



Salina Area
UNITED WAY

**Early
Childcare
Initiative
Fund**

WHERE IT ALL STARTED

2022

Saline County faced a
childcare emergency

Severe staffing shortages

Closed classrooms and long waitlists

Lead Teachers earned \$6,000 below living wage

Assistant teachers earned \$4,000 below living wage

ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Parents depend on childcare to remain in the workforce.
 - “When parents can’t work because they can’t find child care, businesses lose employees and communities lose economic activity.” – U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation report
- Stable childcare directly impacts whether employees stay, show up, and advance at work.
 - “UPS reported employee retention rose from 69% to 96% among workers using childcare support benefits.” (Business Insider on UPS)
- A strong care infrastructure is a stronger regional economy.
 - “Strengthening the child care sector strengthens the workforce that every industry depends on.” Federal Reserve Bank childcare and workforce discussions



“CHILD CARE IS ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE.”
– JANET YELLEN *U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY*

A COMMUNITY SOLUTION

- Providers, employers, funders, and community leaders convened and named **Salina Area United Way** to take charge of the Childcare Initiative.
- Focused on workforce stabilization, sustainability, and growth.
- Created a coordinated regional response to childcare challenges.

CREATED IN 2023



EARLY CHILDCARE INITIATIVE GOALS

- **INVESTING IN CHILDCARE PROFESSIONALS**
 - Lead Teacher benchmark: \$18/hour
 - Teacher Assistant benchmark: \$15/hour
- **COLLECTIVE INVESTMENT CREATES COLLECTIVE IMPACT**
 - ARPA funding
 - Child Care Zones
 - Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund
 - Local Businesses, Donors, and Foundations
- **ENDOWMENT**
 - Actively investing 10% of every contribution to ECIF
 - Establish a \$10 million fund capable of supporting \$500k annually for childcare



EARLY CHILDCARE INITIATIVE “PHASE 1”

Highlights:

- The start of ECIF at Salina Area United Way
- Included Non-Profit Childcare Centers
- Included only Saline County
- 2 grant cycles
- Granted out **\$550k** to 7 centers
- Raised the wages of staff an average of **\$2/HR**
- Brought stabilization to the workforce
- Over **1 million** raised for the Endowment

2023 ↔ 2025



Magnolia Kids Fall 2025

2026 CHILDCARE NUMBERS

CURRENT AS OF 5/19/26

1,570

SLOTS
CURRENTLY
NEEDED

11

IN-HOME
PROVIDERS LOST
SINCE 2024

KDHE data shows birth rates are increasing faster than capacity increases.

46%

DESIRED CAPACITY
MEETS
CURRENT DEMAND

3,891

TOTAL CHILDREN
UNDER 6 YEARS
OLD

350k

GRANTED
OUT THIS
CYCLE

PHASE 2
OF
ECIF

18

IN-HOME
PROVIDERS
SUPPORTED

5

NON-PROFIT
CENTERS
SUPPORTED

9

PROVIDERS
EXPANDED
HOURS

900k

GRANTED
OVER 3
CYCLES

EARLY CHILDCARE INITIATIVE

2026-2027 Grant Cycle “Phase 2”

Highlights:

- Expanded into Ellsworth County
- Now includes Licensed In-Home Providers



Childcare Centers:

- Wage Supplement Grants (4)
- Non-Traditional Hours Grant (0)
- Longevity Grants (4)

Licensed In-Home Providers:

- Wage Supplement Grants (17)
- Non-Traditional Hours Grant (9)
- Gym Membership (3+)
- Bookkeeping Services (1+)

EARLY CHILDCARE INITIATIVE “PHASE 2”

★ WAGE SUPPLEMENT GRANT:

- CENTERS:
 - TO GET LEAD TEACHERS TO \$18/HR AND ASSTS TO \$15/HR
- IN HOME PROVIDERS: \$2,500

★ NON-TRADITIONAL HOURS GRANT:

- CENTERS OR IN-HOME PROVIDERS
- A MINIMUM OF ONE EXTRA HOUR A DAY
- OUTSIDE OF THE “NORMAL HOURS” OF 7AM TO 5:30PM
- GRANT AMOUNT OF \$5,000

★ LONGEVITY GRANT:

- CENTERS: FOR FT AND PT
- UP TO \$400, PER PERSON

★ GYM MEMBERSHIP:

- IN HOME PROVIDERS: 1 YEAR/YMCA

★ BOOKKEEPING SERVICES:

- IN HOME PROVIDERS
- SERVICES, TAX PREP, 1 YR OF QB



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EARLY CHILDCARE INITIATIVE

What can you do?

- **Have a conversation!**
 - The more we bring awareness the more change happens!
- **Donate!**
 - Visit our website to donate directly to the ECIF fund or our endowment.
- **Partner with ECIF annually and make a lasting impact through your business support!**
 - Tax credits this year allow for a tax deduction of up to \$100,000. Senate Bill 82.
 - Sponsor a Teacher program



Current ECIF Donors

Bergkamp

Earl Bane Foundation

Exline

Equity Bank

Great Plains Manufacturing ♦DIAMOND SPONSOR♦

Jack Wilson Trust

Nex-Tech

Salina Family Health Care

Salina Regional Health Foundation

Superior Contracting and Manufacturing Services

...and many private donors!

Thank you!

Thank you!

UNITED IS THE WAY™

Together, we're creating
a bright future.

Thank you for joining the
conversation about
childcare in Saline County!

