



Early Childhood Workforce & Environments

PILLAR 2

Our workforce is the heartbeat of the Kansas Early Childhood Ecosystem. Highly qualified and valued professionals are key to creating the consistent, safe, and high-quality experiences we want for our young children. Shortages in the number of highly qualified early childhood professionals is a particular point of emphasis in this plan, as it has implications for child and family well-being and the Kansas economy at large.

The early childhood workforce encompasses a range of professional fields including child care workers, early educators and administrators, early intervention specialists, and home visitors. We also recognize the importance of ensuring families have access to services traditionally provided by public health and behavioral health professionals. Too many Kansas communities, especially in rural and frontier areas of the state, experience limited availability of obstetricians, pediatricians, early childhood mental health professionals, dentists, dietitians and other health workers. The professionals who provide these services are an important consideration of comprehensive efforts to grow the Kansas early childhood workforce and help rural communities thrive. Goals and actions in this pillar aim to recruit, retain, and elevate high-quality professionals while also enhancing the learning environment of the children they work with.

➤ **Goal 1** Support strategies to increase the overall compensation of early childhood professionals and improve the financial sustainability of programs.

➤ **Goal 2** Build workforce capacity to provide high-quality early childhood services.

➤ **Goal 3** Support early childhood professionals to help them reach their professional development goals.

➤ **Goal 4** Support high quality programming and resources for expecting families and children in all birth to age 5 environments so they can reach appropriate developmental goals.

