K-STATE EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION RESOURCES AND ASSESSMENT FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

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OVERVIEW

Introduction / Background
Developmental processes in early care and education
Why focus on Community Development?
The Early Care and Education Challenge
Examples of ECE Capacity-Building
Resources for Kansas
Acknowledgements
EDUCATION AND SCHOOLING

B.S. Psychology – Indiana University, Bloomington
M.S. Human Development – Virginia Tech
Ph.D. Human Development – Virginia Tech
Graduate Certificate in Gerontology – Virginia Tech
Associate Professor and Extension Specialist at Kansas State University and Kansas State Research and Extension
Current Master of Public Health Student at Kansas State University (expected May 2025)
DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES AND EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Focus on Access to Quality, Affordable Early Care and Education in Rural Communities to Increase Prosperity and Quality of Life

• Family Development
• Child Development
• Economic Development
WHY FOCUS ON COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

**Workforce Enhancements**
Benefits to employers through workforce enhancements

**Job Recruitment & Retention**
Attracting and retaining talent for local economic productivity

**New Job Creation**
Primary, Secondary, Tertiary
WORKFORCE ENHANCEMENTS

- Full household workforce participation
- Increased productivity
- Reduced absenteeism
- Current and future workforce investment
JOB RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Workers with young children

Workers starting families

Rural lifestyle with economic potential
NEW JOB CREATION

ECE workers and support staff

Secondary support (e.g., facility construction, ongoing goods and services)

Tertiary support (e.g., retail and dining)
FAMILY AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Increased Family Relationship Cohesion
- Decreased stress
- Reduced conflict
- Family planning motivated by internal factors

Reducing Risk Factors for Children
- Instability and transitions from multiple care settings
- Safety (e.g. seeking care from strangers online)
- Increasing licensed child care

Increasing Protective Factors for Children
- Cognitive development
- Secure attachment to primary caregivers
- Social-emotional development
EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION CHALLENGE IN THE U.S.
Purposes of Needs Assessments

• Needs differ across communities
  • Extant county-level data help
  • Rarely specific enough to take action
• Results position communities to meet identified needs
  • State and federal funding proposals
  • Private foundation or philanthropy
  • Local, latent assets
• Give a voice to those closest to the issue
  • ECE providers
  • Seeking Care
  • With Care
  • General Public
NEEDS ASSESSMENTS AS CATALYSTS FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY

- Requirements for success
  - “Usual Suspect” stakeholders (ECE License Surveyor, Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, School System, ECE Center)
  - “Unusual Suspect” stakeholders (Clergy, Home-based ECE Providers, Local Government Official, Extension Agents/Educators, Parents, Grandparents, Nursing Home Staff, Service Clubs, Hospitals)

- Community Action and Change
  - Trust
  - Reciprocity
  - Collective Competence
  - Social Capital

- Networks
  - Formal Networks
  - Informal Networks
  - Their Network’s Networks!
SOCIAL ORGANIZATION, ACTION AND CHANGE

**Individual/Family Results**

**Intermediate Results**
- Sense of community

**Social Organizational Process**
- Network structure
- Social capital
- Community capacity

**Community Antecedents**
- Social infrastructure
- Physical infrastructure
EXAMPLE 1 – LEOTI, KS

Grow and Learn Child Care Center

- Key steps
  - Started with needs assessment (NCRCRD)
  - Met with people already in the trenches
  - Attended grant writing workshop
  - Fund raised for economic impact study
  - Spoke to my Extension Board about time commitment
    - Critically important
    - Inform board that 90% of time dedicated
    - Full support because of need and long-term effect
EXAMPLE 2 – EDWARDS COUNTY, KS

- Key Steps / Approaches
  - Aligned ECE capacity with Extension position
  - Recruited Task Force members and volunteers
  - Needs assessment
  - Teaming up with an existing non-profit as fiscal agent
  - SMART Goals (Chastain, 2018)
  - Communication with ALL stakeholders

https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/smart_goals_help_you_achieve_success
EXAMPLE 3 – MARION COUNTY, KS

- Key Steps
  - Formed committee of about 20 members to start
  - Needs assessment
  - Focused on economic implications
  - Partnered with community (churches, foundation)
  - Created a 501(c)(3) for ECE center
  - Serves on the board of directors
LESSONS LEARNED FROM MARION COUNTY – KEY ELEMENTS

• A dedicated leader with passion
• Needs assessment
• Buy-in from all manner of stakeholders
• Non-profit to help with fundraising
• Philanthropy to provide living wages for ECE staff
SO WHAT?

- Grow and Learn = 42 new slots at one facility
  - Aimee Baker, FCS Agent, Wichita County, KS
- Marion County = 60 new slots at one facility
  - Tristen Cope, FCS Agent
- Edwards County = 60 New slots at six facilities
  - Trisha Greene, FCS Agent
K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION RESOURCES FOR KANSAS

• Early Care and Education Surveys – limited capacity, seeking additional resources
• KSRE agent trainings on building community capacity – August 2023
• Systemic support in partnership with College of Health and Human Sciences, KSRE, and KCCTO
• Child Care Aware of Kansas Community Engagement Professionals
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