

➤ COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT



Building a shared online resource for parents, caregivers and early childhood professionals in Douglas County

TYKES Douglas County provides a comprehensive online hub of local and expert resources for early childhood development stakeholders seeking community and support

“TYKES Douglas County is about building a sense of a community around the shared goal of giving our children the best possible start in life. It is our hope that what starts out as an online experience builds a bridge to an agency and human connection to strengthen the early childhood safety net for our county.”

– **Kim Polson**

*Community Children's Center
executive director*

With Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Renewal Quality Subgrant funding, the Community Children's Center worked with several partners to develop TYKES Douglas County, an online resource hub for parents, caregivers and professionals working in early childhood. Each of the above stakeholders has made distinct and critical contributions in supporting early childhood in Kansas, but a lack of a trusted network can leave many feeling isolated in their efforts and or vulnerable to misinformation. By providing accessible and reliable information, TYKES Douglas County elevates the experiences of communities in Douglas County while also expanding visibility to established resources and networks that are dialed in to serving local communities. Encompassing physical and mental health, education and family well-being, TYKES Douglas County covers the expansive topic of early childhood development in a comprehensive approach that is easy to follow and strives to ensure that no family feels left alone.

After an intensive discovery phase, TYKES Douglas County evolved into an opportunity to collaborate with many county partners to help build its resource hub to be responsive in meeting family needs:

- Lawrence Public Schools USD 497
- Lawrence Chamber of Commerce
- Lawrence Public Library
- Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health
- Child Care Aware of Eastern Kansas
- Imagemakers, Inc.
- LMH Health
- Unite Us

These partnerships and the hub's linked social service agencies were critical in envisioning TYKES Douglas County as an integral pillar supporting families in their search for services and supports as well as providing direct representation of their perspectives and experiences. By targeting stakeholders in early childhood development while also prioritizing community connection, TYKES Douglas County is now live and is positioned to help strengthen families with tools, resources and opportunities to connect with each other and with educational and service organizations across the county.

With assistance from Quality Subgrants and its partnerships, TYKES Douglas County has the scale and resources to grow into other counties in Kansas. By expanding its network of community partners, TYKES Douglas County can further develop the content and reach of its resource hub and support cross-sector efforts to sustain investments in the early childhood system in Kansas.

**All In For
Kansas Kids**

CONTACT

To learn more about TYKES Douglas County and how to support investments in early childhood in Douglas County, email Kim Polson, Community Children's Center executive director, at kimpolson@communitychildrenks.org.