

CHILDCARE & SCHOOL DISTRICTS



Early childhood education plays a pivotal role in the quality of life and economic health of a community. Our tomorrows will be brighter with an adequate number of high-quality childcare slots available in Northwest Kansas communities. School Districts are increasingly playing an important role in providing quality childcare solutions for communities in Northwest Kansas.

School District Benefits

There are many benefits for school district sponsored childcare facilities.

- **Childcare is a valuable benefit to school staff.** Like other professions, school employees face difficulties finding childcare for their own young children. Teachers and other school district staff indicate lack of childcare as a barrier to work. School district sponsored childcare facilities may reserve childcare slots for their employees.
- **Childcare facilities are pipelines to school districts.** Families who enroll their child in a school district sponsored childcare facility are more likely to keep their child in that same school district.
- **Research shows us that a child's first five years are critical to future academic success.** Quality childcare facilities address things such as nutrition, early literacy, fine motor, gross motor and social-emotional development to ensure that children are healthy and ready to be successful in Kindergarten.
- Classified staff sometimes seek additional employment in the summer, during school holidays and after school. **School sponsored childcare facilities can offer supplemental employment options for these staff members.**

Childcare Facility Benefits

School districts are situated to provide many advantages to childcare facilities.

- School sponsored childcare facilities may utilize existing school district services. School nutrition programs can provide meals and snacks. Administrative services are useful resources for billing, purchasing and human resources. District staff can provide routine maintenance services.
- School districts can provide adequate wages and benefits. Childcare providers are historically underpaid. Association with a school district could provide a living wage and benefits for staff members employed at a childcare facility.
- A school district's non-profit status allows them to apply for grants.



Creating Lifelong Learners

Quality childcare provides the emotional and academic support children need to be ready for Kindergarten. The first five years of a child's life are critical in brain development since these early years form the foundation from which all learning will grow. Partnerships with school districts optimize successful transitions to Kindergarten.

Financial Resources for School Sponsored Childcare Facilities

- School districts can apply for grant funding from private and community foundations. Grants can fund start-up costs including: construction, remodeling, equipment, supplies and first year salaries and expenses. Sustainability grants are available for staff longevity, early childhood library books and curriculum kits.
- KSDE Funding: 3 and 4 year old students who meet at-risk criteria or receive special education services are counted as a ½ student (0.5 FTE) in calculating a district's enrollment and accompanying weightings.
- EHS Funding: Funding may be available for facilities that agree to serve families enrolled through the Early Head Start program.
- Parent childcare fees are a constant source of revenue for facilities. DCF funds may subsidize fees for families with socio-economic concerns.
- CACFP Funding: Child and Adult Care Food Program reimbursements can offset food costs.

Childcare Support

School Districts can support childcare without sponsoring their own childcare center. Other means of support can include:

- Provide a childcare stipend for staff members.
- Work with providers to create career exploration experiences for high school students.
- Include childcare providers in district professional development activities.
- Donate land for a childcare facility.
- Include childcare providers in Kindergarten readiness committees.
- Participate in childcare recognition efforts.
- Provide bus transportation to and from school for the children of childcare providers.



NWKansas CARES FOR KIDS

Early childhood education plays a pivotal role in the quality of life and economic health of a community. A lack of childcare options equates to fewer homes sold, fewer children in our schools, and recruiting difficulties for our businesses.

Established in 2021, NWKansas Cares for Kids are program initiatives of the **Dane G Hansen Foundation** and the **Norwest Kansas Economic Innovation Center** to address childcare issues in Northwest Kansas.



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