



EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL

A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT TO ADVISE STATE GOVERNMENT
ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF SERVICES AFFECTING
YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

MEMBERS APPOINTED
BY THE GOVERNOR
REPRESENT:

- Parents
- Family Child Care
- Center-based Child Care
- Early Intervention Providers
- Primary Education
- School-based Programs
- School-age Care
- Parenting Education
- Pediatric Health
- Mental Health
- Head Start
- Higher Education
- Extension Educators
- Child Care Food Programs
- State Agencies

PRESS RELEASE

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COUNCIL RECOMMENDS HIGHER PAY FOR CHILD CARE STAFF

An early childhood council said today that higher pay for child care staff is needed to improve the quality of Nebraska's programs for young children.

The Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC) approved today the findings of a nearly two-year study on the quality of early care and education services in Nebraska. The ECICC was established in 2000 to advise the Governor, the state agencies, and the legislature on all services for young children in Nebraska.

"Higher pay for child care staff will help assure that we meet our goal of providing quality child care for all of Nebraska's young children," said Lea Ann Johnson, chairperson of ECICC. "Our recommendations should be implemented to better assure that our state's youngest children have an opportunity to grow and thrive to their full potential."

Carrie Witte, chairperson of an ECICC task force, said Nebraska needs a comprehensive plan for improving the quality of early care and education across the state. "Our child care sector contributes enormously to Nebraska's economy," she said. "The people caring for our youngest children are entitled to better pay — pay reflecting their knowledge and longevity in the field."

"Studies conducted by the Midwest Child Care Consortium supports the council's findings and recommendations", Witte said. That research, which was conducted in Nebraska and the Midwest, shows that early childhood professionals who receive higher pay and benefits provide higher quality care.

The average pay in Nebraska for a child care teacher is \$7.65 an hour, compared to \$9.41 for a preschool teacher and \$13.39 for an entry-level kindergarten teacher, according to the Nebraska Department of Labor.

"Early child care providers across the state recognize that parents are paying all they can afford now. Additional investments from the state and community are needed to improve the quality of our programs," Witte said.

The council's recommendations focus on comprehensive planning, economic development strategies and salary supplements for early childhood educators.

An executive summary of the 12 recommendations and/or a copy of the Quality Child Care Worthy Wage Task Force report are available at: <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/ecicc>. For a printed copy contact: Susan Dahm, Nebraska Department of Education, P. O. Box 94987, Lincoln, NE 68509-4987.



*Head Start-State
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Nebraska Department of Education

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