

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INSTITUTE
CENTER FOR APPLIED RESEARCH AND EVALUATION



Partner Survey Report

for

Kansas Power of the Positive

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Kansas Power of the Positive Partner Survey Report

Main Findings (What You Should Know If You Read Nothing Else)

- K-PoP Partners remain aware of and committed to a focus on **societal factors (safe, stable and nurturing relationships and environments - SSNREs)**, which is consistent with the approach of the CDC Essentials for Childhood grant that funds K-PoP activities.
- K-PoP partners remain active in implementing some of the primary actions to achieve community changes related to SSNREs such as **using and sharing data** to increase awareness of the need for a focus on SSNREs and **advocating for policy and practice change**.
- The majority of K-PoP partners believe the group has been **successful or very successful in achieving their targeted outcomes**.
- Efforts to support/increase **Family Friendly Workplaces** was identified as the primary accomplishment of K-PoP.

Introduction

The Partner survey was created to measure Kansas Power of the Positive (K-PoP) partner awareness, commitment, and actions related to the shared goals in the state action plan developed by K-PoP. This survey was administered in 2019 and again in 2023. Twenty-two (22) partners completed the survey in August 2019, at the end of the first year of funding from the CDC for Essentials for Childhood, and 27 completed the survey in 2023, near the end of the grant period. The survey was based on one created in collaboration with the CDC and Essentials for Childhood representatives from other states and administered on behalf of K-PoP in Kansas in 2017. Where possible, the results from this survey of K-PoP partners are compared against those from approximately 8,000 Kansans in the 2017 Kansas Social Norms survey.

Executive Summary

***NOTE:** Given the relatively small group of respondents to this survey in both 2019 and 2023, the differences seen in percentages often represent only one or two persons. In general, differences between responses in 2019 and 2023 are very small. Additionally, responses from partners were already largely reflective of the desired focus on SSNRE's in 2019. So, there wasn't much room for improvement. Measures show that awareness of and support for SSNREs have remained strong among partners in 2023.*

Awareness

The Awareness questions in this survey are designed to determine where participants place responsibility for creating and/or addressing reasons children struggle. Responses are divided into the categories of the child, parents, or society/societal factors. Analysis is focused on how

responses are skewed i.e., toward children, parents, or society as the most important factors in why children struggle. It's common for responses to be skewed toward placing responsibility on parents first, then either the child or society. Essentials for Childhood is focused on creating awareness that should result in a larger percentage of respondents placing responsibility on society/societal factors. In general, K-POP partners were very likely to place responsibility on societal factors, but also still placed a great deal of importance on parents as a primary factor in why children struggle. Although the changes between 2019 and 2023 weren't large, most tended to go in the direction of places more responsibility on children and parents, rather than societal issues.

- K-PoP partners continue consider societal factors the most important reason children struggle, indicating 97% of societal factors listed were important (compared to 96% for 2019). This is much higher than was found in the Kansas 2017 Social Norms Survey of the general Kansas population (75% were noted as important).
- Many of the parental factors are also considered important (71%). The number of parental factors considered important by partners has dropped slightly from 2019 when 71% were seen as important. Partners have consistently been less likely to view parental factors as important when compared to the 2017 Kansas survey (86%).
- Child factors remained as the least important reasons why children struggle according to partners. However, the child factors selected by partners as important increased between 2019 (26%) to 2023 (38%). This remains much lower than shown in the 2017 general Kansas survey (72%).

Commitment

- There were very high levels of support for all listed community actions, with most actions having support from all partners that responded in 2023. This is very similar to 2019.

Actions

- Partners were very likely to engage in supportive actions they had reported as being important. It should be noted that respondents could have said they supported a particular action but not engage in it personally. The following were three most common actions K-POP partners actually engaged in:
 - I accessed data/information to help increase my knowledge about these issues
 - I shared data/information about these issues with others
 - I advocated for program or policy implementation or change
- The top three actions taken by partners were the same in 2023 as in 2019. However, “I advocated for program or policy implementation or change” decreased from 90% saying they'd taken that action in 2019 to 77% in 2023.

Critical Factors to State Plan Development/Implementation

- Partners were asked to select the factors they found most critical in K-PoP's development and implementation of the State Plan. In general, partners were more split across the possible reasons in 2023 than in 2019, which is understandable given

the difference between the start of an initiative and being several years into implementation. The top three factors for 2023 were:

- Having a shared mission, goals
- Exchanging info/knowledge
- Sharing resources
- The main difference between 2019 and 2023 is that “Bringing together diverse stakeholders” was one of the top three factors in 2019 but was fourth in 2023.

K-PoP’s Achievements and Suggestions for the Future

- As this is the last year of the current grant, several summative questions were asked about the overall achievements and suggestions for the future were asked.
 - When asked how successful partners thought K-PoP has been in achieving its goals, all of the goals received at least 75% positive responses (successful/very successful).
 - Most open-ended responses to the question about what partners thought was K-PoP’s greatest accomplishment identified efforts related to Family Friendly Workplaces.

Complete survey results begin on the next page.

Complete Partner Survey Results

I. Awareness: Explanation of Why Children Struggle

Twenty-four questions were included in the Awareness section of the survey. These questions assess the perceived importance of reasons people might give to explain why some children struggle (e.g., do poorly in school, do not graduate from high school, become teen parents, get involved in substance abuse and/or crime, etc.). The reasons were organized into three categories, or factors: (1) Child Factors (reasons related to the child), (2) Parent Factors (reasons related to the parent/s), and (3) Societal Factors (reasons related to society). Each question was measured using a 5-point scale (1=extremely important, 2=somewhat important, 3=neither important nor unimportant, 4=somewhat unimportant, 5=not at all important). For analysis, responses for each question were recoded as either important (i.e., combining “extremely important” and “somewhat important”) or other (i.e., combining “neither important or unimportant”, “somewhat unimportant”, and “not at all important”). Tables 1-3 depict the percentage of participants that indicated that they perceived each reason as being an important reason for why some children struggle in 2023 and 2019.

Table 1. Reasons Children Struggle: Child Factors	2023	2019
Children not thinking things through carefully enough and end up making poor choices	48%	41%
Children born with bad personality traits that are passed from one generation to the next	42%	24%
Children not working hard enough in school	24%	14%

Table 2. Reasons Children Struggle: Parent Factors	2023	2019
Children living in families with challenges like substance abuse, violence, mental health problems	100%	100%
Parents not knowing how to parent correctly	92%	100%
Parents using harsh or aggressive discipline	92%	100%
Parents not supporting their children’s learning through educational activities like reading to them or playing with them	88%	100%
Parents not thinking about the future of their children	54%	57%
Parents not thinking things through carefully enough and end up making poor choices.	54%	62%
Parents not working hard enough	19%	19%

Table 3. Reasons Children Struggle: Societal Factors	2023	2019
Children growing up living in poverty	100%	100%
Children not having high quality (i.e., nurturing, stimulating, safe, and stable) early child care	100%	100%
Children treated unfairly because of their color (e.g., in schools, by police, or the justice system)	100%	100%
Parents being stressed about money	100%	100%
Employers not paying parents enough to support a family	100%	95%
Families living in neighborhoods with few resources or public services like community centers, libraries, or transportation	100%	95%
Lack of public investment (e.g., in early care and education, schools, job opportunities) in low income neighborhoods and communities of color	100%	100%
Employers not adopting family-friendly practices (e.g., paying family and sick leave, flexible schedules to accommodate children's needs)	100%	100%
Limited political support for helping poor families get out of poverty	100%	95%
Families living in unsafe neighborhoods (i.e., with easy access to drugs, guns, or gangs)	96%	100%
Parents not having enough time for their children	92%	100%
People not willing to support solutions that benefit all children, not just their own	92%	95%
Children not going to high quality schools	88%	91%
Families living in neighborhoods with a lot of other families that can't make ends meet	84%	71%

Data related to each factor (i.e., child, parent, and society) were combined and averaged. Table 4 represents the percentages of respondents (partners in 2019 and 2023, and the general Kansas survey in 2017) that indicated those respective factors play an important (i.e., extremely important or somewhat important) role in why children struggle.

Table 4. Reasons Children Struggle: Overall Comparison	Partners 2023	Partners 2019	Kansas 2017
Societal Factors	97%	96%	75%
Parent Factors	71%	77%	86%
Child Factors	38%	26%	72%

II. Commitment Section: Increasing the Opportunity for all Children to Succeed

Questions in this section gather information on K-POP partners' commitment to increasing opportunities for all children to succeed. The survey asked how strongly participants supported or opposed the ideas using a 5-point scale (1=strongly support, 2=support, 3=neither support nor oppose, 4=oppose, 5=strongly oppose). CARE recoded all responses as either support (i.e., combining "strongly support" and "support" responses) or other (i.e., combining "neither support or oppose", "oppose", and "strongly oppose" responses). The percentages of participating partners that supported the ideas in 2023 and 2019 are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Support for Community Action	2023	2019
Have paid parental leave to care for a new child	100%	100%
Be able to buy enough nutritious food	100%	100%
Be able to live in safe and stable housing	100%	100%
Be able to leave their children in child care that is good for the child's development	100%	100%
Be able to send their children to high quality preschool	100%	95%
Be able to send their children to high quality schools in their neighborhood	100%	100%
Have easy access to after-school and summer care that provide meaningful opportunities for children	100%	95%
Have at least one adult (other than a parent or caregiver) who would provide a safe, stable, nurturing relationship for their children (e.g., a mentor, coach, or teacher)	100%	100%
Be able to live in a city or county where their children are treated fairly in school, by police, or the justice system regardless of the color of their skin	100%	100%
Have a full-time job that provides sufficient income to cover basic needs for the employee and his/her child	100%	100%
Have a job that is "family-friendly" (e.g., provides flexible schedules, has on-site child care or provides subsidies for child care, provides paid days to care for sick family members, paid leave to attend school events)	100%	100%
Have access to health care	100%	100%
Have access to mental health care or substance abuse treatment, if needed	100%	100%
Be able to live in a safe neighborhood where children aren't exposed to violence or illegal drugs	96%	100%

Receive income support (cash, vouchers, or tax refund) to cover basic needs (e.g., housing, food, child care) if a bread winner loses his/her job or household income is below the income needed to cover basic needs	92%	100%
Have easy access to an affordable parent training program	88%	95%
Be able to send their children to schools that don't punish children by suspending or expelling them	85%	86%
Be able to live in a neighborhood where few or no families have a hard time making ends meet	80%	95%

III. Action Section: Partner Actions in the Last Year

Partners were also asked what they actually did in the last 12 months regarding several actions to increase opportunities for children to succeed that they indicated they support or strongly support. It should be noted that even though the percentage decreased from 2019 to 2023, K-POP partners were very likely to have actually participated in one of the more demanding actions, advocacy for program or policy implementation change. The percentages of partners that indicated they did each action in 2023 and 2019 are in Table 6.

Table 6. Actions Taken by Partners in the Last Year	2023	2019
I accessed data/information to help increase my knowledge about these issues	88%	85%
I shared data/information about these issues with others	88%	85%
I advocated for program or policy implementation or change	77%	90%
I donated money to an organization supporting these ideas	50%	60%
I signed a petition or e-mailed a prewritten letter to decision-makers	46%	40%
I met with an elected official or his/her staff to talk about them	38%	40%
I attended a town hall meeting or public rally to support them	31%	20%
I implemented or changed programs	27%	40%
I implemented or changed policy	27%	25%
I asked friends or family to sign a petition or write to decision-makers	23%	30%
I made phone calls or went door to door to gather support for them	12%	10%
I did none of the above	0%	5%

IV. State Action Plan Section: Critical Factors to Development/Implementation

Partners helped to develop and implement the State Action Plan (SAP) and were asked to indicate critical factors in that process from the list, with the option to also write in a different factor. The percentage of partners that found each factor critical are listed in Table 7.

Table 7. Critical Factors to SAP Development/Implementation	2023	2019
Having a shared mission, goals	73%	95%
Exchanging info/knowledge	73%	95%
Sharing resources	62%	89%
Bringing together diverse stakeholders	62%	95%
Collective decision-making	58%	68%
Informal relationships created	54%	53%
Meeting regularly	38%	53%
Other (partner specified 2023: Vicky Roper as leader' 2019: Being part of a systemic change)	4%	5%

Section V: K-PoP's Achievements and Suggestions for Future

Because 2023 is the last year in the current Essentials for Childhood grant, partners were asked some summative questions to gauge K-PoP's success in addressing the primary grant goals as well as ideas for the future should funding continue.

Table 8. How successful do you think K-PoP has been in achieving the following outcomes?	Successful/very successful
Build commitment to creating conditions that lead to safety, stability and nurturing relationships.	88%
Increase use of state-level data related to child maltreatment prevention.	88%
Identify and leverage resources/ programs/policies that bolster efforts to create Family Friendly Workplaces in Kansas.	84%
Partner with employers to create Family Friendly Workplaces in Kansas.	76%

Since 2019, what do you believe is K-POP's greatest achievement?

Out of seven respondents to this question, all but one mentioned the efforts of K-PoP related to Family Friendly Workplaces. More specifically, they noted that K-PoP's greatest achievements were:

- Raising the visibility of and advocating for family friendly workplaces
- Sharing best practices for family friendly workplaces
- Promoting policy change related to family friendly workplaces
- Developing and implementing the Family Friendly Workplace survey

Respondents also mentioned developing the employee survey, identifying health equity disparities through that survey, and "increased exchange of knowledge and resources to support commitment to improving opportunities for families.

What organizations that are not currently involved in K-POP do you think should be recruited/included?

Five persons responded to this question. Four gave specific ideas of organizations/sectors to involve while one provided a suggestion of how to renew the commitment of current partners.

- More private sector involvement
- Statewide foundations/philanthropies doing "parallel work" (should integrate efforts)
- Community Action Headstarts
- Family Preservation contractors
- Have the involved agencies recommit; explain the larger goals of the coalition each meeting to help increase buy-in/consistency in involvement

What other suggestions or feedback do you have regarding K-POP and its accomplishments or ideas for the future.

- More aggressive/creative solutions to recruiting businesses to participate; limited business engagement is biggest hurdle to even greater success

About the Community Engagement Institute

Wichita State University's Community Engagement Institute is dedicated to improving the health of Kansans through leadership development, research and evaluation, organizational capacity building, community collaboration, and public health and behavioral health initiatives. The Community Engagement Institute maintains six Centers with skilled staff that work directly with community coalitions, nonprofits, government entities, health and human services organizations, and support groups. The Centers are:

- Center for Applied Research and Evaluation
- Center for Behavioral Health Initiatives
- Center for Leadership Development
- Center for Organizational Development and Collaboration
- Center for Public Health Initiatives
- IMPact Center

Want to know more about this report? Contact [Dr. Tara Gregory](#) at tara.gregory@wichita.edu