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2024-2025

YEAR
FOUR



FAMILY CHILD CARE
NETWORK OF KENTUCKY

ANNUAL REPORT

Report Submitted July 2025

MISSION STATEMENT

Family Child Care Network of KY recruits and supports in-home care, families, and communities to increase and sustain access to quality early learning experiences.

VISION STATEMENT

Elevating Family Child Care in KY from START to STARS

FAMILY CHILD CARE NETWORK CORE VALUES

Relationships and Teamwork
Collaborative Efforts
Trust, Integrity & Ethical Standards
Open Communication
Dependability & Reliability

Letter from Network Director

It is with great pleasure that I am submitting the Annual Report for the 4th year of work at the Family Child Care Network of Kentucky (FCCN-KY). Since its inception in 2021, this network has grown to a staff of 38 individuals working within five agencies across the Commonwealth. Included in this report, you will see qualitative and quantitative data that reflect the work of our staff over the past year.

As the Director of the FCCN-KY Network, one of my responsibilities is to collect and analyze the data, but I also get to hear the stories and see the progress of our work as the network continues to grow. The best part of my job, however, is to see the pride and passion that all of the specialists have about their work. Prior to the submission of this report, I reached out to the staff and asked them to share “highlights” or special moments they would like to share about their work this year. I got so many tidbits of information about all the great things happening that I had to narrow it down to only ten provider highlights. However, one specialist included this in her reply, Ms. Rebecca from AECN said, *“Being part of this work and witnessing the close-knit, supportive relationships family child care providers form with the children and families they serve has truly been inspiring.”* I decided to share that as a separate testimonial because I truly believe that this is a thought most specialists share. To be honest, I have to say watching this network grow over the past four years and seeing the excitement among the team has been inspiring to me as well.

Please accept this as the 4th Annual Report on the Family Child Care Network of Kentucky.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amy S. Hood". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Amy S. Hood

INTRODUCTION

Family Child Care Network of Kentucky (FCCN-KY) is a state-funded non-profit organization that recruits, supports, and trains family child care providers throughout KY. This network, housed at Western Kentucky University (WKU) and operated by Training and Technical Assistance Services (T/TAS), was established in 2021. This completes the network's fourth year of services.

The Network is made up of sub-contractual agreements with four (4) agencies to serve as Regional FCC Networks to ensure services are offered in all eight child care regions. The network currently has ten priorities.

Regional networks will:

1. Establish systems and protocols for recruiting family child care providers in each region. (Registered Relative Care Certified, Type II).
2. Establish protocols for working with family child care providers who want to enhance their KY All STAR rating by providing technical assistance and training support systems.
3. Recruit registered relative child care providers, including outreach to Kinship Care and Fictive Kin providers, to become part of the registered provider system.
4. Provide Technical assistance for registered relative care providers in the provider's home or the home of the family.
5. Provide Technical assistance for certified and Type II family child care homes in the provider's home.
6. Create and implement training specifically targeted for family child care providers.
7. Provide networking opportunities and resources for family child care homes.
8. Support family child care homes with appropriate business practices and needs, including, but not limited to:
 - a. tuition billing,
 - b. compliance with the Child and Adult Federal Food Program,
 - c. tax preparation.
9. Be the liaison between community businesses and child care programs that are attempting to establish the child care network model as an employee benefit for the business.
10. Be the voice for family child care providers in collaborative meetings at the local, state, and national levels in ways that will enhance awareness of family child care as a choice for quality child care, but also in establishing systems that make family child care more equitable and attainable.



FY 2025

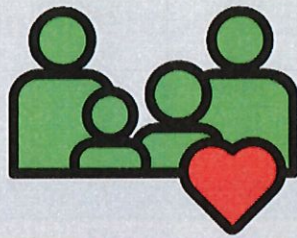
Family Child Care Network Facts

New Certified Homes

32 in 18 different counties

New Type II Homes

2 in 2 different counties



Statewide Impact

A total of **19** counties were impacted by newly opened homes.

Six of those counties are considered child care deserts.

Potentials

288 potential providers are currently working with the FCCN.

During the year, **334** potentials opted to stop their startup process.



Technical Assistance and Community Outreach

The FCCN made **9988** contacts to potential, registered relative, certified and Type II providers.

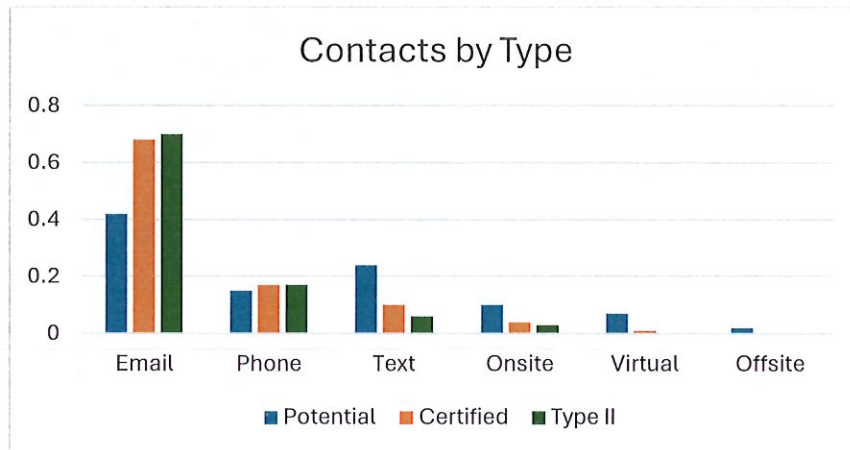
FCCN Staff were involved in **203** community events.

FCCN-KY FOURTH YEAR DATA

Technical Assistance Contacts

Number of TA Contacts by Types

| STATEWIDE TOTAL CONTACTS: 9,988 | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|------|-----|------|----------|-----|-------------|-------|
| Potential | Contacts | AECN | CCC | 4C | EC Learn | WKU | Total | 1,699 |
| | <i>On-site</i> | 22 | 29 | 34 | 13 | 67 | 165 | |
| | <i>Off-site</i> | 2 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 13 | 21 | |
| | <i>Email</i> | 138 | 152 | 144 | 118 | 160 | 712 | |
| | <i>Phone</i> | 69 | 44 | 27 | 41 | 83 | 264 | |
| | <i>Text</i> | 131 | 58 | 3 | 34 | 189 | 415 | |
| | <i>Virtual</i> | 18 | 5 | 48 | 12 | 35 | 118 | |
| | <i>Other</i> | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 | |
| Certified | <i>On-site</i> | 92 | 18 | 45 | 35 | 94 | 284 | 7,544 |
| | <i>Off-site</i> | 3 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 9 | |
| | <i>Email</i> | 2762 | 56 | 1309 | 796 | 235 | 5158 | |
| | <i>Phone</i> | 796 | 28 | 41 | 27 | 367 | 1259 | |
| | <i>Text</i> | 338 | 13 | 10 | 98 | 282 | 741 | |
| | <i>Virtual</i> | 62 | 6 | 0 | 7 | 9 | 84 | |
| | <i>Other</i> | 5 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 9 | |
| Type II | <i>On-site</i> | 9 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 13 | 29 | 745 |
| | <i>Off-site</i> | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | |
| | <i>Email</i> | 349 | 11 | 22 | 118 | 24 | 524 | |
| | <i>Phone</i> | 114 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 131 | |
| | <i>Text</i> | 22 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 16 | 44 | |
| | <i>Virtual</i> | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | |
| | <i>Other</i> | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 | |



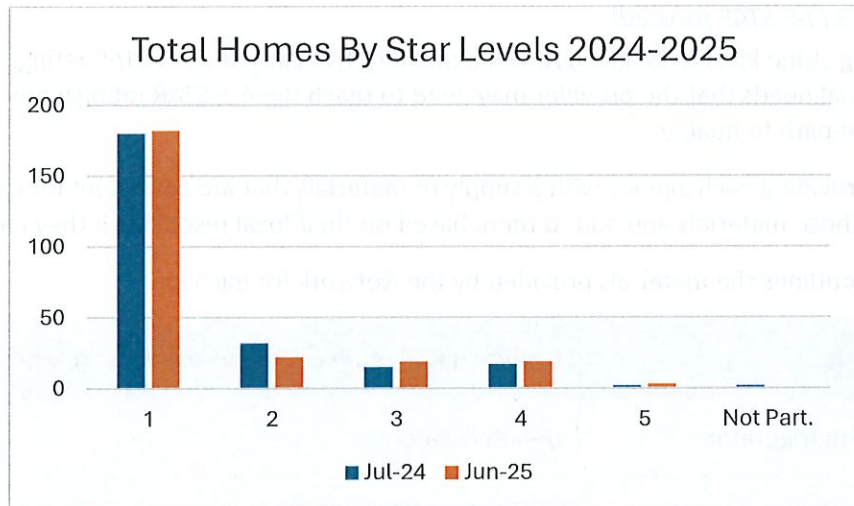
Community Collaboration:

Community Events by Region:

| Agency | Total |
|---|------------|
| AECN | 28 |
| Child Care Council | 38 |
| 4 C | 28 |
| ECLearn | 56 |
| WKU | 53 |
| STATEWIDE TOTAL COMMUNITY EVENTS | 203 |

ALL STARS Participation:

This chart reflects the total number of homes (certified and type II) by STAR level at the beginning and the end of the year.



Star Level by Types July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025

| Provider Type | STAR 1 | | | STAR 2 | | | STAR 3 | | | STAR 4 | | | STAR 5 | | | Not participating | | |
|---------------|--------|------|----|--------|------|-----|--------|------|----|--------|------|----|--------|------|---|-------------------|------|----|
| | 6/24 | 7/25 | | 6/24 | 7/25 | | 6/24 | 7/25 | | 6/24 | 7/25 | | 6/24 | 7/25 | | 6/24 | 7/25 | |
| Certified | 155 | 156 | +1 | 26 | 18 | -12 | 12 | 15 | +3 | 15 | 18 | +3 | 2 | 2 | - | 2 | 1 | -1 |
| Type II | 25 | 26 | +1 | 6 | 4 | -2 | 3 | 4 | +1 | 2 | 1 | -1 | 1 | 1 | - | 0 | 0 | - |

STEPPING STONES FOR QUALITY

As the FCCN-KY took on the work related to the All-STARs Quality Rating System, a plan was put into place to establish some type of “developmental milestone kits” for Family Child Care providers as they reached various stages of the All STARs system. After a few months of planning, the plan became a reality. The process is called “Stepping Stones for Quality,” and there are three different “kits” along the path to achieving a five-star-rated home.

Stepping Stone #1 – Welcome Kit

The **Welcome Kit** will be distributed by an FCCN specialist when a potential provider has had at least 2 consultations AND the FCCS determines a potential provider is committed and ready for the process or will at least benefit from the items provided. The items in this kit are geared toward health and safety, and items necessary to become regulated.

Stepping Stone #2

This kit will be delivered after being certified for at least six months. The FCC Specialist can make that decision based on their knowledge of the provider and when they both feel they are ready to begin progressing toward the 2nd or 3rd star.

Stepping Stone # 3 (4-5 STAR focused)

The third stepping stone kit is to be given AFTER a provider has earned a 2-3 STAR rating. This kit is focused on material needs that the provider may need to reach the 4-5 STAR rating when they are ready to move along the path to quality.

The FCCN-KY is providing each agency with a supply of materials that are consistent for each kit. Each agency can take those materials and add to them based on their local resources if they choose.

The chart below outlines the materials provided by the Network for each kit.

| Stepping Stone #1 | Designed to ensure compliance with regulations |
|------------------------------|--|
| Thermometer – Refrigerator | Health & Safety |
| Thermometer – Child | Health & Safety |
| Cabinet Locks | Health & Safety |
| Outlet Plug cover | Health & Safety |
| Outlet plugs | Health & Safety |
| Smoke Alarm | Health & Safety |
| Door knob covers | Health & Safety |
| Poison Control Center magnet | Health & Safety |

| Stepping Stone #2 | Designed for 2-3 STAR support |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Flash Drives | To support the uploads required for the STARS application |
| Help Me Grow brochure/flyer | To support the implementation of developmental screening |
| ASQ3 Activity Book | To support the implementation of developmental screening |
| CDC Milestone Booklets | To support the implementation of developmental screening |
| KY EC Standards Booklet | To support the lesson planning process |
| Lesson Planning Kits | To support the lesson planning process |
| Family Engagement Guides | Brightwheel resource to support family engagement |
| Activity Guide | Brightwheel resource to support activity and family planning |
| Family Guides | State Resource to support family engagement |
| Differing Abilities Dolls | Materials to support the ERS scores |
| Multicultural Baby Dolls | Materials to support the ERS scores |
| Wooden Blocks | Materials to support the ERS scores |
| Community Dress Up Clothes | Materials to support the ERS scores |
| Stepping Stone #3 | Designed for 4-5 STAR support |
| Real Picture Books | Materials to support science/nature with the ERS |
| Multicultural Foods | Materials to support quality dramatic play |
| Science/Nature Materials | Materials to support science/nature with the ERS |
| FCCERS 3 Book | To ensure providers understand the ERS scores |
| iPad/Tablet | To support the technology needs for business practices |
| iPad/Tablet Case | To ensure the safety of technology |

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

WKU sponsored the annual conference in March 2025. The conference, held at the Convention Center, was the 3rd annual conference designed specifically for Family Child Care since the inception of the network. The theme of the conference, Rolling Out the Red Carpet for Family Child Care, treated providers, network staff, and partners to an Oscar Themed evening of fun with a red-carpet entrance, dinner, awards for providers in each region, a provider of the year award, and an engaging workshop entitled, “Snap, Clap, Wiggle and Giggle” by Mary Jo Huff.

A total of 110 participants engaged in the conference, which was held March 14-15, 2024. A total of 7.5 clock hours of training were offered for participants who took advantage of the entire conference with the Friday evening session, a morning keynote, and a choice of five breakout sessions on Saturday. While there were 99 guest rooms reserved for providers who had to travel more than 50 miles to the conference, 79 rooms were used. A few were cancelled due to the forecasted storms during the weekend.

| Region/County | Participant Number | Region/County | Participant Number |
|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Cumberland Region | 13 | Eastern Mountain | 3 |
| Green | 1 | Boyd | 1 |
| Pulaski | 3 | Lewis | 1 |
| Taylor | 4 | Rowan | 1 |
| Whitley | 5 | | |
| Jefferson Region | 30 | Northern Bluegrass | 11 |
| Jefferson | 30 | Boone | 2 |
| | | Campbell | 3 |
| | | Carroll | 1 |
| | | Kenton | 5 |
| Salt River Trail | 18 | The Lakes | 11 |
| Bullitt | 4 | Calloway | 1 |
| Franklin | 1 | Christian | 5 |
| Hardin | 7 | Graves | 1 |
| Larue | 1 | Hopkins | 2 |
| Nelson | 1 | Livingston | 1 |
| Scott | 1 | Todd | 1 |
| Shelby | 1 | | |
| Washington | 1 | | |
| Woodford | 1 | | |
| Southern Bluegrass | 19 | Two Rivers | 5 |
| Clark | 1 | Butler | 2 |
| Fayette | 12 | Daviess | 1 |
| Jessamine | 2 | Hart | 1 |
| Madison | 4 | Logan | 1 |

Based on evaluations and feedback from the participants, the conference was a success, and the participants both enjoyed the time together and learned new skills.

A few comments taken from the evaluations include:

- The training sessions were extremely useful.
- I gained knowledge about the Early Childhood field that I could immediately apply to my program."
- las sesiones fueron excelentes, pude adquirir muchos conocimientos útiles para mi trabajo en el cuidado infantil (translation: The sessions were excellent, I was able to acquire a lot of useful knowledge for my work in childcare.)

When asked what their biggest takeaways from the training sessions were, a few comments included:

- ✓ Use of puppets for motivation
- ✓ Connecting with the other childcares
- ✓ None other than I never got the photo back that we took.
- ✓ I was able to view challenges we all face are about similar issues.
- ✓ I was able to network.
- ✓ This was my first time attending the conference. I enjoyed the whole entire conference.

HIGHLIGHTS:

Family Child Care Specialists across the state had several highlights to share from the past year.

Northern Kentucky:

Jessica Meier from Boone County:

A provider who utilized the grant and opened in March 2024 recently received her 3-star rating and is currently transitioning to a Type 2 licensed home. This provider is utilizing every single avenue to further her education, earning both her CDA and now working on her Master's in Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education. This provider is coming into early childhood education from a background in logistics. Our team has seen amazing growth and passionate drive with this Provider in such a short time, and we're excited to be part of helping guide her.

Francie Allison, Kenton County:

Following the STARS process this past year, Francie submitted the following: "The STARS team is very helpful. My Quality Coach is there to help me understand the STARS program and process. She has great ideas of what I can do to get a higher STAR rating. She answers my questions in a timely manner. I look forward to getting my 5 stars back."

Eastern Kentucky:

Amanda Thomas from Boyd County:

Amanda shared that owning and operating a family childcare program gave her the opportunity to raise her children and be home with them during their early years. During a difficult time in her life, including going through a divorce, family child care provided a way for her to sustain herself and continue supporting her children.

Amanda will be closing her program at the end of this year, not due to challenges with the field, but because she is relocating out of state. Her story is a powerful example of how meaningful and life-changing family child care can be—not only for the families served but for the providers themselves.

Missy Nichols of Laurel County

Ms. Nichols is the dedicated educator behind Imagination Station, a certified FCC home.

Missy has made tremendous progress, moving from Level 1 to Level 4 on Kentucky's ALL STAR quality rating system, and she's currently working toward achieving Level 5. Her growth and commitment to continuous improvement are truly inspiring.

Missy is not only a talented early childhood educator but also a true professional. She's an active participant in our FLORA program, contributes regularly to our Garden Club Community of Practice, and is a proud member of the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC).

Missy is also passionate about outdoor learning and nature-based experiences. She's currently working on expanding her outdoor play space to include a dedicated outdoor classroom.

Southern Kentucky:

Emilia "Emy" Jaramillo from Hardin County:

Emy successfully renewed her 4-star program with an overall score on her FCCERS observation of 5.09. Emy is proof in her daily practices that Family Child Care is quality child care! Spanish is also her first language, so these children get amazing multi-language exposure interwoven into each day.

Upon receipt of her STARS certificate, she immediately sent a picture of it to her Family Child Care Specialist with the following message: "Hello to the best child care specialist. I received great news today and you have a big part in it. I am so excited!"

Patricia Porter, Hardin County

Patricia Porter was voted by the FCCN staff statewide as the 2025 FCC Provider of the Year. She has been a regulated provider in Hardin County since 1995 (has been watching children longer than that). She is a proud 2-star program (renewed this year), involved in her community, and a former member of the Kentucky Child Care Advisory Council. Her waitlist is consistently long, and there is low turnover - once children enter her program, they tend to stay for many years.

Ms. Porter stated, "I would like to say that I am so grateful to have such an awesome support system. I want to give a special thank you to Mrs. Katherine Martin, whenever I needed any assistance of any kind she always went above and beyond to ensure I received all the support I needed and more, she is an amazing asset and very dependable at all times for all those who have come to know her.

West Kentucky:

Deborah Vallely in Caldwell County

Opened a Family Child Care Home in August 2024 and is one of 4 total programs in Caldwell County. Less than a year into the work, Ms. Vallely is currently awaiting her 3 STAR Rating visit.

Harley Jones in Christian County

Harley Jones began her Certified Program process in 2023. She received the FCC Start Up Grant, completed Strengthening Business Practices, and even completed her CDA Courses, all in an effort to grow as a Child Care Provider. She is currently waiting to have her examination for her CDA. She opened her program in April 2024, and 6 months later, went for her 2-STAR Rating. At our AQR visit this previous

April, she decided it was time to go for her 3-STAR Rating. Harley offered her home for a reliability visit for FCCN, and because of the feedback received, she had decided to go for a 4-STAR program instead. She is very resilient and takes anything she learns and applies it as soon as possible.

Vodaka Watkins in Christian County

Ms. Watkins originally opened as a Registered Provider in June of 2022 to care for her grandchildren. She was previously a school principal before retiring. She had heard about us through word of mouth and reached out to start as a Registered (before the Registered Relative Care transition). She had flip-flopped between Certified and Type I until finally deciding on Certified last year. She had a bit of a struggle in the beginning due to an identity theft incident 11 years ago; however, she was able to get that taken care of and move on.

Ms. Watkins finished her application and officially opened in December 2024. She wants to continue to grow and is currently making plans to start her on STARS at the beginning of next month.

NOTE: Both Harley Jones and Vodaka Watkins are in Oak Grove, Christian County, where there are many Barriers with the Zoning group. FCCN staff were not sure how these would turn out, but now seeing the progress in a short amount of time has been very encouraging!

Faye Osborne in Todd County

Mrs. Osborne opened a program in May 2024 in a desert county. One of 4 total programs, Ms. Osborne received her 3 STAR Rating in May 2025, within a year of opening!

BARRIERS:

While FCCN- KY has many successes and highlights for the year, staff have identified that we still have **barriers to the recruitment efforts and/or services** for Family Child Care providers across the state:

- Loss of the start-up grant:
- The loss of the startup grant during this year has made potential providers either stop the process because of the lack of financial assistance or take much longer to become regulated because of the costs necessary for start-up.
- Zoning:
- Zoning continues to be a huge barrier for Family Child Care providers. A variety of reasons contribute, including the following:
 - Inconsistency in requirements and fees from county to county and even from city to city.
 - Waiting time is also a barrier in some areas. If applicants have to wait for a month before the board meets is a barrier. Many can't wait this long due to income and families needing care. This is understandable for large businesses, but for FCC, this creates a time and cost barrier.
 - In 2022, we put together a KY Zoning Document. At that time, many agencies did not even hear back from their local zoning offices. In addition, there are some rural areas where their zoning board is just one person, OR their zoning board does not have any processes in place for zoning approval.
 - HOAs are not allowing FCC or have extra strict requirements. Potential providers are not able to afford to fight the legality of these regulations.
 - Costs for zoning in some areas are prohibitive and scary, especially if it is not guaranteed.

- Insurance:
 - A new barrier facing potential providers is the required Liability Insurance and the fact that many insurance providers are now not offering that as a possibility. Farm Bureau has been the recommendation; however, they stated that they will no longer give quotes for FCC. The past few providers some specialists have worked with are having a hard time finding agents to work with them.
- First Aid/CPR
 - A few specialists have identified First Aid/CPR certification as a barrier in some areas at least once every two years. This seems to be an issue in the more rural areas where providers have to travel to more urban areas to receive the training in person, and sometimes these are already at capacity and hard to get into a class, as well as the increasing costs for that certification.
- Inconsistencies in STARS/licensing
 - Specialists report that in some areas, they feel that DRCC surveyors tend not to be consistent with the Certification and Type II, and that sometimes providers feel they are being overlooked or pressured to do something not “required” for them because the surveyors may not know the differences.
 - When asked, a few specialists feel that they have a challenge of getting folks to participate in STARS (even the ones that are required by the grant to do so) because the feeling is that the standards are inconsistent. **Director's note:** I am not sure if this is a provider concern or a specialist concern – the revision of the STARS regulations and information with that should correct this barrier upon implementation.

2025-2026 GOALS

- FCCN would like to strengthen the DRCC communication and collaboration to connect us more quickly with those who have been served a cease and desist/making sure they get good information into the hands of those who might need our help.
- FCCN is going to explore the strategy for Registered Relative Care. This was noted as a Potential barrier because it has been noted that there have been positive results from the families who had no prior knowledge of the program when given information from FCC Specialists. However, there appears to be a lack of follow-through. We are not sure if FCCN information is provided to those interested in the registered relative care once they contact CCAP, or if they just don't follow through with any of the process.
- FCCN wants to enhance the awareness of Family Child Care across the state. Our specialists continue to hear “*What is family child care?*”. We recognize that family child care is a quality option because of its small group size, home-like environment, and the close, family-like relationships providers build with children. Even with the creation of the Family Child Care Network and the specific outreach by individuals to work with FCC, we still hear that the providers are feeling increasingly pressured to mirror the practices and structure of Type I centers, and that creates frustration. We feel raising the awareness of safe, quality family child care is key, even within our own agencies.

BUDGET INFO

The total budget for the 2024-2025 funding year was \$2,600,000. Each child care region was awarded \$300,000 to ensure that the family child care work is carried out appropriately and successfully.

The sub-awards are as follows:

- Appalachian Early Childhood Network (AECN) is covering the Eastern Mountain, and the Cumberland Region was awarded \$600,000.
- EC Learn was funded to serve the Northern Bluegrass area and nine counties of the Salt River area, and they were awarded \$450,000.
- 4C Louisville, serving the Jefferson County region, received \$300,000.
- Child Care Council of KY (CCC of KY) serves the Southern Bluegrass region with a total of \$300,000.
- WKU serves the Two Rivers Region, the Lakes region, and eight counties in Salt River for a total funding award of \$675,000.
- T/TAS operates the state network offices to oversee the project with \$200,000.

At the end of the fiscal year, 4C Louisville, EC Learn, and Child Care Council of KY had spent down their entire budget. WKU and AECN had some carry-forward money, which will be reallocated for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. Those funds will be used for the 4th annual statewide conference by the AECN, as they will sponsor the annual conference. In addition, WKU will use the other funds to purchase additional supplies for the Stepping Stones for Quality Developmental Kits inventory for the entire network.