



**KANSAS
CHAPTER**
American Academy of Pediatrics
INCORPORATED IN KANSAS



BLUEPRINT FOR CHILDREN

A State Child Health Policy Agenda 2024 and Beyond

Priorities and recommendations to promote the health and well-being of Kansas infants, children and young adults, advance health equity, decrease health disparities, optimize lifelong outcomes, and strengthen the role of public health, with the aim of positioning the state of Kansas as a leader in child well-being.

KansasAAP.org





Promote Healthy Children

All children, adolescents and young adults from birth to age 26 should receive excellent healthcare throughout their lives. Policymakers must ensure all children, no matter their race, ethnicity, family, income, or where they live or come from, can:

- **Access high-quality and affordable healthcare and medicine without being treated unfairly.**
- **Have health insurance, either public or private, that covers everything kids need.**
- **Get pediatric and subspecialty care for physical, mental, behavioral, and social health.**
- **Receive comprehensive and family-centered care in a physician-led medical home.**

Promote Secure Families

Together we will work to help parents and caregivers give their children a strong start in life. Policymakers should make sure all families have:

- **Jobs that provide a stable and adequate income and come with family-friendly benefits, like paid family medical and sick leave.**
- **Safe and fair housing.**
- **Affordable, safe, and high-quality childcare.**
- **Access to adequate and healthy food all year round.**
- **Support to keep families together and provide a permanent home, when needed, within the child welfare system.**

Promote Strong Communities

Healthy children and secure families rely on strong communities. Policymakers must ensure that communities:

- **Are safe from violence and environmental dangers.**
- **Provide high-quality early education, especially in areas with segregation within cities, suburbs, and rural areas.**
- **Have strong public health systems to keep children safe from diseases and support the health of mothers and children.**
- **Respond effectively in times of disasters and public health emergencies.**

Ensure Kansas is a Leader for Children

We must make child health and well-being a top priority in our state. Policymakers should create and enforce policies that:

- **Prevent discrimination based on race, ethnicity, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation, knowing how harmful discrimination is.**
- **Allocate funds and support for public health and healthcare services to help children grow up healthy.**
- **Tackle environmental issues that affect children's health.**
- **Address the factors that make some kids more at risk or vulnerable, like their race, ethnicity, religion, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.**

ADVOCACY AGENDA

Immunizations

Immunization stands as one of the most significant medical achievements in recent history, eliminating and decreasing vaccine-preventable diseases and greatly benefiting children's health. Vaccines, integral to the immunization process, are proven to be safe, effective, and life-saving. Pediatric practices play a crucial role in delivering childhood immunization services within Kansas' public health framework. Our commitment remains unwavering in promoting the safety and effectiveness of all recommended childhood vaccines and ensuring accessibility to every family in the state. KAAP supports policies that:

- **Promote vaccines recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) on the schedule recommended by the AAP, ACIP, and state public health and medical experts.**
- **Boost people's confidence in vaccines, educate the public and decision-makers about why child immunization is crucial, highlight the dangers of low vaccination rates, and actively counter false information about vaccine safety and effectiveness.**
- **Remove financial barriers to getting immunized.**
- **Allow only medical reasons as exemptions for vaccinations.**
- **Oppose efforts to change the current science-based and medically sound management for immunization.**

Financing & Funding for Healthcare

The policies and procedures related to healthcare coverage, particularly Medicaid, have a significant impact on the health of children in Kansas. When parents have health insurance, their children are more likely to have uninterrupted coverage. Children without insurance are less likely to have a stable medical home, more prone to delaying care, end up using costly emergency room services, and frequently experience unmet healthcare needs. This increases their risk of preventable illness, hospitalizations, or missed diagnoses. It is essential for children's health and well-being to have a dependable, continuous, and affordable source of healthcare within a pediatric medical home. Medicaid coverage improves access to care, health outcomes, and various economic factors. KAAP supports legislative and state policy efforts to:

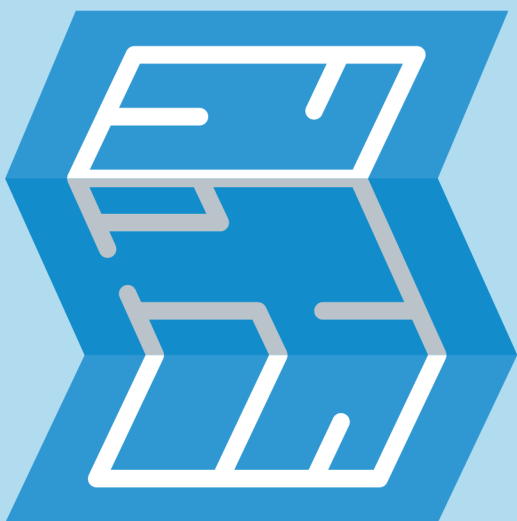
- **Simplify the sign-up and renewal processes to make it easier for children to continuously keep their Medicaid coverage without unnecessary hurdles.**
- **Support expanding Medicaid to make healthcare more accessible.**
- **Raise Medicaid rates for children's healthcare, including vaccines, doctor visits when they're sick, and routine check-ups.**
- **Ensure that mental health services are paid for at the same rate as physical health services, including those integrated into pediatric care.**
- **Ensure that payments for the same services from both Medicaid and Medicare are uniform.**
- **Expand parity in payment for healthcare services provided through telehealth.**
- **Allocate funding for comprehensive, high-quality community-based care systems with proven methods that can be delivered in a child's home, community, or school.**
- **Reject limits on how long someone can have Medicaid coverage and requirements to work, as these create obstacles to getting healthcare.**



Child Safety & Well-being

Every child, whether in their birth family or the foster care system, should receive high-quality, dependable, and continuous healthcare. Unfortunately, there are numerous obstacles preventing children in unsafe situations from receiving the care they need. Moreover, we're seeing an alarming increase in depression, anxiety, trauma, loneliness, and thoughts of suicide among young people, which will have long-term effects on them, their families, and their communities. Kansas systems should safeguard children by working together on collaborative initiatives like the Child Abuse Referral and Evaluation (CARE) program and KS KidsMap. KAAP supports policies that:

- **Continue state support and funding for the CARE network, a statewide triage system that ensures expert review reports of child abuse and conducts forensic exams when necessary.**
- **Expand suicide prevention programs in schools, pediatric and primary care, and communities.**
- **Promote high-quality trauma-informed care services that help strengthen the relationships and resilience of both children and families.**
- **Promote family-centered and family-based comprehensive healthcare coordination for children and youth in foster care.**
- **Improve access to healthcare, eliminate disparities, and ensure health equity for children and teenagers, no matter their sexual or gender identity.**
- **Reinforce the goals of the Family First Prevention Services Act to further encourage agencies to implement programs that prevent or reduce child welfare involvement.**
- **Increase access to safe, high-quality, affordable childcare.**
- **Reduce childhood poverty levels, including reinstatement of the Child Tax Credit.**
- **Promote firearm safety and secure storage measures, recognizing that firearms are a leading cause of death for children due to homicide, suicide, and accidental injury.**



This Blueprint for Children and 2024 Advocacy Priorities, presented by the Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (KAAP), is a comprehensive plan aimed at ensuring the health, safety, and prosperity of children and families across Kansas. It champions the delivery of high-quality healthcare to all children, irrespective of background, and underscores the importance of secure families, strong communities, and equitable policies. The agenda addresses a wide range of issues, including immunizations, healthcare funding and finance, child safety, and mental health, with the ultimate goal of making Kansas a leader in safeguarding the well-being of its children.

For more information on the KAAP or the Blueprint, contact Denise Cyzman, KAAP Executive Director
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