



# KANSAS STRONG *for* CHILDREN & FAMILIES

## OUR PURPOSE

Kansas Strong for Children and Families (Kansas Strong) aims to establish a collaborative and effective initiative that develops, implements, and evaluates strategies that will improve safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes, by enhancing agency and court/legal practices, and reducing systemic barriers.

## WHO WE ARE

Kansas Strong is a public-private-university collaborative that includes the KU School of Social Welfare; the Kansas Department for Children and Families; the Kansas Court Improvement Program and the Supreme Court Task Force on Permanency Planning; the state's network of private providers of family preservation and foster care - Cornerstones of Care, KVC Kansas, Saint Francis Ministries, and TFI; and, the Kansas Family Advisory Network.

## PROJECT FUNDING

Kansas Strong is a 5-year cooperative agreement between KU School of Social Welfare and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. Kansas is one of five grantees nationally aimed at strengthening child welfare systems to improve outcomes for children and families.

## TARGET POPULATIONS & STRATEGIES

Children and families involved with the child welfare system and needing services and supports

Older youth (15+) with emotional and behavioral problems who are at risk of entering foster care

Children and youth legally free for adoption and a case plan goal of adoption

Children and youth with risk factors related to entry, reunification, and adoption



### Interagency Advisory Board

A cross-system collaboration among leaders and managers in Kansas that will:

- Build knowledge of needs and service gaps
- Use data and CQI
- Create action plans to address needs and service gaps
- Lead with shared outcomes & accountability



### Parent/Youth Facilitation

A facilitation process for older youth (14+) and their parents that aims to reduce the number of out-of-home placements by engaging parents and youth in a meaningful problem-solving process, and connecting them with community services and supports



### Adoption Tracking Tool

Case reporting tool that will reduce time to adoption by:

- Establishing clear timelines and benchmarks
- Providing a tool for agency workers and court/legal system to assist with communication of roles, responsibilities, and process



### KanCoach

Coaching program focused on developing and strengthening supervisory capacity and skills to promote quality frontline practice and improve outcomes. Priority topics are: safety/risk assessment & case planning, engagement, relative/kin connections, and secondary traumatic stress

## OUTCOMES

Improved service array and resource development

Children are maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate

Children have permanency and stability in their living situations



# THE NUMBERS BEHIND STRATEGY SELECTION

**5<sup>th</sup>**

Kansas ranks 5<sup>th</sup> worst in the nation in non-permanent discharges from foster care. Like time to adoption (below), time to reunification has increased 11% since 2015.

Adoption Tracking Tool

KanCoach

**7<sup>th</sup>**

Kansas ranks 7<sup>th</sup> worst nationally in time to adoption, taking an average of 38 months for children to exit foster care to adoption. Time to adoption has increased 15% since 2015.

Adoption Tracking Tool

**8<sup>th</sup>**

Kansas is the 8<sup>th</sup> highest across all states, and well above the national rate, for youth aging out of foster care without a permanent family. 69% of these youth entered foster care at 15-17 years old.

Parent/Youth Facilitation

**13<sup>th</sup>**

Kansas' removal rate per 10,000 is the 13<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation, and the number of Kansas children in foster care increased 47% since 2011.

KanCoach

Parent/Youth Facilitation

## Key barriers to achieving positive child welfare outcomes are closely linked to the service array\*

From Surveys of 360+ Kansas Stakeholders

Parental Substance Abuse **84%**

Child Behavior Problems **52%**

Parental Mental Illness **46%**

Lack of Prevention Services **75%**

Interagency Advisory Board

\* - percentage of survey respondents that endorsed the barrier