An independent coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to strengthening Kansas's foster care system. Steering committee members:

Zachary Brown, young leader  
Carl Burris, young leader  
FosterAdopt Connect  
Kansas African American Foster Care/Adoption Coalition  
Kansas Appleseed  
Don Jordan, retired social services administrator  
Kansas Association of Community Action Programs  
Kansas Chapter National Association of Social Workers  
Micah Kubic, executive director of the ACLU of Kansas  
Natalie Zarate, young leader  
Sister Therese Bangert, Social Justice Office, Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth

This coalition came together over concerns about the record number of children in foster care. At the end of January, 2018, there were 7,324 Kansas children in foster care. That's about 2,000 more children in foster care today compared to 5 years ago.

Even before the recent increases, Kansas had a higher rate of children in foster care than most other states. In the most recent year of available data (2015), Kansas ranked #43 out of the 50 states.

Source: Annie E. Casey Kids Count.

Monthly Average Number of Children in Foster Care

Source: DCF data summarized by SFRH Coalition.
Child neglect is the primary reason more children have been removed from their homes and placed into foster care in Kansas.

As in other states, the largest share of removals in Kansas has historically been related to neglect. However, it is notable that the recent growth in children entering foster care in Kansas has been almost entirely related to neglect; the number of children entering foster care due to physical or sexual abuse has remained steady. (Child welfare cases—like families—are complex, and commonly involve multiple removal reasons. Because the primary removal reason is related to neglect does not mean that other factors, such as parental substance abuse, are not involved.)

**Family preservation services have not kept pace with increased reports of potential abuse and neglect.** Referrals to these intensive in-home services to help families resolve issues and avoid foster care have not increased despite increasing need. Ideally, determinations about whether a child can be safely maintained in their home would be made on a case-by-case basis and not be subject to limits on the number of Family Preservation Services referrals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SFY 2011</th>
<th>SFY 2017</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intake reports</td>
<td>59,775</td>
<td>67,372</td>
<td>+13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports assigned for investigation</td>
<td>30,458</td>
<td>37,445</td>
<td>+23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removals (entry into foster care)</td>
<td>3,408</td>
<td>4,020</td>
<td>+18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referrals to Family Preservation Services</td>
<td>2,687</td>
<td>2,630</td>
<td>-2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DCF data summarized by SFRH Coalition.
As the number of children in foster care has gone up—largely related to cases involving neglect—social safety net programs in Kansas have assisted many fewer children and families.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of children served by TANF</th>
<th>Number of children served by child care assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2010 25,467</td>
<td>July 2010 20,627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2017 7,516</td>
<td>July 2017 10,145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DCF data summarized by SFRH Coalition.

Placing more children with relatives could provide better placement stability and better maintain family connections. Relative to other states, Kansas has historically done a good job of placing children in foster care in family-like settings rather than group homes or residential treatment facilities. However, the opportunity to place more children with relatives (rather than non-relative foster family homes) may be limited by the financial support relative homes generally receive.

### Placement Settings (SFY 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement Setting</th>
<th>Statewide</th>
<th>Riley County</th>
<th>Geary County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foster family home</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group residential</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DCF data summarized by SFRH Coalition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statewide</th>
<th>Average # of kids per month</th>
<th>Average daily rate paid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-relative licensed foster home</td>
<td>2,152</td>
<td>$21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative, non-licensed</td>
<td>2,182</td>
<td>$3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data presented to the Kansas Child Welfare Task Force summarized by SFRH Coalition.
Flexible funding streams could support a broader array of services.

Could more families' needs be served with child welfare programs less extreme than foster care, including family preservation services?

As more children have entered foster care, Kansas is spending $55 million more through its child welfare budget today compared to five years ago. Nearly all of the additional spending has been on foster care; spending on family preservation and prevention (Family Services and Community Services Grants) has remained flat.

- **DCF Child Welfare Budget**
  - **2014**: $136,000
    - Foster care: $35,000
    - Adoption support: $12,000
    - Family preservation & prevention: $12,000
  - **2015**: $142,000
    - Foster care: $36,000
    - Adoption support: $13,000
    - Family preservation & prevention: $13,000
  - **2016**: $154,000
    - Foster care: $37,000
    - Adoption support: $13,000
    - Family preservation & prevention: $13,000
  - **2017**: $163,000
    - Foster care: $37,000
    - Adoption support: $13,000
    - Family preservation & prevention: $13,000
  - **2018**: $186,000
    - Foster care: $38,000
    - Adoption support: $13,000
    - Family preservation & prevention: $13,000

Source: Data presented to the Kansas Child Welfare Task Force summarized by SFRH Coalition.

Kids in foster care today deserve sufficient funds dedicated to their care. **Going forward, if we could reduce the number of children in foster care, flexible sources could fund other efforts to support children and families.**

Historically, the large majority of funding for foster care in Kansas has come from flexible sources (shaded blue in the pie chart): the state general fund, federal Social Services Block Grant, and federal TANF block grant. These three sources made up 80% of Kansas's foster care funding in state fiscal year 2016. (The more restrictive federal Title IV-E funds, by comparison, contributed 11%.)

### Kansas Foster Care Funding Sources SFY 2016

- **General fund**: 56%
- **SSBG**: 10%
- **TANF**: 14%
- **Title IV-E**: 11%
- **Other**: 9%

Source: Kansas Legislative Research Department data summarized by SFRH Coalition.