



Kansas Strong for Children and Families (Kansas Strong) strategies aim to **improve outcomes** for children and families by supporting the **full continuum** of child welfare services and changing practices in both **court/legal and agency settings**, and to address systemic barriers through a **cross-system board of key leaders and stakeholders**

Who we are

Kansas Strong is a public-private-university collaborative that includes the Kansas Department for Children and Families; Kansas Family Advisory Network, Parent Partners, Kansas Youth Advisory Council, Kansas Court Improvement Program, Office of Judicial Administration, Kansas Supreme Court Task Force on Permanency Planning, Children's Alliance, the state's network of private providers of family preservation and foster care - Cornerstones of Care, DCCCA, KVC Kansas, Saint Francis Ministries, and TFI; and, the University of Kansas

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.

“ Kansas Strong is a unique collaboration that centers families and activates our state's key strengths by bringing together agency, court, parent and youth leadership to create meaningful and lasting change in our child welfare system. ”

Our process



Our focus

Safety: Ensuring families stay together when safe & appropriate

Permanency: Ensuring children have stability & permanent families

Service Array: Fortifying services, resources, & supports available to Kansas children & families

Questions? Please contact:

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Kansas Strong Targeted 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

Rationale for Strategy Selection

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



5th Kansas ranks 5th worst in the nation in non-permanent discharges from foster care. Time to reunification has increased 11% since 2015.

7th Kansas ranks 7th worst nationally in time to adoption, taking an average of 38 months for children to exit foster care to adoption.

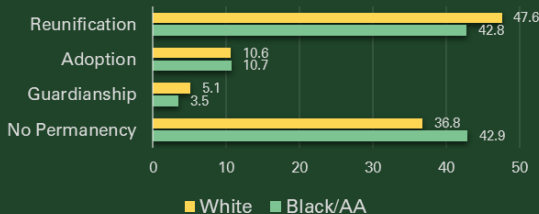
8th Kansas is the 8th highest across all states, for youth aging out of foster care without a permanent family. 69% of these youth entered foster care at 15-17 years old.

13th Kansas' removal rate per 10,000 is the 13th highest in the nation, and the number of Kansas children in foster care increased 44% since 2011.

Call to action from the Children's Bureau**

Words used by youth to describe foster care: *overwhelmed, confused, voiceless, judged, ashamed, angry, sad*

Discharge Reasons for Black and White Children, SFY 2012-2016



Kansas Strong Strategies

Interagency Advisory Board A cross-system collaboration among leaders and managers in Kansas that will: (1) Build knowledge of needs and service gap, (2) Use data and CQI, (3) Create action plans to address needs and service gaps, and (4) 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 (1) Establishing clear timelines and benchmarks and (2) 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, secondary traumatic stress, and anti-racist practice

Youth Voices from Foster Care In partnership with the Kansas Youth Advisory Council, Kansas Strong is working with youth and young adults ages 14-26 who have experienced the Kansas foster care system in the creation of a digital storytelling project that will inform Kansas Strong strategies and child welfare practice.

Change the WORLD In partnership with the Center for the Study of Social Policy, this workgroup is committed to taking firm action, both in identifying and following through with steps to correct policies, procedures, and perspectives that perpetuate racial inequities in the child welfare system. We are working actively to identify policies and procedures to support anti-racist practice.

* - percentage of survey respondents that endorsed the barrier

**Call to Action from Children's Bureau: (1) Prioritize family and youth voice, (2) Work with families and youth to co-create a clear vision of honoring family