

SMART START KANSAS



**GOOD
BEGINNINGS
LAST A LIFETIME**

UPDATE 2005

WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS: Smart Start Kansas Results for 2004

Well-trained Caregivers: The training level of caregivers is one of the most critical indicators in the quality of a child's experiences in child care and preschool.

- 233 early childhood professionals have completed a total of 2,050 credit hours toward obtaining a college degree with Smart Start Kansas.

Stability of Staff: Research shows that stability, or low turnover, is critical to a quality early learning program.

- Turnover rates for early childhood professionals are lower in participating Smart Start Kansas programs. The overall turnover rate in Salina was reduced from 134% to 26%.

Parent and Family Support: Parents need to have the skills, knowledge, and support to make well-informed decisions and to assist children in reaching their potential.

- 831 referrals have been made for families with children birth through age 5. Smart Start Kansas has facilitated 711 follow-up contacts to ensure the connection between referred families and services.

Ensuring that children in Kansas are healthy and prepared to succeed in school begins long before they step foot into a kindergarten classroom. Research reveals that over 90 percent of brain growth occurs in the first three years of life. Investing in early learning opportunities, such as quality child care and preschool, can produce lasting benefits for Kansans for years to come.

Smart Start Kansas is already making a difference for thousands of children in 47 counties by providing flexible funding to allow communities to respond to the needs of local children birth through age five and their families. Wichita's diverse Smart Start Kansas program covers a wide spectrum of early childhood issues and has been instrumental in developing a community plan to address these issues for all area children. To improve the quality of early care and education in Saline County, Smart Start Kansas funds have been used to significantly expand the quality and availability of early childhood programs. Junction City's Smart Start Kansas program is family-centered and focuses on increasing access to critical early education support services. The services are dictated by community needs, but all fall within three areas:

Child Care and Education: Includes higher quality and availability of child care; service to children with special needs; child care subsidies; and teacher education, compensation, and support.

Family Support Programs: Includes parent education; literacy programs; family resource centers; child care resource and referral; transportation; and support for teen parents.

Health Services: Includes healthcare access; health screenings; parent education; immunizations; and dental care.

With 105 counties in Kansas, there is no "one size fits all" solution to support families and prepare children to enter kindergarten. Smart Start Kansas allows flexibility yet provides structure by requiring implementation of proven and effective core services. It brings agencies and citizens together to solve problems and share resources.

Today's economic reality does not give many parents a choice. More than 70% of children under age six have working parents. Parents still have the primary responsibility for making sure their children have the best care possible, but public policy, as well as communities and employers, need to support their efforts.

"Good Beginnings Last A Lifetime" is more than a slogan. It's backed by research that shows initiatives such as Smart Start Kansas improve scores on primary grade testing, reduce grade retention and special education, and increase high school graduation rates.

It is clear that Smart Start Kansas is a promising strategy for improving the quality of early care and education in Kansas.



SMART START WORKING IN KANSAS

Forty-seven Kansas counties currently receive Smart Start Kansas grants through partnerships in Butler ■ Crawford's tri-county area in southeast Kansas ■ Dickinson ■ Douglas ■ Ellis' six-county area ■ Finney's 13-county area in southwest Kansas ■ Geary ■ Marshall ■ Mitchell ■ Reno ■ Riley ■ Saline ■ Sedgwick ■ Shawnee ■ Thomas' 11-county area in northwest Kansas ■ and the tri-county area of Leavenworth, Wyandotte, and Johnson. ■

Smart Start Kansas at a Glance

What is Smart Start Kansas? Smart Start Kansas provides flexible dollars that allow communities to respond to the needs of all local children and families. Smart Start Kansas is not an entitlement program. The funds are used to improve the quality, affordability, and accessibility of early learning opportunities and to provide health services for children.

What is the goal? The goal of Smart Start Kansas is to ensure that all Kansas children enter school healthy and prepared to succeed.

What outcomes can be expected from Smart Start Kansas?

- Children will be better prepared for school, which benefits both the children and the schools.
- Parents will be supported and have more resources.
- Early childhood teachers and child care workers will be better educated.
- The quality and availability of child care will be improved.
- More families will have access to comprehensive education and support services.
- Children will be healthier.
- The business community will benefit from a more skilled and better-trained workforce.

How many children are currently served by Smart Start Kansas? From January through September 2004, 10,425 children were impacted by Smart Start Kansas services.

Where are children benefiting from Smart Start Kansas? Grants are currently awarded to partnerships in Butler; Crawford's tri-county area in southeast Kansas; Dickinson; Douglas; Ellis' six-county area; Finney's 13-county area in southwest Kansas; Geary; Marshall; Mitchell; Reno; Riley; Saline; Sedgwick; Shawnee; Thomas' 11-county area in northwest Kansas; and the tri-county area of Leavenworth, Wyandotte, and Johnson.

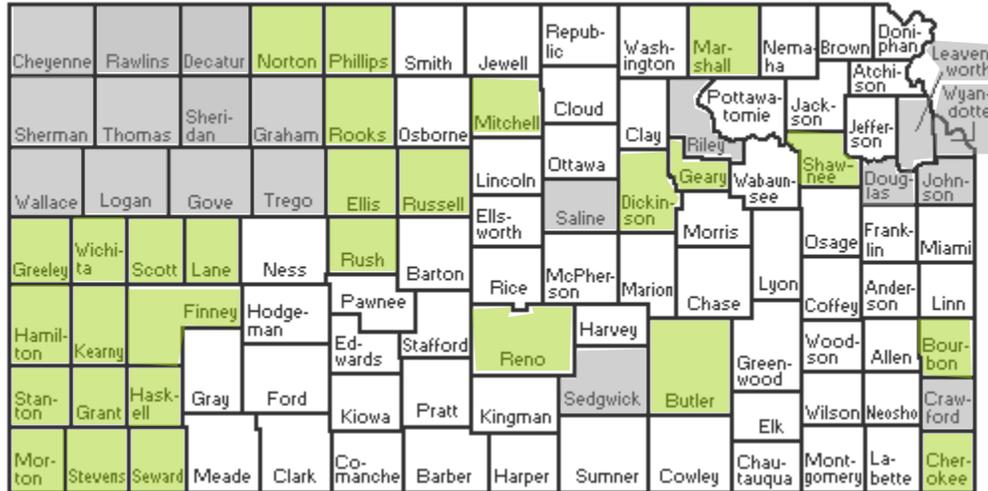
How is Smart Start Kansas funded? In 1999, the Kansas Legislature dedicated the state's portion of the Master Tobacco Settlement to improving the health and well-being of children and youth. The Kansas Children's Cabinet was established to make recommendations on how to spend the money with final appropriations made by the legislature.

How do we know if Smart Start Kansas makes a difference? Smart Start Kansas is outcome-based and research driven. An evaluation of programs funded by Smart Start Kansas is completed at both the local and state level to ensure program performance.

Will there be planning grants in 2005? Yes, the grant applications will be available in early 2005. Check the Kansas Children's Cabinet website, www.kschildrenscabinet.org, and the Kansas Register for more information.

SMART START KANSAS

2005 Grantees



Gray square: Grantee Location Renewal Site

Green square: Grantee Location NEW Site

Additional planning grants may be determined in 2005.

Success By 6 Coalition of Douglas County, Lawrence

Renewal Grant: \$241,541

County Served: Douglas

Program Summary: Family Resource Team Assessments, referrals, infant and toddler subsidies, teacher training and scholarships, quality grants to providers for health and safety improvement.

United Way of Wyandotte/Tri-County Smart Start Coalition, Kansas City

Renewal Grant: \$819,187

Counties Served: Johnson, Leavenworth, Wyandotte

Program Summary: Compensation program to child care providers, flexible benefits for providers (includes support for health and dental insurance, professional development/training, etc.), technical assistance to centers and providers for business management.

Northwest Kansas Council on Substance Abuse/Birth To Success Coalition, Colby

Renewal Grant: \$329,908

Counties Served: Cheyenne, Decatur, Gove, Graham, Logan, Rawlins, Sheridan, Sherman, Thomas, Trego, Wallace

Program Summary: Teacher scholarships, training for professional development, peer mentoring, recognition program for quality in early childhood profession, infant/special need subsidy program, enhanced Parents As Teachers program, preschool accreditation, business initiative program, resources program, child care center training program.

United Way of the Plains Smart Start Wichita, Wichita

Renewal Grant: \$603,640

Counties Served: Sedgwick/ South Central Kansas

Program Summary: Professional development opportunities for child care providers, home visitors, and early childhood volunteers; mental health education for children, parents, and professionals; direct medical and developmental services for children; and parenting education and support for families.

Riley County-Manhattan Health Department, Manhattan

Renewal Grant: \$295,768

County Served: Riley

Program Summary: Development of Family and Child Resource Center (focus on children birth to five), infant and toddler care slots, parent education, provider training, and scholarships.

Child Abuse Prevention Services, Salina

Renewal Grant: \$546,000

County Served: Saline

Program Summary: Early childhood education college scholarships, wage bonuses and mental health trainings for providers, mental health consultations for children birth to age 5, accreditation support, increased child care slots for infants/toddlers with disabilities.

Family Resource Center, Pittsburg

Renewal Grant: \$550,653

County Served: Crawford

Program Summary: Professional incentive/wage compensation, infant care subsidy, increased infant care slots, preventative health services, mental health consultations and counseling, parent education.

2005 Smart Start Kansas Grantees Continued

Hutchinson Community Foundation/Smart Start Reno County, Hutchinson

New Grant: \$432,163 **County Served:** Reno

Program Summary: Home visitor program; comprehensive mental health care; education to parents, child care providers, and the public; compensation to child care providers; scholarships for students in child care provider training programs; scholarships for families to access affordable and quality pre-school programs.

Marshall County Community Resource Center, Marysville

New Grant: \$167,682 **County Served:** Marshall

Program Summary: Improving availability and accessibility of services for families through making general public transportation available to all; establishing adult education incentive program; increasing child care quality, affordability, and accessibility through provider education; bringing community resources together in a Resource and Education Center.

Quality of Life Coalition, Inc./Smart Start of Dickinson County, Abilene

New Grant: \$226,532 **County Served:** Dickinson

Program Summary: Implementing WAGE\$ and TEACH; sponsoring child care center in a rural setting; availability of mental health services to teachers and students.

Mitchell County Communities That Care/Partnership for Children, Beloit

New Grant: \$210,329 **County Served:** Mitchell

Program Summary: Provide preschool for all four-year old children in county; offer parent training to all families with children birth to age five; provide incentive programs for providers; partner with local mental health agency to provide an afterschool program and health and safety instruction; implement a community literacy program; open a parent resource center to improve accessibility to these services.

Family Resource Center Inc./Smart Start Southeast Kansas, Pittsburg

New Grant: \$453,915 **Counties Served:** Cherokee and Bourbon

Program Summary: Wage compensation programming, training opportunities for recruitment and retention of quality providers.

Rainbows United Inc./Butler County Smart Start Implementation Grant, Wichita

New Grant: \$367,960 **County Served:** Butler

Program Summary: Resource materials; provider training, mentoring, and WAGE\$ salary supplements; central information/resource center; financial support for licensure of new centers/homes; mental health assessments, consultations, support, and guidance.

Geary County Unified School District #475, Junction City

New Grant: \$491,978 **County Served:** Geary

Program Summary: Parents As Teachers; Healthy Families America; Nurse-health screenings; LMSW/MWS training, family support and mental health assessments/referrals; literacy/librarian story and reading programs delivered; child care centers; playtime during parenting classes.

Russell Child Development Center/Project Hand-in-Hand-in-Hand, Garden City

New Grant: \$458,514 **Counties Served:** Finney, Grant, Greeley, Hamilton, Haskell, Kearny, Lane, Morton, Scott, Seward, Stanton, Stevens, Wichita

Program Summary: TEACH and WAGE\$; CDA scholarships; child care provider grants; infant/special needs subsidies; professional development initiatives; infant home visitor program; community enhancement projects (i.e., early childhood playgrounds and literacy activities); immunization support services; health transportation services; interpreter registry.

Unified School District #489, Hays

New Grant: \$452,106 **Counties Served:** Ellis, Rush, Russell, Rooks, Phillips, Norton

Program Summary: Expansion of early care and education including Parents As Teachers, Early Head Start, Head Start, and Healthy Start; broaden mental health services for children; support safety through car seat distribution program; wage bonuses and early childhood education scholarships through WAGE\$ and TEACH.

Success by 6 United Way of Greater Topeka/Capital Area Smart Start, Topeka

New Grant: \$649,544 **County Served:** Shawnee

Program Summary: TEACH and CDA scholarships; NAFFCC accreditation; technical assistance, training, and mini-grants; broaden family support services for all families with special emphasis on high-risk and special needs families.



For more information about this brief, please contact the Kansas Children's Campaign, an initiative of Kansas Action for Children, at (785) 232-0550, e-mail kcc@kac.org, or online at www.ks4kids.org.

About KAC The mission of Kansas Action for Children is to advocate for policies and programs that ensure and improve the physical, emotional, and educational well-being of all Kansas children and youth. KAC is an independent and nonpartisan voice on their behalf.