thanks to funding from the Joe and Janet Aleshire Venture Grant Program (also called BODs for BODs) we were able to offer a free professional development project to Shawnee county early educators to provide education on children's physical development, incorporate new physical activity ideas, self-evaluation on their program's physical activity supports, and resources and coaching to support ongoing program goals. A total of **30** early educators participated in the project.

Funding in the fall through Child Care Aware® of Kansas to support work on increasing physical activity with young children provided additional coaching to these program participants on ways to improve children's overall health (oral health, nutrition, reducing screen time) made an activity tote available in our resource library for checkout that included materials for **8** different active play games, and provided the classrooms that participated in the fall session with active play classroom materials that support the development of stability (stepping stones and balance activity cards.)

A new online course, **Safe and Healthy Practices for Infants and Toddlers**, was developed and first offered in 2021 to provide an online professional development option for child care staff to meet the updated annual requirement of four hours in health and safety coursework. The course was offered twice in 2021, serving 30 participants and continues to be a recurring option in our online coursework.

Thanks to a **Preschool Development Grant (PDG)** through the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund, activities were offered to address child care access in three communities: Chanute, Ottawa, and Hi-Crest Topeka. In Chanute and Ottawa, grants and coaching assistance was offered to child care programs to increase their infant and toddler enrollment capacity and classroom quality. Through this effort, **sixteen** programs received assistance totaling **\$32,923.91**. Support in Hi-Crest Topeka focused on the launch of a new child care center, SENT Prep Academy, located in an area known as a "child care desert" because of the lack of child care. This center serves children birth to school age and is licensed for **68** children. Grant funding purchased classroom equipment and materials. Classroom teachers also received coaching support through staff working under the Capital Area Successful Start effort.

**Anti-Bias Preschool Development Grant**  
With funding from a Preschool Development Grant, Googols of Learning in Lawrence collaborated with us to provide training, observation, coaching and goal setting for five classroom teachers on Anti-Bias teaching strategies. Each classroom also received anti-bias learning materials. We will be continuing these services to other center and family child care based programs located in Douglas county in 2022.

The **Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC)** network officially launched in October 2021, funded by the Kansas Department of Health & Environment through Child Care Aware® of Kansas. The goal of CCHC is to work with potential child care providers to provide consultation and support as they navigate the licensing process, working in tandem with child care licensing surveyors. Small start-up stipends are available through CCHC to help offset some of the costs of becoming licensed, and larger health and safety grants can be accessed to address barriers to licensing.

# CREATING HEROS WITH... FAMILIES

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## In 2021...

A total of **15,929** child care referrals were completed through the Child Care Aware® of Kansas Parent Resource Center Operated by Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas.

**8,316** families used the Parent Resource Center, either by calling or utilizing the online service.

**11,431** children were served through the Parent Resource Center, either by calling or utilizing the online service.

Families who contacted the agency for child care referrals were given information about community resources, which includes other programs and support services in addition to the list of child care providers. These support services include information about home visitation programs, child screenings, and health agencies. to remain on solid footing during a very challenging time for many.

A **Preschool Development Grant (PDG)**, federal funding through US Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families through the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund, focused on outreach and support activities to families in the Hi-Crest neighborhood in Topeka. Families received regular communication through text and email to connect them with programs and services, with all outreach activities offered in partnership with SENT Topeka.

The **Successful Connections program** in Shawnee County supports pregnant women and families with new babies by offering community resources to assist them in becoming more successful parents. In 2020, Successful Connections offered support services to **787** families from Stormont Vail, local OBGYN offices, and other community partners, offering them free resources including parenting programs. Families received a hand-made cuddle blanket, a child development calendar and information about area home visitation programs, child development, choosing child care and other valuable community resources. The Successful Connections Program is funded by the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund.

"My service was beyond helpful. I was able to receive a referral list right away within the hour and found a daycare provider the same day. The employee that helped me with my referral list even called me back the next day to make sure that the information sent was useful."

*-Parent Resource  
Center Client*





# CREATING HEROS WITH...

## COMMUNITIES & BUSINESSES

In 2021...

As more and more businesses resumed more regular operations in 2021 following the COVID pandemic, child care quickly rose to the forefront. Without child care capacity in local communities, businesses struggled with recruitment and hiring as they attempted to rebuild their workforce. Business and civic leaders found themselves in unfamiliar territory as they tried to learn more about why more child care wasn't available. As a result, Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas began fielding more requests for information and data for community and business leaders. Through the Community Outreach & Engagement work funded by the Kansas Department for Children and Families through Child Care Aware® of Kansas, presentations were prepared for delivery to business and civic groups upon request. The launch of the Child Care Health Consultant network in fall 2021 brought new support to communities interested in hosting provider recruitment events to build local child care capacity. (Read more about the Child Care Health Consultant work on page 4 of this report.)

Agency staff continued to participate in a variety of community events including health fairs, back-to-school fairs, job fairs and other events throughout the region to share information regarding high-quality early education topics. These events served as outreach and education opportunities for local communities as well as opportunities to encourage child care as a career as appropriate.

A collaborative partnership in Shawnee County in 2021 was the continuation of the **Kindergarten Transitions** workgroup. Representatives from all six Shawnee County public school districts joined with private schools, Head Start, Kansas Children's Discovery Center, Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, child care professionals, Washburn Tech, and Child Care Aware® of Kansas partnered on initiatives to support the shared vision that every family in Shawnee County, no matter where they love or where their child will attend school, has access to support and information around kindergarten transitions. The result of this collaborative partnership included the launch of a website in early 2021, [www.kindergartenready.org](http://www.kindergartenready.org) that provides a wealth of information and resources for families to help them link with their local school and access topics and information about preparing their child for success in school. This work was funded through a Preschool Development Grant through the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund. (Read more about the Preschool Development Grant on page 4 of this report.)



# CREATING HEROS WITH... PUBLIC POLICY

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Public policy is defined as a purposeful and consistent course of action produced as a response to a perceived problem of a constituency, formulated by a specific political process, and adopted, implemented, and enforced by a public agency. Everyone has a role in shaping public policy through advocacy efforts.

## Public Policy Statement:

**ERC Resource & Referral, Inc., dba Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas, is committed to:**

- Advocating for federal, state and local policies that support working families with young children, including child care resource and referral services for every family.
- Working collaboratively with other entities to define the issues and challenges facing families with young children in today's society.
- Sharing information about national, state and local policy issues that have an impact on families with young children with families, child care providers, businesses, and community leaders
- Showing support for accessible, affordable, high-quality programs and services that meet the needs of families with young children.

## Public Policy Principles:

### Our organization...

- Recognizes parents as their child's first and most important teacher.
- Connects families with resources in their community that support their child's development, supporting family choice.
- Promotes high-quality early education in every setting including family child care, center-based care, preschools, Head Start, and license-exempt programs including schools.
- Embraces the belief that learning starts at birth and what happens in a child's earliest years lays the foundation for all later learning, strongly impacting their success in school and beyond.





# 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Jane Tilghman**  
*President*



**Liz Steffen**  
*President-Elect*



**Jamie Stafford**  
*Secretary*



**Lucinda Anstaett**  
*Treasurer*



**Dawn Bicknell-Reiser**  
*Treasurer-Elect*



**Lori Downing**  
*Immediate Past President*



**Deb Crowl**



**Donna Doel**



**Matthew Godinez**



**Paige Jones**



**Erin Lewis**



**Andrea Luke**



**Lindsey Munson**



**Cherie Sage**



**Catherine Shafer**



**Sarah Snyder**



**Beth Toland**



**Kelly Trussell**

Volunteers, including the agency's board of directors, contributed an estimated **1,020** hours of volunteer time supporting agency programs and services, valued at **\$30,600!**

# **2021 CHILD CARE AWARE® OF EASTERN KANSAS STAFF**

## ***Executive Director***

Reva Wywadis

## ***Accountant***

Diana Ingram-Cantrell

## ***Marketing & Communications Coordinator***

Julie Scott

## ***Data Specialist***

Holly Wehner

## ***Administrative Assistant/Bilingual Resource Specialist***

Eva Abril

## ***Parent Resource Center Manager***

Nancy Rohr

## ***Resource Specialists***

Lori Boos (Team Lead), Earlina Faurot, Abigail Larson

## ***Provider Services Managers***

Marie Treichel, Renee Wohletz

## ***Early Care & Education Specialists***

Grace Cott, Audrey Danielson, Deb Danielson, Susan Drewelow, Michelle Gilbert, Talia Juiliano, Lexi Merz

## ***Successful Connections Parent Resource Specialists***

Tori Beam, Jane Redger

## ***Library Resource Specialist***

Stephanie Prue





# 2021 FINANCIALS

## Statement of Financial Position

Year Ending December 31, 2020

Assets	2021
Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$ 832,628
Receivables	207,788
Investments	149,858
Property Held for Sale	50,975
Other	40,859
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>1,282,108</b>
<b>Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	
Accounts & Notes Payable	5,061
Accrued Expenses	90,351
Unearned Revenue	63,211
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>158,623</b>
Without Donor Restrictions	1,056,720
With Donor Restrictions	66,765
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>1,123,485</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>\$ 1,282,108</b>

## Statement of Activities

Year Ended December 31, 2021

<b>Without Donor Restrictions</b>	
<b>Revenues</b>	
<b>Grant &amp; Contract Income</b>	
Child Care Aware of Kansas	\$501,789
Capital Area Successful Start	704,928
Preschool Development Grant	186,255
United Way	45,327
Other Grants or Programs	9,039
<b>Other Revenue</b>	
Showhouse & Other Special Events-net of expenses	83,437
Provider Training	28,381
Donations and Contributions	24,219
Other Revenue	138,640
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>1,722,015</b>
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	150,000
<b>Total Unrestricted Revenue, Gains &amp; Other Support</b>	<b>1,872,015</b>

## 2021 AGENCY FUNDING

The agency is supported through a variety of grants, contracts and fund-raising efforts, including:

- Kansas Department for Children & Families through Child Care Aware® of Kansas
- Kansas Children's Cabinet
- US Dept. of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families through the Kansas Children's Cabinet
- Child Care Aware® of America
- United Way of Greater Topeka
- Kansas Health Foundation
- Topeka Community Foundation
- United Way of Douglas County
- Individual Donor Support
- Support from Area Businesses & Corporations
- Agency fundraising activities

<b>Expenses</b>	
Program Services	1,389,195
Fundraising Expense	17,499
All Other Operating Expense	232,481
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,639,175</b>
<b>Change in Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions</b>	<b>232,840</b>
<b>With Donor Restrictions</b>	
Contributions and Program Revenue	420
Net Assets Released From Restrictions	(150,000)
<b>Change in Net Assets With Donor Restrictions</b>	<b>(149,580)</b>
Change in Total Net Assets	83,260
<b>Net Assets at Beginning of Year</b>	<b>1,040,225</b>
<b>Net Assets at End of Year</b>	<b>\$1,123,485</b>