



**HUMANITIES
KANSAS**

A Movement of Ideas

The American Kid West

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Grass swaddles the plains
like a swaddle. Our national anthem
is something off a children's album
from the library that puts babies to sleep
instantly— but only at extreme volume.
We eat at chain restaurants because
they have parking and car seat slings
and enough room to put them
next to the table. When our children
begin eating solid foods, there will be
something on those menus for them
to eat. Perhaps an illustrated cup
to take home. Our currency is snacks,
stuffed into diaper bags alongside
accessories and ephemera: Changing pads.
Thermometers. Extra keys. Outfits.
That gift certificate we lost months ago.
We strap mirrors to headrests.
We are known for our competence
and our freezers and our tired faces.
Our grocery stores are giant
and have parking spaces
for expectant and new mothers.
The carts warn us not to mount
our car seats onto the handles
but we do anyway. We know balance
and we'd catch our children
if they ever fell. They don't.

This transcript of "The American Kid West" is part of the Humanities Kansas Humanities Hotline, a series of bite-sized micropresentations about Kansas stories – both serious and light-hearted – that are researched and presented by experts across the state. Humanities Hotline topics change monthly. For more information about Humanities Kansas and the Humanities Hotline, visit humanitieskansas.org or call 1-888-416-2018.